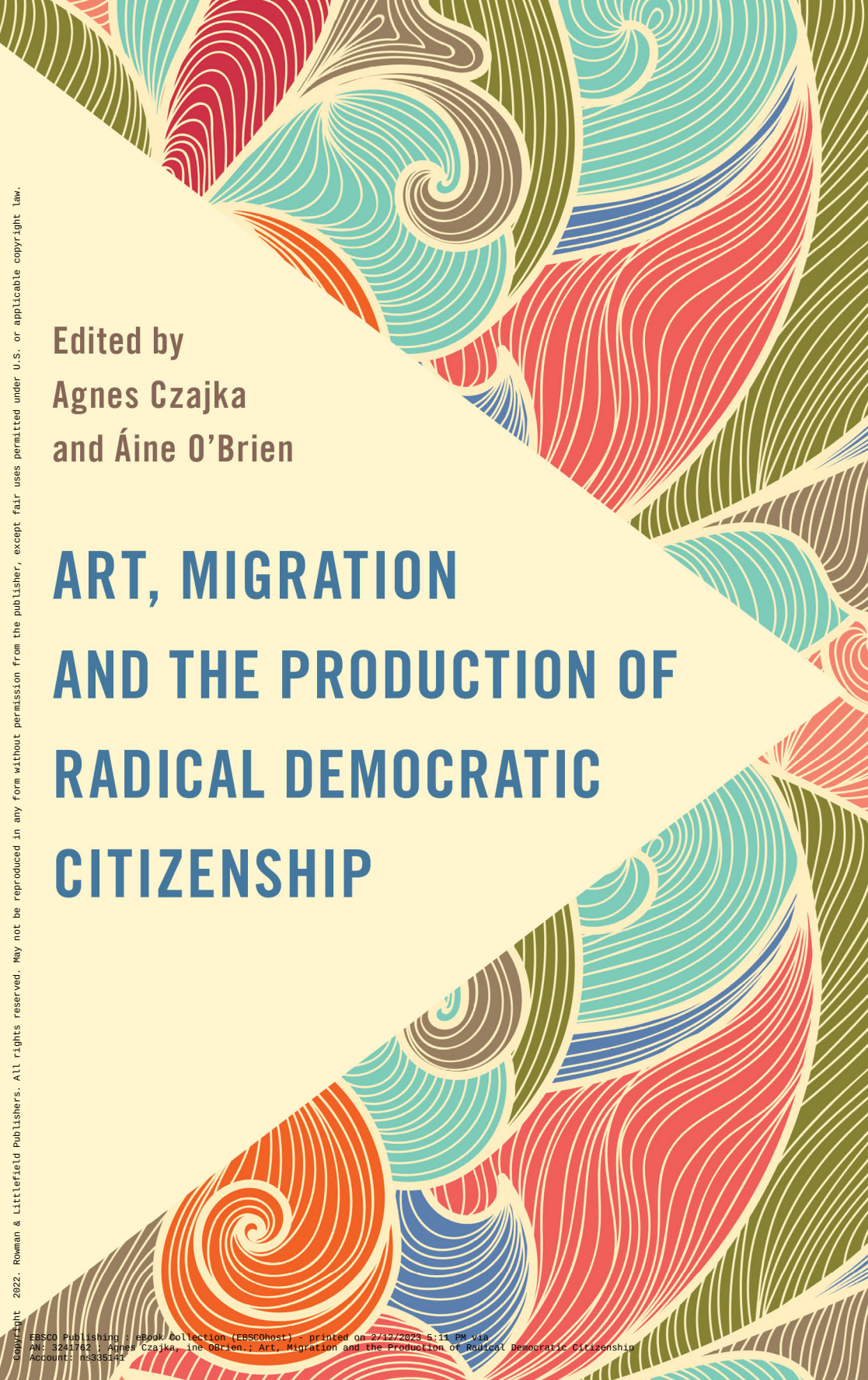

Art, Migration and the Production of Radical Democratic Citizenship

FRONTIERS OF THE POLITICAL: DOING INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Series Editor: Engin Isin is professor of international politics, Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) and University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP). He is a leading scholar of citizenship studies and is a chief editor of the journal *Citizenship Studies*. He is the author and editor of eleven books in the field, including *Being Political* and *Citizens Without Frontiers*.

This series aims to contribute to our understanding of transversal political struggles beyond and across the borders of the nation-state, and its institutions and mechanisms, which have become influential and effective means of both contentious politics and political subjectivity. The series features titles that eschew and even disavow interpreting these transversal political struggles with categories and concepts.

Postcolonial Transitions in Europe: Contexts, Practices and Politics
Edited by Sandra Ponzanesi and Gianmaria Colpani
Citizenship and Place: Case Studies on the Borders of Citizenship
Edited by Cherstin M. Lyon and Allison F Goebel
The Question of Political Community: Sameness, Logos, Space
Jonna Pettersson
Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe: Academics, Artists, Activists and Their Publics
Edited by Sandra Ponzanesi and Adriano José Habed
Citizen Journalism as Conceptual Practice: Postcolonial Archives and Embodied Political Acts of New Media
Bolette B. Blaagaard
Governing Affective Citizenship: Denaturalization, Belonging and Repression
Marie Beauchamps
Public Perception of International Crises: Identity, Ontological Security and Self-Affirmation
Dmitry Chernobrov
The Uses of Imperial Citizenship: The British and French Empires
Jack Harrington
Engaging Authority: Citizenship and Political Community
Edited by Trevor Stack and Rose Luminiello
Art, Migration and the Production of Radical Democratic Citizenship
Edited by Agnes Czajka and Áine O'Brien

Art, Migration and the Production of Radical Democratic Citizenship

Edited by Agnes Czajka and Áine O'Brien

ROWMAN &
LITTLEFIELD
London • New York

Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Available

Names: Czajka, Agnes, editor. | O'Brien, Áine, editor.
Title: Art, migration and the production of radical democratic citizenship / edited by Agnes Czajka, Áine O'Brien.
Description: London : Rowman & Littlefield, [2022] | Series: Frontiers of the political : doing international politics | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021061747 (print) | LCCN 2021061748 (ebook) | ISBN 9781786612786 (cloth) | ISBN 9781786612809 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Democracy and the arts. | Refugees as artists. | Arts--Political aspects. | Interactive art.
Classification: LCC NX180.P64 A797 2022 (print) | LCC NX180.P64 (ebook) | DDC 704/.086912094--dc23/eng/20220314
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021061747
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021061748

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Agnes Czajka and Áine O'Brien

Figure 0.1. As Far As Isolation Goes.
Source: Tania El Khoury and Basel Zaraa. Image: Marcia Chandra, 2018.

Intersecting histories and contemporary reverberations of colonialism and war have shaped global experiences of citizenship. On both sides of the Atlantic and in the global south, the rise of right-wing populism, the intensification of nationalist rhetoric and the concomitant proliferation of racist and xenophobic sentiments and policies have given rise to a politics of resentment, animosity and fear. In Europe, the incongruity between national and European discourses and practices of citizenship, sharpened by recurring, seemingly intractable social, political and economic crises, has added a dimension of precarity, volatility and intensity to the experience of both citizenship and democracy.

On all sides of this map, these circumstances have given rise to hostility, trauma, despair and heartbreak, but also to courage, resilience and creativity.

The confluence of these has meant that citizenship and democracy have been fiercely contested, with struggles acquiring both a sense of unprecedented urgency, if not an existential proportion. This volume explores the contribution and insights of artists and cultural actors with diverse experiences of migration and displacement to these fractious public debates. Focussing on performative, participatory, autobiographical and autoethnographic artistic processes and practices, it considers the contribution these artists make to radically reimagining the cartographies of democratic citizenship.

Artistic practice, and the transdisciplinary tools and techniques associated with creative processes of production, have been increasingly recognised as powerful methods for engaging publics on urgent or contentious social, cultural and political issues. Participatory and performative art, in particular, disrupts the conventional distinctions and hierarchies between artist and audience, but also the dominant canon and inherited power structures of art institutions. It is also often premised on the co-creation and collaborative element of the artwork, and thereby, the co-creation of knowledge. Initiatives such as *Who Are We?* (whoareweproject.com) and *Picturing Climate* (picturingclimate.net) at Tate Modern's Tate Exchange programme (https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-exchange), to which some of this volume's authors have contributed and which prompted many of the critical insights developed here, have served as spaces and vehicles for such engagement. Many of the artists whose work is being foregrounded also form part of a deeper network of creative and political alliances between artists, activists, academics and advocates working with and alongside the arts agency Counterpoints Arts (https://counterpointsarts.org.uk/). By centring socially engaged practice as a catalyst for change, this volume aims to highlight what Boanventura de Sousa Santos calls an increasingly vital "ecology of knowledge" found in the "unsettling alchemy of art and social justice."

Collectively, these and other participatory and performative interventions serve as a radical methodology for collaborative, engaged, affective and effective social action. Situated in the context of this artistic practice and literature, this volume explores the specific contribution of artists shaped by migration and diverse conditions of displacement to reimagining the parameters of citizenship and democracy, and in so doing, to the production of radical democratic citizenship.

The volume foregrounds the work of artists who are shaped by migration and displacement for two fundamental reasons: First, many of these artists have audaciously inserted themselves into and are pushing the boundaries of controversial political debates, challenging and unhinging dominant interpretations of citizenship and belonging. Second, as the remainder of this introduction will suggest, critical interventions by artists who have experienced firsthand the everyday realities of displacement can offer a particularly

incisive challenge to existing regimes of citizenship and democracy. Often, though not always, excluded or marginalised by existing citizenship regimes (and the conflation of citizenship, belonging and democratic participation), but also by mainstream cultural and arts organisations, these artists are able to intervene from the complex terrain of the borderlands they often inhabit and thus navigate the centre. In so doing, they not only open up, but actually perform and enact a radical democratic citizenship.

The following discussion in this introductory chapter considers the construct of radical democratic citizenship and the contribution of artists who have migrated or are categorised as 'refugees' to its production. To do so, it first deconstructs radical democratic citizenship into its constituent parts. It tackles citizenship with the help of Engin Isin's work on performative and activist citizenship and radical democracy with the help of Jacques Rancière. The chapter then turns to the critical contribution that artistic practice can make to the production of radical alternatives to the status quo. It does so, again, with the help of Rancière's work, focussing on his understanding of the meaning and function of 'critical art.' It also begins to consider the practices of a constituency of artists who have migrated or have been forcibly displaced as a creative form and expression of 'critical art,' challenging existing regimes of citizenship and democracy and further enacting radical alternatives. The chapter concludes with an overview of the contributions to the volume, highlighting the common threads that emerge when these artists enact, install, perform or reflect upon the boundaries and horizons of radical democratic citizenship.

RADICAL + DEMOCRATIC + CITIZENSHIP

What is radical democratic citizenship, and how do artists with lived experience of migration and displacement contribute to its production? To begin to answer the question, this first section breaks radical democratic citizenship into its constituent parts, starting with the concept of citizenship. Isin provides a succinct yet comprehensive definition of citizenship, describing it as "a dynamic (political, legal, social and cultural but perhaps also sexual, aesthetic and ethical) institution of domination and empowerment that governs who citizens (insiders), subjects (strangers, outsiders) and abjects (aliens) are and how these actors are to govern themselves and each other in a given body politic."[1] Here, citizenship is not, or not just, membership, but rather, "a relation that governs the conduct of (subject) positions that constitute it."[2] It is an institution that constitutes and governs the conduct and conditions the possibilities of both citizens and non-citizens.

Understanding citizenship as a relation or series of relations that governs the conduct of citizens, non-citizens and the array of subject positions that

occupy the rest of the political spectrum enables us to imagine citizenship as being produced and performed (and thus also critically engaged with) by various subjects, including migrants and refugees, in different ways, and at different sites and scales. Isin has called the interventions that challenge, push the boundaries or reimagine the parameters of citizenship "acts of citizenship," those who engage in them "activist citizens" and the result "activist citizenship." For Isin, therefore, the subject position of "citizen" and the institution of "citizenship" is not necessarily predicated on membership in a polity. Rather, it is predicated on "subjects and abjects . . . adopting modes and forms of being an insider . . . or challenging those modes and forms thereby transforming them."[3] Understood in this way, activist citizenship is thus always already radical, as it is predicated on those with "no-part" assuming or seizing "a part" and thereby challenging and transforming the parameters of democratic citizenship. This volume is specifically interested in how artists with experience of migration and the asylum system—"a part of those who have no-part"[4]—challenge and unsettle dominant interpretations of the parameters of citizenship and belonging through their artistic production.

For Isin, acts of citizenship are acts through which claims are articulated, and through which claimants produce new sites of contestation, belonging, identification and struggle.[5] Acts of citizenship can stretch across boundaries and territories, and rupture and transform forms and modes of being political by bringing into being new actors and by creating new sites and scales of struggle.[6] Unlike well-established and easily recognisable institutions and sites at which the subject position of citizen is traditionally enacted—a voting booth, a parliamentary debate, a town-hall meeting—Isin's conceptualisation of acts of citizenship invites us to recognise a host of other sites and modes through which citizenship is performed and contested. For Isin and a number of contributors to this volume, "bodies, courts, streets, media, networks and borders have also become sites of contestation for citizenship."[7] Bojana Janković and Dana Olărescu (this volume) expose the bureaucracy governing migration, settlement and citizenship as one such site, and their comic, performative engagement with it as a mode of resistance. In her live art and chapter in this volume, Natasha Davis explores her own body as a site of such contestation. As Janković, Olărescu, Elena Marchewska and Abbas Zahedi's contributions attest to, art galleries, cultural institutions and art itself have also become key sites of contestation over citizenship and democracy.

The performances or enactments of citizenship that Isin and the contributors to this volume explore break with existing habitus and routine, enabling the actor or actors (if only momentarily) to "create a scene rather than follow a script."[8] For Isin, this rupturing and transformative potential is not only the distinguishing feature of acts of citizenship, but also of activist citizens and activist citizenship; in contrast to active citizens, "who act out already written

scripts, such as voting, taxpaying or enlisting, activist citizens engage in writing scripts and creating the scene."[9] Acts of citizenship and activist citizens, therefore, "traverse frontiers" both physically and metaphorically.[10] It might thus be useful from the perspective of this volume to think of artists shaped by histories of migration and displacement as activist citizens without, or traversing frontiers, whose interventions create "a series of resonances" that radically challenge the parameters of citizenship.[11]

Having articulated how and to what effect the concept of citizenship is used throughout the volume, we now turn to radical democracy, or more accurately, to the concepts of radicalism and democracy as building blocks for thinking through the construct of radical democratic citizenship. Particularly useful in the context of this volume is the work of Jacques Rancière on the relationship between politics, democracy and art.

For Rancière, politics arises out of a contestation over the distribution of the sensible, or "the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it."[12] As Patrick Craig elaborates, what is being distributed "are spaces, times, and forms of activity," and their distribution, in turn, creates inclusions and exclusions.[13] Rancière provides the following example of the inclusions and exclusions predicated on a particular distribution of the sensible:

> Aristotle states that a citizen is someone who *has a part* in the act of governing and being governed. However, another form of distribution precedes this act of partaking in government: the distribution that determines those who have a part in the community of citizens. . . . The distribution of the sensible reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community. . . .[14]

The political community and our understanding of who has a part in that community, who belongs to it and who has the right to partake in its governance—in other words, our understanding of who is a citizen and who is not—is determined by the distribution of the sensible. Who is seen, heard or perceived, whose speech is discerned or discernable, is thus regulated by the distribution of the sensible.

Democracy, in turn, is a particular distribution of the sensible, a particular way of assembling people under a common authority and governing the contests that inevitably arise.[15] Democracy, however, is also much more than this. As Jacques Derrida writes, democracy is the only system "in which, in principle, one has or assumes the right to criticize everything publicly, including the idea of democracy."[16] It is "the only one that welcomes the possibility of being contested, of contesting itself, of criticizing and indefinitely improving itself."[17] It is thus a "form of society in which men consent to live under the stress of uncertainty," dependent as it is on perpetual self-transgression.[18]

Unlike any other system for the distribution of the sensible, democracy is thus simultaneously an organizing principle and its disruption. For Rancière, Panagia and Bowlby, "the 'freedom' of a people that constitutes the *axiom* of democracy has as its real content the rupture of the axioms of domination."[19] Democracy is a rupture and a disruption, "that state of supplement which is not controlled or counted in the count effected by the police."[20] As democracy is also characterised by "the complete absence of qualifications for governing," it is an explosion of "the people" onto the scene, a disruption of an existing distribution of the sensible by "the part of those who have no-part," the *demoi* who "do not count, those who have no qualification to part-take…no qualification for being taken into account."[21] For Rancière, then, democracy is exceptional, a deviation and dissensus from the taken-for-granted order of things or distribution of the sensible, and thus, inherently radical.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE GROUND OF 'CRITICAL ART'

What role, then, can migrant and refugee artistic practice play in this (radical) democratic moment? Rancière suggests that art can play a significant role in the contest over the distribution of the sensible. Artistic practice, he suggests, can intervene in the distribution of the sensible, in the system of "self-evident facts" that governs what (and who) is seen, heard, rendered visible, made invisible, included or excluded. It can constitute "'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making, as well as in the relationships it maintains to modes of being and forms of visibility."[22] For Rancière, however, the potential of artistic practice does not terminate here; significantly, it can also be activating and mobilising, inspiring and provoking a transformation of the existing distribution of the sensible.

Critical art, Rancière argues, "is an art that aims to produce a new perception of the world, and therefore to create a commitment to its transformation."[23] It does so through a "conjunction of three processes: first, the production of a sensory form of 'strangeness'; second, the development of an awareness of the reason for that strangeness and third, a mobilization of individuals as a result of that awareness."[24] By intervening in the distribution of the sensible, by producing a sensory form of strangeness, by creating an awareness of the reasons for that strangeness and by mobilizing individuals as a result of this awareness, critical art can disrupt our inherited and seemingly self-evident understandings of the world around us and contribute to its transformation. Critical art can thus be seen as radically democratic: an intervention into the existing distribution of the sensible that exposes who has a "part" or a share in a political community and who does not. It challenges

us to reimagine the very grounds and parameters of that community, and to mobilise and act on that imagination.

It might be worth pausing briefly to reflect on what an artistic challenge to an existing distribution of the sensible might look like. If we circle back to the concept of citizenship, and specifically, to performative citizenship as delineated by Isin, we can perhaps imagine how artistic practice might reveal the exclusionary nature of existing legal and political citizenship regimes and enable us to imagine a radical alternative. In her chapter "Creative Acts of Citizenship: Performance of Activist Citizenship by Migrant Artists," Marchewska explores Aram Han Sifuentes's installation, *The Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Who Legally Can't*, as precisely that kind of alternative. Conceived as a "citizen objection" to the exclusion of migrants from voting, the installation positioned migrants as citizens and invited them and other disenfranchised groups to participate by voting in the 2016 US presidential elections. Challenging also the arbitrariness of borders and noting that results of elections have cross-border implications, voting booths were installed on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

When produced by artists who, more often than not, have "no part" or have contested relationships with the institutions of citizenship, this kind of practice acquires a more deeply radical dimension. By demanding the rights reserved for citizens and inserting themselves into the institutions in which they have no part—such as voting—artists shaped by migration and displacement engage in a performative politics through which they enact themselves as citizens, and in so doing, challenge existing regimes of citizenship and democracy. When these artists also have no part in mainstream or state-sponsored cultural and arts organisations, their interventions invite a radical reimagining of both politics and culture. Thus, installations such as that analysed by Marchewska enact a more radical democracy, in which voting, for example, is differently activated and distributed. In critically intervening into the existing distribution of the sensible and enacting a parallel reality, the installation invites us to imagine the possibility of an alternative distribution of the sensible, a radical democracy of those who presently have no part, where citizenship and the right to have rights are very differently distributed, and the borders of political communities are reshaped.

By inserting themselves into debates and institutions in which they have no part and demanding the rights to which they have no right, these artists can enact a radical democratic citizenship. Through their art practice, they constitute themselves as citizens, audaciously inserting themselves "where they don't belong" and partaking in that which they have no part of. In so doing, they expose the existing distribution of the sensible, challenge its taken-for-grantedness and disclose the possibility of another present. In the case

of *The Official Unofficial Voting Station*, Sifuentes exposes the exclusions and perversions of the contemporary institution of voting. By performatively partaking the right to which the disenfranchised and foreign nationals have no right, this artist's work and the communities she includes in her collaborative methodology enact a more radically democratic citizenship, allowing us to imagine that another distribution of the sensible is possible.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Many of the artists contributing to this volume work across the transdisciplinary field of socially engaged art practice; their projects are collaborative and participatory, involving communities and people as the essential material of the work.[25] What distinguishes much of this practice is its cooperative approach and the implementation of dramaturgy as a central trope, evoking what Isin calls "a dramaturgical language, combined with a language of performativity."[26] This critical mix of codes and strategies opens up sites and spaces for testimonials and dialogue between both citizens and non-citizens.

In foregrounding artists who have been shaped by migration and involuntary displacement, and the artefacts and performances through which they reimagine the cartographies of citizenship and belonging, the volume includes two distinctive textual formats. The first is a section comprising short provocations in which artists reflect on radical democratic citizenship in the light of their specific art practice and personal trajectories, situating themselves in relation to project participants and in the context of the cultural and civic/state institutions and public sites in which their work is staged and performed. These provocations are honed from the granular insights and particularities of the creative process itself, spanning and sometimes intermixing a range of art forms and methodologies including live art, visual art and public installation, community and site-specific durational work (in neighbourhoods) or the combination of writing, autoethnography and media activism. In "Four Thoughts in Two Voices and One Dodgy Passport," Bojana Janković looks back at her work as part of the *There There* collective to explore the role of comedy and site-specific performance in the interrogation of immigration and citizenship rules and policies. Janković describes *There There* as 50 percent Romanian and 50 percent Serbian, hence migrant in form, yet eschewing any prescriptive notion of autobiography as a fault line for the work. Whilst drawing attention to the political potential of artistic interventions, Janković also cautions against romanticising the interventions of artists with precarious citizenship status and points to the need for solidarity. "Radical citizenship is a liberating practice," Janković notes, "but it does not a legislative change make; I leave that to those with appropriate documentation."

In "Practicing Migration," Dana Olãrescu, the second member of the *There There* duo, focuses on her role as a "practicing migrant" and the performative interventions this has inspired. Reflecting on a *There There* performance at the Tate Modern (in the context of the *Who Are We?* programme at Tate Exchange) titled, *A 10-Minute Crash Course on How to Fill in a Permanent Residency Application*, Olãrescu exposes the role that the art museum might play in consciously or unconsciously sustaining the 'hostile environment' against migrants in the name of 'art.' When performing a 'how to' apply for UK residency in the bowels of the gallery, Olãrescu recounts how this enactment of radical democratic citizenship was engaged with by the audience—who immediately connected and participated—yet was frowned upon by the gallery. As she puts it: "When kept at bay in community centres, places of worship or diaspora institutions, we are tolerated; but should the conversation spill into the mainstream, into middle-class territories, minority solidarity is suddenly perceived as threatening."

In "Art of Literature, Citizenship and Statelessness," Evgeny Shtorn interrogates the imaginative and political scope for autoethnographic writing in exile. Working from a Direct Provision Centre (Asylum Centre) on the outskirts of Dublin, Shtorn figures his autoethnographic, documentary prose as "performing a different regime of citizenship," one where "statelessness has no place and where the very state of being an 'outsider' no longer makes any sense at all." Having never planned to do so, Shtorn finds himself writing documentary prose where his "voice is reflective of many other voices" compelling him to stand outside of himself in order to tell a relational, multi-voiced story of 'belonging' and citizenship—one that features the values of solidarity alongside feelings of love, pain and pleasure, simultaneously charting a narrative space between what he calls the "the abandoned past and the elusive future."

Reflections on statelessness also permeate Basel Zaraa's intervention, "As Far as Art Will Take Me." Drawing on his own conflicting relationship to statelessness, having grown up in the Palestinian camp, Yarmouk, in Damascas, Zaraa embarks on an autoethnographic journey. He reflects on how the interactive live art installation *As Far as My Fingertips Take Me* (produced in collaboration with artist Tania El Khoury), together with his performing in the Palestinian hip-hop group Katibeh Khamesh, enabled him to survive and tell a comparative story about displacement. The ambivalence surrounding his own British citizenship—acquired in 2016—is both liberating and painful, since his parents continue to live in Syria without formal citizenship. Yet art allows Zaara the means to render intimate his own intergenerational Palestinian story, enacting a form of healing through the exchange of trans-local experiences of displacement with increasingly global audiences.

In "A Collective Gesture of Civil Demands," Isabel Lima reflects on a neighbourhood-based intervention called the *Gresham Wooden Horse*—a

durational project conducted by Lima over several years, which included "a five-meter tall wooden horse…[being] unleashed onto the streets of Middlesbrough." This work was first conceived as a response to austerity, failed regeneration and the UK migration policies of a 'hostile environment.' The aim of this participatory project was to sow the seeds for a newly imagined civil space via the performance of slow acts of resistance and local solidarity. The collaborative building of the horse initially served as a catalyst for the cultivation of coalitions, between citizens and non-citizens alike, or, as Lima suggests, facilitated a coming together *in difference*. Many of these alliances among 'activist citizens' continue to this day to form the basis of a Neighbourhood Plan that is led and produced by the local communities, setting out a vision for the area and containing policies for the use and development of local land.

In the final provocation of the first section of the volume, "Performing Citizenship: Mickey Mouse and Activism in Egypt," filmmaker and journalist Hossam Fazulla similarly reflects on innovative ways of enacting radical democratic citizenship, but in authoritarian spaces that leave little room for resistance, or what Fazulla calls "conventional activism." This narrowing sphere for freedom of speech is navigated through new forms of activism, using direct parody and satire or creative street games instigated by children that are then reframed and amplified online. In this context, creative activism is mobilised by those who have "no part," yet, as Fazulla claims, have found a way to register the invisible visible through a mode of playful, powerful opposition. These activist collectives manage to regroup via a reclaiming of public, civil and civic space despite increasing restrictions on democracy and the 'right to have rights.'

The second section of the volume comprises longer, more sustained engagements with the intersection of migrant and refugee artistic practices and radical democratic citizenship. Contributors focus on the ways in which socially engaged practice—by enabling an exploration of embodied, tacit and sensual ethnographies within situated narratives of migration and displacement—can mobilise a reimagining of democratic citizenship. Many allude to or engage directly with a range of participatory, autoethnographic and performative approaches as modes for enacting and radically rethinking the very meaning of democratic citizenship. Several of these contributors are visual and live art practitioners, dramaturges or curators, with others moving between the independent art sphere and academia or located in academia but co-creating with artists. All are in some way shaped by diverse trajectories of migration, either first- or second-generation, or are part of a wider 'neo-diaspora' as Abbas Zahedi coins it (in the conversation to follow with Dominik Czechowski).

Yet migration does not provide a homogenous anchor; significantly, the chapters and the shorter provocations differentially draw upon a range of experiences, creative practices, case studies and analyses to explore a perfor-

mance of "citizenship as yet-to come."[27] Like the provocations, these chapters testify to the increasingly urgent role that artistic practice might play—as methodology and radical tool —in reimagining the parameters of democratic citizenship. Isin puts it this way:

> The gaps—traversed between citizenship (in) theory, citizenship (in) practice, citizenship (in) law, and citizenship (in) acts—are increasingly where articulate, effective languages of everyday politics emerge and are where literary and artistic performances are playing out serious roles.[28]

In "Performing Migratory Identity via a Trilogy of Works: *Rupture, Asphyxia* and *Suspended*," Natasha Davis draws on her live artwork to reflect on the loss of citizenship with the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The lived experience of displacement figures as a central trope in Davis's work, as does the materialisation of the 'body' as a living archive holding knowledge triggered by both memory and trauma. Davis reflects on both her performative art and the performative mode of writing the chapter as constitutive of a radical democratic intervention into the space of citizenship, figuring displacement itself as a site of political autonomy. She narrates her own longitudinal art practice and personal history of exile through a performative form of writing across autoethnography, theory and creative prose, interrogating the central place that displacement has had as an aesthetic device in her work, enabling her to engage with audiences. In this retrospective reading, Davis positions displacement as a key methodological catalyst where the axis between 'departure and arrival' are repeatedly foregrounded. As she puts it: "Both exile and performance are lived in the moment but charged and heightened by the memories and embodied experiences of previous departures and arrivals." For Davis, 'displacement' itself constitutes the means through which to travel the conceptual and deeply personal space between "identity, citizenship and [the] crossing [of] borders."

In "Creative Acts of Citizenship: Performance of Activist Citizenship by Migrant Artists," Marchewska considers performative and participatory work that aims to expose and reconfigure the parameters of democratic citizenship in the previously mentioned *The Official Unofficial Voting Station* by Han Sifuentes and the work of the collaborative, cross-border group La Pocha Nostra, led by Nola Mariano and Guillermo Gómez-Peña. In so doing, Marchewska explores the use of autoethnography by artists who have lived experience of migration, who are 'non-citizens' yet are choosing to explore the often hidden 'acts of citizenship' underpinning migration journeys. This analysis is further layered by a weaving of Marchewska's own memories of being an artist and a migrant in the UK, experiencing the alienating bureaucracy of the UK Home Office in a decade when the 'hostile environment' was

steadily gaining ground. The use of autoethnography is not merely a research method, but it provides a vital process of narrative "witnessing" serving as a prompt for critical commentary, pedagogy, provocation and participation with audiences—what Marchewska calls an "embrace of vulnerability with purpose." Like Davis, Marchewska sees herself interpellated as a "citizen of no country" and the artists she engages with as honing a vital vocabulary for radically new scripts, thus "creating the scene," as Isin puts, for a reimagining of the everyday performance of citizenship.

In "Bridging Citizenship: The Civic Contribution by Artists Impacted by Displacement," Mary Ann DeVlieg highlights the contribution of artists who have primarily experienced involuntary displacement by evoking the idea of a 'here and there' through the form of a 'bridging citizenship.' For DeVlieg, who engages from the perspective of international human rights policy: "These [artists] bridge the culture and values of their homeland, the experiences of externally-obliged migration and transition to one or sometimes more countries, and of relocation in a host country with its own culture and values." Her concept of "bridging" draws upon Isin and Saward's analysis of "activist citizenship" as the means through which new forms of political participation are imagined and where rights claims come about. Like Fazulla, DeVlieg focuses on the specific issue of freedom of speech for artists who have experienced the harsh end of state restrictions on human rights in their countries of origin—categorised as 'artists at risk' in some sectors. Whilst their artwork does not narrowly explore the subject of displacement—nor might they be comfortable with the definition of 'artist-at-risk'—these artists' work is often, DeVlieg proposes, by its virtual embodied enactment a radical "citizenship act." Shaped by the cultural habitus of the place from which they have been forced to leave, together with the experience of displacement and the observation and confrontation of the 'host' context, their lives and associated work is a 'real-time demonstration' of the intricate fault lines of contemporary democratic citizenship.

In "Migrants Performing Citizenship: Participatory Theatre and Walking Methods for Research," Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani, Maggie O'Neill and Tracey Reynolds draw on their Participatory Arts and Social Action Research (PASAR) project to explore how participatory methodologies can facilitate critical engagement with existing citizenship regimes, and, in turn, enact a radical rethinking of the meaning of democratic citizenship. In this durational project (conducted approximately over two years), the boundaries between researcher and participant are dissolved, or at least the categories of 'researchers' and 'research participants' and 'migrants' and 'citizens' are significantly challenged. The participants, mainly migrant mothers with 'no recourse to public funding' are, as Erel puts it, negatively defined by the UK immigration system as "incompetent citizens." Yet what it means to be a "full

citizen," these authors suggest, is always "subject to struggles." Through coproduction with research participants, this collaborative research opens spaces for "rights claims" to be amplified—with the longitudinal research *in itself* acting as a form of "citizenship practice." Utilising theatre and walking methodologies that pivot around concepts of "belonging" and "place-making," the project also includes intergenerational and diverse voices with the inclusion of young migrant women together with policymakers, arts practitioners and activists working alongside the academic research team. The notion of who has the right to become a political subject is repeatedly tested and rehearsed via methods of dramaturgy and performativity (echoing Isin). In its totality, this project aims to give centre stage to a public debate about a policy intentionally configured to punish and further "marginalise and silence migrant families"; yet in its creative design and logic of cooperative enactment, this project opens spaces to contest that very silencing via a collective "claiming [of] the right to equal participation" by the research participants—migrant women—themselves.

The penultimate chapter, "The Ground Is What We Have in Common—Solidarity Without Similarity," takes the form of a conversation between Polish curator Dominik Czechowski and second-generation Iranian artist Abbas Zahedi. Czechowski's questions circle around the notion of "flexible citizenship" and what he posits as a defining feature of Abbas's methodology, "performing citizenship-as hospitality-as artistic-practice." Czechowski asks Zahedi to reflect on the future of citizenship beyond a "time of illiberal democracy." In response, Zahedi draws upon his experience as a spoken word poet and hip-hop artist, explaining how the tone, rhythm and accented voice(s), together with the deliberate cuts and silences of that art form, have resulted in a mode of code-switching that is central to his work. Zahedi rejects labels like "British Muslim, or a child of immigrants to the UK, or anything to do with 'identity politics"' and silos. Instead, the term "neo-diaspora" allows Zahedi to challenge categories imposed from without, hence situating his practice within a more 'liquid' (borrowing from Zygmunt Bauman) social, political and cultural landscape. For Zahedi (mixing performance, installation, moving image and writing), democracy and radical citizenship are enacted through the specific (mostly forgotten) acts and skills of 'hosting' (such as gestures of invitation and participation), thus opening public ground for a coming together in the context of mutual aid and solidarity. Czechowski suggests that Zahedi's socially engaged practice offers a vital "testing ground/lab for democracy and self-criticality."

In "For a Return to Radical Agency: A Critique of the Fetish for 'Humanising' Migrant Narratives in the Arts," the dramaturge, activist and researcher Hassan Mahamdallie argues for the activation of a radical new humanism that vociferously eschews expressions of empathy with the Other via modes of

storytelling that merely serve as alibis for what he calls a "conditional citizenship." Quoting Nasrine Malik, Mahamdallie suggests that "'humanising' is a tricky business" dependent on tactics that cast migrants and refugees within parable-like "morality tales," regularly imbibing tropes of either positivity or pity. The media and art world has increasingly fallen prey to such patronising acts of humanising, writes Mahamdallie, by unwittingly perpetrating or making invisible the epistemic violence underpinning a deep-seated colonial imaginary. "Perhaps citizenship is the problem not the solution," he asks, given the history of brutal exclusions associated with its status in the West. Perhaps even the attempt to think about more radical forms of citizenship cannot escape the realities of this blatantly unequal history. As with several of the other contributors to this volume, Mahamdallie turns to dramaturgy to rewrite the script and "create the scene" in relation to exclusionary regimes of citizenship. He sees the theatre space as a "playground of dangerous ideas," and like Zahedi, Erel et al., Davis, Janković and Olãrescu, the *ground* onto which citizenship can be reconfigured and "where the outer limits of truth can be put into play, possibilities pursued, and human consequences revealed." Stories are not necessarily "virtuous in and of themselves," writes Mahamdallie, but the means through which "human traits, thoughts and actions" are questioned and challenged, "put to the test by external circumstances." These external circumstances are central to Mahamdallie's writing and theatre practice, which is informed throughout by his own family history and the comparative writings of Fanon, Arendt and Baldwin, thus critically and proactively crossing borders in its creative architecture and narrative scope.

Many of the essays and provocations in this volume were commissioned before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, with the exception of the Czechowski/Zahedi conversation and Mahamdallie's chapter. The issues and questions raised throughout, however, in both the short provocations and chapters, deeply resonate and are rendered starkly visible by the pandemic, especially in relation to rights claims around racial and economic justice. The economic crisis on the back of the health crisis has led and will undoubtedly lead to greater political instability and restrictions on democracy and civil liberties—on who plays 'a part' and who does not. As stated previously, there is no formulaic consensus about the role that artists, who have experience of migration and displacement, might play in the reconfiguring of what we mean by citizenship. At this critical moment in time, the instantiations and interventions throughout rightly indicate a healthy diversity of opinions, methodologies, agencies, locations and cultural identities. Taken together, however, they offer critical, creative and ever-more-urgent ways of exposing the exclusionary nature of legal and political citizenship regimes, enabling us to envision and project radical alternatives to the established parameters of contemporary citizenship and democracy.

NOTES

1. Engin F. Isin, "Citizenship in flux: the figure of the activist citizen," *Subjectivity* 29 (2009): 371.
2. Isin, "Citizenship in flux," 371.
3. Isin, "Citizenship in Flux," 371–72.
4. Jacques Rancière, Davide Panagia and Rachel Bowlby, "Ten Theses on Politics," *Theory and Event* 5, no. 3 (2001) https://doi:10.1353/tae.2001.0028.
5. Isin, "Citizenship in Flux," 370–71.
6. Engin F. Isin, "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 39.
7. Isin, "Citizenship in Flux," 371.
8. Isin, "Citizenship in Flux," 379.
9. Isin, "Citizenship in Flux," 381.
10. Engin F Isin, "Citizens without Frontiers," *openDemocracy*, 15 October 2012, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/citizens-without-frontiers/.
11. Isin, "Citizens without Frontiers," 2012.
12. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum Press, 2004), 7.
13. Patrick Craig, "Jacques Rancière, Thomas Hobbes, and a Politics of the Part That Has No Part," *Theory and Event*, 18, no. 1 (2015), muse.jhu.edu/article/566088.
14. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 7.
15. Craig, "Jacques Rancière."
16. Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 86–87.
17. Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 121.
18. Daniel Bensaïd, "Permanent Scandal," in *Democracy in What.State?* ed. Giorgio Agamben (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 32.
19. Rancière, Panagia, Bowlby, "Ten Theses."
20. Craig, "Jacques Rancière." In their discussion of politics, Rancière, Panagia and Bowlby distinguish between politics and police. They articulate the distinction in the following way. There are, they write, "two ways of counting the parts of a community: The first only counts empirical parts—actual groups defined by differences of birth, by different functions, locations, and interests that constitute the social body. The second counts 'in addition' to a part of the no-part. We will call the first *police* and the second *politics*" (Rancière, Panagia, Bowlby, "Ten Theses").
21. Rancière, Panagia, Bowlby, "Ten Theses."
22. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 8.
23. Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum Press, 2010), 142.
24. Rancière, *Dissensus*, 142.
25. For a range of debates and an overview of projects associated with socially engaged practice or social practice (the latter as it is called in the United States), see *Field: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism* (University of California Institute

for Research in the Arts [UCIRA]), and Tom Finkelpearl's *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation* (Duke: Duke University Press, 2013).

26. Engin F. Isin, "Doing Rights with Things: The Art of Becoming Citizens," in *Performing Citizenship. Performance Philosophy*, ed. P. Hildebrandt , K. Evert, S. Peters, M. Schaub, K. Wildner and G. Ziemer (Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2019), 53.
27. Isin, "Doing Rights," 52.
28. Isin, "Doing Rights," 53.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Borradori, Giovanna. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Bensaïd, Daniel. "Permanent Scandal." In *Democracy in What State?* edited by Giorgio Agamben, 16–43. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Craig, Patrick. "Jacques Rancière, Thomas Hobbes, and a Politics of the Part That Has No Part." *Theory and Event*, 18, no 1 (2015). muse.jhu.edu/article/566088.

Derrida, Jacques. *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Isin, Engin F. "Citizens without Frontiers." *openDemocracy*, 15 October 2012. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/citizens-without-frontiers/.

Isin, Engin F. "Citizenship in Flux: The Figure of the Activist Citizen.' *Subjectivity* 29 (2009): 367–88.

Isin, Engin F. "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship." In *Acts of Citizenship*, edited by Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielson, 15–43. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Isin Engin F. "Doing Rights with Things: The Art of Becoming Citizens." In *Performing Citizenship. Performance Philosophy*, edited by P. Hildebrandt, K. Evert, S. Peters, M. Schaub, K. Wildner and G. Ziemer, 45–56. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97502-3_4.

Isin, Engin F., and Michael Saward, ed. *Enacting European Citizenship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. *Epistemologies of the South*. Boaventura de Sousa Santos in Dialogue with ALICE, 2016. https://ces.uc.pt/summerwinterschools/?lang=2&id=12704.

Rancière, Jacques. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, translated by Steven Corcoran. London: Continuum Press, 2010.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Politics of Aesthetics*, translated by Gabriel Rockhill. London: Continuum Press, 2004.

Rancière, Jacques, Davide Panagia and Rachel Bowlby. 'Ten Theses on Politics,' *Theory and Event* 5, no. 3, 2001, https://doi:10.1353/tae.2001.0028.

Chapter One

Four Thoughts in Two Voices and One Dodgy Passport

Bojana Janković

1 THE INVISIBLE IMMIGRANT

Performance company *There There* existed for almost a decade, a 50 percent Romanian, 50 percent Serbian project by Dana Olărescu and me. The company made works about immigration, and it was 100 percent immigrant, but our work was not autobiographical. To prove that point and to illustrate the depersonalisation felt by immigrants, we never made a piece in which all of us—our faces, our bodies, our voices, our names—appeared at the same time. We restricted access to ourselves and made it look like an imposition. For *Text HOME*, a performance project that saw us venture into public spaces to distribute immigration advice, we hid our faces behind masks of Nigel Farage and David Cameron and proclaimed it a safety measure, designed to keep us out of harm's way. This reluctance to show ourselves mirrored our citizenship, fractured and impaired: Citizenship is felt when it is absent because citizenship means freedom of choice.[1]

2 THE VISIBLE ARTIST

Making art is a convenient and legal way to enact stolen citizenship. When we walked the streets wearing the faces of politicans Farage (UKIP) and Cameron (Tory), accidental audiences would come talk to us, making us participants in the national conversation on immigration. When the general elections made us an object of political debate with no voting rights, we organised an event to celebrate being Eastern European at the Romanian Cultural Centre in London. The first time we were invited into the Tate Modern Building, we handed our piece and the public forum of Tate to fellow Eastern

Europeans, to do with them as they pleased. The third time we were invited into the building, to do an Artist Talk in response to the collection, we conducted a session on applying for residence permits. Our political agency was constricted, and we symbolically reclaimed it through artistic practice.[2]

3 HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS

Our quest for alternative citizenship had conspirators and detractors. Arts Council England gave us money to wear those Farage and Cameron masks. The curators of Experimentica gave us, Nigel and Dave, free reign in Cardiff. Counterpoints Arts co-initiated "Who Are We?," a Tate Exchange programme on identity, migration and citizenship, then extended us both invitations and trust: They never asked us what we were planning for that Artist Talk and never blinked once we got going (they also invited us to other, equally important places). We conspired, and *There There* grew, and then the limits of radical citizenship became exposed: There were the radical programmers who thought our usurpation a tad too much, and there were those who considered citizenship fulfilled through artistic engagement, making our request to pay participants obsolete. There was also the Hostile Environment, a set of policies designed to make the immigrant life in the UK difficult by asking everyone who came in contact with us—doctors or landlords, for example—to make sure our visas and passports were in order. The HR departments of art institutions coldly enacted this bureaucracy; everyone else pretended not to notice the border checks taking place in ostensibly welcoming spaces. We were performing an alternative citizenship, but backstage we participated in the instrumentalised relationship this UK state maintains with its immigrants, because that was the only way to continue pushing against the limitations placed on us. Challenging citizenship turned out to be complicated.[3]

4 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It's too easy to disqualify the political potential of artistic interventions. No one, including artists subjected to labour practices of the Hostile Environment, gets to work in the moral high ground of ethical purity. But it's also too easy to romanticise artistic interventions—especially when they come, as is often the case, from artists whose citizenship is restricted. Radical citizenship is a liberating practice, but it does not a legislative change make; I leave that to those with appropriate documentation.[4]

Figure 1.1. Eastern Europeans for Dummies.
Source: *There There*. Image: Patrícia Venâncio Oliveira, 2016.

NOTES

1. I remember my classmates going from one polling place to another to vote in their first elections, when I was seventeen and three quarters. Because this was Serbia (or Serbia and Montenegro, or Yugoslavia, I forget), there was another election a year later, but because it was Serbia (or something else), citizenship was enacted by not voting, in the hope the turnout would be low and the election annulled. Half an hour before the polls closed, I snuck out of the house and voted in secret.

2. I practice citizenship and activism from the safety of art institutions, which give legitimacy and protection to actions that would otherwise be out of reach. As a non-EU immigrant whose temporary visa is permanently contingent on the ability of the Home Office to confirm my "good character," I shy away from public demonstrations of citizenship because "good character" tends to be incompatible with most police interactions. As part of *Text HOME*, I took photos with the police, extended advice on living just above board and once shared a bottle of homemade *rakija* with two officers.

3. Over the last ten years, I found the Border Force Guards universally hostile: Some shouted, many were openly xenophobic and all smirked at my comebacks safe in the knowledge that the system is made to hurt. None assumed the gender of the 'family member' who bestowed the visa on me via marriage, which left me, a citizen of a systemically homophobic country, with conflicting feelings, mirroring, I guess, the complex nature of discrimination.

4. Register to vote . . . or something.

Chapter Two

Practising Migration

Dana Olărescu

In May 2018, Mamoudou Gassama, an undocumented twenty-two-year-old Malian, was granted French citizenship after scaling a Paris building to rescue a child hanging off a balcony. The gesture came just weeks after French president Emmanuel Macron enacted an asylum bill to speed up the deportation of failed asylum-seekers, sending a transparent and straightforward message: Citizenship is the ultimate desirable asset. Yet brushed aside is acknowledgement of the psychological trauma incurred by the 'assimilation' that citizenship represents, and its profound effects on individuals; the granting of citizenship alone will evidently not heal all wounds.

In her lecture, "What a Time to Be Alive: Migration and Slow Pain," Yasmin Gunaratnam (2016) discusses how 'social pain' activates the same brain regions as physical pain, and she analyses immigration-related end-of-life hallucinations haunting those previously subject to belligerent Home Office policies. Her own mother's final words, "Get the tickets and passports, the man is coming!," decades after her immigration status had been settled, serve as testimony to the effects of these invasive procedures.

As a Romanian artist living in the UK, I have been inspired by the red tape of bureaucratic paperwork (permanent residency, work permits, etc.) new EU member states' citizens must fill in, and I have studied the accumulated social pain of being cast as criminals and social parasites. Belonging to the perceived less-fortunate 'Global North' territories, we have been fed a diet of self-loathing and inferiority complexes by both our own leaders and the Western media. The toxicity of comparing ourselves to and aspiring to be like the West has aided the expansion of neoliberalism, prioritising economic wealth, efficiency and 'advancement' over human-centered values. But nothing, of

course, is free under capitalistism—especially not those settlement forms—meaning that buying in to a second-class citizen identity directly results from scapegoating, isolation and confusion.

For this reason, performance company *There There* (active 2010–2019; cofounded with Bojana Janković), strove to overcome colonial infrastructures that prevent immigrants from connecting by bringing Eastern European nationals together. Our work tackled the unjust, ignorant and criminal ways Eastern European citizens have been subject to systemic racialisation; in the process, we attempted to reclaim our identity.

In 2018, as part of Counterpoints Arts' *Who Are We?* project at Tate Exchange, we gave a short talk with the work of Slovak artist Július Koller as a reference point. Titled *A 10-Minute Crash Course on How to Fill in a Permanent Residency Application*, we printed the relevant application forms, displayed the residency permits we had recently been granted and talked through the pitfalls and trick questions that both EU and non-EU citizens would have to contend with. The room gradually became busier, with audience members taking notes and videos, profusely thanking us for our tips at the end. The museum's duty manager, however, showed less excitement; he

Figure 2.1. Text HOME.
Source: *There There*. Image: Sofia Villanueva, 2016.

insisted our artist response hadn't met expectations—without explaining what he considered to be unsuitable.

When kept at bay in community centres, places of worship or diaspora institutions, we are tolerated, but should the conversation spill into the mainstream, into middle-class territories, minority solidarity is suddenly perceived as threatening. What is more, migration as a cultural act is widely excluded from the populist agenda; the single biggest challenge in our work was fighting for credibility in the context of institutional xenophobia, and the hurtful ignorance of those in charge. Over the years, we disseminated immigration advice at every cultural occasion, balancing expert knowledge with lived experience, prioritising unheard voices.

Later that year, we travelled outside the UK to interrogate how exclusion was felt for immigrants elsewhere (in Denmark), and also for those having difficulties acclimatising to their home country after living abroad (Romania). We collaborated with the Centre for Art on Migration Politics in Copenhagen, and ODD and Tranzit in Bucharest. Through workshops with female artists from the above categories we co-designed two participatory games inspired by their experiences of alienation and tested by diverse audiences. Creating confidential safe spaces, where stories of isolation and 'otherness' could be shared, connected participants stayed in touch long after the project's conclusion. We asked if gestures of self-care and unionising could counteract the slow acts of violence inherent to a 'hostile environment.'[1] Inviting fellow nationals to join us throughout the process helped to temporarily alleviate some of the social pain of being an outsider.

As practising migrants, our bureaucratic paper trail would impress any archive. Yet it records none of the subjective experiences of migration. Acknowledging and piecing together the stories of trauma might benefit us more than the spectacle of citizenship. Choosing to exist as an act of resistance is our greatest asset. May we scale high through our resilience long after the granting of citizenship.

NOTE

1. The 'hostile environment' policy refers to a range of measures aimed at reducing the number of immigrants in the UK with no right to remain. It is designed to make staying in the United Kingdom as difficult as possible, with the intention that people may voluntarily leave, and it is characterised by a system of citizen-on-citizen immigration checks. These may include housing, health care, work, etc.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Oxford University (2016). Center on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). Yasmin Gunaratnam, *The time of our lives: Migration and slow pain* [ONLINE]. 27 January 2016. Available from: https://staged.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/time-our-lives-migration-and-slow-pain [Accessed: 25 September 2019].

Chapter Three

Art of Literature, Citizenship and Statelessness

Evgeny Shtorn

What makes one an artist? What makes one a writer? I have been made a writer and an artist through the severity of circumstances thrust upon me. When the environment around seems full of pain and unbearable, the only way to deal with it is to continuously write down and document experiences. Write them down in the Mestiza way, as Gloria Anzaldúa does, by blurring boundaries and by mingling forms of expression,[1] by finding oneself in a state of statelessness by speaking from a space of non-belonging. This has been my path to the art of literature.

What difference does being a writer make? My current work is an attempt to record how anamnesis works and is experienced in that stateless, limbo-space of seeking asylum. This is my intervention into making a better future, into making a different form of citizenship. Without any permission or even obligation, I have found a voice, which speaks for both myself and for the people I have met seeking international protection in the Irish asylum accommodation system, for the current shape of the Direct Provision System in Ireland is a symptom of disease.[2]

I fled from Russia. Current Russian regimes of citizenship mix Soviet peculiarities, capitalist aspirations and the orientalising effects of a European periphery. This blend of regimes is well demonstrated by Sasha Kondakov in his analysis of queer sexual citizenship.[3] My life in this sexual citizenship regime was hanging by a thread. Before leaving Russia, I had been approached by the ideological police, the FSB, the offspring creature of KGB, NKVD, OGPU and Cheka.[4] Under threat, they were trying to recruit me to work against my workmates—the activist citizens, as Engin Isin calls them.[5] These citizens were independently thinking scholars, queer people and human rights activists. They were seeking a better citizenship. They were making interventions.

On that frosty morning that I will never forget, I arrived in Moscow with the hope of getting my visa to Ireland. That day was the longest in my life. The next day I travelled out of Russia—most probably forever.

Russians have a record of living and writing in prisons, in concentration camps and, for those who are a little bit luckier, in exile. Almost from the very first day after my plane landed in Ireland, I started writing. My writing is about everyday experiences of escape. It is about those people who live their invisible lives on this "Emerald Isle." It is about those of us "locked" in open cells: people who are here, who are near and yet who are also always deemed to be "out there"—outsiders everywhere we go, anywhere we have fled from.

I have written poetry all my life. But I never planned to write documentary prose. This type of autoethnographic writing requires not only the investment of emotion or the use of strong metaphors, but also another type of responsibility and rigour. It makes one monitor oneself all the time, so that the beauty of a phrase does not take possession of the text. My sociological training, however, assists me in conveying this bare and self-conscious textuality. Sociology has taught me to listen attentively to other people's stories, because these stories hide something important. By combining listening and responsible writing, I wrote my first prose, resulting in a kaleidoscope of perceptions that have allowed me to make an intervention.

When I ended up in a refugee camp (Direct Provision Centre) on the outskirts of Dublin, I could not get rid of the thought that almost everything I'd managed to achieve in my short life was now nullified. I was no longer a member of a well-known Saint Petersburg NGO aspiring towards social change. I had instead become the serial number assigned to me by the Direct Provision System. My needs in the eyes of this regime were limited only to food and bed. But I realised that I am obliged to convert these serial numbers (including my own) back into people: to hear and record their stories, their hopes, their fears. So I started to write about dehumanisation and rehumanisation, and the everyday instances of joy and despair, the abandoned past and the elusive future.

My texts—sometimes merely brief sentences or long passages—reflect a diversity of languages and experiences. This is my intervention, my contribution to a different regime and form of citizenship. My voice is reflective of many other voices. We are all here speaking with many voices about restarting our lives as refugees with no chance to go back "home," being forced to live isolated for years, denied the right to be ourselves or to choose our food, company and leisure. Yet, we have never stopped having relationships, having fun, pleasure or concerns, feeling panic and embarrassment. Does this make a difference? It does so long as we unite and act in love and solidarity to offer different ways of writing about belonging—to echo those voices we

Figure 3.1. Raindrops.
Source: John Malcolm Anderson. Image: John Malcolm Anderson, 2018.

hear, those diverse stories, which seek to make and perform a different regime of citizenship—where statelessness has no place and where the very state of being an "outsider" no longer makes any sense at all.

NOTES

1. G. Anzaluda, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, 4th ed*. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012).

2. Official definition provided by the Department of Justice and Equality: 'Direct provision is a means of meeting the basic needs of food and shelter for asylum seekers directly while their claims for refugee status are being processed rather than through full cash payments' (http://www.ria.gov.ie/en/RIA/Pages/Direct_Provision_FAQs).

3. A. Kondakov, "Rethinking the sexual citizenship from queer and post-Soviet perspectives: Queer urban spaces and the right to the socialist city," *Sexualities*, 22, no. 3 (2019), 401–17.

4. FSB (Federal Security Service of Russian Federation), a successor to the KGB (Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union). The security services in USSR changed their name several times. The most notorious of them would be NKVD (The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), OGPU (The Joint State Political Directorate) and The Cheka (The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission).

5. Engin F. Isin, "Theorizing acts of citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen (London: Zed Books, 2008), 15–43.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anzaldua, G. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, 4th ed*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

Isin, Engin F. "Theorizing acts of citizenship." In *Acts of Citizenship*. Edited by Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen. London: Zed Books, 2008: 15–43.

Kondakov, A. "Rethinking the sexual citizenship from queer and post-Soviet perspectives: Queer urban spaces and the right to the socialist city." *Sexualities*, 22 no. 3 (2019): 401–17.

Chapter Four

As Far as Art Will Take Me

Basel Zaraa

I was born in Yarmouk in Damascus, one of the biggest Palestinian refugee camps outside of Palestine. I'm from the third generation of Palestinian refugees living outside Palestine without papers, granted only temporary residency in the countries in which we are born.

I only learned the word *stateless* after coming to the UK. When I got permanent residency here, they wanted to write that I was stateless, but I said no, I am Palestinian. I have a nation, and it is Palestine.

Like everyone in Yarmouk, my identity as a Palestinian refugee was strongly shaped by the history of the Palestinian struggle. I was born in 1985, during a period of armed struggle that moved from Jordan to Lebanon, where my father had been fighting for ten years. I grew up with Palestinian resistance songs and stories from my dad and uncles about the war in Lebanon. Protests and funerals for martyrs were a regular occurrence in the camp.

When I was growing up, others thought *refugee* was a bad word. To be a refugee meant that you needed help. But to me, refugee meant 'revolutionary.' In the camps, we weren't ashamed of being refugees. It was a badge of honour.

I left Yarmouk in 2010. My friends and I had begun to feel that life in Syria was killing our dreams. After Oslo, the Palestinian resistance had changed its form, and the camps were sidelined. There was a sense of defeat among our generation because there were no opportunities for us.

I met a British girl in the camp, and we fell in love. After we got married, she worked hard to help me get a visa to the UK. I moved to Britain, hoping to follow my dreams and to find myself.

I had only been in the UK a few months when, in 2011, the Arab Spring began. When the uprising first started in Syria, it was peaceful, and we were very hopeful. Young people were trying to change things. It felt like just as

I had arrived in Britain, what I had been dreaming of in the camp all those years was finally coming true.

After a year, the Arab Spring began to transform because of the interference of powerful outside nations. The place I had tried to leave had followed me in a brutal way. Yarmouk was being destroyed, and my friends were dying. For several years, I was lost, but after a long battle, I decided I wanted to survive.

Art became a rope that I held on to, to stay afloat. I played in a band called Raast, and then with Katibeh Khamseh, a Palestinian hip-hop group from the camps in Lebanon. Later, I discovered shadow theatre, performing and running community workshops as part of Alleyway Radical Theatre. I held on to these things, because they looked a bit like the dream I had left Syria to follow.

It was during this period, in 2015, that I met live artist Tania El Khoury. We started a project about the journey of my sisters and brother, who were trying to escape Syria for Sweden. The piece, *As Far as My Fingertips Take Me*, is a one-to-one live art installation. I perform the work from behind a wall, with the audience member on the other side. They listen to a piece of my writing about my siblings' journey, and our community, and at the same time, I draw the story on their arm.

I've performed *As Far . . .* in around thirty-seven cities across the world. It has enabled me to say lots of things I want to say, the way I want to say

Figure 4.1. As Far as Isolation Goes.
Source: Basel Zaara and Tania El Khouri. Image: Briony Campbell, 2018.

them. I've got hold of that rope again. It has helped me get back on my feet, meet new people and become hopeful again that maybe we can do something.

In 2016, I was granted British citizenship, becoming a citizen for the first time at the age of thirty-two.

I now have the freedom to move around. I can go to the airport without being scared I'll be stuck for hours, or not let through. The first time I came back into Britain after becoming a citizen, I gave them my passport, and instead of stopping me, they said, "Welcome home." It was the first time anyone had said that to me.

But of course it's ambivalent. My parents are stuck in Syria, displaced from our home after the destruction of Yarmouk, and will probably die without citizenship. While I go by plane from country to country, my father can't go from one street to the next without being stopped at a checkpoint because he's Palestinian.

So, the struggle continues. As an individual, my problem may have been solved, but as a group, we are still suffering because of our identity.

As Far . . . has allowed me to travel the world telling my story, the thing I had been bottling up, to people I don't know. Sometimes that's easier. I do the performance, they ask me questions and I answer, and it's like healing.

Once I performed the piece to someone who told me about how his family had left Cuba for America when he was a child. The time and place were different, but their experience of leaving home, to find safety and to realise their dreams, resembled mine.

Another time I performed for a woman whose family had left Germany for America during World War II. Her father was an engineer, but he wasn't able to work as one in the United States because he didn't speak English, so he had to work in restaurants for ten years before returning to his vocation. Again, it's a different war in a different place and time, but it's similar to my experience.

Art is a way of communicating, and also a way of saying that we need to stop these things from happening. The message that we are communicating through our art is that this must not keep recurring. It has to stop.

Chapter Five

A Collective Gesture of Civil Demands

Isabel Lima

On September 24, 2017, a five-metre-tall wooden horse was unleashed onto the streets of central Middlesbrough in the direction of Gresham. Gresham is a neighbourhood that has been scarred by civic impositions such as austerity, the "hostile environment"[1] and (failed) regeneration processes. The *Gresham Wooden Horse*, which was the official name of the project, embodies a collective gesture of civil demands for accountability, visibility and responsibility.

Let me clarify the use of the terms *civic* and *civil*[2]—especially since the arts in the UK are currently experiencing a supposed "civic turn."[3] The *civic* refers to the sphere of institutions and governments, whereas the *civil* refers to collective movements of people in relation to each other, independently of whether *or not* they are citizens. According to Pascal Gielen, "civil space, in the Certeausian sense, remains fluid; a space where positions still have to be taken up or created."[4] As an immigrant artist, I occupy both spheres, albeit always with limitations. The civil space for me becomes the space where praxis shapes the act of performing citizenship and the act of claiming rights alongside others.

In 2005, the Middlesbrough town mayor, Ray Mallon, announced the regeneration of Gresham whereby 1,500 houses were to be demolished with the support of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI).[5] Mallon publicly likened Gresham to a "cancer that needed to be cut out."[6] By 2011, the HMRI came to an abrupt end; local families had been displaced; houses were boarded up and half-demolished; home owners weren't conducting property repairs; and banks wouldn't offer mortgages to those who wished to move into the area. This story isn't unique to Gresham. Many other neighbourhoods, particularly in the north of England, saw the same fate. What is specific to Middlesbrough is that a local private housing company, Jomast, was

subcontracted by G4S[7] to provide accommodation for people seeking asylum, on behalf of the Home Office.

Jomast bought very cheap properties in Gresham, and through the Home Office practice of dispersal,[8] people seeking asylum were sent to live in this neighbourhood through no choice of their own. In 2015, against regulations, Jomast was housing over one thousand people in Middlesbrough who were seeking asylum, at odds with the Home Office cluster limit of under seven hundred (one for every two hundred residents). Even though Middlesbrough is generally a welcoming town and proud to be "built on immigration,"[9] the practice of austerity aligned with the "hostile environment" and a failed regeneration process started to corrode its social fabric. Social tensions were emerging between settled, emergent communities and those who arrived via dispersal. The "us and them" rhetoric was enacted by each group, as they resented and blamed one another for their poor living conditions, lack of support, lack of adequate health care and the lack of access to a stable job market. This divisive situation was aggravated during the Brexit referendum in 2016 and the snap general election in 2017. There was a 34 percent increase of recorded hate crime in Teesside between 2016 and 2017, when people were abused or attacked due to their race.

Given this context, how could I, an artist, an immigrant, an 'other,' begin to conceive and create a civil space in Gresham? How could we start to carve,

Figure 5.1. Gresham Wooden Horse Parade.
Source: Isabel Lima. Image: Ian Robinson, 2017.

shape and hold a space for visibility, for demands? The myth of the "Trojan Horse," in the form of the "Gresham Horse," became the strategy for positing a way forward because it enabled people to come together *in difference*. As a symbol, the "Gresham Horse" is ambiguous enough to speak to multiple agendas, allegiances and embodied experiences. As Engin Isin suggests, making demands such as equality, justice and solidarity

> enable[s] or motivate[s] people to struggle over rights by transversing the boundaries of social groups and borders of polities. By so doing citizens and non-citizens, with or without rights, assume responsibilities toward each other, across boundaries and borders, transform themselves and others, the rights under which they make claims, and the rights to which they make claims.[10]

They (the residents) were going to demand control of their land, be this repossession imagined or otherwise. We (as a connected group) were going to collectively occupy the derelict demolished sites. We were going to physically, slowly and tentatively attempt to build and reclaim what the civic sphere had destroyed: our relationships, our imagination and our dreams. But the claiming of rights, or the "right to have rights," doesn't just involve spectacular acts[11] like building and parading a five-metre-tall wooden horse. It also involves everyday, invisible performative actions, such as working and being remunerated for that work. During the summer of 2017, those who came to the "Gresham Horse" workshops were remunerated at the end of each session. This might seem like a small gesture, but "participants" in art projects are usually expected to contribute to the making of the work just for the pleasure of being part of it. Paying people becomes particularly radical in the UK when we consider that for those seeking asylum, working and being remunerated constitutes a crime; and for those in receipt of out-of-work benefits, not declaring these earnings could lead to a loss of their entitlement. Due to a health and safety cap of ten collaborators per workshop, people decided to self-select and took turns attending the sessions, enabling all of those who came forward to be part of the project. People met each other, learned from each other, shared skills and expertise and worked together towards a common goal, towards visibility. Building that horse was the catalyst of many alliances, friendships and collaborations, which are still ongoing in the neighbourhood.

Although the *Gresham Wooden Horse* no longer exists in its physical form, as any good myth goes, it opened up a space for togetherness. As one collaborator, Ali Bashir, stated, "We made history, I made history. If I die tomorrow my children will know that their father built that horse."[12]

NOTES

1. In 2012, Teresa May, who was then the Conservative home secretary, introduced the Hostile Environment Policy, remarking that: "The aim is to create, here in Britain, a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants." Amelia Hill, "'Hostile Environment': The hardline Home Office policy tearing families apart," *Guardian*, November 28, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/nov/28/hostile-environment-the-hardline-home-office-policy-tearing-families-apart.

2. Here I'm referring to *civil* as a noun, not an adjective.

3. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, in 2016, initiated an inquiry into the civic role of arts organizations that receive public funding. This inquiry is currently ongoing. For more info, see https://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk/about.

4. Pascal Gielen, "Artistic constitutions of the civil domain," *Eurozine.com*, March 1, 2017, https://www.eurozine.com/artistic-constitutions-of-the-civil-domain/.

5. The Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) was a scheme of demolition, refurbishment and new-building that ran in the UK between 2002 and 2011, aimed at renewing failing housing markets in nine areas of the Midlands and north of England. This programme was launched by deputy prime minister John Prescott, a Labour scheme that came to an abrupt end under the coalition government led by David Cameron in 2011.

6. Teesside Live, "Gresham housing demolition: The 'cancer' Ray Mallon attempted to cut out of Middlesbrough," *Gazette*, November 22, 2013. https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/gresham-housing-demolition-cancer-ray-6330961.

7. G4S, an integrated security company, held two regional COMPASS contracts between 2012 and 2019: one in the Midlands and the east of England, the other in the northeast, in Yorkshire and Humberside. COMPASS stands for Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services. For more info, follow this link: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/637/63703.htm.

8. The policy of dispersal of those seeking asylum accommodation in the UK was introduced by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The legislative intention was that by distribution across the country, no one area would be overburdened by the obligation of supporting asylum seekers. For more info, see https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CDP-2016-0095.

9. David Budd, Middlesbrough town mayor, interview in April 2016.

10. Engin F. Isin, "Performative Citizenship," in *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*, ed. Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Bauböck, Irene Bloemraad and Maarten Vink, 500–23 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 507–78.

11. Isin, *Performative Citizenship*, 518.

12. Ali Bashir is a pseudonym for a collaborator in this project. Conversation with Ali in 2017.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gielen, Pascal. "Artistic constitutions of the civil domain." *Eurozine.com*, March 1, 2017. https://www.eurozine.com/artistic-constitutions-of-the-civil-domain/.

Hill, Amelia. "'Hostile Environment': The hardline Home Office policy tearing families apart." *Guardian*, November 28, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/nov/28/hostile-environment-the-hardline-home-office-policy-tearing-families-apart.

Isin, Engin F. "Performative Citizenship." In *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*. Edited by Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Bauböck, Irene Bloemraad and Maarten Vink, 500–23. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Teesside Live. "Gresham housing demolition: The 'cancer' Ray Mallon attempted to cut out of Middlesbrough." *Gazette*. November 22, 2013. https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/gresham-housing-demolition-cancer-ray-6330961.

Chapter Six

Performing Citizenship

Mickey Mouse and Activism in Egypt

Hossam Fazulla

In the latest Egyptian presidential elections, in March 2018, more than one million Egyptians voted for the footballer Mo Salah.[1] The Liverpool player and Egyptian icon was not, however, running for the presidency. In fact, voters found themselves facing only two options: the current president, Abd-El-Fattah El-Sisi, or his backer, Moussa Moussa. One week before the elections, Moussa left El-Sisi's presidential campaign and ran against him, legitimizing the "democratic" process after El-Sisi's rivals were forced out of the electoral race. More than five contenders, including the former military chief of staff Sami Anan were—whether through prosecution or detention—forced to withdraw from the race. Most recently, in April 2019, the constitution was amended in order to secure El-Sisi's rule until 2030, setting the boundaries for change even tighter. Although humorous, voting for Salah was one of the few acts of resistance that took place in Egypt after the 2013 Rabaa Massacre, which left nearly one thousand supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood dead, according to a report by Human Rights Watch in 2014.[2] Three months after the deadly crackdown, the new government released its anti-demonstration law, which prohibited the gathering of more than ten people in any public space and suppressed all forms of peaceful demonstration. The number of prisoners of conscience rose to sixty thousand people in 2017.[3] In this way, the Egyptian public sphere came under tight control, asserting the failure of the 2011 revolution, and the full control of the autocratic military state.

These desperate measures have left no space for conventional activism. However, they have prompted activists to be more innovative and creative when practicing dissent. Like voting for a footballer in elections, new creative forms of activism have arisen in the past seven years in Egypt, utilizing new media and the miniscule space for freedom of expression that still exists.

In October 2015, millions of Egyptians logged on to their Facebook accounts to see a picture of El-Sisi, the current Egyptian president, with the ears of Disney's famous character Mickey Mouse, posted on their newsfeed. The photo was created by Amr Nohan and was shared by thousands of Egyptians after Nohan was sentenced to three years in prison for designing it. The large number of shares made it difficult for state authorities to take action, while simultaneously amplifying Nohan's satirical message.

Similarly, on May 11, 2016, thousands of Egyptians posted selfies of themselves covering their eyes on different social media platforms with the caption: 'Does the Camera Rattle You?' This phenomenon was a reaction to the arrest of the satirical street performance group Atfal Shaware (Street Children) for criticizing El-Sisi. The campaign's slogan was a direct commentary on the absolute ban of the use of cameras in the streets of Egypt, whether for amateur or professional purposes, without special permits from several authorities. Similarly, in 2018, a campaign started in solidarity with the imprisoned photojournalist Shawkan, who was facing the death penalty for covering the Rabaa Massacre. Activists posted pictures of themselves miming the act of shooting an invisible camera as a tribute to Shawkan's photograph behind bars.

One online activity in particular was performed in Cairene neighborhoods through the use of new, safe and creative spaces for activism. In 2017 children playing with a simple plastic pendulum toy, which they called "Bedan El-Sisi," or "El-Sisi's Testicles," occupied the streets. The toy gained its

Figure 6.1. My Picture of Shawkan.
Source: Hossam Fazulla. Image: Ayman Aref, 2018.

sarcastic name and popularity after a short video was shared online of an anonymous individual asking a young boy, "What is the name of that toy?" "Bedan El-Sisi," the kid replied. In Egyptian slang, the term 'testicle' signifies something unpleasant and distasteful. Hundreds of similar videos were created and shared online. Not only was this intervention playful and sarcastic, but it also made a significant contribution to reclaiming public space whilst sidestepping perceptions of threatening, conventional political action. At the same time, it opened up cultural spaces that were accessible for children. Having children at the forefront of the collective action both amplified its sarcasm and ensured its safety.

In its ideal form, the public sphere is an open space for both citizens and non-citizens to come together, despite their differences and without any forms of discrimination, to discuss matters and take part in their own governance. Some have argued that such an ideal concept cannot manifest itself in real life, and if it existed, it could only do so in "Western democracies." Nevertheless, in Egypt and in many similar contexts, people have always found creative and artistic ways to push the boundaries and perform their citizenship. Despite the extreme crackdown on freedom of expression and the public sphere in Egypt, the doors for creativity are continuously being opened by the people, and they hold new, innovative and collective forms of activism. These movements utilize art, reclaim space and have made it clear that to render citizens passive is impossible.

NOTES

1. "Egypt's election produces surprise runner-up: Mohamed Salah," *New Arab*, April 3, 2018, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/News/2018/4/3/Egypts-election-produces-surprise-runner-up-Mohamed-Salah.
2. "All According to Plans: The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt," *Human Rights Watch*, August 12, 2014, https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/12/all-according-plan/raba-massacre-and-mass-killings-protesters-egypt.
3. Richard Spencer, "60,000 Egypt prisoners on 'torture assembly line,'" *Times*, September 6, 2017, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/60-000-egypt-prisoners-on-torture-assembly-line-sf7v0jcrd.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"All According to Plans: The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt." *Human Rights Watch*, August 12, 2014. https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/12/all-according-plan/raba-massacre-and-mass-killings-protesters-egypt.

"Egypt's election produces surprise runner-up: Mohamed Salah." *New Arab*, April 3, 2018. https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/News/2018/4/3/Egypts-election-produces-surprise-runner-up-Mohamed-Salah.

Spencer, Richard. "60,000 Egypt prisoners on 'torture assembly line.'" *Times*, September 6, 2017. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/60-000-egypt-prisoners-on-torture-assembly-line-sf7v0jcrd.

Chapter Seven

Performing Migratory Identity via a Trilogy of Works

Rupture, Asphyxia *and* Suspended

Natasha Davis

When I was a child in former Yugoslavia, we often played a game that would, translated literally, be called "Between Two Fires." In this game, the "fires" are the two players at each end of the court, "firing" fast balls at a number of other players caught in the field between the two "fires." The players in the field need to be constantly on the move as balls are thrown at them from one "fire" line to the other. The only way for a player to get out of that in-between run is to catch enough balls to "save her life." But the balls are not easy to catch in that hectic motion; it takes time and a lot of running.

I sometimes think of the game today as a metaphorical and playful rehearsal for every child in the sixties and seventies in former Yugoslavia, the years prior to the civil war, as advance practice for managing the conundrum that would be unfolding for them in the nineties: the trauma of war on one side, and on the other, a possible resolution of trauma if one manages to "get out," with constant running between the two "fires," frantically trying to process information, remember, strategize and react in order to 'score' enough points and earn the right to exit the game.

This chapter focuses on how performance art handles trauma and on the effects of the loss of citizenship on body and memory. In the last ten years and a bit more, I have created more than a dozen performances, gallery installations and short films dealing with the identity of the migratory body, border crossings, memory and land, departures and arrivals. In these works, I have used my own history of displacement and repeatedly returned to the trauma of departing from a country in civil war, as a stateless citizen. I was born in former Yugoslavia into a mixed Serbian and Croatian family situation, and I emigrated in the early 1990s, as the country descended into military conflict. This autobiographical experience of being uprooted has centrally informed my body of work as an artist.

My performance and art research is grounded in autobiographical experiences as well as in the ways other artists have responded to the trauma of displacement affecting their lives. It is foregrounded by theoretical research by, for example, Jane Blocker (1999), Deirdre Heddon (2008) and Susan J. Brison (1999), to mention a few, all supported by the belief in the value of allowing people to talk about their lives and experiences to inform social and political science, human rights and cultural theory.

How does the creative work of a performance artist reveal the logic of exilic subjectivity and the political potential of the performance as a medium? How can a traumatic exilic past be juxtaposed with an exilic artist's present experience? What can be revealed about migration and displacement by using body and memory as critical, performance tools? In the writing that follows, I attempt to provide evidence of how I responded to these questions in my performance trilogy: *Rupture—Asphyxia—Suspended* (2009–2011).

A CITIZEN OF NO COUNTRY

As I have written previously about my work, displacement often feels like existing in limbo: emotionally, somatically, linguistically, creatively, administratively, politically and financially. Bodily functions and spaces the body and mind occupy need to "catch up" with evolving events, a feeling not unlike jetlag perhaps: a lasting sense of being lost and disoriented and lacking the means to become "located" once more. While one is trying to find their way around this psychosomatic state, traumas become harboured in the body, unaddressed, unspoken. They start working their patient somatic way, much like liquid damage in a laptop computer. Drops of liquid can take a long time to find their way through the wiring and components, but they eventually start compromising and then shutting down first the battery, then the lights, the hard drive, the logic board. Repair is possible, but it requires time, finances and specialised knowledge.[1]

To illustrate, poetically and playfully, the split between the body and mind on one side, and the reality surrounding them on the other, as well as a certain absurdity of the situation, I will for a moment here create two parallel layers of text, using an excerpt from *Rupture* (2009), the first part of the trilogy. The text on the left side of the page should be read as a "poetic shadow," a mirror, an image in words, accompanying the text on the right: the autobiographical account of events. The reader needs to choose which text to engage with first. There is no correct sequence; the parallel texts are complementary versions of each other, although they may, to a degree, spoil the pleasure of discovery for the other, too.

This may be frustrating, but the reality is that the eye cannot take in both texts at the same time. The ear cannot receive them simultaneously either. If two different voices were to read both texts aloud to us at the same time, the sound would become cacophonic and incomprehensible. In order to understand anything at all, the ear would have to focus on one text only and receive half of the information, at best. The fact itself that it is impossible to receive both layers at the same time (the more surreal and the analytic), either aurally or visually, is also a metaphor for the difficulty of coping with the absurdities of exile. While fully entangled in a surreal set of circumstances for an extended period of time, it is challenging and perhaps impossible to be analytic and creative at the same time.

When my country started falling apart,
I emigrated to Greece—the only Western nation
that kept its doors open for me after the
Western embargo on ex-Yugoslavia. While my
country was deciding who is who and what is
where, I spent six stateless, rootless,
ungrounded years in Athens, during which time
nobody wanted me: Serbs thought I was too
Croatian; Croats that I was too Serbian; and so on.
But day-to-day existence continued. I even worked.
I wasn't allowed to say at work where I was from,
I had to be 'from England.' When I pointed out my
English sounded foreign, they suggested I could say
my family was based in Hong Kong.

From 1992, for six years, I was an emigrant in Greece.
After four years, a Croatian embassy was established
in Athens, as Croatia had by then formed
itself as an independent state. I was relieved
and expected finally to gain citizenship,
considering I was born in Croatia to a
Croatian mother. I was, however, refused twice,
the second time was final with no right to appeal.
Although there was no explanation provided, the
likely reason was the fact that my father
was Serbian and that my last place of domicile
was in Serbia. I finally had to sue Croatia
to achieve citizenship, and I won the case in a
Croatian court, representing myself from exile.
With the fresh passport of a new country,

I could never sit still or be alone through that time.
No matter how many hours I worked, I carried on,
stayed with people, walked, talked, until
I was completely exhausted and could fall asleep
as soon as I lay down in bed.

One day I visited a work acquaintance and
complimented her on her embroideries. She even
embroidered her sofas and armchairs. They looked
amazing! When Christmas came, she bought me an
embroidery set, and because she had been so nice to
me, always, I realized I actually had to do it!
It was daisies. Rows and rows of daisies. An ancient
motif from Crete. As I was embroidering rows of
green stems, yellow stamens and white petals, I felt
so alone" (excerpt from *Rupture*, 2009).

the borders opened for me but remained complicated.
Travel was still difficult for a citizen of former
Yugoslavia. One relief, however, was that I could
finally leave Greece, my prison. A low-security
prison, as beautiful a prison as can possibly be,
nevertheless, a prison with bars, instruments of
power (such as work and stay permits), and
instruments of the system and authority—
constant reminders of being a nobody, with few
rights. In analysing Mona Hatoum's work,
Ursula Panhans-Bühler quotes Edward Said,
according to whom '[t]he exile knows that in
a secular and contingent world, homes are
always provisional. Borders and barriers,
which enclose us within the safety of
familiar territory, can also become prisons.'[2]

There are two urgent issues at play here that *Rupture* sets to explore. One is the mixed feeling of "relief," of finally officially belonging to a country, even if that country did not want me culturally. The second urgent issue is the desire to be able to leave, under any condition, the "prison" of the status quo, the unofficial, unresolvable status I had in Greece, and be able to travel again. Travel is a symbol of freedom unequally distributed in the international context. It is closely attached to the perceived political and economic standing and strength of each state, which then influences the currency attached to its respective passport and finally impacts on the ease with which

its citizens will be able to cross borders. In other words, as a US citizen one rarely needs a visa and will encounter few questions when entering another country, whereas for a Cuban citizen, the procedure, both prior to the travel and at the actual border, will be much stricter. Doreen Massey refers to this by saying that:

> [. . .] different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. [. . .] Some are more in charge of it than others, some initiate flows and movements, others don't; some are more on the receiving end than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.[3]

Taking into consideration the abstract notion of "a life in prison," it may be worth noting that the dialectic relationship between the law and everyday life has perhaps never been tighter and more uncomfortable for the foreigner than nowadays, with the proliferation of CCTV monitoring, restrictions on freedom, fears of terrorism, anti-immigration rhetoric, government funds going towards military interventions in other countries and the strengthening of the political right and nationalist parties across Europe.

NO-BODY, IN EXILE

Having left Greece in 1998, when Croatia finally granted me citizenship, I managed to visit my family, both in Croatia and Serbia, for the first time in years. A few unsettled years followed, in which I migrated between the Middle East (Syria) and several other countries, for economic, legal (migration laws) or career reasons, before finally settling down in London, where I started addressing the issues around crossing borders in my performance works.

Rupture is a nonlinear autobiographical solo performance with a narrative evolving through ritual, installation, original and recorded sound, film and poetic text. It consists of five episodes, each commencing with a different garment. I take my previous dress off, package it in a ball with twine and thus gradually build an installation of it in the performance space, then put on a new item of clothing and continue the journey from one clearly distinct migratory moment to another, even if not in chronological order.

My mother and father visit me in London.
I ask my dad how he likes it all.

I developed an interest in exploring mental states
and the delicate balance between
mental health and

He mentions a famous Croatian actor
and says how not even he could have
ever been in a house as nice as this.
That amuses me, and I decide to

show him a trick—how I can fall asleep
in a standing, almost falling position.
It's a feat of relaxation and a kind of
self-hypnosis

that I'd learned on a meditation course.

My mother walks to the window

and starts crying.

I hug her around her shoulders

and ask if anything is wrong.

is she unhappy?

She says the house is warm,

much too warm, she can't stand it.

She opens the front door and

runs down the several steps.
She slips, starts almost flying down,
and ends with her face down in the snow

(in)stability, as well as what relationship they may
have with trauma and accumulation of stress due to
civil unrest, political turmoil and war. One of the
episodes in *Rupture* recalls a dreamlike,
phantasmagoric fragment about my parents
visiting me in England. At first everything
appears normal, my father and I even
rejoice in the beauty of my house—a conscious
need to confirm that 'I am well,' perhaps even that I
have 'succeeded' economically and monetarily,
despite the trauma of war. In the twentieth century, due
to wars and economic instability in Yugoslavia,
migrants regularly left home and settled in
other countries, mainly Germany, as guest workers,
Gastarbeiter. Many of those workers, often women,
intended to stay only for a short while, to
earn enough for attractive clothes, but they would
instead remain in Germany, in various factory
jobs their whole working lives.
Artist Margareta Kern created a short film,
GUESTures I GOSTIkulacije
(2011), based on the

because it has snowed in London today.

I sense she is not hurt and is savouring it,
doesn't want to move.

I walk towards her and try to lift her
by her arms.

It's terribly cold, and she is very, very
heavy. I somehow manage to do it,

but all my strength goes into holding her,
not letting her slip again on her unsteady,
delicate, aging legs.

interviews with some of these workers, which
offers glimpses into their lives. In my own surreal
memory of my parents visiting me in England, my
mother is both my real mother, briefly on a respite
from clinical depression, and a symbol of the
thin line between balance and imbalance, which is
a metaphor and methodology that I continuously
employ in my work. Similar to 'standing in a falling
position' here, in another episode of *Rupture* I attempt
to deliver an elegant fragment and a piece of poetic text
while balancing myself on a wobble board (excerpt from *Rupture*, 2009).

The body movement on the wobble board, which accompanies the last few lines of the text, rarely appears even remotely graceful, but the very physical action facilitates the visceral experience of the dislocation for both the performer and the audience, and although I never quite balance myself on the board, I also never quite fall, the in-betweenness remaining as a *status quo.* As this is also a piece of equipment now widely used in gyms to strengthen legs and hips, this implies that life in exile can lead to the empowerment and strengthening of the body, increased discipline through the training and focused concentration needed to not fall off the board (lose balance) and hurt oneself.

RUPTURE: SMALL THINGS CAN THROB IN OUR INSIDES FOR A LONG TIME

Rupture begins with me applying to my face what is, as the audience will later understand, green toothpaste. It will make my face tingle and feel both

uncomfortable and aware throughout the entire performance, thus emulating continuous discomfort and a sense of alertness in exile. I then proceed to swing the hanging light above my and the audience's heads while humming, as one line in *Rupture* mentions, a "cadaverous, repetitive sound." The accompanying text provides a fragmented, short look back at the years of living in the communist world as a reticent child. Then onwards, *Rupture* continues almost as a catalogue of cracks and breaks of the body, land, health, family and marriage—together, the episodes explore personal histories and tell a fragmented tale of living in a spasm between the East and West. It is a tale of war, a tale of illness, a tale of the infertile land, but also a tale about endurance, about reclaiming and embracing a cultural background and a state of bodily health, making sense of events in life that initially, and sometimes for a long while, do not make sense, and consequently, investigating and becoming aware of what traces these leave on the body, both in itself and as cultural signifier.

Rupture explores the body as a permanent site of trauma, and in the final episode of the piece, which lasts ten minutes, I perform a ritual in which I unwrap, from around my waist, a see-through hospital bag, with my name and a long number, containing my own dissected uterus, extracted from my body following a surgical intervention. I transfer it to a vessel, and during this process, through a series of ritualistic actions, I have the chance to hold the womb pieces, feel their texture and come to terms with the fact that this part of my body is not in me anymore, and that I need to wear surgical gloves in order to "protect" myself from it (the liquids in which it is preserved) and ensure its longevity as a specimen outside of my body. At the beginning of the ritual, I light a candle and place it on a small, non-geometrical, ancient, broken piece of terra-cotta acquired during my years in exile. At the end of the ritual, I wrap my long hair around my face, lie down and place the candle on my abdomen. This creates both an image of warmth and the image of a hole in my body, referencing a rebirth and a non-space that invokes rest, peace, silence and infinity away from losses and dislocations.

The use of objects and the creation of installations featured in my performance works is intrinsic to my performance-making. Furthermore, it is significant to me that these objects and installations can simultaneously exist on their own, apart from the performance. In my works so far, the entire sets of my performances could be viewed as installation displays, or almost, to borrow the term from the American visual and performance artist Janine Antoni, as "hidden performances," although not necessarily in the way that Antoni meant it.[4] In the case of Antoni, this refers to the instances when she interfered performatively at night, hidden from the audience, with her exhibits displayed in a gallery during the day—for example, by chewing on them

and leaving her bite marks on the material and texture of the sculptures, so that they looked different the next day. I think of my sets and installations as hidden performances more in the sense of the marks left on them by the public performance itself and the stories, narratives and dramaturgies they may contain once I, the performer, leave the performance space they inhabit, and the installations are transferred to a gallery. The strategy here is for the boundary between performance and installation, between performative and visual, to be deliberately blurred and obscured as an attempt to enhance the emotional impact of the work and evoke, for the audience, the feeling of physically inhabiting the work.

Dorothy Max Prior, in her review of *Rupture*'s sequel, *Asphyxia*, says that "*Asphyxia* is less a stage set than a sculpted environment, awaiting occupation."[5] In *Suspended* (2011), which is the follow-up to *Asphyxia*, and in which the entire first episode consists of myself, the performer, suspended in the space, waiting for the audience to release me into movement. The question of whether that opening episode is a performance or an installation is deliberately blurred. Indeed, it can be either or both, and partly this depends on the course the work will take once the audience enter the space. If the audience chooses not to interact with me, the performer, this is how far the performance will go—for example, the work will exist as an installation only. If the audience interacts with me and releases me into movement, the work will take the course of a performance. In *Rupture*, one of the central pieces of the set includes an eerie-looking hanging installation consisting of chains, hooks, glockenspiel pieces and meat and surgical instruments, which I have been collecting for years. Left on their own, they are a beautiful but menacing reminder of the pains inflicted on the meat of our bodies. However, as soon as I step into the installation, it begins to perform with me; the hanging instruments come alive, tinkling in their metallic vibrations and producing seductive, almost dreamy and gentle sounds.

Some installations in my performance works are in the performance space from the beginning; others are constructed and dismantled in front of the audience, such as the one in *Rupture*, which begins as a wedding cake model with a figurine of bride and groom at the top, and then reveals a cage underneath, within which is a real piece of cake. By taking the cake out of the cage with my hands and stuffing my mouth with it, the wedding cake-cage becomes destroyed again and is finally displayed as carnage under the hanging light, a sculptural piece that embodies the actions and spoken text happening around it. The site can be read as a destroyed marriage or perhaps another destroyed unity, a collateral damage that never had a chance to survive under the constant pressure of dislocation in exile.

ASPHYXIA

Asphyxia is the second part of my autobiographical solo trilogy about identity, migration, body and memory, continuing the themes explored in *Rupture* and focusing on the real and metaphorical situations in life that may lead to suffocation, whether it be due to personal or social life, traumas from the past or the stress related to crossing borders. As part of the development process, I displaced myself by travelling to South America for visual and content references of trauma, dislocation and death. Argentina and Chile are both nations collectively in recovery, as they still embody the trauma of 'the disappeared' and the dictatorships of Videla and Bignone in Argentina and Pinochet in Chile. Whilst in the Peruvian Andes, due to the high altitude, I experienced physically on a daily basis what it is like not to be able to breathe fully. The films in the performance were made in high-altitude locations, such as the isolated island of Taquile in Lake Titicaca, the highest lake on Planet Earth. It is also interesting that the island, still fairly cut off from the 'modern world,' with no cars and only limited electricity, contains pre-Inca ruins and has been used at one point in history as a Spanish colony prison, thus itself embodying ritual, trauma and dislocation.

It was crucial that on the island there was a naturally eroded steep staircase of more than five hundred steps made of stone, although the material existed in hybrid unison with the fertile vegetation of the island. The staircase starts

Figure 7.1. Asphyxia.
Source: Natasha Davis. Image: Bob Karper.

from a small dock and leads to the village in the centre of the small island on top of the hill. The climb takes twenty minutes if one is acclimatised to the local altitude, but it can easily take a breathless hour if one is not used to it. Although this particular staircase has an obvious purpose—it is the only way to reach the village—due to the uneven height of its steps, there was, for me, an inevitable association with Bruce Nauman's sculpture installation *Stairway* on a hill in Northern California on a piece of land above the Russian River, commissioned by Nancy and Steven Oliver. At a glance, Nauman's *Stairway* looks just like an ordinary staircase coming down the hill, albeit disturbing the logical topography of the place, if we take into account that a hill in nature is not normally descended using stairs. When viewed close up, however, the sculpture reveals that each step is of a different height, thus throwing the body into imbalance, as the body can never fully relax into movement. The body needs to negotiate every unpredictable step separately, which, for me, strongly evokes a very specific feeling of living in exile.

Nauman and the Olivers may have had something different in mind with this installation. Perhaps they wanted us, the users of the stairs, to be dislocated sufficiently to have to take each step as it comes and appreciate the moment and the beauty around us. Whatever the interpretation, once you start descending the stairs, you have no choice, and the dislocation of the step, the feeling of being out-of-balance, requiring extra caution, will occur. To make my descent down the staircase on Taquile even more imbalanced, I wrapped myself in a porous, long white cloth and covered my face with an old and rusty fencing mask acquired in a Buenos Aires market. Through the editing process, the footage was slowed down to resemble how the body itself felt and pulsated in the actual short, downwards journey, not being able to breathe easily in the heat, through the cloth and the mask, in high altitude, with vision heavily obscured—all metaphors for living in exile. In the performance, the film is projected on a light, see-through black curtain, which lends a further airy and almost dizzy quality to the descent. The footage provides an abstract backdrop to the difficult and unpredictable exilic experiences of dislocation.

There are several other moments in *Asphyxia* when my breathing is heavily restricted to elucidate the experience of exile. In the middle of the performance, I put on an old gas mask and perform an energetic dance to an original and sharp conceptual, percussive soundtrack composed by Bob Karper. It only lasts a few minutes, but the mask is old and dysfunctional, and instead of supporting breathing, it actually restricts it, which significantly stretches the boundaries within which the body normally functions. A fine balance is required here from my non-dance-trained body to complete the vigorous movements and not pass out. Previously in the performance, the mask itself had actually been used as a video camera, rolling over black-and-white pho-

tographs from the distant past, which simultaneously appear behind me on the back wall of the performance space, and thus a connection is established between the past and the lack of breath, through the use of the object (the object that was initially perceived as a video camera is revealed as an actual gas mask).

The inability to breathe there and then in front of the audience is twofold. The action communicates the pain, which can be described as political or collective, as it is related to past events and memories, but at the same time specific, individual and biological, as it is concentrated in the lungs and the struggling body of the performer at that very moment. Regardless of its extreme manifestation, or perhaps because of it (and its ritualistic nature), the act is also very intimate. The pleasure derived, however, is grounded in the act of the body misbehaving, to borrow the expression from Amelia Jones, as a way of "escap[ing] the constrictions of the habitus."[6] The habitus here is, of course, French sociologist Pierre Bordieu's habitus, a set of categories such as attitude, behaviour, speech and appearance, which together reveal someone's status, education and belonging to a certain social structure.[7] But habitus can also be interpreted here as a set of rules imposed on an individual belonging to that social structure, and so the act of misbehaving, of doing something unusual, of speaking out, in life or on stage, brings freedom and a sense of pleasure, even if the situation at the root of the action may be challenging.

The deliberate and measured (as much as possible) manipulation of biological functions is pushed to the extreme and thus becomes inseparable, in the context of the performance, from the embodied memories of crossing borders and leaving the country in war for exile. My preparations to be able to execute the physically demanding three-minute dance lasted two months and consisted of rigorous training involving a daily run, swim, yoga and choreography practice, with the aid of choreographer and video artist Gretchen Schiller, suggesting again that with persistent work and discipline, similar to the use of the wobble board in *Rupture*, it is possible to overcome extraordinary difficulties and perhaps lessen the gap between the pain and pleasure of exile. The agency and empowerment are manifested in the fact that the body has learnt how to breathe through a suffocating mask—and not just breathe, but also breathe and dance. In *Rupture*, over time the body has mastered balancing on the board—not just balancing, but also speaking and delivering choreographed movement. In life, the parallel can perhaps suggest that the body has developed coping mechanisms with life in exile—and not just to cope, but also to speak out and assert itself.

Two other instances of restricted breathing in the performance occur when I fill my mouth with photographs, and when I cover my face with a fencing mask filled with soil as a reference to death. In both cases, I, as a performer,

am in control, as I can spit the photographs out of my mouth one by one in a rejection of an oppressive situation, and I can remove the mask filled with soil from my face, symbolically outlining the fact that to be uprooted from the land can also initiate the freedom to breathe fully.

In *Asphyxia*, I crush strawberries with my hands and smear them across my mouth while talking about being ashamed of my Yugoslav background and my citizenship. I say how eagerly I embraced my new surname, Davis, abandoning Vučković, the carrier of heavy personal and collective mythology and memories of loss. I slowly open an old radio box and reveal its internal elements, which refer to the organs of a human body, while talking about the fundamental difference of crossing borders as a nationalised British citizen, as opposed to a citizen from the Balkans. I recite a poem, "I Would Love to Have a Tiger"—it is a dream of walking in London fields with another powerful but equally displaced creature in that environment.

SUSPENDED

Suspended (2011) is the final part of the autobiographical trilogy. The piece continues with the themes of identity, migration, body and memory. However, the form of the performance is different from the end-on configuration of the previous two performances. Although I believe the previous two pieces achieved intimacy and a close relationship with the audience, I wanted to experiment further and find out whether it would be possible for the audience to take a physical, poetic and metaphorical migration journey with me, in the same space, from one episode and installation to another, investigating marginal spaces and evoking migratory bodies burdened with past memories, present fears and future anxieties. *Suspended* has, as a result, developed as a performance that eliminates the boundaries of space for the audience and envelops the viewer into the surreal world inhabited by the performer.

If I am living in the liminal space between two worlds, can one of them ever become home? How do memories preserve identity? Where is memory located if I am always in-beween, always experiencing a position of liminality? The performance opens with me suspended in the space in a long gown reaching the ground, with my hair rigged to the ceiling with forty-six strings, one for each year of my life at that time. I am in that position when the audience walks in, centre-stage, the hazer and original soundtrack evoking an otherworldly atmosphere. This is a position of beauty and power, but also vulnerability and status quo. I am stuck. A careless move could unroot my hair directly from my scalp. My intentions are obvious—I hold a large pair of scissors in my hands. I am, however, not the only one in the space to feel

Figure 7.2. Suspended.
Source: Natasha Davis. Image: Bob Karper.

disoriented. The audience has been stripped of their bags and coats, led into a dark room with no seats for them, with haze, a loud soundtrack and a person suspended in the middle of the space. Not knowing exactly where they should position themselves, they arrange themselves wherever they can find space around me.

I start cutting the strings that I can reach myself and then offer the scissors to the audience. In order for me to be released into movement, the audience is first silently invited to finish cutting my hair in order to 'free' me. To navigate exilic journeys, it is inevitable to rely on the help of strangers—some of them will be well-meaning and cut just enough hair to help the release; some others will cut in the middle or close to the scalp and then the hair will require more time to grow back. Strings are left to hang in the space amongst the audience, with bits of my hair attached to the bottom of each—evoking the sensation that if someone is displaced from their original environment, a piece of them will always stay behind. For the rest of the performance, we will all be walking through the forest of these strings, they will be brushing our faces, occasionally getting in the way of our bodies and footsteps, steady reminders of past events and memories. Said's seminal text, *Reflections on Exile*, mentions that "(t)he achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever."[8] In the trilogy of works, *Rupture*, *Asphyxia* and *Suspended*, I was, however, curious to balance this loss against the poten-

tial advantages of exile, such as a certain sense of freedom from the past and from authority, from the codes of behaviour inscribed on a specific nation or a family within it, which we are 'trained' to perform throughout our lives. I was interested in exploring whether the past can be erased or rejected, at least to a degree, or transformed, processed into a new path commencing from something fresh. How would that happen? Can the pain of exile be processed and transformed into the pleasure of exile, as George Lemming coined it, or do they merely exist alongside each other?[9] And what possible freedoms and restraints might be associated with the "new path" or the pleasures of exile?

Said poses a similar question: "But if true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture?"[10] The conversation around these issues outlines a contradiction in the understanding and representations of exile, significant for my work as well. As Blocker notices: "Like the nation, exile is more than a location (or, more precisely, a lack of location). It is a product of a set of meanings that both engage and undermine the narrative of the nation."[11] As such, dislocation perhaps carries the potential to become a potent and charged place, or a moment in time, a way to sever what was previously imposed on an individual, such as legal and social ties to a specific place and nation, based on the random square meter of their birth—the conditions that define us and impact on us. Can the condition of dislocation carry in itself a seed of freedom? I juxtapose Said's phrase "terminal loss" directly to staging images of strength in my performances, such as the opening episode of *Suspended*, in which my body is suspended in the space, or the way I balance on apples or unravel a long blue piece of silk across the performance space, as I will describe in the segment to follow, all enhanced with the use of sound, lighting, installations, objects and materials, and the ritualistic nature of choreography.

IN THE PLACE WHERE I WAS BORN, NOBODY IS WAITING FOR ME

Once all of my hair is cut and I am free to move, I walk out of the long gown and down the ladder that is holding me in place. I retrieve a black sack from under the gown and carry it with me to the next installation—a wooden box. The audience walks with me. I spill dozens of apples from the sack onto the box and step on them, a number of apples falling off and creating thumping sounds, a residue of loss. This is a difficult episode to perform. I am raised on the box, just a bit too high for a jump off the apples, completely unbalanced as the fruit below me keeps moving and never settles, my feet hurting as they try to remain in position. At the same time I am singing, saying that

in the place where I was born nobody is waiting for me, and I need to remain sufficiently close to the hanging microphone for my voice to be recorded and looped in this sequence. As a result, the song appears extremely fragile, and this, in turn, paradoxically becomes its strength. It is the mix of English and Serbo-Croatian, looped throughout via a loop station, which creates multiple layers of my voice endlessly repeating and merging with itself, another residue of loss. This fragment evokes the condition of not belonging to either the past home or the new home—the condition that can be unsettling, dislocating and traumatic, but can also provide a kind of freedom from expectations associated with either home. Julia Kristeva sums this situation up succinctly: "Rejection on the one hand, inaccessibility on the other: if one has the strength not to give in, there remains a path to be discovered."[12] Alban Ukaj, Albanian actor born in Kosovo and living and working in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina (both in former Yugoslavia), whom I interviewed for my documentary film *Berlin-Sarajevo* (2019), talks about belonging, and the fact that he still, after so many years, feels like a foreigner in Sarajevo, but that he enjoys the feeling and even prefers to feel that way, both in his new home in Bosnia and in his former home in Kosovo. He says that, for him, being a foreigner enhances the feeling of freedom.

This freedom, however, is closely related to having a citizenship and being able to exercise it openly, both at home and abroad. In one episode in *Suspended*, I speak in Serbo-Croatian, mixed with English, about establishing myself administratively in a new land. The text I deliver is the original text from the procedure of suing Croatia at the court of justice to recognise me as a Croatian citizen, following the fall of Yugoslavia. The majority of the audience does not understand the Serbo-Croatian text word for word, but from the tone, they understand its bureaucratic nature. The English parts of the text fill in the gaps to make it clear that I, as the main protagonist, had become just a number in yet another long and difficult-to-comprehend Kafkaesque game, and I want out of it. Brison uses a phrase, "speech acts of memory," and argues that:

> [. . .] working through, or remastering, traumatic memory (in the case of human-inflicted trauma) involves a shift from being the object or medium of someone else's (the perpetrator's) speech (or other expressive behaviour) to being the subject of one's own.[13]

In other words, according to Brison, in order to regain agency, the subject needs to locate the trauma and express it, speak about it and speak out—this is how we refuse, liberate ourselves from and recover from victimisation and objectification.

Maya Angelou thought that "[t]here [was] no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."[14] Angelou herself expressed in numerous ways the struggle she had to go through as a Black woman in the United States, and through the telling of her story both ensured her own self-empowerement and provided inspiration for many other marginalised voices. Similar to Brison and Angelou, Deirdre Heddon claims that "[t]he telling of stories about oneself is part of the construction of an identity for that self."[15] Through that construction of identity, alongside recognising our losses, we can perhaps create an opportunity for ourselves to create an identity of choice, an identity that suits us, an identity not imposed on us by states, nations or bureaucratic powers, an identity that offers freedom of choice and is closer to what we really feel we may be.

I am my hair and my nails

my teeth, my x-rays,

my liquids, my summer and winter bones,
my memories—I hold on to them.

I wash the jars, and dirty, sticky, ugly spaces
become clean and new.

I am clean and new Me.

I bite my nail and put it in a jar.

I pull my hair and put it in a jar.

I take a piece of me and put it in a jar:
a tooth, skin cut through, saliva,

a womb of my infertile land.

I knock on people's doors,

ask for a jar
and tell them my story
(excerpt from *Suspended*, 2011).

A major installation in the *Suspended* space is a beautifully lit (with its own wired lights) piece of furniture with shelves, which also had its own migration journey from another continent. Its wood is battered and chipped; it has a Patina of survival. It is heavy, it demands respect and strong muscles to move around. It is filled With more than a hundred jars, which I had been collecting from recycling and rubbish bins for months. The piece is called *Izazov* (Challenge) and has been inspired by Louise Bourgeois's installation, *Le Défi*—a 'haunting assemblage of collected objects that trigger memory and association.'[16] *Le Défi* also contains pieces of glass.

However, as opposed to my glass collected from junk, Bourgeois's pieces are extremely beautiful objects, acquired by herself, or passed on to her from her family. Ordinary and worthless pieces of glass in my installation are a comment on the identity of migratory bodies and the difficulty of taking things into exile. My glass pieces are filled with personal objects (such as photographs, jewellery and medals), substances and materials (salt, metal, wax and grass) and organic bodily materials (hair, nails, teeth) before being presented in the glory of a cabinet of curiosities in order to honour the memories of people, places and things that are lost to us, in addition to using the objects performatively. Glass is a conscious choice of material here as it is fragile, but essentially sound. Jars especially embody a combined sense of fragility and endurance—they are not easy to break.

In the final episode of *Suspended*, I very slowly crawl through the space, as a body inscribed by migration and the experiences of exile, amongst the audience, on my back and shoulderblades, splitting the audience in two halves, accompanied by an epic live piano piece composed by Bob Karper. The movement of the shoulders that allows me to gradually crawl across the performance space is so internal that it barely exits the body. Wrapped in meters and meters of lush blue material, my form becomes triangular as the cloth keeps unfolding and creating an image of ascending in the space horizontally, evoking a range of metaphorical references around the body, memory, displacement and survival, and referencing both personal and collective or historical memories and traumas. Matt Truman refers to it as:

> […] slow and steady, considered and calm—though not without effort—it suggests a coming to terms. Perhaps, in that balance of peace and exertion, movement without discomfort, Davis is suggesting a happy medium.[17]

The trilogy of works, *Rupture*, *Asphyxia* and *Suspended*, collectively represent research into the impact of the trauma of exile and migration on the body, memory and identity. It uses movement, poetic text, installations and sonic material to investigate the loss and liberation, the pain and pleasure of living in exile. As a creator and a performer, I place myself in fragile and vulnerable situations of in-betweenness and imbalance both as a strategy to reach the material inscribed in my own body and as a visual metaphor to communicate the material to the audience viscerally and engage their emotions. Through the practical and theoretical research, I am concerned both with the personal and the historical, although the truth I am interested in accessing is poetic rather than documentary. Setting up the relationship of intimacy with the audience plays an important role in allowing these methodologies to work.

WHY?

In one of his essays, André Aciman asks himself, as much as his readers, why should anyone care about past memories, past cities and displacements that embody us? Annoyed with himself and his impulses that took him to the streets of Alexandria, so different that day from his nostalgic memories of the city, he goes on to explain that his desire was "to bridge the things here to things there, to rewrite the present so as not to write off the past."[18] His determination to achieve this is manifested through his effort to "rescue things everywhere, as though by restoring them here [in Alexandria] I might restore them elsewhere as well."[19] In this way he attempts to resolve the conflict between his past and his present, before the memories of the past dissolve into something out of reach. What is the way out, and how can one resolve becoming foreign with what was once intrinsically part of one's physical and psychic fibre, without dissolving with it?

With my trilogy, *Rupture*, *Asphyxia* and *Suspended*, I propose that this may be possible through repetitive and structured returns to the past, as well as recognising and embracing the state of being out of balance. Using these methodologies to create a new discourse, I provide the time and space for encounters with the audience, the time and space in which temporal and geographical, fragmented and associative journeys, as well as experiences of losses and transformations can be shared. The fragmentary nature of the work is a deliberate choice, not just a device referring to the way our thoughts return to the past in which the displacement occurred. The fragments themselves get displaced by me in the creative process, and then arranged in such a way that the audience and readers can emotionally connect themselves to the material explored.

Departing on a journey of crossing borders into exile is not simple, and there is no universal method of doing that. In terms of performing the material, departure in search of a point of meaningful sharing and communication with an audience is an equally unbalancing and challenging process of experimentation. Both exile and performance are lived in the moment, but charged and heightened by the memories and embodied experiences of previous departures and arrivals. What the audience can experience through these encounters is perhaps the final stop on each journey—the point at which the artist can celebrate the arrival, whilst preparing for the next departure, to explore all that the latest journey has opened up.

The aim of my explorations of identity and displacement, of departures and arrivals, through the trilogy of *Rupture*, *Asphyxia* and *Suspended*, as well as the performative mode of writing in this essay, is to constitute radical and democratic interventions into discourses and practices of citizenship, and into

the political space more generally. Using autobiographical material, theory, performative tools and multimedia, I ask questions, such as who has the right to live at a particular square meter, and what fundamental conditions that we have no impact on, such as the place where we were born, impact on us.

When referring to having a citizenship as a condition of being able to exercise freedom, I also attempt to address the fact that displacement as a state of being carries in itself not only strength, personal as much as political, but also a certain form of autonomy. Both of these allow an individual or a group of people to demand to be heard and draw attention to the conditions and wider political reasons for their displacement. Performing the body, performing the memory, performing the belonging or the lack of it, as well as interrogating the value of having nationality and citizenship, allows the artist to question democracy and the current political realities, both poetically and explicitly.

In the current climate of rising nationalism and tightening immigration rules in the majority of the countries of the Western world, the position of a foreigner becomes a politically charged position. The art reflecting on these issues has a significant place in the shaping of ideas around identity, citizenship and crossing borders.

NOTES

1. Natasha Davis,"*Rupture*: Things That Throb in Our Insides," in *Natasha Davis: Performance film installation*, ed. Natasha Davis, Branislava Kuburovic and Bob Karper (London: Natasha Productions, 2013), 29–35.
2. Ursula Panhans-Bühler, "Being Involved," in *Mona Hatoum*, 13–41 (Hamburg and Bonn: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 39.
3. Doreen Massey, "Power-Geometry and the Progressive Sense of Place," in *Mapping the Futures, Local Culture, Global Change*, ed. John Bird et al. (London Routledge, 1996), 59–69.
4. Sidonie Smith, "Bodies of Evidence: Jenny Saville, Faith Ringgold and Janine Antoni Weigh," in *Interfaces: Women/autobiography/image/performance*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (University of Michigan Press, 2005): 151.
5. Dorothy Max-Prior, "Asphyxia," in *Total Theatre*, March 11, 2010, http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk/Reviews/archiveautwin0910.html.
6. Amelia Jones and Marin Blažević, "The Voice of Death, Rupturing the Habitus," *Performance Research: A journal of the performing arts,* 19, no. 3 (2014): 3.
7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (London: Routledge, 2000).
8. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000): 173.
9. George Lemming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).
10. Said, *Reflections*, 173.

11. Jane Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta?: Identity, performativity, and exile* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999): 27.

12. Kelly Oliver, ed, *The Portable Kristeva* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 267.

13. Susan J. Brison, "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self," in *Acts of Memory: Cultural recall in the present*, ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999): 39.

14. Angelou, Maya, "May Angelou quotes: 15 of the best," *Guardian* (May 29, 2014), https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/may/28/maya-angelou-in-fifteen-quotes.

15. Deirdre Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 35.

16. Spector, Nancy, ed., *Guggenheim Museum Collection A–Z* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2002): 60.

17. Matt Truman, "Review: Suspended, Chelsea Theatre," *Carousel of Fantasies* (November 12, 2010), http://carouseloffantasies.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/review-suspended-chelsea-theatre.html.

18. André Aciman, *Alibis: Essays on elsewhere* (New York: Picador, 2001): 38.

19. Aciman, *Alibis*, 38.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aciman, André. *Alibis: Essays on elsewhere*. New York: Picador, 2011.

Angelou, Maya. "May Angelou quotes: 15 of the best*." Guardian*, May 29, 2014. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/may/28/maya-angelou-in-fifteenquotes.

Antoni, Janine. *Gnaw* (installation). 1992.

Blocker, Jane. *Where Is Ana Mendieta?: Identity, performativity, and exile*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Brison, Susan J. "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self." In *Acts of Memory: Cultural recall in the present*, edited by Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, 39–54. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999.

Davis, Natasha. *"Rupture:* Things That Throb in Our Insides." In *Natasha Davis: Performance film installation*, edited by Natasha Davis, Branislava Kuburovic and Bob Karper, 29–35. London: Natasha Productions, 2013.

Heddon, Deirdre. *Autobiography and Performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Jones, Amelia, and Marin Blažević. "The Voice of Death, Rupturing the Habitus." *Performance Research: A journal of the performing arts,* 19, no. 3 (2014): 140–43.

Lamming, George. *The Pleasures of Exile*. London: Pluto Press, 2005.

Massey, Doreen. "Power-Geometry and the Progressive Sense of Place." In *Mapping the Futures, Local Culture, Global Change*, edited by John Bird et al., 59–69. London Routledge, 1996.

Max-Prior, Dorothy. “Asphyxia.” *Total Theatre*, March 11, 2010. http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk/Reviews/archiveautwin0910.html.

Oliver, Kelly, ed. *The Portable Kristeva*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Panhans-Bühler, Ursula. “Being Involved.” In *Mona Hatoum*, 13–41. Hatje Cantz Publishers. Hamburg and Bonn: Hatje Cantz, 2004.

Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Smith, Sidonie. “Bodies of Evidence: Jenny Saville, Faith Ringgold, and Janine Antoni Weigh.” In *Interfaces: Women/autobiography/image/performance*, edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 132–59. University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Spector, Nancy, ed. *Guggenheim Museum Collection A–Z*. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2002.

Truman, Matt. “Review: Suspended, Chelsea Theatre.” *Carousel of Fantasies*, November 12, 2010. http://carouseloffantasies.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/review-suspended-chelsea-theatre.html.

Chapter Eight

Creative Acts of Citizenship

Performance of Activist Citizenship by Migrant Artists

Elena Marchevska

The winner of the World Press Photo 2019 contest was John Moore. The winning photo shows Honduran toddler Yanela Sanchez crying as she and her mother, Sandra Sanchez, are taken into custody by US border officials in McAllen, Texas, USA. The image captured the public imagination and provoked an outcry against the Trump administration. The photo was emblematic evidence of the controversial practice of separating children from parents during illegal crossings of the US-Mexico border. After the photo was seen all around the world, US Customs and Border Protection confirmed that Yanela and her mother had not been among the thousands who had been separated by US officials. But public outcry over the controversial practice resulted in President Donald Trump reversing the policy on 20 June 2018.[1]

Despite the small victory in the United States, the contradictions surrounding this picture capture successfully some of the larger issues connected with illegal border crossing. The fact that the mother is not visible in the picture and the focus is on the child points to the fact that the actual illegal migrant is kept outside of the frame. In the media and wider cultural discourse, illegal migrants and unauthorized border crossers are usually portrayed as polluted because of their very unclassifiability.[2] Through the legal system and legal regulation, the state creates a politicized human being (a citizen of a nation-state), but also a by-product, a politically unidentifiable "leftover," a "no-longer-human-being," a non-citizen.[3] Sent back and forth between sovereign states, humiliated and represented as human dirt, stateless asylum seekers and irregular migrants are excluded and become the detritus of humanity, leading wasted lives.[4]

This specific image, and the reality behind it, tell us that migrants are often depicted as outsiders. This reinforces the story of migration as a story of people without agency. This process of dehumanisation is presently at the

forefront of mainstream politics. Many myths about migrants' journeys are perpetuated and exaggerated in the media. Unfortunately, the actual stories of what it means to transverse these borders without the right passport are rarely heard. So, how to promote a narrative led by migrants? How to encounter the story of migration told from the migrant's own perspective? As argued by Sellars:

> None of us are the picture in our passport. When a border guard looks at us for ten seconds or for ten minutes, who do they see? What in the computer file that they consult as they pass your documents through their system at a checkpoint would begin to say anything about the courage, the love, the vision, the generosity, or the potential of the human being who stands in front of them?[5]

In this chapter, I am looking at how migrant artists tell stories about their precarious experience of border crossing and their life after this act. I am interested in what strategies migrant artists use to claim agency and to act as citizens of their host countries. I will apply Shahram Khosravi's argument that an autoethnograhic approach to studying borders and migrant lives is useful and enables research that can "explore abstract concepts of policy and law and translate them into cultural terms grounded in everyday life."[6]

The artwork I will analyse is created by artists who are first-generation migrants, and who use their personal journeys as starting points to create stories for their audience. These stories are complex and transgress many physical and psychological borders. I will analyse two specific art projects: La Pocha Nostra's *Mapa/Corpo* series and Aram Han Sifuentes's project, *Official Unofficial Voting Station*. I will argue that artwork informed by autoethnographic research can empower the artist to fully engage their audience in an authentic portrayal of migrant experiences. Towards the end of the chapter, I will also explore how these creative interventions can be seen as performative acts of citizenship.[7]

WHOSE STORIES?

Stories of migration are often told through the lenses of the receiving country, and many details about the journey and life after the crossing are lost. As argued by Shahram Khosravi, there is a tendency in migration studies to rank migrants along a continuum of choice, ranging from free (voluntary migration) at one end to not-free (forced migration) at the other. In migration studies, he further argues, forced migrants are usually represented as without

agency. Lacking any kind of choice or option, they are looked at as victims of sociopolitical structures that force them to move. Khosravi further argues that "studies of migrant illegality are often written by people who have never experienced it; my aim is to offer an alternative, partly first-hand, account of unauthorized border crossing that attempts to read the world through 'illegal' eyes."[8]

Similarly, in art, the stories of migration that we usually see in galleries, on screens and on theatre stages, are mediated by artists who haven't necessarily experienced migration in their lives or who act as witnesses of the migrant journeys. However, this act can inadvertently objectify the subject matter, and the stories can easily become appropriated through the host country lens.

I aim to demonstrate how migrant artists use autoethnography as a method to activate their personal experience, personal writing and art-making to: (1) purposefully comment on/critique cultural practices; (2) make contributions to existing research; (3) embrace vulnerability with purpose; and (4) create a reciprocal relationship with the audience in order to compel a response.[9] I am particularly analysing how La Pocha Nostra and Aram Han Sifuentes adopt and perform autoethnography to explore migrant experience and their contribution as (non)citizens. How do their performative acts become creative acts of citizenship? Added to this, the chapter contains a layer of personal reflections on my own experience as an artist and an overseas migrant in the UK during the "hostile environment"[10] period, between 2008 and 2018. You can read this reflective section on its own or as part of the chapter narrative. These vignettes meander and expose the complex act of becoming a UK citizen. This nontraditional methodological approach invites readers to engage with the chapter content in unconventional ways. I attempt to present my migrant existence in contested liminal spaces. I rarely talk with anyone about my experience with the UK Home Office system. It is difficult to say for sure after ten years of insecurity that my memory of my interactions with this system is fully accurate, although I still pedantically keep all my applications and communication. My journey through this system was certainly far less traumatic than many other individual experiences during the hostile environment period.[11] But I thought that it is important to offer you my reflective witnessing, the accounts of real-life experience—in somewhat disturbing, private moments of realisation of my powerlessness, the embarrassment, the reality of being a "non-citizen." I see this writing as an act of defying what constitutes a "good citizen's" narrative in the UK today.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF EUROPEANS

I was born and raised on the edges of what geographically constitutes Europe. My childhood and youth were marked by wars and social and economic deprivation due to the fall of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Very early in my life, I understood that I am not welcome in certain parts of the world. Of course, this stimulated my imagination and desire to visit these places. The lure of freedom and liberty associated with the Western European countries was something that occupied my generation's imagination. We used any means possible to reach these places—illegally, legally, semi-legally. We married and divorced, we faked documents, we studied very hard, we lied, we were resilient, we gave up big parts of us to become Western. We were so wrong. We were never European enough.

When I arrived in the UK in 2008, the hostility against Eastern European, especially against Polish citizens, was palpable. Very often I was asked where I came from. When saying that I am from Macedonia, there was almost a relief in the voices of shop owners, taxi drivers and public servants. They always complimented me on my English and said they wished there were more migrants like me. I still struggle to accept this as a 'compliment.' The narrative of 'good migrant' never chimed with my experience in post-2009 UK. Government policies sent me constant reminders that if I overstayed my welcome, I might not be perceived as a 'good migrant' anymore. My time was limited, with a high price tag attached to it.

Foreigners are the undesired ones who never stop being seen as foreigners, no matter how long they have lived in the country, no matter how integrated they are into society, regardless of whether or not they were born in the country.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF BORDERS

Many artists and ethnographers alike have dealt critically with various migrant stories in relation to broader questions of migration, borders and identity. Their work has creatively engaged with the complex web of interrelations and transcultural entanglements that is integral to how we perceive migration today. In order to explore this transcultural axis, I will foreground

an analytical and theoretical framework around the the intersections of two areas of scholarly and artistic exploration: autoethnography and autohistoria[12] as creative strategies used to reconsider migration journeys, and as act of citizenship, ways or an alternative way to investigate citizenship.[13] Navigating this field in the next two sections will provide me with a vocabulary for a close reading of two artistic projects in the later parts of this chapter.

Shahram Khosravi is one of the first anthropologists and ethnographers who, based on his own illegal journey, wrote an (auto)ethnographic observation of crossing borders.[14] Khosravi rightly states that studies of migrant illegality are often written by people who have never experienced it.[15] Khosravi explains his decision to use the autoethnographic approach in the following way:

> Based on my own journey and my informants' border narratives, I will tell of the nature of borders, border politics, and the rituals and performances of border crossing. Auto-ethnography lets migrants contextualize their accounts of the experience of migrant illegality. It helps us explore abstract concepts of policy and law and translate them into cultural terms grounded in everyday life. . . . Border stories reveal the interaction between agency and structure in the migratory experiences. They offer a human portrait of 'illegal' travellers.[16]

Unlike depersonalized narrative, autoethnographers ask their readers "to feel the truth of their stories and to become co-participants, engaging the storyline morally, emotionally, aesthetically and intellectually."[17] Autoethnography links the world of the author with the world of others, and it keeps alive a sense of what it means to live in a world one struggles to understand. Autoethnography is a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It is both a method and a text.[18]

The use of autoethnography in art goes beyond autobiographical practice. The migrant artist is not just telling their personal story, but he or she comments on a wider context and culture in which they are embedded. This is what Gloria Anzaldúa calls autohistoria-teoría.[19] Anzaldúa describes autohistoria-teoría as a blending of life stories, self-reflection and "cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth and other forms of theorizing paired with lived experiences."[20] Autohistoria-teoría thereby creates an interlinked landscape that fuses personal experience with theory, cultivating spaces of (re)membering and imagining and ways to "make knowledge, meaning, and identity through self-inscription."[21] Anzaldúa explains this function of autohistoria-teoría in the following way:

> I cannot use the old critical language to describe, address, or contain the new subjectivities. Using primary methods of presentation (autohistoria) rather than

> secondary methods (interpreting other people's conceptions), I reflect on the psychological/mythological aspects of my own expression. I scrutinize my wounds, touch the scars, map the nature of my conflicts, croon to *las musas* (the muses) that I coax to inspire me, crawl into the shapes the shadow takes, and try to speak with them.[22]

Anzaldúa's autohistoria-teoría and autoethnography as a method in art practice offer to the audience a space to understand the ways in which some of their worldviews are interconnected with the one deemed "the other." As argued by Andrea J. Pitts, autohistoria-teoría foregrounds the fundamental interdependency between authors/speakers and readers/audiences that is necessary for any form of self-knowledge/ignorance to emerge.[23]

Performance autoethnography is something that extends the concepts explored by Khosravi and Anzaldúa into the realm of performing arts. According to Norman K. Denzin, performance autoethnography allows the performers to bring the world into play, to make it visible, to bring it alive. It allows the performer to forge a link between themselves and the world, to make fleeting sense out of a world gone mad.[24] As further argued by Dwight Conquergood, the [auto] ethnographer "is a co-performer in a social drama, a participant in rethorically framed cultural performances, enacting rituals, writing fieldnotes, recording interviews, videotaping, observing, talking, doing the things ethnographers do, turning research into performative inquiry."[25] By following closely Denzin and Conqergood's argumentation, we can conclude that performance autoethnography is not a methodology for studying the other. Rather, it is a process that allows the artist to reflexively write themselves into their performance text, into those fluid spaces where they interact with others (including the audience). The ultimate aim is to make the migrant artist's complex world visible through their performative acts.

PERFORMING ACTIVIST CITIZENSHIP AS A MIGRANT ARTIST

Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen define "acts of citizenship" as those moments when individuals, beings and groups claim, assert and impose rights through which they define themselves as active in their ways of being with others.[26] The concept of acts of citizenship seeks to address the myriad of ways that human beings organize, remake and resist their ethical-political relations with others.[27] Melanie White extends this definition and explores the creative apsects of becoming political.[28] White reflects on the work of Henri Bergson and suggests that as a society, we still look at citizenship as relatively homogeneous, and define it as an expression of citizens' location in a system of

obligations.[29] Citizenship is traditionally organised by habits that have limited ability to challenge, debate and critically engage. However, as White argues, we can also witness profound and fundamental breaks from this traditional logic: creative acts that engender profound ruptures in how we conceive of citizenship. These creative acts of citizenship transgress the confines of habitual practices, and consequently, reorganize and reconstitute those very habits in the process.[30] Isin, therefore, contrasts "activist citizens" (those engaged in writing scripts and creating the scene) with "active citizens" (those who follow scripts and participate in scenes). Isin defines activist citizens as creative and as ones who perform alternate ways of being political.[31]

Theorizing these acts of citizenship is a complex process and requires identifying the events through which subjects reveal themselves as claimants against injustice. According to Isin,

> this is where theorizing acts perhaps borrows most from the dramaturgical or performance features of acts, where it is the performance of actions that makes a scene. Such scenes depend on bodies, which must collude, collide and contact each other and things that create a site.[32]

I am attempting to investigate what constitutes an activist citizen in the creative sector, through analysing the work of La Pocha Nostra and Aram Han Sifuentes. And while their artwork and storytelling strategies can be illuminating, I remain mindful that migrant artists do not come to this process easily. Being vulnerable and open to the audience while sharing traumatic stories can be a difficult act. This kind of work can also be seen as a provocation to mainstream art institutions and audiences (as I will discuss later in the chapter, when reflecting on the work of La Pocha Nostra). The artwork that I will analyse exposes the fact that migrant journeys do not stop after migrants cross a physical state border. This can present a challenge for artists going through the difficult process of settling in to a new environment. This is what Natasha Davis in a recent interview calls the unbalancing act as a method, but at the same time reflects on how precarious this position is. Davis says:

> [This kind of work is] a very new process for me. It's a bit unbalancing, which I welcome, because placing myself out of balance has become my methodology for developing new work. Being out of balance is an incredibly fertile space, so I think working with participants also very much taps into that feeling, recognising the value of being thrown out of balance, as we are crossing borders. It is worth remembering, however, that finding comfort in being out of balance is obviously for me grounded in a more permanent place of stability, in which I now exist. And I can experiment with it. I don't think I would've thought about that place of being out of balance as comfort in 1992 when I got out of Yugoslavia, when everything around me was falling apart.[33]

White similarly states that the power of social authority surrounding migrant artists, and the pressure contained within the obligations associated with the processes of becoming a citizen, are in contradiction with the necessity for endurance and stability over time.[34]

What is the Home Secretary responsible for?

Are you . . . ? Where do you . . . ? Why do you . . . ?

Do you speak good English?

Do you know what created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland?

Do you understand?

Who is travelling with you?

Are you the mother of this child?

When is St. David's day?

Who is the main applicant?

How much money is in your account?

How do we celebrate Christmas?

Where do we go from here?

What do we get from this?

Do I look them in the eyes?

What if I make a mistake?

What if I made a mistake?

What if there was a mistake?

BODY AS A BORDER: *MAPA/CORPO*

As Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis argue, autoethnographers study culture at "ground level, in the thick of things," through the empirical (observation-and-experience-based) method of fieldwork.[35] Like autoethnographers, La Pocha Nostra study culture. Their work often focuses on the collective relational practices between migrants and host communities. Moreover, through their pedagogical practice, they explore common values, beliefs and shared experiences of artists who come from migrant backgrounds.

La Pocha Nostra was formed in 1995 by Nola Mariano and Guilermo Gómez-Peña. The objective was to create a loose interdisciplinary association of rebel artists interested in collaboration. They were inspired by Zapatismo and created a collaborative model of what they called concentric and overlapping circles, which function as a means to create 'ephemeral communities' of like-minded artists. For Dana Cole, the performance art of La Pocha Nostra utilizes the body to depict border zones, a kind of corporeal intertexuality, by blending symbols, genres, gender associations, cultural icons and historical time, which serve to dismantle hierarchy, binaries and static definitions.[36] As an example, one of La Pocha Nostra's most significant early pieces is Borderrama, a proscenium piece that subverts and parodies talk shows and self-help seminars and merges them with an ethnic fashion show. The collective invites the audience into the show and encourages them to arrive in costumes, dressed as their 'favourite cultural other.' They also invite 'special guests' from local communities to participate in the show. In the past, these have included a drag queen and Mexican wrestlers, among others. In the most recent iteration of their manifesto, La Pocha Nostra call this form a *live art laboratory*:

> We are also a "live art laboratory," from an international "loose association of rebel artists" thinking together, exchanging ideas, aspirations, music scores, playlists, props and creating on site projects. The basic premise of these collaborations is founded on an ideal: if we learn to cross borders on stage, in our bodies, in the gallery or museum, we may learn how to do so in larger social spheres and transgress what keeps us apart. We hope others will be challenged to do the same. This is our ultimate radical act.[37]

This live art laboratory format has become a matrix for La Pocha Nostra's future work and brings to the fore the two most important elements of their autoethnographic approach: the use of insider knowledge of a cultural phenomenon and experience, and the constant seeking of engagement from audiences. This is in line with what Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis define as a

common set of priorities, concerns and ways of doing research when using an autoethnographic approach.[38]

Gómez-Peña's work has, for more than thirty years, challenged not solely geographic borders (although he does address the US/Mexico border and ideas of transnationalism), but also the borders we have been erected around social categories that construct identity. His work embraces art, performance and the body as means of opening up in-between spaces and exposing their inherent possibilities. The body becomes a site of representation, signification and resignification through which identities are depicted as fluid, porous and heterogeneous. In an interview with the philosopher Eduardo Mendieta, Gómez-Peña defines the source of his inspiration in the following way:

> I am interested in the culture generated by the millions and millions of uprooted peoples, the exiles, the nomad and migrants from so-called Third World countries, the orphans of crumbling nation-states who are moving North and West in search of the source of their despair. In the process, they are redefining both the North and the West. In the process, they are creating a new culture that is anti-authoritarian and anti-colonial. . . . We really see our work as part of a much larger project involving artists, activists and intellectuals from all over the world.[39]

This quote also addresses an important element of La Pocha's methodology and how the collective uses insider knowledge to address migration and borders. It is very important to clarify here that the artists are reflecting on their own experience as migrants, but they do not create autobiographical work as such. Gómez-Peña specifically talks about how he detests the "confessional" and says:

> I hate diaries and autobiographies. I have always found the "confessional" tone a bit foreign. The spectacle of my own pain and (anti)heroism is strictly reserved for my beloved ones. . . . I only write or make art about myself when I am completely sure that the biographical paradigm intersects with larger social and cultural issues.[40]

Since his early work with the Border Art Workshop (a binational collective of artists and activists that worked in the Tijuana/San Diego region between 1984 and the 1990s), Gómez-Peña has defined himself as a migrant provocateur and border crosser. He describes this process-based identity as something that he created while travelling in search of the many other Mexicos, his other selves and the many communities to which he belongs; while travelling, he makes art, writes, theorizes and edits his memories.[41] This clearly outlines the process that underpins La Pocha Nostra's creative outcomes. The work starts from the individual artist's lived experience on the border, but then engages

with various perspectives that different contributors bring, and is kept open for the audience to contribute their perspective as well.

This is evident in the piece *Mapa/Corpo*, which started in 2004 and continues as an ongoing experiment. Gómez-Peña and Emiko R. Lewis began workshopping the piece as a response to the invasion of Iraq after 9/11. The group defines the piece as a performance installation, which is a poetic, interactive ritual that explores neocolonisation/decolonisation through 'political acupuncture' and the reenactment of the post-9/11 body politic. The first iteration was only presented in Latin America, Europe and Canada, since producers in the United States found it too risky. The second iteration of the project 'Mapa/Corpo 2: Interactive Ritual for the New Millennium' was created and toured between 2005 and 2007. This piece has become one of the company's most significant and lauded pieces.

The performance is usually staged in a gallery or black-box space emptied of seats, allowing the audience to circulate throughout, mingling with each other and the performers. There are focal points of varying heights located at cardinal points of the space. The main protagonists usually appear on an elevated surface, lying on a gurney. There is a man's body (Roberto Sifuentes) on one gurney, and he shares the space with props such as a gas mask, a whip and a gun, among others. The objects are placed next to him as if on an altar and suggest a story of systematic violence. On the other gurney, a woman's body (Violeta Luna) is covered with the UN flag. A trained acupuncturist inserts needles topped with small flags of occupier countries, and her body immediately becomes a metaphor for colonized and occupied territories. But then the audience is asked to "decolonise the Mapa/Corpo" by carefully removing the needles with the assistance of the acupuncturist. Parallel to this, the body of the "the universal immigrant" on the other gurney is exposed as a canvas, and the audience members are invited to write on his body "a poetics of hope."

The performers' bodies in *Mapa/Corpo 2* become La Pocha Nostra's artistic canvas. As argued by Seda and Patrick, they function as instruments of artistic agency to talk about the personal experience of migration and the wider context and effects of colonisation and violence; they create a narrative of resistance to violence and colonisation.[42] As Mendieta observes, La Pocha performances are about marking the body, the marked body, the branding of bodies.[43] But the performance starts from the lived experience of the performers, in the context of global migration politics that surrounds them and the audience members. By inviting the audience to contribute, La Pocha engages them in a ritual of healing the wider body politic, empowering them with a greater awareness of their position in the migrant-host duality. As Gómez-Peña poetically summarises:

> When we perform, we are not actors, not even human beings with a fictionalized individuality. We are more like Mexican Frankenstein, artificial freaks or what I term 'ethnocyborgs.' In other words, we are one-quarter human, one-quarter technology, one quarter pop culture stereotype and one quarter audience projection. In fact, the audience completes or alters our identities in situ with make-up and costumes. We even offer the audience the opportunity to directly intervene in our bodies and alter our identities on site. We give them permission to cross that dangerous border.[44]

Gómez-Peña's role in the piece is to give the final monologue. He takes the role of shaman, someone who can see beyond the immediacy of the body. Melanie White talks about the importance of this role in establishing the act of citizenship as disturbance of habituated norms. She argues that the mystic (shaman) serves as a vehicle of change, but one that is also rooted in the habitual practices of everyday life.[45] They help us to "see" that we must leap without explicit direction, without knowing where we will end up. The act that La Pocha offers represents an encounter where one opens oneself to the unknown. In this context, *encounter* is defined as the meeting or confrontation between people and things, and this encounter poses the problem of how to act. This last act of the shaman poses the question of why one might act one way and not another. This choice disrupts one's habitual tendencies and ultimately opens the audience to the complex choices experienced by migrants in their everyday life and to the choices they (the audience) have, particularly in the way they engage with migrant "bodies."

ACTIVIST CITIZENSHIP: VOTING AS AN ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE

Autoethnography gains its narrative power from the process of witnessing. The significance of the voice of the witness is that the witness has been there, has seen what happened. Witnesses have themselves lived the disaster and might themselves be victims. They can retell the story and unfold the events with firsthand authority. The witnesses' narrative is only one of many, albeit one that is less frequently heard. This is the context from which Aram Han Sifuentes performs when she creates her artistic installations. She carefully observes the political processes in her host country, the United States, from the sidelines, witnesses the injustice and acts on it in coalition with her collaborators.

Sifuentes was born in Seoul, South Korea, and immigrated to Modesto, California, in 1992. She talks eloquently about the transition and the changes she witnessed, the changes in her parents' lives when they arrived in the

United States. In an interview with Kathryn Hall, curator of the Houston Centre for Contemporary Craft, she says:

> I use sewing, because it is linked to my identity politics as an immigrant of color. My mother is a seamstress, and I learned how to sew when I was six years old, the year that we moved to the United States. It was not a choice for me but a necessity to help my parents make a living as new immigrants in this country. I use sewing to create space within dominant culture for immigrants of color, particularly to insert and reclaim traditions of sewing as immigrant traditions and labor.[46]

Han Sifuentes is aware that even though she has spent most of her life in the United States, she will be always perceived as being foreign. This is what she tries to challenge and reorder through her socially engaged practice. As an artist, she uses the needle and thread to mine from her own experiences as an immigrant and address issues of labour and identity politics. She carefully unpacks complex labour and immigrant histories by engaging with people through long-term projects utilizing varied social practices. Through this process, she creates autoethnographic performances that, according to Denzin, have the potential to intervene in and interrupt public life:

> Such interruptions are meant to unsettle and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions concerning problematic issues in public life. They create a space for dialogue and questions, giving a voice to positions previously silenced or ignored. . . . This performance aesthetic values performance narratives that reflexively go against the grain and attack the dominant cultural ideologies connected to nation, race, class, family and gender.[47]

This potential is most visible in Han Sifuentes's piece, *The Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Who Legally Can't.* As a legal alien of the United States who is barred from voting, Han Sifuentes found herself witnessing one of the most polarised presidential election campaigns in recent American history. As noted by Jake Ladd in his comment on the United States election for *Chicago Reader*, for many, casting a ballot was a form of catharsis, yet "millions of people living in the U.S. . . . didn't have that option. Whether they're formerly incarcerated, immigrants, citizens in U.S. territories, or too young, millions of people here don't have the right to vote."[48] Han Sifuentes used the frustration arising from this imposed passive position, which presumes inaction, to create the *Official Unofficial Voting Stations* to insert an unsanctioned voting process into the 2016 election season. This project was conceived as a citizen's objection to the exclusion of herself and others from the central democratic processes of voting. *Official Unofficial Voting Stations* was hosted by fifteen artists and radical thinkers

all over the United States and in Mexico. They each created voting stations that were open to all, but particularly to the disenfranchised. To engage the various communities, the project was taken out of traditional art spaces and even beyond US borders. Han Sifuentes invited Mexican artists to also create voting stations, since the flagship promise in the presidential campaign was a physical wall between Mexico and the United States. This meant that the results of the election would implicate people on both sides of the border. As such, Sinfuentes offered those on the "other" side of the border a chance to have a say in the elections. She justifies her decision to do this by saying that:

> National issues are not always local issues, and vice versa. Specificity is really important to me, since any type of generalization and abstraction becomes a violence in the ways in which it makes people and experiences invisible. I aim to make as many fights, protests, and specific concerns as present as possible.[49]

Each of the voting stations took on a different form depending on the collaborator. They ranged from participatory public artworks to radical performances to pedagogical tools. For example, the collaborators in Mexico City, Tijuana and Acapulco, Cecilia Aguilar Castillo and Erick Fernández Saldaña, created a station where participants voted with fake blood, then drilled screws and Mexican flags into styrofoam heads of Trump and Hillary to vote against them. Han Sinfuentes hosted a public program at the Hull House with DJ

Figure 8.1. Official Unofficial Voting Station.
Source: Aram Han Sifuentes. Image: Aram Han Sifuentes, 2017.

Sadie Rock playing music, and Yvette Mayorga and Han Sifuentes facilitating a workshop on how to build a piñata wall. When the wall was completed, the audience was invited to help bash it.

On results night, Roberto Sifuentes, DJ Sadie Rock and Aram Han Sifuentes performed and asked the public to fill out ballots at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. On the days leading up to the election, ex-offenders, permanent residents, tourists, disenfranchised voters, Mexicans and immigrants who couldn't legally vote were able to cast their ballots in unofficial voting stations. On the night when Donald Trump became president-elect, Hillary Clinton won the unofficial election in the installation. All ballots cast at these voting stations were returned to the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in Chicago to be counted and were later displayed in the final project installation at the museum. So, like La Pocha Nostra, in her autoethnographic approach, Han Sifuentes used insider knowledge of a cultural phenomenon/experience to challenge dominant notions of who has the right to participate in the democratic process, and invited a response from audiences and participants to make sense of a wider political context.

Aram Han Sifuentes talks about the difficulty of remaining an active observer/witness during moments of adversity or violence, when your fears appear to be justified:

> . . . as a non-citizen and a new mother, I do not always feel safe going to protests. At the official election on November 8th, 2016 Trump won the U.S. Presidential Elections. Personally, I was devastated by the elections, as many were. Coming from a place of great anxiety and disorientation, I found the only thing I could do was make. I started to make protest banners in my apartment.[50]

She used the material and anxiety coming out of *Official Unofficial Voting Station* to start her most recent project, *Protest Banner Library* (2016). This project enables her to protest against Trump's political agenda in a number of meaningful ways. Aram Han Sifuentes conceived the Library as a space for people to gain skills to learn to make their own banners, a communal sewing space where they could support each other's voices and a place where people could check out handmade banners to use in protests. Han Sifuentes was keen to develop a communal space where people could see, talk and sense solidarity. The library holds banners that will be used and reused, which recognises that there are no quick fixes to the political struggles we face today. Both projects were brought together at Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in Chicago for a final installation (more about this in the interview at the end of this article).

Aram Han Sifuentes's work possesses an incredible amount of depth, detail, emotionality, nuance and coherence, all of which permit the formation

of a critical consciousness, or what Paulo Freire terms "conscientization."[51] Denzin claims that through this critical consciousness or "conscientization," the oppressed gain their own voice and collaborate in transforming their culture.[52] The project *Official Unofficial Voting Stations* enacts an ethic of care and an ethic of personal and communal responsibility and empowerment. Han Sifuentes's project celebrates difference and the sounds of many different voices. According to Nielsen, as events "acts of citizenship" are unique moments in which local and/or transnational actors "claim the right to claim rights" or impose obligations with respect to injustices and already instituted practices.[53] Such acts, Nielsen argues, improvise creative and convincing arguments for justice against unjust laws, as well as their intended or unintended exclusionary consequences. Voting is an act that Aram Han Sifuentes and her collaborators creatively appropriated and gave to the people who are most implicated by the outcome of the election. This indeed might be only an act of citizenship that aesthetically shapes the political moment, but it certainly offers the audience a way to think about how they can transform the administrative, moral and legal imperatives that regulate non-citizens.

BECOMING BRITISH

Waiting has been a part of our life for ten years. Waiting for documents to arrive, waiting for approval, waiting for the change in circumstances to be logged. A decade of our lives in waiting.

In a small waiting room, we arrive and sit next to another family with two young children. We know we are in a similar position. But we chat about the weather, food and lack of catering facilities. We despretely try to normalise this process, which tests our ability to remain human, to be human. Hours pass by, the children are restless, we can't leave the room until our biometric data is logged. I try to watch television, endless programmes about how government successfully manages benefit fraud. I wait patiently, although deep down I know everything is wrong with this situation.

I sit in front of a Home Office clerk. Again, we discuss the weather, school runs and bank holidays. I wonder how it feels to assess human beings in the name of the state, day in, day out. I guess it's a job, something that feeds the kids. A tick-box exercise. We just have to fit in the right box, so we can go on with our lives.

We leave the building with the permit. It is a strange relief, like somehow, I have been seen. It is strangely reassuring. In the car, my daughter

says, *Well, I guess we are Brit(ish)*[1] *now . . . like that book that sits on your desk . . .*

The rain outside becomes heavier, I look at the horizon, silent. I am a citizen of nowhere, trapped in endless procedures, I don't belong anywhere. *I guess we are . . .*

NOTE

1. Afua Hirsch, *Brit(ish): On race, identity and belonging* (London: Random House, 2018).

CITIZENS OF NOWHERE

This chapter looked at performative acts by the artist group La Pocha Nostra and the artist Aram Han Sifuentes. I analysed their work and the stories it tells about their precarious experience of border crossing as migrant artists and their life after this act. The text also analysed their autoethngraphic strategies and how they use their performative acts to claim agency and to act as activist citizens of their host countries. There are, of course, certain limitations to these performative acts. They are small, insignificant performative interventions and can easily be lost and forgotten in the sea of information in which we all swim. But, as a migrant artist, I find comfort in their existence. I revel in their capacity to question what is happening in my life and in the lives of millions of others who are citizens of nowhere. In the current moment, when citizenship is again reframed and used by nationalistic and fascistic forces, it remains imperative to think beyond accepted definitions, habits and habitus. It is imperative to be comical, open, disruptive and creative as a citizen; to tell the story of the ones who are experiencing institutional abuse because of their (non)citizenship.

I also want to highlight that these kinds of performative acts can only be retrospectively constituted and perceived as creative interruptions. If we return to White's argument, the creative act of citizenship is one in which the answer to the question of action is not already assumed, but one must pose the question and leap into uncertainty. Due to their scale and locality, the work of the artists that I analysed can easily remain unrecognised as acts of citizenship. Such work is often underfunded and sometimes has a "do-it-yourself" feel, as it does not 'appeal' to mainstream audiences in large cultural institutions. However, the performative acts of La Pocha Nostra and Aram Han

Sifuentes come from a place of questioning, and their structure is kept open on purpose. This allows them, as artists, to find a way to make the audience understand what it means to be on the other side. According to Denzin, politically, these kinds of projects use autoethnography to imagine how a truly democratic society might look, including one free of racial prejudice and oppression.[54] Both La Pocha Nostra and Aram Han Sifuentes acknowledge that they sometimes feel lonely as voices of migrants in the wider cultural sector, and that change is necessary. White argues that creative acts of citizenship engender profound ruptures in how we conceive of citizenship.[55] The work of La Pocha Nostra and Han Sifuentes allowed us to think through these ruptures and through the complex circumstances of migrant artists who need to constantly question and reassess their position as citizens in their host countries. For better or worse, their precarious citizen-migrant status puts them in direct confrontation with the habitual tendencies of the host community.

Citizenship is not only a legal status; it is also enacted through practices and rituals. Consequently, acts of citizenship compromise not only the establishment or the challenging of rights and obligations, but also the construction, interpretation and reinterpretation of those practices and rituals that act to sustain the myths underlying particular conceptions of citizenship. As has been argued by Marsili and Milanese, what constitutes the citizens of nowhere is their potential to act in the name of that which is not yet actual, perhaps as yet not even fully thought through.[56] The performance work of La Pocha Nostra and Aram Han Sifuentes can therefore be seen as an 'autonomous border zone,' where the transit of ideas, radical art and human bodies is not only allowed but encouraged. As Gómez-Peña pointedly reflects:

> The goal for us nowadays is to welcome all demonised others into our performance universe, and this includes all the trans-national (occupied) spaces we work in and treat young artists from all communities as true peers and first-class citizens, even if only for the duration of the workshop or the performance. In our performance universe, there are no passports, no border patrolmen and no social classes. We know, it is an imaginary space, but we also know that it exists, even if only for the duration of a project.[57]

This imaginary space is where migrant artists can question what it means to be an activist citizen. Also, this is a place where we can all escape from the "good immigrant" narrative and allow ourselves to play out migrant political contributions in all their nuances and complexity.

INTERVIEW WITH ARAM HAN SIFUENTES AND ROBERTO SIFUENTES

This interview was first published as part of *The Displaced & Privileged: A Study Room Guide on Live Art in the Age of Hostility* in 2017, publication commissioned by Live Art Development Agency.

I am sitting outside of Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in Chicago, where I just saw the *The Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Who Legally Can't*. In this piece, Aram Han Sifuentes welcomes anyone to vote, but it is made especially for those who are discontented and the disenfranchised. I am completely shocked by the numbers. In the piece, Han Sifuentes underlines the fact that there are 91.2 million people in the United States and its territories who cannot legally vote (youth under eighteen, non-citizens, the incarcerated, ex-felons, residents of US territories and people without state IDs). This means that one in every four people cannot legally vote. One in ten persons who are over eighteen years old cannot vote. We sit in the Hull-House dinning room with Aram and Roberto, while the museum buzzes with people who are attending Open Engagement in Chicago. The atmosphere of despair, but also hope for change, is palpable in the room. We discuss Trump, voting and displacement for an hour, before we go to see some more work at the conference.

Elena: I just voted in your piece, but as an immigrant I can't vote in the UK. I was really moved by the piece and by your talk yesterday, because I think voting is a process that we don't discuss enough. In the UK, European Union citizens were not allowed to vote during the Brexit referendum. Those are people who have lived in the UK for twenty, thirty years. So, they were excluded from a vote that would determine their future.

Roberto: They are excluded from a vote that pertains to their existence…

Elena: Exactly. So, I felt that your piece is so important, in both the American and European context. Can you tell me how you came up with the idea?

Aram: I am a Korean, non-US citizen, and I've been here for twenty-five years. I have my personal reasons for not applying for citizenship. But I desperately wanted to vote in this election [2016 US presidential election], mostly because the stakes are so high. Of course, it didn't turn out the way I wanted it to, but I was thinking out loud. I really want to vote. How do I do that? How do I open up a space where everyone can vote, particularly the disenfranchised? So I did some research, and initially it was really hard to find actually how many people can't vote. And then when I found the actual data, I was astounded at how many millions of people are excluded from the voting process. It is almost like one in four people. I felt like I couldn't do something

small in scale after knowing this. I really wanted to create as many voting stations as possible to collect as many votes as possible. I invited different collaborators to create voting stations with me. The actual act of creating is a part of this project.

Elena: I agree, the space is very performative, and it demystifies how the voting process works.

Aram: So, each collaborator did their own thing. The process took on many different formats. It all depended on the collaborator and their work, and what they wanted to do. We were constantly thinking about what would be the best way to get votes from the disenfranchised communities with whom we were working. Not all of the collaborators were just artists either. I worked with an immigration lawyer, activists and partners from the Hull-House Museum. One of these collaborators was formerly incarcerated and currently does activism work in and out of prisons with those formerly incarcerated. So he took ballots into a prison in Illinois. Every voting station was very different, based on what type of community we were trying to get involved in voting.

Elena: Why did you decide to have a live art element?

Roberto: Really the nature of the project is to be open and inclusive. It provides voting stations open to everyone, at this very crucial political moment. This model is a kind of kit for different invited artists to use within their communities. What is that disenfranchised community? Are they undocumented or prisoners or merely discontented voters? And what is the best way to access that community? So, in a sense, the concept itself is a performance artpiece.

It's a conceptual performative piece that calls for innovation and site specificity. It allows the piece to take on multiple formats: an audio piece; a simple desk piece; an elaborate participatory installation. Or it can happen in a discotheque or in a border zone in Mexico. In Mexico, this piece also served as a pedagogical tool where our collaborators, Cecilia and Erik, brought in students from their university and created a semester-long experience for them. Aram visited my Border-Crossing class at SAIC, and some undocumented students found this project a particularly pertinent tool to address the current moment. They are under attack in the United States. I mean, that is just what is happening right now. These people are under direct attack and live in a constant state of fear and increasing trauma in their own homes. So we used it, the voting station, as a pedagogical tool. Aram came, talked about the piece and offered ballots for the students to do whatever they want[ed] with them. The piece was really a response to the frontal assault on immigrants, displaced people, women, queers.

Aram: That's why the next iteration of the project will be during the Mexico election. The initial collaboration that happened in Mexico was so

interesting, and I learned so much from it. Really they were the most successful in terms of how they just geared up people to wait in line for their turn to vote. In the United States, people were excited, but it didn't seem as urgent. The voting station in Acapulco had a huge line the entire day. This made me think about the gesture of voting across borders. And how important that is.

Elena: It is very poignant how the main messages from the project appear on the textiles during the installation in Hull-House. Aram, you are also a prolific banner maker. You say on your website that: 'Banners are a way for me to resist what is happening in the United States and in the world. It is a way to put my voice out there and not stay silent.' This spring you opened the the Protest Banner Lending Library as a space for people to gain skills to learn to make their own banners and a place where people can check out handmade banners to use in protests.

Aram: The Protest Banner Lending Library project is such a logical continuation, because it moves from the act of casting your vote to the act of protesting the results. The act of making a statement and being there, being forward. Because our ability to protest is minimised, cornered…boxed in by the government, the police, laws around protests…especially for those who are not citizens. People even get deported for getting arrested during protests. That's such a scary space to be.

Roberto: The act of voting, the act of the banner-making workshops, getting people together and providing those kinds of tools is a pedagogical space as well. With audiences, with scholars, with activists, who all come to this space, and teach each other. What are the strategies of the advocate and of the activist versus that of the dancer, performance artist? Where do the concerns intersect between the radical queer community in Mexico City versus the political left or the political right? Where are the intersections, and where are the conflicts? Those are really some of the spaces that these projects want to open up. We're really interested in providing new models of collaboration.

Aram: Definitely it is also about the ethics of making this kind of work; that's something I'm always concerned with in terms of this type of project. That's why I create this kind of open space where anyone can participate on any level. So, you can make a banner, and you can also check one out… I try to create spaces where power is equal as much as possible amongst all participants… How do we create these spaces together…in the various communities that we are all in and from?

Roberto: So, the issues we're talking about here are precisely those that are happening in Europe and other places in the world. This was why we wanted to continue these projects. We don't see it as something exclusively about Trump and this moment in the United States, but rather a project that can translate to the political realities in many countries across the globe.

Aram: Voting especially across borders is such a gesture of care. Because we care about what happens in the world.

Roberto: The votes that the audience casts are poetic messages, are gestures, are drawings, are like expressions into the wind. Their voices are in the air. We need to fill the air with dissent and discord and these strong voices, so that we feel that energy.

NOTES

1. It is worth noting that despite this official reversal, children were still being separated from their familes well into 2019 (see, for example, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trump-child-migrant-separate-us-border-mexico-immigration-family-a9028366.html).

2. Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), and Liisa Malkki, "Refugees and Exile: From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24 (1995): 495–523.

3. Anton Schütz, "Thinking the law with and against Luhmann, Legendre and Agamben," in *Law and Critique*, 11, no.2 (2000), 121.

4. Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, "The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand," in *International Migration* 42, no.1 (2004), 33–63.

5. Emma Cox, *Theatre & Migration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), viii.

6. Shahram Khosravi, "Stolen Time," *Radical Philosophy* 2, no. 3 (December 2018), 5, https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/stolen-time.

7. Engin F. Isin, and Greg Nielsen, ed., *Acts of citizenship* (London: Zed Books, 2008).

8. Shahram Khosravi, *'Illegal' Traveller: An Auto-ethnography of Borders* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

9. Tony Adams, Stacy Holman Jones and Carolyn Ellis, *Handbook of Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013).

10. The Hostile Environment Policy, announced in 2012 by Theresa May, is aimed at producing voluntary leave. According to Diana Martin, this policy is closely tied to processes of subjectivisation that construct illegality and 'waste.'

11. As one of the most traumatic injustices was the Windrush scandal, a 2018 British political scandal concerning people who were wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation and in at least eighty-three cases, wrongly deported from the UK by the Home Office.

12. For examples, see Khosravi, *'Illegal' Traveler*, 2011; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, AnaLouise Keating, ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Autoethnography*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014).

13. Engin F. Isin, *Citizens without Frontiers* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).
14. Khosravi, *'Illegal' Traveller*, 4.
15. Khosravi, *'Illegal' Traveller*, 6.
16. Khosravi, *'Illegal' Traveller*, 5.
17. Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner, "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Ed.)*, N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications), 745.
18. Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 6.
19. AnaLouise Keating, ed, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 5.1.
20. Keating, *Anzaldúa Reader*, 9.
21. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark*, 6.
22. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark*, 4.
23. Andrea J. Pitts, "Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Autohistoria–teoría as an Epistemology of Self Knowledge/Ignorance," in *Hypatia* 31, no. 2 (2016), 365.
24. Denzin, *Interpretive*, 89.
25. Dwight Conquergood, 'Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics,' in *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*, D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera, ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2005), 360.
26. Isin and Nielsen, "Introduction," 2.
27. Isin and Nielsen, "Introduction," 2.
28. Melanie White, "Can an Act of Citizenship Be Creative?" in *Acts of Citizenship*, Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. (London: Zed Books, 2008), 44.
29. White, "Can an Act," 48.
30. White, "Can an Act," 55.
31. Engin F. Isin, "Theorising Acts of Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. (London: Zed Books, 2008), 39.
32. Isin, *Citizens Without*, 187.
33. Natasha Davis, 2017, 42.
34. White, "Can an Act," 54.
35. Adams, Homan Jones, Ellis, *Handbook*, 50.
36. Dana Cole, "The Body as Politic: Education and the Performance Art of Guillermo Gómez-Peña," in *Cultural Encounters, Conflicts, and Resolutions* 1, no.1 (2014), https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cecr/vol1/iss1/3.
37. La Pocha Nostra, 2018.
38. Adams, Holman Jones, Ellis, *Handbook*, 26.
39. Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Laura Levin, *Conversations across Borders: A Performance Artist Converses with Theorists, Curators, Activists and Fellow Artists* (London: Seagull, 2011), 112.
40. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 7.
41. Gómez-Peña, *Dangerous Border*, 9.
42. Laurietz Seda and Brian Patrick, "Decolonizing the Body Politic: Guillermo Gómez-Peña's 'Mapa/Corpo 2: Interactive Rituals for the New Millennium,'" in *TDR* 53, no. 1 (2009), 139, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25599456.

43. Gómez-Peña and Levin, *Conversations*, 113.
44. Gómez-Peña and Levin, *Conversations*, 114.
45. White, "Can an Act," 52.
46. Aram Han Sifuentes, "Aram Han Sifuentes on the Protest Banner Lending Library," Interview with Kathryn Hall, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (December 20 2018), https://www.crafthouston.org/2018/12/aram-han-sifuentes-on-the-protest-banner-lending-library/.
47. Denzin, *Interpretive*, 73.
48. Jake Ladd, "An election night-event for those who couldn't vote," in *Chicago Reader* (November 9, 2016), https://chicagoreader.com/blogs/an-election-night-event-for-those-who-couldnt-vote/.
49. Han Sifuentes, "Aram Han," 2018.
50. Han Sifuentes, "Aram Han," 2018.
51. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000).
52. Denzin, *Interpretive*, 73.
53. Greg M. Nielsen, "Answerability with Cosmopolitan Intent: An Ethics-Based Politics for Acts of Urban Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. (London: Zed Books, 2008), 268.
54. Norman K. Denzin, *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (London: Sage, 2003), 113.
55. White "Can an Act," 55.
56. Lorenzo Marsili and Niccolo Milanese, *Citizens of Nowhere: How Europe Can Be Saved from Itself* (London: Zed Books, 2018), 12.
57. Gómez-Peña, *Dangerous Border*, 57.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Tony, Stacy Holman Jones and Carolyn Ellis. *Handbook of Autoethnography.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013.

Adams, Tony, Stacy Holman Jones and Carolyn Ellis. *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2009.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. AnaLouise Keating, ed. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Boylorn, Robin, and Mark Orbe. *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life.* London: Routledge, 2020.

Cole, Dana. "The Body as Politic: Education and the Performance Art of Guillermo Gómez-Peña." *Cultural Encounters, Conflicts, and Resolutions* 1, no. 1. (2014), https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cecr/vol1/iss1/3.

Conquergood, Dwight. 'Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics,' in *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*. D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera, ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2005, 351–65.

Cox, Emma. *Theatre & Migration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
Denzin, Norman K. *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture.* London: Sage, 2003.
Denzin, Norman K. *Interpretive Autoethnography*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014.
Ellis, Carolyn and Art Bochner. "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject." *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd ed.)*. N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000, 733–68.
Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum, 2000.
Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back.* New York: Routledge, 2000.
Gómez-Peña, Guillermo, and Elaine Peña. *Ethno-Techno: Writings on Performance, Activism, and Pedagogy.* New York: Routledge, 2005.
Gómez-Peña, Guillermo and Laura Levin. *Conversations across Borders: A Performance Artist Converses with Theorists, Curators, Activists and Fellow Artists.* London: Seagull, 2011.
Han Sifuentes, Aram. "Aram Han Sifuentes on the Protest Banner Lending Library." Interview with Kathryn Hall. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (December 20, 2018), https://www.crafthouston.org/2018/12/aram-han-sifuentes-on-the-protest-banner-lending-library/.
Hirsch, Afua. *Brit(ish). On race, identity and belonging*. London: Random House, 2018.
Isin, Engin F., and Greg M. Nielsen. "Introduction." In *Acts of Citizenship*, 1–12. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. London: Zed Books, 2008.
Isin, Engin F. "Theorising Acts of Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, 15–43. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. London: Zed Books, 2008.
Isin, Engin F. *Citizens without Frontiers*. New York, NY; London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
Keating, AnaLouise, ed. *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.
Keating, AnaLouise, ed. "Preface," *Light in the dark/Luz en lo oscuro: Rewriting identity, spirituality, reality*, 1–8. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.
Khosravi, Shahram. *'Illegal' Traveller: An Auto-ethnography of Borders.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
Khosravi, Shahram. "Stolen Time." *Radical Philosophy* 2, no. 3 (December 2018), https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/stolen-time.
Ladd, Jake. "An election night-event for those who couldn't vote." *Chicago Reader* (November 9, 2016), https://chicagoreader.com/blogs/an-election-night-event-for-those-who-couldnt-vote/.
Malkki, Liisa. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
Malkki, Liisa. "Refugees and Exile: From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995), 495–523.
Marsili, Lorenzo, and Niccolo Milanese. *Citizens of Nowhere: How Europe Can Be Saved from Itself*. London: Zed Books, 2018.

Marroquín, Jaime, Franco Pineda, Eugenia Adela and Magdalena Mieri. *Open Borders to a Revolution: Culture, Politics, and Migration.* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013.

Nielsen, Greg M. "Answerability with Cosmopolitan Intent: An Ethics-Based Politics for Acts of Urban Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, 266–86. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. London: Zed Books, 2008.

Pitts, Andrea J. "Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Autohistoria-teoría as an Epistemology of Self-Knowledge/Ignorance." *Hypatia* 31, no. 2 (2016), 352–69.

Rajaram, Prem Kumar, and Carl Grundy-Warr. "The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand." *International Migration* 42, no.1 (2004), 33–63.

Reed-Danahay, Deborah. *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*. Oxford: Berg, 1997.

Schütz, Anton. "Thinking the law with and against Luhmann, Legendre and Agamben." *Law and Critique* 11, no. 2 (2000), 107–36.

Seda, Laurietz, and Brian Patrick. "Decolonizing the Body Politic: Guillermo Gómez-Peña's 'Mapa/Corpo 2: Interactive Rituals for the New Millennium.'" *TDR* 53, no. 1 (2009), 136–41. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25599456.

White, Melanie. "Can an act of citizenship be creative?" In *Acts of Citizenship*, 44–56. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, ed. London: Zed Books, 2008.

Wilson, Dean, and Leanne Weber. "Surveillance, Risk and Preemption on the Australian Border." *Surveillance & Society* 5, no. 2 (2008), 124–41.

Chapter Nine

Bridging Citizenship

The Civic Contribution by Artists Impacted by Displacement

Mary Ann DeVlieg

This chapter explores an alternative understanding of citizenship, "bridging citizenship," which attempts to recognize the social contribution made by artists who have been obliged to migrate due to persecution in their home countries. Whilst not providing a solution to their often-precarious legal status, considering them as enacting a "bridging citizenship," bridging their home and host cultures with a valuable civic offer to their host communities, may provide some recognition for the contribution they provide.

The chapter focuses on the phenomenon of "artists impacted by displacement," indicating that they are artists in the first place, whose displacement, a result of their strong artistic engagement, has largely been involuntary, the only reasonable option open to them. They are artists in exile, compelled to move from their home territory, sociocultural environment and usual artistic activities for a variety of reasons. These may include armed conflict; natural disasters and severe climatic changes; violations against recognized human rights, such as those protecting and defending free expression, the rights of women, the rights of children, the right to education, religious freedom and freedom of sexual orientation, as well as circumstances depriving them of their recognized economic rights and cultural rights. With legal status in their new host country denied or postponed, their civic status may be in flux: They may be seeking asylum, have gained (or not) refugee status, be clandestine or simply classed as a migrant. Because their artworks often "speak truth to power," repressive elements in their societies want them silenced. Due to their art practices, they encounter censorship, persecution, violations of basic human rights, imprisonment, physical and mental harm, even death. These are artists who, when lacking a civil status in their new host country, cannot enjoy the same rights as other artists who are citizens or have a similar legal status.

The chapter will first discuss citizenship, a state-bestowed legal status that has been and is increasingly contested, the critiques of legally defined citizenship and some alternative concepts of citizenship. As anti-immigrant politics spread, the status of "settled," refugee or other official designations allowing for the enjoyment of rights is increasingly difficult to obtain from the host state.[1] This is problematic for "artists-at-risk," who, once relocated to relative safety, find their lives are still in danger at home to the degree that they cannot return. When their host countries withhold or delay legal status, these artists live in limbo, between freedom and its denial.

The next section explains what rights protect artists who become targets, who perpetrates the violation of those rights and why some artists may be considered as HRDs (human rights defenders). Repressive elements found in totalitarian governments, political parties and ideological, social or religious factions often do not want people to think beyond prescribed limits. Abusing established human rights that guarantee freedom of expression, intellectuals and artists whose work invites broader reflection are targeted. As "temporary relocation" is a common form of support offered by NGOs (non-governmental organisations), this section explores what happens when the artists are relocated, and it raises concerns regarding artists whose relocation cannot be merely "temporary."

In the final section, I examine other concepts of citizenship—artistic, participative and socially engaged citizenship—to contend that the artist impacted by displacement, even if denied the state-bestowed status, can be considered as enacting a sense of citizenship, one that forms a bridge between ideas, values and cultures. Theirs is a performative citizenship, or a "bridging citizenship." They have lived and worked in one country, quite frequently transited through one or more countries and landed in another. I will argue that through their lives, artwork and art practices, these artists provide a matrix of education, inspiration and reflection, an invitation and provocation to open minds and question prevailing habits, interpretations and behaviors. As our world becomes increasingly nomadic, something that is not likely to change,[2] increasing understanding between migrants' and host communities' perspectives becomes critical to the evolution and stability of society.

CITIZENSHIP: WHAT IS IT? CONTESTED NOTIONS, EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS, ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Citizenship includes and excludes. It is membership of a nation-state awarded by the sovereign state according to criteria that range from parentage (*ius sanguinis*) and location of birth (*ius soli*) to marriage and a variety of other ar-

rangements in between. It can be acquired administratively by naturalization for applicants who meet the state's requirements, but also at times by depositing, paying or investing large sums of money in a country. Sharply criticized as hypocritical by migrants' rights activists who ask if media-visible heroism is a fair criterion for expediting administrative assessments for some while ignoring others, in two recent cases immigrants in France[3] and Italy[4] have even been granted citizenship for highly sensationalized acts of rescuing children in danger.

In his exploration of the political and philosophical history of nationalism, Zygmunt Bauman critiques the myth-filled constructions of identity based on separation between us (citizens) and them (anyone else) and binding the citizens to an authoritative and administrative state.[5] Focusing on the current context, Saskia Sassen has argued that this ineluctable connection to the nation-state is also put into question by economic globalization and international legal regimes, both of which transcend borders; the internet, which makes cross-border networking and collaboration widespread; and increasing numbers of people nomadically working, studying and living who are thus "increasingly unwilling to automatically identify with a nation as represented by the state."[6]

Giorgio Agamben has further critiqued the state's power in granting what he deems is a type of involuntary membership that imposes its citizenship on every person at birth. "The sovereign state asserts its domination as it separates the human from being itself. . . . Nation-state means a state that makes nativity or birth [*nascita*] (that is, naked human life) the foundation of its own sovereignty."[7] He argues for a more holistic existence, that he calls 'form-of-life,' free of this state imposition.

> Intellectuality and thought . . . are . . . the unitary power that constitutes the multiple forms of life as form-of-life.'[8]. . . / . . . In the face of State sovereignty which can affirm itself only by separating in every context naked life from its form, they are the power that incessantly reunites life to its form or prevents it from being dissociated from its form.'[9] . . . A political life, that is, a life directed toward the idea of happiness and cohesive with a form-of-life, is thinkable only starting with the emancipation from such a division, with the irrevocable exodus from any sovereignty.[10]

If we are thus bound to our administrative state, which separates us from our natural selves, as well as others imposing an artifice of an identify whose function is no longer accurate, what about those people who have lost or left their state? Writing about refugees, specifically "those who are politically persecuted or for whom returning to their countries would mean putting their own survival at risk," Agamben cites Hannah Arendt to exemplify the

paradoxical nature of so-called universal, inalienable human rights that are in fact denied or postponed, especially for migrants, but particularly for refugees who have been obliged to leave their home countries to escape danger.[11] As Arendt pointed out, the human rights regime applies only from the moment when migrants are given a civic status (such as "refugee" or "citizen") by the state; thus, although rights may be universal, they are not inalienable. Agamben, therefore, identifies the refugee as a key subjectivity that illustrates the problem of state bureaucracy in an international context, and demands new thinking.

> Inasmuch as the refugee, an apparently marginal figure, unhinges the old trinity of state-nation-territory, it deserves instead to be regarded as the central figure of our political history. . . . The refugee should be considered for what it is, namely, nothing less than a limit-concept that at once brings a radical crisis to the principles of the nation-state and clears the way for a renewal of categories that can no longer be delayed.[12]

Whether obtained by legal means, financial payments or media fame, with bestowal of citizenship, the state grants certain rights, especially the right to participate in the political life of the country. It is the state that also grants the official status of refugee, also giving rise to certain defined rights, but in a context marked by a certain degree of confusion, as demonstrated below.

In 1951, in the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations adopted the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in order to establish legal protections for the war's eleven million displaced people. The Convention was amended with a Protocol in 1967 to bring it into a more contemporary context, but the overall foundation remains those rights defined in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and the legally binding UN Conventions that elaborated them. On the seventieth anniversary of the 1948 Declaration, their universality was defended anew, as well as warnings of increasing attacks on the rights contained within.[13] States that ratify UN legal instruments are bound to uphold them, but the state can and does renege on its duties, especially concerning non-citizens. Indeed, states have get-out clauses.

> While the core human rights standards apply equally to migrants and non-migrants, regardless of their legal status in a country, and prohibit discrimination on the basis of national origin . . . / . . . there are exceptions to these rules. International human rights law does allow States to treat citizens and non-citizens differently if the difference in treatment serves a legitimate State objective and is proportional to its achievement.[14]

Apart from the right to free movement in the host country, to safety and security, the right to a family life, and the right to own property (all of

which are denied in some countries, especially those that illegally detain or "warehouse" refugees), crucially one of the most prized rights is the right for refugees to work. Artists who have been persecuted due to their free artistic expression will almost certainly have made a living, or at least part of their living, through their artistic, or arts-affiliated, work, such as teaching, broadcasting or writing. Denying permission to continue their artwork to an artist who lacks the "correct" status, means not only denying them of the means to be independent of state financial aid, but also denying them of their *raison d'être*—why they make art, why they had to leave their home and whatever they want to artistically express in their new home.

> The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees accords refugees the right to work but many host countries are reluctant to allow this right. This reluctance reflects varying concerns about labour market distortion and limited capacity to absorb new labour, the crowding of certain sectors, availability of jobs for citizens, reduction in wages and decline in working conditions. Host governments may also be swayed by popular opposition to refugee rights to work and by security concerns about large-scale refugee populations settling and working. Of the 145 States Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention, almost half declare reservations, and even States that grant the right to work usually impose conditions on access to labour markets. The same limitations apply to many of the 48 States that are not States Parties to the Refugee Convention.[15]

The 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration held out some promise regarding a common approach to problems faced by migrants awaiting status confirmation, including the right to work. It is a non-binding document that was intended to be approved and ratified by all of the UN member states that had been party to the long negotiations. Although all 193 countries approved the text, only 164 formally approved it, with President Trump refusing for the United States, followed by Hungary, Austria, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Chile and Australia, alongside twelve abstentions, almost certainly for some of the reasons cited above.[16] Yet, recent research indicates that populations are willing to accept incoming migrants if they are seen to be actively making efforts to integrate.[17] Studies found that local populations, while sceptical, fearful or angry about political, economic and social issues in their countries, often also feel a deep-seated warmth or responsibility for welcoming refugees and are anti-racist. Those who might be called the "conflicted, or anxious middle," in terms of attitudes, can change given more information, closer contact with refugees and confidence that integration can be achieved.

A SENSE OF CITIZENSHIP

Alongside the critiques of legally defined citizenship in a globalized world, and the conflicted imbrication of human, citizens and refugee rights, there are other, broader notions that describe a *sense* of citizenship, not embroiled with states and legislation, bureaucracies and administrative mechanisms. These concepts focus on behaviors and social contributions that can lay claim to a socially responsible form of citizenship. *Enacting European Citizenship* describes individuals and groups enacting citizenship when they demand rights and "invest themselves in overcoming whatever injustices seem most important and related to their social lives, and dedicate their time and energy accordingly."[18] This enacting of citizenship happens even if—or perhaps especially when—those enacting themselves as citizens are not legally defined as such. Rewording Arendt's famous observation on WWII's stateless refugees whose lack of civic status of citizenship meant they were excluded from enjoying rights and from belonging to a political community, Isin and Saward suggest that, "What enacting citizenship then means is that people perform their right to *claim* rights by asking questions about justice and injustice."[19]

Isin and Saward define acts of citizenship not so much as the day-to-day established "routine social actions," such as voting or military service, which they describe as *active citizenship*. They examine what they call *activist citizenship*, comprised of "acts [that] introduce a rupture in the given by being creative, unauthorized and unconventional." Such acts of citizenship can include "movements of bodies such as collusions, evasions, clashes, demonstrations, refusals, processions, marches and so on."[20] These acts can be enacted or performed across territorial borders or boundaries; they can overlap, and they can connect to other sites. Referencing Judith Butler, they write, "What is politically significant about acts is . . . the moment in which a subject—a person, a collective—asserts a right or entitlement to a liveable life when no such prior authorization exists, when no clearly enabling convention is in place."[21]

What is important here is the idea that the legal, state-linked definition of citizenship is not the only conceivable one. Citizenship can be enacted (or performed) by the action of claiming rights, identifying injustice and calling for justice. In Arendt's words, it is exercising "the right to have rights," or in Butler's, "asserting an entitlement to a liveable life,"[22] and doing it in a dynamic, public, visible way that causes a rupture in the established order of things. It can also transcend political or territorial borders. This is, of course, precisely what artists whose work speaks truth to power, and who thus become persecuted artists impacted by involuntary displacement, do. Their art-making is a citizenship act, performed by a non-citizen still lack-

ing civic status, that engenders a dynamic moment of rupture in a context of trans-territoriality. Through their artistic interventions, these artists demand the right, for themselves and for their fellow citizens, to question dominant narratives and challenge repression. They claim the right for free expression guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its subsequent UN Conventions, to seek out, have access to, express and diffuse opinions and information, including artistic works, freely.

HUMAN RIGHTS: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION. WHO DEFENDS; WHO VIOLATES; WHEN AND WHY ARE ARTISTS AT RISK?

Analyzing the situations of persecuted artists opens a perspective on a range of human rights, which includes freedom of expression, and of which freedom of *artistic* expression, or artistic freedom, is an integral part. Human rights also include cultural, economic, social and political rights (and others, such as children's and women's), all of which are detailed in separate UN Conventions. This section looks at some relevant rights and who perpetrates violations of them. It describes the role of the human rights defender (which can include artists) and existing protection mechanisms for defenders, especially relocation, as well as problems arising from the relocation of artists.

In the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 deals with freedom of expression, stating that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."[23] In subsequent UN Conventions (binding international legislation for countries that have signed them), such as the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[24] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[25] these rights are reiterated and further elaborated legally. Some of the rights that are pertinent to artists include the right to take part in cultural life, the right to freedom of expression and to creative activity; the right to international cultural collaboration; the right to freedom of movement (artists' mobility); the right to education and training; the right to the economic fruits of one's labour (including artist's copyright); and the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly (which can include exhibitions and performances).

Importantly for those who had been advocating for the protection of artists for some time in Europe, the 2013 "European Union Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline" specifically mentioned artistic expression alongside the more commonly cited journalists and others whose risk is more widely made visible.[26]

In her 2013 UN Special Report, *The Right to Freedom of Artistic Expression and Creativity*, the then–UN special rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed, defined *freedom of artistic expression* as:

> to be free from obstacles that impede the flourishing of artistic creativity, that carry an aesthetic and/or symbolic dimension, using different media including, but not limited to, painting and drawing, music, songs and dances, poetry and literature, theatre and circus, photography, cinema and video, architecture and sculpture, performances and public art interventions, etc., irrespective of whether their content is sacred or profane, political or apolitical, or whether it addresses social issues or not.[27]

Ironically, in the majority of cases, the perpetrator of the human right abuses is the state, that very institution that by law is charged with upholding the international instruments that protect human rights (as well as granting the status that guarantees them). States may fail to enforce international laws they have signed, fail to protect artists or fail to punish those who repress artists. What is more, governments use or selectively interpret various laws as pretexts to silence artists. These can include sedition, anti-discrimination or hate speech; terrorism; disturbance of the public order; blasphemy; laws against fake news; or obscenity.

In addition to the state, non-state perpetrators who target artists may include educational institutions (firing teachers); mass media, broadcasting, telecommunications, and production companies (banning or not diffusing work); unions (prohibiting an artist from working by denying membership); armed extremists and organized crime (drug mafia and gangs); religious authorities and traditional leaders (issuing condemnations of work or artists); corporations, distribution companies and retailers/sponsors (big multinationals suing artists for breach of copyright); civil society groups, associations and so on (censorship of the mob or street censorship).

ARTISTS-AT-RISK AND CENSORSHIP

Artist-at-risk is the term commonly used to describe artists whose human rights are abused, who are being persecuted due to their visible, public artworks or practices that encourage their communities to question authority; they may be standing up for the social rights of their community or calling out other injustices. They are claiming rights, calling for justice and highlighting injustice in creative ways that invite people to think about what is happening.

When describing violations against the human rights of artists, the umbrella term *censorship* is used, but there are degrees ranging from the obstruc-

tive to the deadly. Human rights organisations have signaled that violations to freedom of expression are the first warning signs of increasing overall repression.[28] Indirect censorship of artists can include loss of subsidy or sponsorship; loss of work or presentation premises, such as loss of exhibitions or performance bookings or lack of police protection. Censorship of the market happens when publishers are afraid to publish or when creating, maintaining and developing audiences are obstructed through bans of the work.[29] Freedom of mobility is threatened when artists are denied visas or banned from entry.[30]

In her 2017 UN report on the Impact of Fundamentalism and Extremism on the Enjoyment of Cultural Rights, current UN special rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Karima Bennoune, describes some of the situations in which artists are targeted, stating that abuses

> often involve attempts at cultural engineering aimed at redesigning culture based on monolithic world views, focused on "purity" and enmity toward "the other," policing "honour" and "modesty," claiming cultural and moral superiority, imposing a claimed "true religion" or "authentic culture" along with dress and behavior codes often alien to the lived cultures of local populations, stifling freedom of artistic expression and curtailing scientific freedom.[31]

In asking what artists do to invite such targeting and what are the consequences, there are many examples and just as many consequences: Some stay in the dangerous territory, some leave and some are killed.

Artists face danger and even death by artistically expressing alignment with values of democratic citizenship, human rights and social justice. They raise questions about existing political, religious or social power structures. They may have aligned themselves with out-of-favor political parties by accepting grants, commissions or university posts, or they may have accepted subsequently outlawed foreign funding for arts projects. Some have explored sensitive periods or questionable behaviors in their countries' histories. Often, they have merely responded artistically to their own moral imperative to react to an intolerable outrage. Ramy Essam is an Egyptian rock musician who, in 2011, played his songs to the millions of people gathering in Tahrir Square demanding freedoms and the resignation of then-President Mubarak. Threatened with imprisonment and having received death threats, he fled to safe haven in Europe, where he continues to sing, promoting gender equality, freedom, social justice, equity, health care, minority rights, education and peace. His colleague and collaborator, Galal El-Behairy, a lyricist and poet, is still in prison in Egypt.[32]

Censorship of the street or censorship of the mob is demonstrated when, for example, a social group threatens or destroys artworks, or blocks public entry to an artistic event. In 2010, in Turkey, contemporary art exhibitions

began to be targets for extremist religious groups who attacked galleries and destroyed artworks. In one case, an exhibition called *Free Zone Istanbul*, part of a contemporary dance and performance festival organised annually by a Turkish cultural foundation, was attacked. Artist Rosa Bosch, the designer of the exhibition, stated, 'Each object in the exhibition has a question, which can be answered in different ways. It is doable to . . . / . . . discuss about them but the impossibility of a discussion is a sign of some dogmas. It saddened me to experience such a case while working on a project that aims to create and share discussion.'[33]

At-risk artists or their loved ones are often threatened or physically harmed or maimed. Very often political party–affiliates, police, military, government or religious groups will threaten artists' parents, siblings or partners in order to intimidate the artist to cease making or diffusing work they deem provocative. In a confidential case I worked on in 1993, film censors, knowing a young filmmaker's father had a heart condition, threatened to beat his father in an attempt to stop a film being made. The filmmaker eventually left the country with a scholarship to study film. In another case, Richard Djif, a Cameroonian filmmaker who had made a political satire, was kidnapped for some days by political loyalists, his finger was cut off and he was left by the roadside as a warning. He is still active in his home country.[34]

Artists are put in prison, or left in prison for years, in the hope that their public will forget them. Ashraf Fayadh is a Saudi-born Palestinian artist and poet who was imprisoned on weak and contested charges of blasphemy in a book of his poetry, in a series of court cases that called for his death and then later for 800 to 1,000 lashes and eight to ten years in prison. On hearing the initial court decision, Ashraf's father died of a heart attack. Despite, or because of, international outcries and campaigns for his release, Ashraf has been repeatedly put into solitary confinement, each time following international social media criticism of his treatment by the Saudis.[35]

Artists are arrested; their works are censored and banned from publication, presentation and diffusion, thus preventing them from earning a living; or they are simply and swiftly murdered. In Pakistan's Swat Valley, home of generations of musicians, singers and dancers whose cultural tradition is to provide music at weddings, the Taliban and its sympathizers are responsible for many assassinations and attacks on musicians.[36] Mark Weil was a Ukrainian/Russian Uzbek theatre director and founder of the Ilkhom Theatre company in Tashkent. His work covered a range of issues, and above all, encouraged audiences to think openly about contemporary social issues such as gender and religion. He was beaten and stabbed to death in the hallway of his apartment building. Although some men were eventually charged for the crime, members of the theatre company believe this was a government

coverup and those arrested were scapegoats.[37] Juliano Mer-Khamis was a successful actor/director/filmmaker, of mixed Israeli Jewish/Palestinian and Christian parentage. He developed the Freedom Theatre from a youth project established by his mother in Jenin, in the West Bank of the Palestinian Territories. A mixed-discipline arts centre, Freedom Theatre encouraged children in the Jenin Refugee Camp to reason, analyze and think independently in a context of strict proscriptions. Again, various suspects for his assassination have, in turn, been accused, but according to those close to him, the case is not definitively solved and is likely to have been politically or religiously motivated.[38] Whereas writers have long been accepted as defending human rights in their work, it is only relatively recently that the case has been made for artists in other disciplines.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND TEMPORARY RELOCATION

As more and more artists of all disciplines today are involved in socially or politically engaged work that 'speaks truth to power,' directly or indirectly promoting human rights, more artists could become at risk. The continuing interest and recent increase in arts school courses on socially or politically engaged work is a testimony to the spread of this art practice. Increasing numbers of artists in conflict or national revolution situations are using their art to support human rights, free expression and democratic values. Statistics are hard to come by. Very few organisations collect them, and they do not currently collaborate and cross-reference data, so a coherent picture is difficult to produce. Freemuse, an international organisation that uses a human rights approach to defend artistic freedom, has, since 2014, attempted to establish some baseline statistics through its annual State of Artistic Freedom reports. In 2017, whilst citing 533 verified cases of illegal censorship and persecution in seventy-eight countries, Freemuse admitted that this "is a big tip of a big iceberg," as there are many more cases that go unreported.[39] However, reported numbers are rising, likely due to the growing visibility of the phenomena and the fact that it is beginning to be reported. The 2019 edition details 673 cases of violation of artistic freedom in eighty countries.[40] Alongside this, for the last twenty years but accelerating in the last ten, there has been a gradual but definite movement for NGOs dedicated to free speech—such as PEN or Index on Censorship, who have traditionally only supported writers—to join together with arts advocates to serve artists of all disciplines whose artworks defend democratic, human rights and social justice values, and who are persecuted. Although there are many examples of persecution

of artists and repression of free artistic expression in the Global North, the majority of artists whose situations are grave enough to warrant fleeing the country and securing safe relocation elsewhere come from the Global South and head to the Global North.

If artists can demonstrate that their artwork or art practices defend human rights (or a human right) and that expressing this has made them a target for human rights abuses, they may be considered in the category of HRD (human rights defender). In the definition below, note the requirement to "act," acting to claim rights.

> "Human rights defender" is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights. Human rights defenders are identified above all by what they do . . . / . . . To be a human rights defender, a person can act to address any human right (or rights) on behalf of individuals or groups. Human rights defenders seek the promotion and protection of civil and political rights as well as the promotion, protection and realization of economic, social and cultural rights . . . / . . . Human rights defenders can be any person or group of persons working to promote human rights, ranging from intergovernmental organizations based in the world's largest cities to individuals working within their local communities. Defenders can be of any gender, of varying ages, from any part of the world and from all sorts of professional or other backgrounds.[41]

In 1998, the UN passed a non-legally binding Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, affirming that, "State parties to the Declaration have a duty to protect HRDs against violence, retaliation and intimidation as a consequence of their human rights work. The duty to protect is not limited to actions by State bodies and officials but extends to actions of non-State actors, including corporations, fundamentalist groups and other private individuals."[42] In 2000, the UN created the mandate for the UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs, monitoring and investigating cases of abuse and encouraging states to implement key universal international human rights instruments, and in 2009 the UN mandate of Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights was created.[43] The two Special Rapporteurs now work closely together.

NGOs in the human rights and free speech sector have done much over the last decade to develop methods to protect HRDs who are subject to serious persecution. Persecuted artists have increasingly been assisted with these resources. They include emergency grants for legal, medical and psychosocial care, as well as so-called temporary relocation to quickly bring the defender (or artist) out of immediate danger, or for a period of rest and recuperation, or for additional training and support.

In 2012, Nicolaj Sønderby produced a report for the EU, entitled, "Mapping of Temporary Shelter Initiatives for Human Rights Defenders in Danger,

In and Outside the EU."[44] The report explored the increasing use of relocation and the inclusion of artists-at-risk who are considered as defending human rights. The Mapping report set the stage for the EU's EIDHR (European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights) to continue and to improve its financial support to programmes in collaboration with human rights NGOs, cities, regions and universities that offer protection, defense and relocation to defenders. Some of these programmes specifically include writers and artists. The mapping report led to the creation of an EU exchange platform for NGOs and others who organize temporary relocation to HRDs globally.

Temporary relocation entails assisting the defender to leave the situation of danger and facilitating their stay in a so-called safe haven, or safe house, that may be in the same, a neighboring or a different country. Funding programmes, both private (e.g., NGOs and foundations) and public (e.g., the EU's DEVCO—the Directorate General for International Development and Cooperation) can offer or lead to funds for emergency assistance. Cases are rigorously verified: The HRD (including artists) must prove through documentation that they are facing a real and serious threat related to their work defending human rights.

On the local level, some municipalities and universities have long been active in shelter city movements for intellectuals, scholars and human rights activists at risk. A number of shelters have been established for persecuted artists. The original International Network of Cities of Asylum (INCA) was founded in 1993 by the International Parliament of Writers (IPW) in response to the assassination of writers in Algeria and elsewhere, and although the IPW was dissolved in 2005, the initiative continued, led by a newly formed network of cities, ICORN (International Network of Cities of Refuge, now numbering over seventy cities). In 2014, ICORN's membership decided to offer residencies not only to writers, but to artists of all disciplines. Over the same period, there has been a substantial increase in the numbers of artists' residencies, temporary studios or workspaces intended to give artists focused time for reflection and creation. Although only a fraction of these offer places to at-risk artists, there are increasing numbers of spaces open to artists who must be relocated to safety. Classic human rights defenders' residencies have opened to qualifying artists, and new programmes have recently been created, such as the Artists' Protection Fund based in the United States and the Martin Roth Initiative based in Germany. All have selection criteria and procedures, and all believe that temporary relocation, providing space and time to work away from threat, is useful for an artist who is facing danger due to the nature of their artwork or practice. Other initiatives have started to appear, such as the relatively new Artists at Risk Connection platform based at PEN America, and the annual Safe Havens conference, organised each December, bringing

together artists-at-risk, arts associations, human rights and free speech NGOs, lawyers and public authorities to share information and good practice.

Thus, we see more paradoxes: States have the power to grant rights-giving status, but they can also withhold those rights; yet on the other hand, they have a duty to protect those who act to claim rights.

ISSUES CONCERNING RELOCATION OF ARTISTS

While relocation is a crucial safeguard, there are concerns. Although there is usually a honeymoon period marked by feelings of relief and freedom, depending on the degree of trauma experienced and the degree to which an artist has an international network and profile, a relocation is generally not an end, but the beginning of a series of challenges. Some of the issues associated with temporary relocation for artists are coming to the surface. Some of these highlight the North/South divide, others are questions of equitable access and professional development support, still others are related to appropriate care for the trauma that the artists may have experienced, and some are linked to the lack of civic status, and thus obstructions to their rights.

There is the question of artistic brain drain. The overwhelming majority of artists-at-risk residencies are in the Global North, particularly in Europe, where there is a prevalence of public subsidies and grants. HRD NGOs and others have become aware that for many reasons including language, culture and proximity to home and loved ones, it is advisable to relocate within the defender or artist's home region. There are some, but few, ICORN cities in the Global South, notably in Brazil and Mexico, with potential for others in Africa. Other regional initiatives, such as el Mawred al Thaqafy (Arab Culture Resource), have started to support safe havens and artists' protection projects. Yet supporting at-risk artists may compromise the safety of the regional organisation, and various countries are making it illegal to accept foreign funding, especially for projects that support human rights or free speech. Thus, for the moment and despite current efforts to support regional responses, the Global North countries are the most frequent destinations, and Global South initiatives must keep a low, sometimes secretive, profile in order to continue.

Relocation is usually for a limited period from a few weeks, up to (more rarely) one or two years. Artists are most often hosted in artistic residencies, where they may continue to do their artistic work, or again, more rarely, offered a scholarship for further artistic education. Yet, it is an open secret that most "temporary relocation" is not temporary at all, but long-term or even permanent.[45] In many cases, it is impossible to return to the home country if

the danger has not passed. This has been seen in the follow-up to the Arab Spring revolutions—in Egypt, for example, where the government and military have ensured a repressive state security environment. Turkey is another case where artists and intellectuals are as much in danger now as when the current government began its purge of opponents. The last few years have seen Myanmar open its doors to free expression, including for artists, only to close them down now very severely.

Despite HRD relocation programmes that include preparation for the return home and potential dangers, the relocated defenders and artists often find the danger is too great. In these cases, they may be helped to search for a second residency or a third and so on, or to seek political asylum (although this is always advised only as a very last resort). It can take years for civic status to be decided—then eventually granted—during which time the artist may have no status in the host country, and thus not be able to claim the rights granted only when the status is received. This is where public policies designed to support artists' careers and development, or policies that aim to regulate immigration, can pose obstacles. Most arts councils are mandated to grant funds only to legal citizens. Many countries do not allow asylum seekers to earn money or grants. Applying for refugee status can take years. If an artist "temporarily" relocated cannot go back, what legal status can they obtain in the host country, how long will this take, how will they continue to exercise their "right to claim rights" and how will that affect their artistic work?

If artists realize that they cannot return home, how do they compete in an artistic landscape with many local artists and relatively fewer funds? Who is their audience once they have changed their environment? Is it their old public, from whom they are now distanced, or a new local public, with whom they may not share a perspective? Which gatekeepers (museum or gallery directors, curators, performance programmers, festival directors, publishers, etc.) will understand their aesthetic, which may be very different from the local one, and promote them? How do they learn to work the subsidy system, learn to use both the local language and the arts jargon, and find enough work to support themselves?

Artists need to keep working as artists, even if they have to flee danger in order to feel their work has value. Specialized refugee psychologists testify that in order to avoid mental and emotional stress, refugees need to feel their sacrifice has value, and is justified as contributing to the good of their community or family.[46] It is therefore far better to host artists within an artistic milieu than a general refugee or HRD facility. But arts residency staff need to be trained and competent to address some of the complex issues these artists may carry, such as hidden trauma or extreme worry about family members.

When an artist arrives at a site of relocation, they will have been through an extreme experience and will start another. Most artists, at risk in their context, do not realize the danger until it is very late. They need to find a place of safety. They may go from one hiding place to another in their own country until they have exhausted their friends' and colleagues' hospitality. They may leave on their own, as an ordinary refugee, alone or with others. Depending on the country of arrival (and we see policies hardening), they may be lucky and get a time-limited visa, or get invited to a short-term artists' residency, a training or higher education course, or even a temporary teaching post in another country. In any case, where they arrive, they do not belong; they are not citizens, according to the legal definitions. They do not belong as those with generations of roots in that place belong. They are deemed "foreigners." They may be asylum seekers, migrant workers or guest lecturers, or they may be simply called, in the more benign term, "newcomers." If they have fled persecution, it is likely that they will not be able to return to their country of origin, at least not in the short- or even medium-term. They are "exiles." Their lived experience of displacement is what they cannot help but carry, and as artists, offer, to their host societies. Although displaced from their home countries, they are the opposite of what, at the 2016 Conservative Party conference, the British Prime Minister Theresa May called, "a citizen of nowhere." I will argue that they can, and do, embody, enact or perform a certain sense of citizenship.

"Artists impacted by displacement," as defined in the introduction to this chapter, is a working title I currently use, although constantly inviting feedback from artists who may fit the description. My definition necessarily requires a movement that is, to a significant extent, involuntary, due to an untenable situation in the artist's home location. (This is also the definition of exile.) There are numerous variations and situations involved in the decision to leave a home base under duress. Some artists, seeing the writing on the wall, for example, of intolerance to their gender or community orientation, political ideas or religious views, may leave before being pushed, as it were—they can observe others' fates, or the general political, social or even economic climate that will eventually force them to face danger and/or abandon their artistic work. Whereas a migrant is anyone who has moved from their home for any reason, a refugee has moved to escape conflict, persecution or other factors that put them in need of international protection and lead to justifiable fears of a return home. As we have seen, however, the official status of "refugee" is not assumed; it needs to be granted by the hosting state. Those awaiting the decision on their request to a state for this protection, and thus, their official refugee status, are called asylum seekers. Artists impacted by displacement may fall into any of these categories—they may be migrant

artists studying abroad; they may have moved to a country where their artistic work can continue. They may have already nourished and networked an artistic career on an international level. Some artists may leave impending difficulties via a totally legitimate artists residency, scholarship, performance tour, showcase, arts festival or conference. And then they may stay. Like anyone in exile, they will develop perspectives on their experiences, and like all artists, their experiences, whether physical, intellectual or spiritual, will be present in some way in their work: Their dynamic, public acts rupture accepted ways of thinking and invite reflection. Many feed into a globalised art scene and discourse, with aesthetics not only shaped by local influences and cultural norms, but underpinned by a wider, cross-border and global frame of reference. Some will exercise their art practice by creating closely and interactively with participants, while others will prefer to offer their created works to a public that can face and reflect on it as it stands.

Artists' freedom of artistic expression is protected under the international human rights regime, and when they are themselves persecuted because their art promotes recognised human rights, they can be considered as human rights defenders and be supported with emergency funds and relocation to safety. However, there are legitimate concerns for artists who have been relocated. Some of these directly relate to the loss of rights if they do not have civic status in the new host country, if they are neither citizens nor refugees. An understanding of an artist-at-risk, or any artist impacted by displacement, as fulfilling a civic role by providing a type of "bridging citizenship," might be useful in valorizing their contribution to civic life and provide a pathway to more inclusive policies.

ARTISTIC, PARTICIPATIVE AND SOCIALLY ENGAGED CITIZENSHIP

There are various explorations of citizenship related to art and artists using terms such as *artistic citizenship*, *artivism* and *citizen artists*. Although socially engaged art practice has long been a staple of the arts curriculum and the arts sector, a renewed and growing interest by a new generation has resulted in more recent university and other artists' training programmes' specialist courses.[47] In the United States, the Aspen Institute Arts Program defines *citizen artists* as those who engage in proctive participatory practices, as well as those who take a more formal or personal path, as:

> Individuals who reimagine the traditional notions of art-making, and who contribute to society either through the transformative power of their artistic abilities, or through proactive social engagement with the arts in realms including

> education, community building, diplomacy and healthcare . . . [This includes] citizen artistry and musicianship, largely founded in the ideals of empathetic connections between artists and communities, as well as inspiration, imagination and transformation.[48]

In the introduction to *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis*, editors Elliott, Silverman and Bowman argue against the eighteenth-century European "arts for art's sake" justification for art, which imagines that the intrinsic or aesthetic quality of art is the only legitimate one. While not committing themselves to a strict definition of *artistic citizenship*, the book sets out to examine and demonstrate examples of ethical art-making, by "conscientious artistic citizens," and "art practices that implicate responsibilities to each other and to our collective identities."[49] Underlining their arguments with the premise that the arts are essential, fundamental social endeavors, they write,

> The arts are made by and for people, living in real worlds involving conflicts large and small. As such, the arts are also and invariably embodiments of people's political and ideological beliefs, understandings, and values, both personal and collective. Accordingly, artistic endeavors involve a special kind of citizenship—civic responsibility to conceive of and engage in them with a view to the particular social "goods" they embody or nurture. The arts are rich human actions replete with human significance and, by extension, ethical responsibilities.[50]

Another clearly political perspective on socially engaged arts practice is given by Grant H. Kester. Using examples of politically engaged theatre, he defines *the aesthetic* as "the relationship between self and other; subjective or interior and social or exterior experience." He continues:

> For me the aesthetic is, in a way, the missing piece of modern political theory, as it raises essential questions about how we come to think differently about our condition from the perspective of immediate, somatic experience, how we form a sense of social solidarity or antagonism, and how we come to both envision and feel new political and social forms. At the core of the modern concept of the aesthetic is the principle of autonomy, which marks out the space within which new forms of agency and new forms of creative or emancipatory thought might be cultivated.[51]

Kestzer echoes the idea of creating a reflective rupture. Envisioning and feeling new political and social forms also brings to mind Agamben's "new political community" (Agamben 2000) or art critic, curator and artistic director of Rome's MAXXI museum, Hou Hanru, as he identifies refugees as creating new conditions of culture,

> . . . migrants turn their "exile" into a process of engaging and negotiating with urban/suburban spaces. Culturally and physically, their presence and active involvement strongly changes the social and cultural structures of the city in order to produce new cities. . . . Internally the structure of the population, public behavior, values, etc. are becoming increasingly diversified and transformed.[52]

This process includes the work that artists who have been obliged to move will have created in their home countries and will continue to do, acting as social bridges, in the new host country, artistic projects that, in Rosa Bosch's words, "aim to create and share discussion" and that encourage people to think and express freely. It includes work that is dynamic, disruptive, connects across territories, claims rights for self and others and changes status quo perceptions.

Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis contains a series of chapters by contributors who, to a large degree, discuss diverse forms of participatory, engaged art, that is, art that directly engages with participants who have agency in the process. On the other hand, the Aspen definition also speaks specifically of artists who are not necessarily engaging "proactively . . . in various realms including education, community development . . . ," but rather "through the transformative power of their artistic abilities."[53] For me, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but rather they are flexible points on a moving scale, and many artists place themselves on different points on the scale, adapting to their own artistic interests, their public and the context.

Many artists impacted by displacement very understandably do not wish to be seen as victims, refugees or objects of pity, and they object to the role that is sometimes placed on them to portray this. As "A," an artist relocated to the West from a country in civil war, due to attempts by militias to frame and arrest him, says, "All they want me to do is come and talk about being a refugee. I don't like to do it, but they pay me, and, well, I need money too. But what I really want to do is to study and become the best theatre artist I can be." Yet aside from theatre projects and continued drama study, "A" willingly volunteers artistic and organisational services in projects that build bridges between the disapora and the new local host community. "B" is a novelist whose gender-oriented stories made flight to safety necessary. His work as a novelist continues privately, even while he also works part-time helping other artists who had to flee danger to integrate into the community. And "C," a feminist writer who also had to flee persecution, now devotes herself entirely to socially engaged writing initiatives with migrant women in her city.

Yet another approach has been taken by Be Aware Productions, a Turkish theatre and film production company based in Wales. Involved in a 2012 digitally interactive play in Turkey called *Mi Minör* with a significant social

Figure 9.1. Untitled.
Source: Sulafa Hijazi. Image: Sulafa Hijazi, 2017.

media presence, the three associated with it—actress Pinar Ogun, writer Meltem Arikan and director/actor Memet Ali Alibora—had to seek safe haven (and have since been condemned in absentia to life imprisonment without parole). The play was set in a fictional country, supposedly a democracy but in reality a dictatorship, where the musical note Mi was banned. During the 2013 protests in Gezi Park and elsewhere, the play was condemned as a rehearsal to topple the government, in a wide-ranging smear campaign orchestrated by pro-government media.[54] Although they had not done so

in Turkey, they decided to form their own production company once in the UK. One of their plays, *Enough Is Enough*, deals with sexual harassment and the empowerment of girls, and it has toured their new host country in mostly deprived and remote territories. Pinar Ogun relates, "In some areas, the team was shocked by the lack of interest in arts, but on the contrary in other areas, they observed the transformational power of it."[55] After the play one of the girls asked Pinar to teach her how to become a feminist. "It was like an answer to the everlasting question, 'why do we make theatre?'"[56] They have decided to use their own experience of repression to open the minds of the people where they are now. "Since coming to the UK, apart from some individual professional projects, they have done work on domestic violence, the Welsh language and identity. When their life sentences were announced in Turkey, their response was to say—look, we are working here as theatre makers, we've made our home here."[57]

Khaled Barakeh is a Syrian artist and cultural activist based in Berlin whose practice also spans the spectrum. Having already served in the Syrian Army, he studied art in Syria, then in Denmark. Facing his call-back to the Syrian Army, he was granted political asylum in Germany. With a base in conceptual art practice, he creates stunning images and installations, drawn on his personal life experience:

> . . . through acts of joining and separation, decontextualizing and reconstructing the narratives, blurring the lines between real and fiction and highlighting presence by absence—that of words, objects, individuals, victims, bodies. His art practice can be categorized as cultural hacking—revolving around both personal and social narratives, it often transforms pre-existing materials, objects and data in order to change their contexts through repetitive acts of transformation. Through these actions, Barakeh aims to create new environments for the audience, challenging their expectations and pre-existing assumptions.[58]

Barakeh certainly reflects his sociopolitical concerns, and the work itself is fully grounded in art theory and years of study of aesthetics. His lived experience of constrained migration, in any case, comes through in what he creates and in his extremely committed activities as curator and arts organiser, hosting a residency for at-risk artists, teaching art courses for artists impacted by displacement and speaking out on behalf of migrant and refugee artists, especially but certainly not limited to those from Syria. He has managed to build a practice that both reflects the inner creativity in his own solo works, as well as being totally committed to the multiple communities with whom he identifies.

I would argue that life experiences are inherent in an artist's work even if not directly depicted: Art asks us to reflect back ourselves, on its impact on

Figure 9.2. MUTE.
Source: Khaled Barakeh. Image: Guevera Namer, 2020.

us and our own experience. In the words of Ghanaian sculptor now based in Nigeria, El Anatsui:

> I think that art is something that should lend itself to constant recontextualization . . . / . . . While science class attempted to feed us information, art asked us to search for something from within ourselves. I believe the creative endeavor is about exploration. It is bound to be open-ended, divergent, and free to various contextualizations. People approach this work with different antecedents, and these are what enable them to read meaning into it, or not get any meaning at all, which is still not a waste of time.[59]

Anatsui also prefers the notion of interconnectivity to categorization by country or region of origin (and thus he reflects the transnational journeys of artists impacted by displacement). He continues:

> . . . interconnectivities [between places] have been largely economic, political, militaristic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and psychological. They have created a cauldron of experiences that impacts contemporary art and society.[60]

It is this 'cauldron of experiences' that artists impacted by displacement can also offer us, an 'interconnectivity' that invites those of us who have not been

dislocated, to connect on some level. If art elicits in us a response according to what we see or hear or feel in it, resonating with our own life experience, then the experience of forced displacement will connect to something in us and accordingly bring us a certain sensitivity and sensibility. This art-making is on another point on the scale; it invites the viewer, listener or reader to reflect on the human condition and their own resonance with it. This is illustrated well in an interview with Syrian philosopher and writer based in the UK, Odai Al Zoubi, regarding his book of short stories, *Silence*:

> I was actually criticized by friends and people who say that some of my stories in fact say nothing about the war, and I like this comment. Yes, they are not about the war per se, they don't tell you who's fighting whom, they don't tell you why we have a war. First of all, this is not what literature should do. . . . [The book] is about human communication and how sometimes silence might be a way to communicate with other people. There is an introduction where I talk about the different kinds of silence. There is silence when you don't need to utter any words because the person you're communicating with understands what you want to say without you talking. There is the silence that comes from a feeling that your words are pointless. There is no point in saying them because nobody would understand you. Sometimes, you don't talk because you're too tired or because you're too sad or you don't know what you want to say because you, yourself, are very confused.[61]

This nonparticipatory art-making is also a dynamic invitation and offer to the community or society to shake off habitual thoughts. It asks the one engaging with it to realize anew what it is like to be in that community or society, to consider identities, commonalities, differences and solidarities. Though two very different types of creators, El Anatsui's and Zoubi's words also relate to artists whose lives embody the experience of repression by a sovereign state that violates their human right to free expression, assembly and so on, either by persecuting them or failing to protect them, but whose artwork is not necessarily a direct or didactic depiction of this situation or their own political stance. In countries with harsh censorship laws, artists have learned to work more abstractly, using metaphor or allegory to address repression. Yet their artworks, for which they have been targeted, are still demonstrably dynamic cracks in the status quo.

Some artists impacted by displacement make work that does directly challenge injustice or claims rights, and some feel a personal need to use their arts skills with others who have gone through the same experience—they work in camps, or with migrant or refugee communities in the new host community. Another reaction by artists impacted by displacement is to make artwork that directly speaks to forced migration, its histories and legacies, or the fear, frustration, humiliation, political injustices or challenges to integration in a new

host country. Still others make work, motivated by the experiences they have had in their home country, that can raise self-awareness by people in the new host country of aspects of their histories or lives that they take for granted. Those whose legal status is still in question, or who are still struggling with the trauma associated by their persecution or flight, may have difficulties doing this type of work—for example, if they are in detention facilities where they cannot go out, or cannot do any work to earn money, or cannot travel to network with other artists or arts organisations. Many of them find a way—by volunteering, or with the support of other artists or artist-led initiatives. We might say they are enacting a kind of citizenship between non-citizens, a new form for a new citizenship of a community of not-yet citizens in the legal sense. A community nonetheless, whose mutual support, common challenges and collective dreams form a citizenry.

Most artists simply wish to make art, to be an artist, to give form or shape, whether in an object or in a practice, by creating a product or facilitating a process that expresses their will to create. Not all artists wish to focus on one singular aspect of their lives, such as the migration experience. They do not seek to be eternally identified with victimhood or suffering, labelled as "the refugee," but as an artist free to explore any artistic pathways and ideas where their inspiration takes them. Breaking free from simplistic and constraining labels imposed by others, however, does not mean leaving aside one's own experiential truths. These are the truths, or contradictions, confrontations, dilemmas or even joys or mysteries that may echo in us, who in turn, experience the work. The work of artists who live in involuntary exile, whose forced displacement has an impact on them, may have an impact on those of us in their new host communities, if only they have the necessary support to make, show and diffuse their work, and if we have the necessary mindset to engage reflectively with it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter aimed to set out a different notion of citizenship, going beyond or perhaps in parallel with its historical-legal meaning and the paradoxes that accompany the nation-state's behaviours and responsibilities. The chapter described a sense of citizenship that requires action, is publicly visible, calls out injustice and asserts rights, especially when they are not freely available. It involves breaking with established ways of thinking, seeing and ordering social life, may transcend borders and is enacted by one or more community members to benefit others. It is akin to a civic duty to inform, to educate, to broaden understandings, to honour the human spirit—and also to affirm, by

the exercise of them, universally recognised rights of freedom of expression, thought, opinion, belief and culture. The chapter described how artists whose artwork embodies these values, can see their own rights violated by repressive social or political perpetrators. Ironically, after experiencing persecution and flight, if relocated to a "safe" country, these artists may face the denial or postponement of the enjoyment of their rights in the "safe" country, at least or until such time as the host state grants (and sometimes it doesn't) official refugee or citizenship status. This can obstruct their ability to continue to do the very work they need to do to make sense of their lives and to offer us new perspectives of our lives and times. Yet artists impacted by displacement may engage in citizenship behaviors and actions in a variety of ways, explicitly or implicitly, whether by inviting participation in their art or offering artworks to be reflected upon. Their work and their actions connect their own life experiences to the new communities and societies of which they have become part.

The type of citizenship that artists impacted by displacement enact is extremely important to our societies today, especially when the artist's artwork or practice has been defending human rights whether overtly or indirectly. It calls into question the rise of xenophobia and populist nationalism that we see in many places today. It reminds us that we cannot take our freedoms for granted. It reminds us that even in our "free" countries, not everyone is free to enjoy the same supposedly human, guaranteed and universal rights. But this enacted citizenship also has the power to engage even with fearful exclusionist members of the public.

Artists impacted by displacement perform or enact this sense of citizenship as a civic or a public offering they would in any case normally provide, as any artist making work for audiences and participants. But this civic offer is informed by three experiences common to artists impacted by displacement no matter which path they have taken. The first is the experience of their homeland, its cultures and values, and the repression or conflict that has forced them away. The second is the experience of involuntary migration, whether logistically straightforward or not. The third is the experience of observing, confronting, engaging with, reflecting on and impacting the new, host society, its values and its cultures. Hou Hanru describes this as an ongoing, historical process:

> battles for cultural difference and exchange, and even hybridization, have never ceased to unfold on the streets. Social mobilization for coexistence and justice between different communities continues to play its role in the making of new localities. . . . Accordingly, the social and political claims of different "new" and "foreign" communities must be heard and cultural differences accepted and even promoted as a key element for the society to adapt to the global change. . . . At the very forefront of this battle are "immigrant" artists, especially those

> from non-Western parts of the world. They not only recount the story of exile, but also create new and innovative narratives of the new localities. . . . They propose new visions and scenarios of the reality-in-progress.[62]

This is the sense of a citizenship that bridges. Through their artwork and the inspiration and reflection in it, the artists impacted by displacement provide a bridge between here and there, now and then, and articulate the condition of being in-between. They link sites across national borders that interrogate national status quos, social injustice and obstacles to freedom. They do not simply observe, but they actually embody one of the most striking phenomena today—involuntary global migration, and its causes: intolerance, polarization, inequality, racism, armed conflict and climatic and other destabilizing changes threatening traditional livelihoods and ways of life. Their lives and work are real-time demonstrations of cultural diversity, plurality, equity (or inequity), decolonialization, the universality of human rights and free expression. In a current world context marked by the movement of peoples and the ideological provocations released in its wake, their civic gift is to make us think and see what we, who have not moved as they have, cannot see—what we will need in order to live, survive and thrive in this changed world. In Hanru and Scardi's view, "What unites them is an intercultural outlook that is not a deliberate choice, but a spontaneous response to the stimuli and influences of the different environments in which they have ended up living."[63] They represent, in Hanru's words:

> a new condition of culture lead[ing] to a new understanding of the notion of identity . . . / . . . It implies a de-identification of the established notion of identification that is often derived from one's dependence on the nation-state community, and a re-identification based on the very complex experience of every individual or group confronting and living with others along the routes of global travel in an attempt to resettle themselves in "new worlds."[64]

Artists who have been impacted by the experience of displacement display a sense of citizenship in their work that speaks, directly or indirectly, to this experience. They bridge the culture and values of their homeland, the experience of externally obliged migration and transit to one or sometimes more countries and of relocation in a host country with its own culture and values. Targeted by repression and violation of their basic, universally recognised human rights, whether freedom to express or freedom to live a dignified life, they claim rights for themselves and others, questioning authority and calling out injustice. Indeed, many are recognised as human rights defenders. They can be considered as enacting an activist citizenship as well as artistic citizenship. Even when their work does not speak explicitly of their concerns, or

when it is not directly participatory in physically or digitally engaging with participants, it still provides an educational, reflective, perspective-broadening service to the public. In doing so, they offer novel, audacious and honest observations of the state of citizenship and democracy.

NOTES

1. Roger Zetter and Héloise Ruadel, "Refugees Right to Work and Access to Labour Markets: Constraints, Challenges and Ways Forward," *Forced Migration Review Online*, 58 (June 2018), https://www.fmreview.org/economies/zetter-ruaudel.

2. OECD-ILO-IOM-UNHCR, *International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report to the G20*, 2019, https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/G20-migration-and-displacement-trends-and-policies-report-2019.pdf.

3. Kim Willsher, "Spider Man of Paris to Get French Citizenship," *Guardian*, 29 May 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/28/spider-man-of-paris-to-get-french-citizenship-after-rescuing-child.

4. "Italy Bus Attack: Salvini Approves Hero's Citizenship," BBC, 26 March 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47710443.

5. Bauman, Zygmunt, "Soil, Blood and Identity," *Sociological Review,* 40, no. 4 (1992): 675–701, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1992.tb00407.x.

6. Saskia Sassen, "Towards Post-Nationalist and Denationalized Citizenship," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 2002): 277, Doi.org/10.4135/9781848608276.n17.

7. Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 93.

8. Agamben, *Means*, 1.

9. Agamben, *Means*, 7.

10. Agamben, *Means*, 5.

11. Agamben, Giorgio, "Form-of-Life." In *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006): 91.

12. Agamben, "Form-of-Life," 94.

13. United Nations, General Assembly, Statement by Karima Bennoune, Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights at the 73rd Session of the General Assembly (23 October 2018), https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23762&LangID=E.

14. IJRC: *International Justice Resource Center*, n.d., "What Rights Do Migrants Have?" Accessed 15 November 2019, https://ijrcenter.org/thematic-research-guides/immigration-migrants-rights/ - WHAT_RIGHTS_DO_MIGRANTS_HAVE.

15. Zetter and Ruadel, "Refugees Rights."

16. IOM: *International Organisation for Migration*, "Global Compact for Migration," https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration.

17. Paul van Lange and Robert Böhm, "Support for refugees increases when refugees participate in integration programs," *Conversation*, 6 July 2008, https://theconversation.com/support-for-refugees-increases-when-refugees-participate-in-integration-programs-99270.

18. Engin F. Isin, and Michael Saward, ed. *Enacting European Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 22.

19. Isin and Saward, *Enacting*, 22.

20. Isin and Saward, *Enacting*, 23.

21. Isin and Saward, *Enacting*, 25.

22. Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004): 224.

23. UNDHR 1948, Art. 19.

24. ICCPR 1966, Art. 19.

25. ICESR 1966, Art. 15.1.a.

26. *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline*, Council of the European Union, Foreign Affairs Committee, Brussels, 12 May 2014, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf.

27. *The Right to Freedom of Artistic Expression and Creativity: Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights*, UN Human Rights Council, A/HRC/23/34, 14 March 2013, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/118/44/PDF/G1311844.pdf?OpenElement.

28. ICORN, PEN, Article 19, and conversations with author, 2009–2019

29. *2005 Convention Global Report: Reshaping Cultural Policies*, Paris: UNESCO, 2017. http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/reshaping-cultural-policies-2018-en.pdf.

30. *2005 Convention Global Report*.

31. *The Impact of Fundamentalism and Extremism on the Enjoyment of Cultural Rights: Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights*, UN Human Rights Council, A/HRC/34/56 (16 Janury 2017): 3, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/ImpactFundamentalismAndExtremism.aspx.

32. "Galal el-Behairy Egypt," PEN America. Last modified 24 January 2019, https://pen.org/advocacy-case/galal-el-behairy/.

33. Berna Ozgencil, "Another art exhibition attacked in Istanbul," *ANF News*, 17 October 2010, https://anfenglish.com/news/another-art-exhibition-attacked-in-istanbul-2189.

34. Africine, "Declaration by Cameroonian Artists and Activists," 2013, http://www.africine.org/?menu=art&no=11432.

35. "Ashraf Fayadh Saudi Arabia," PEN America. Last modified February 2016, https://pen.org/advocacy-case/ashraf-fayadh/.

36. Muhammad Rome, *Study on Effects of War and Repression of Musicians, Performers and the Public of SWAT, Pakistan* (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2016), http://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Swat-report2016.pdf.

37. Freedom Theatre company members, in conversation with the author, 2017.

38. Freedom Theatre company members, in conversation with the author, 2017.

39. Srirak Plipat, ed., *The State of Artistic Freedom, 2018* (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2018), https://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Freemuse-The-state-of-artistic-freedom-2018-online-version.pdf.

40. Srirak Plipat, ed, *The State of Artistic Freedom, 2019* (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2019), https://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SAF_2019_online.pdf.

41. "Who Is a Defender?" UNHCR: *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights*, n.d., https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/srhrdefenders/pages/defender.aspx.

42. Nicolaj Sønderby, *Mapping of Temporary Shelter Initiatives for Human Rights Defenders in Danger in and outside the EU Final Report* (London: GHK Consulting, 2012): 8, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/504_mapping_/504_mappingen.pdf.

43. Sønderby, *Mapping*, 8.

44. Sønderby, *Mapping*, 8.

45. NGO forum, NGO working group exchanges, in discussion with the author, 2014–2019.

46. Julia Bala, Binnie Kristal Andersson, Martin Roth Initiative, in discussion with the author, 2014–2019.

47. Tom Finkelpearl, *What We Made* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

48. "Citizen Artists," Aspen Institute, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/arts-program/citizen-artists/.

49. David J. Elliott, M. Silverman and W. D. Bowman, ed. *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

50. Elliott, Silverman and Bowman, *Artistic Citizenship*.

51. Grant H. Kester, "Hear, see, feel, change—In conversation with Grant H. Kester, professor of art history in San Diego and founding editor of *FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism*," interview by Erik Hagoort, *Metropolis M. Dutch Magazine for Contemporary Art*, 4 (2018), https://www.academia.edu/38207573/Hear_See_Feel_Change._In_conversation_with_Grant_H._Kester.

52. Hou Hanru and Gabi Scardi, ed. *Ovunque Andiamo/Wherever We go/Arte, Identità, Culture in Transito/Art, Identity and Culture in Transit* (Milan: Five Continents Editions, 2006).

53. "Citizen Artists."

54. Pinar Ogun, "Noticing the everyday taboos," Creative Mornings Cardiff, March 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWU9BGaFqXs.

55. Ogun, "Noticing."

56. Ogun, "Noticing."

57. Julia Farrington, Index on Censorship, in conversation with author, April 2019.

58. "Biography," Khaled Barakeh, http://www.khaledbarakeh.com.

59. El Anatsui, "Three Angles (or Sometimes You Catch a Crocodile): El Anatsui and Dee Briggs," interview by Jessica Lanay, *Bomb*, 18 May 2018, https://bombmagazine.org/articles/three-angles-or-sometimes-you-catch-a-crocodile-el-anatsui-and-dee-briggs-interviewed/.

60. Anatsui, "Three Angels."

61. Odai Al Zoubi, "Silence in the Syrian Limbo: An Interview with Odai Al Zoubi," interview by Raed Rafei, *Common*, 1 April, 2019, https://www.thecommononline.org/silence-in-the-syrian-limbo-an-interview-with-odai-al-zoubi/?fbclid=IwAR1URa8wfYXQUBYzYGvGGSq1A7_K4R_uC0x6_F0qo0i3hlxlQ4GZ6SGbuUg.

62. Hanru and Scardi, *Ovunque*, 13.

63. Hanru and Scardi, *Ovunque*, 17.

64. Hanru and Scardi, *Ovunque*, 11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Africine. "Declaration by Cameroonian Artists and Activists," 2013. http://www.africine.org/?menu=art&no=11432.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Means without End. Notes on Politics*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Agamben, Giorgio. "Form-of-Life." In *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, edited by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Alliance of Artists Communities. n.d. "History." https://www.artistcommunities.org/history.

Anatsui, El. "Three Angles (or Sometimes You Catch a Crocodile): El Anatsui and Dee Briggs." Interview by Jessica Lanay. *Bomb*, 18 May 2018, https://bombmagazine.org/articles/three-angles-or-sometimes-you-catch-a-crocodile-el-anatsui-and-dee-briggs-interviewed/.

Arendt, Hannah. *Imperialism*, Part II of *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951.

"Ashraf Fayadh Saudi Arabia," PEN America. Last modified February 2016. https://pen.org/advocacy-case/ashraf-fayadh/.

Bauman, Zygmunt. "Soil, Blood and Identity." *Sociological Review*, 40, no. 4 (1992): 675–701, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1992.tb00407.x.

"Biography," Khaled Barakeh, http://www.khaledbarakeh.com.

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. London: Routledge, 2004.

"Citizen Artists," Aspen Institute, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/arts-program/citizen-artists/.

Council of the European Union. Foreign Affairs Committee. *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline.* Brussels, 12 May 2014. Accessed 15 November 2019, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf.

Elliott, David J., Silverman, M. and Bowman, Wayne D. ed. *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Finkelpearl, Tom. *What We Made.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

"Galal el-Behairy Egypt," PEN America. Last modified 24 January 2019. https://pen.org/advocacy-case/galal-el-behairy/.

Hanru, Hou, and Gabi Scardi, ed. *Ovunque Andiamo/Wherever We go/Arte, Identità, Culture in Transito/Art, Identity and Culture in Transit*. Milan: Five Continents Editions, 2006.

ICCPR: *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. New York. 16 December 1966, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx.

ICESCR: *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. New York. 16 December 1966, https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx.

IJRC: *International Justice Resource Center*. n.d. "What Rights Do Migrants Have?" https://ijrcenter.org/thematic-research-guides/immigration-migrants-rights/-WHAT_RIGHTS_DO_MIGRANTS_HAVE.

IOM: *International Organisation for Migration*. n.d. "Global Compact for Migration," https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration.

Isin, Engin F., and Michael Saward, ed. *Enacting European Citizenship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

"Italy Bus Attack: Salvini Approves Hero's Citizenship," BBC, 26 March 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47710443.

Kester, Grant H. "Hear, see, feel, change—In conversation with Grant H. Kester, professor of art history in San Diego and founding editor of *FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism*." Interview by Erik Hagoort. *Metropolis M. Dutch Magazine for Contemporary Art*, 4 (2018). https://www.academia.edu/38207573/Hear_See_Feel_Change._In_conversation_with_Grant_H._Kester.

OECD-ILO-IOM-UNHCR, *International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report to the G20*. 2019, https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/G20-migration-and-displacement-trends-and-policies-report-2019.pdf.

Ogun, Pinar. "Noticing the everyday taboos," Creative Mornings Cardiff. March 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWU9BGaFqXs.

Ogun, Pinar. "Enough Is Enough." 2017, https://www.enoughisenough-theplay.com.

Ozgencil, Berna. "Another art exhibition attacked in Istanbul." *ANF News*, 17 October 2010, https://anfenglish.com/news/another-art-exhibition-attacked-in-istanbul-2189.

Plipat, Srirak, ed. *The State of Artistic Freedom 2018*. Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2018, https://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Freemuse-The-state-of-artistic-freedom-2018-online-version.pdf.

Plipat, Srirak, ed. *The State of Artistic Freedom 2019*. Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2019, https://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SAF_2019_online.pdf.

Rome, Muhammad. *Study on Effects of War and Repression of Musicians, Performers and the Public of SWAT, Pakistan*. Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2016. http://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Swat-report2016.pdf.

Sassen, Saskia. "Towards Post-Nationalist and Denationalized Citizenship." In *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*. Isin, Engin F., and B.S. Turner, ed. 277–91. London: Sage, 2002, Doi.org/10.4135/9781848608276.n17.

Sønderby, Nicolaj. *Mapping of temporary shelter initiatives for Human Rights Defenders in danger in and outside the EU Final Report.* London: GHK Consulting, 2012, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/504_mapping_/504_mapping_en.pdf.

UNDHR: *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*. New York. 10 December 1948, http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.

UN Human Rights Council, K. Bennoune. *The Impact of Fundamentalism and Extremism on the Enjoyment of Cultural Rights: Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights*. A/HRC/34/56. 15 February 2017, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/ImpactFundamentalismAndExtremism.aspx.

UN Human Rights Council, F. Shaheed. *The Right to Freedom of Artistic Expression and Creativity: Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights*. A/HRC/23/34. 14 March 2013, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/118/44/PDF/G1311844.pdf?OpenElement.

United Nations, General Assembly. *Statement by Karima Bennoune, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights at the 73rd session of the General Assembly*. 23 October 2018, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23762&LangID=E.

UNESCO. *2005 Convention Global Report 2018: Reshaping Cultural Policies*. Paris: UNESCO. 2017, http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/reshaping-cultural-policies-2018-en.pdf.

UNHCR: *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights*. n.d. "Who Is a Defender?" https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/srhrdefenders/pages/defender.aspx.

van Lange, Paul, and Robert Böhm. "Support for refugees increases when refugees participate in integration programs." 6 July 2008, https://theconversation.com/support-for-refugees-increases-when-refugees-participate-in-integration-programs-99270.

Willsher, Kim. "Spider Man of Paris to Get French Citizenship." *Guardian*. 29 May 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/28/spider-man-of-paris-to-get-french-citizenship-after-rescuing-child.

Zetter, Roger, and Héloise Ruadel. 2018. "Refugees Right to Work and Access to Labour Markets: Constraints, Challenges and Ways Forward." *Forced Migration Review*. June 2018, https://www.fmreview.org/economies/zetter-ruaudel.

Zoubi, Odai Al. 2019. "Silence in the Syrian Limbo: An Interview with Odai Al Zoubi." Interview by Raed Rafei. *The Common*. 1 April 2019, https://www.thecommononline.org/silence-in-the-syrian-limbo-an-interview-with-odai-al-zoubi/?fbclid=IwAR1URa8wfYXQUBYzYGvGGSq1A7_K4R_uC0x6_F0qo0i3hlxlQ4GZ6SGbuUg.

Chapter Ten

Migrants Performing Citizenship

Participatory Theatre and Walking Methods for Research

Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani, Maggie O'Neill and Tracey Reynolds

This chapter introduces a participatory arts-based research project with migrant families, reflecting on how we might think of this research as an act of citizenship. It argues that by working together with migrant mothers and young girls, as well as organisations that focus on the rights of migrant and Black and minority ethnic people, we can coproduce knowledge that challenges social exclusion and racist and sexist subjugation of migrant girls and mothers. This project has the potential not only to generate new knowledge and insights, but also to illustrate that participatory arts-based research can be considered an act of citizenship. This is because it contests existing forms of citizenship that inscribe privileges, and it brings into being new modes of rights and rights-claiming subjects.

There is currently increased interest in creative and participatory approaches to research. This is in part due to the decolonial challenge to extractive and procedural research practices, which treat research participants' knowledge as "raw material" for academics to "interpret" and add value.[1] While such decolonial critiques have been formulated with a view to challenging the ways in which indigenous communities have been targeted by the intertwining of colonial and research projects,[2] they also more broadly challenge the ways in which academic knowledge production is tied up with colonial conceptions and interests.[3] Another reason for the increasing engagement with creative and participatory research approaches comes as a result of the recognition of the sensual and affective aspects of knowledge.[4] Furthermore, there is a need to explore how social research methods can address embodied knowledge.[5] As creative methods are particularly apt at "resisting binary or categorical thinking,"[6] these methods are also helpful for questioning and challenging the strict delineation of categories of "researchers" and "research

participants" and the categorization of "migrants" versus "citizens," a key concern of our research project.[7]

This chapter, then, contributes to debates on creative methods, including arts-based methods and those used within a socially transformative framework.[8] Specifically, we explore the potential of participatory theatre and walking methods as acts of performative citizenship, bringing together different groups of research participants, arts practitioners, researchers and policy and practice.

First, we describe the Participatory Arts and Social Action Research Project on which we draw (PASAR). Second, we move on to discuss how we theorise performative citizenship to better understand the lives of migrant families. Third, we show how the arts-based methods of participatory theatre and walking used in this project can be fruitfully combined with theories of performative citizenship. Fourth, the chapter illustrates how our intergenerational and policy-oriented work with migrant families has enabled new conceptions of how migrant families can enact citizenship. The chapter concludes by summarizing the benefits of arts-based participatory methods for researching and enacting citizenship.

THE PARTICIPATORY ARTS AND SOCIAL ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

The Participatory Arts and Social Action Research Project (PASAR; http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar) aimed to gain a better understanding of how participatory action research approaches engage marginalised groups in research as coproducers of knowledge. Funded by the National Centre for Research Methods/Economic and Social Research Council, PASAR combined walking methods and participatory theatre to create a space for exploring, sharing and documenting processes of belonging and place-making that are crucial to understanding and enacting citizenship. Participatory action research, based on the principles of inclusion, valuing all voices and action-oriented interventions,[9] can contribute to the enactment of citizenship in two ways. First, by coproducing knowledge together with research participants, research can engage participants as citizens. Second, when researchers and participants work together to challenge the marginalization of research participants and make rights claims, research can become a citizenship practice.

The project created a model for bringing together practitioners and marginalized groups to engage with each other through creative and innovative methods for researching migrant families' citizenship, specifically arts-based participatory methods of walking stories and theatre. The project developed

methods and methodological knowledge of participatory theatre and walking methods. To do this, we included three strands in the project. First, we employed participatory methods with migrant parents and young people, exploring issues of intergenerational communication (strand 1). Second, we employed participatory methods with families affected by the No Recourse to Public Funds Policy (NRPF) to facilitate conversation of participants with policy-practice (strand 2). Building on this, the final strand (strand 3) developed training tools for social science research.[10]

In strand 1, we undertook three months of parallel weekly arts-based workshops with a group of mothers and a group of girls. We then brought both groups together, so they could show each other the scenes they developed, enabling a reflexive dialogue across generations through performance. In strand 2, we explored how theatre and walking methods can be used to research a particular policy issue and engage with policymakers and the people affected by the policy. We invited migrant mothers who are affected by the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) policy to explore and reflect on their experiences through theatre and walking methods. Later in the process, we organized a workshop in collaboration with Runnymede Trust that brought policymakers and practitioners into dialogue with the research team and mothers with no recourse to public funds. Here the participants presented their experiences through a short theatre performance piece. By showing their experiences, they gained a degree of control over how they presented their experiences. This facilitated a more equal level of discussions with attendees, who were practitioners, such as workers in local authorities and third-sector organizations and policymakers, such as a member of the House of Lords. This short performance served to highlight the detrimental effects of the policy, and it enabled participants to share their personal experiences in a way that allowed dialogue with practitioners and policymakers on a more equal footing (for more detail on methods, see below).

The participatory theatre aspects of the project were led by Erene Kaptani, the research fellow and experienced theatre practitioner and drama therapist, who also trained team members in the early stages of the project. The idea of collaboration was very much at the heart of this project, and we discussed our approach, limitations, challenges, opportunities and pitfalls with our partner organizations, which also critically engaged with the design and process of the project. We worked closely with Counterpoints Arts, an arts organization promoting work by migrant artists and about migration. Filmmaker Marcia Chandra accompanied the project throughout its different phases. We also worked closely with Renaisi, a family support organization, and Praxis, a migrant support and advocacy organization, which were both crucial in recruiting participants and providing advice to participants where needed.

Finally, we collaborated with Runnymede Trust, a race equality policy organization, in particular on our policy workshop involving shared dialogue with practitioners and policymakers about the project (see below for more detail) and a briefing paper[11] for social researchers.[12] All of the resources produced during these collaborations formed part of the project Toolkit.[13] We will now discuss in more detail how theories of performative citizenship can help us to understand the experiences and practices of belonging and the participation of migrant families.

THEORISING MIGRANT FAMILIES' PERFORMATIVE CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is often seen as the relationship between states and individuals, encompassing formal rights and duties. In our work, we take a wider, sociological approach to citizenship, which looks at citizenship as including participation and belonging. Citizenship is complex, entailing inclusionary processes of redistribution of resources, but also exclusionary processes of boundary-making. Although the criteria of who is regarded as a citizen, a legal resident or an undocumented migrant are regulated through law, historically, criteria delineating who constitutes a full citizen is not simply given, but subject to struggles.[14]

Formal citizenship is important, especially for migrants, as their stratified migration statuses determine whether they are entitled to reside in a country, and which social and economic rights they have in that country. However, it is also important to look at how migrants who may be excluded from particular rights nonetheless shape understandings and practices of citizenship. Therefore, following Ruth Lister, we conceptualize *citizenship* "as a more total relationship, inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging."[15] We also draw on the concept of "enacting citizenship," which focuses on the transformative and creative performativities of citizenship, rather than the status or habitus of existing citizenship practices: "Acts of citizenship" are "those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors (. . .) through creating new sites and scales of struggle."[16] This means that our focus of analysis is on the potential of acts to rupture given definitions of the political community and narratives of citizenship, challenging the exclusionary and hierarchical practices inherent in immigration regimes.

In our research, we explored the experiences of migrant women as mothers and young girls from migrant families. Therefore, it was particularly impor-

tant for us to understand how intersections of gender, age, "race" mothering, and migration status shaped migrants' citizenship practices. Racialized migrant women are often not recognized as legitimately embodying a citizen subjectivity: Their belonging to the nation of residence is seen as tenuous, and their social positioning is that of racialized, gendered Others who are often relegated to a precarious status,[17] engaging in poorly paid and unskilled employment, which further casts them as "incompetent" citizens.[18]

Feminist citizenship scholars have pointed out that women are positioned ambiguously within national and ethnic collectivities: While often seen as symbolizing the nation, they are marginalized from the body politic. Citizenship was historically constructed as the entitlement of men, who were seen as representatives of their families.[19] The paradoxical positioning of women vis-à-vis citizenship hinges on the way in which their mothering role is at once central to their citizenship practice, and at the same time it serves a justification for marginalizing women from politics. Women's "political duty (like their exclusion from citizenship) derives from their difference from men, notably their capacity for motherhood."[20] While women as mothers are central to the making of citizens, this contribution is naturalised, seen as part of the private realm of the family and therefore not recognized as inherently political.

If the contributions of women nationals who are constituted as the racial majority tend to be overlooked in discussions of citizenship, the positioning of Black and racialized migrant women is even more complex. Often seen as cultural outsiders to the nation, Black and racialized migrant women are positioned as a potential threat to the social and cultural cohesion of the nation.[21] They are suspected of transmitting the "wrong" cultural and linguistic resources to their children, with migrant mothers often blamed for a supposed lack of "integration" of their children[22] or even their political radicalization.[23]

The cultural practices and resources of racialized and migrant communities are often marginalized and excluded from public representation. Therefore, when racialized migrant mothers, as part of their "kin-work," transmit such cultural resources to their children, this does not only serve to connect them with kin and family members, but it is also an aspect of equipping them with the cultural identities to resist everyday racism.[24] This transmission of culture to between generations, which Hill Collins (2009) terms *culture work*, is essential for resisting and challenging racism. It is an important part of racialized migrant women's mothering work and a critical aspect of challenging racism; it is, therefore, inherently political; and it should be counted as an aspect of citizenship.[25] While mainstream public and political debates often cast migrant families as either outsiders to citizenship or not fully competent citizens, a performative notion of citizenship can help us to change perspective.[26]

In our research, we have not asked how migrant families need to integrate in order to fit into existing notions of citizenship. Rather, we have posited that by bringing up children and by contributing economically, socially, culturally and politically to the places in which they live, migrant families are already changing what community, belonging and participation means. Therefore, what we need to ask is how we can learn from their practices to gain a new understanding of what citizenship should mean in theory, politically and in practice in a multi-ethnic context.

This resonates with Isin's proposal that a performative notion of citizenship allows us to focus on how "people creatively perform citizenship rather than following a script."[27] It is in this sense that, through their acts, people construct citizenship and attach meaning to rights. Furthermore, a focus on performativity also allows us to recognize that it is not only citizens "in the conventional sense of members of a nation-state," but also those who are legally or socially constituted as full or partial outsiders who can constitute citizenship through making rights claims. It is the claiming of rights that people perform citizenship, whether these rights are already constituted or whether it is in the act of claiming them that they are brought into being.[28]

Before discussing the performative methods employed to explore migrant families' citizenship, we want to highlight the ways in which migrant families' citizenship practices can be seen as performative. When, despite racist and exclusionary immigration regimes, migrant families live, work and engage in community building, they claim the right to participate, reside and belong. By claiming such a right to belong and participate for themselves and their children, migrant families bring into being new understandings of who can and who cannot be part of their locality, city and nation. Furthermore, by bringing up a multi-ethnic new generation of citizens, migrant families change our understanding of who can legitimately form the social and cultural community on which the polity is based. With this participatory arts-based research project, we set out to learn more about how migrant families practice, imagine, reflect on and theorize their citizenship.

THE METHODS: PARTICIPATORY THEATRE AND WALKING AS ENGAGEMENTS IN PERFORMATIVE CITIZENSHIP

In this section, we describe the research design and methods, in particular highlighting how participatory arts and action research methods can challenge existing knowledge on migrant families. We argue that participatory arts-based methods helped us to foreground participants' own knowledges, which are often in conflict with and challenge official discourses on migrant

families as problematic and potentially threatening social and cultural cohesion. By articulating their own experiences in their own terms, positing which issues they would like to focus on in the theatre scenes and walks, participants not only shaped the research, but they also began to share their experiences with each other, reflecting on their social positioning collectively and developing collective "subjugated knowledges."[29] In this section, we will focus on how this enabled dialogues across generations (strand 1) and dialogues between researchers, migrant mothers affected by an exclusionary immigration policy and practitioners (strand 2). These methods, we suggest, are important in allowing us to enact new understandings of citizenship, both through the arts-based work, but also through the empirical and theoretical research insights.

The research took place in London in 2016 through 2018, where we worked with three groups of participants. As stated earlier, in the first research strand, we explored how participatory theatre and walking methods can help us to understand the experiences of migrant mothers and girls from migrant families and how these methods can help to generate an intergenerational dialogue. The research team took part in participatory theatre practice, led by the research fellow who was also an experienced theatre maker and drama therapist. We worked with two groups of sixteen migrant mothers and twelve young girls from Year 8 (thirteen-year-old secondary-school students from two different schools in north London). The groups were recruited through our research partner organisation, Renaisi, which runs activities for migrant families in schools.

A Renaisi worker advertised the research workshops in the school, which the children of the migrant mothers' group were attending. This worker continued attending all of the sessions, participating in the exercises and creative scenes. While much of the research did not require a high level of English skills, where necessary, she helped by interpreting during the workshop sessions. After running eleven weekly sessions, we concluded with an event, in which both of the groups (the mothers group and the girls group) showcased their performance-based creations to each other. The majority of the group members in both the mothers' and young girls' groups were from Muslim cultural backgrounds. The central questions explored in the workshops were: "What does it mean to live in London as a migrant mother?" and "What does it mean to be a young girl from a migrant family living in London?"

The second strand of research took place over the course of four months, during which time we worked with a group of twenty mothers affected by the No Recourse to Public Funds Policy (which we explain in detail below). Our partner organization, Praxis, a migrant rights advice and advocacy organization, helped us to recruit participants. This strand aimed at exploring the

effects of the No Recourse to Public Funds policy on the mothers and their families. It simultaneously explored how the idea of "legislative theatre"[30] could be used to allow those affected by the policy to voice their experiences and views of the policy to practitioners and policymakers. For that purpose, we brought two social workers into the workshop space for a number of sessions, allowing participants to share their experiences, critiques and frustrations with them and reflect together on how this policy pushed families into poverty and destitution. We then produced a short play, which was shown at the policy workshop to practitioners and policymakers (including social work professionals, migrant and family support organizations and race equality and children's rights organizations) and at the Houses of Parliament (facilitated by MP Kate Green, the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on migration).

The research workshops were based on a combination of participatory theatre (principally forum theatre) and walking methods.[31] Our use of participatory theatre draws on Augusto Boal's body of work on Theatre of the Oppressed (2000). Forum Theatre is one key tool of the Theatre of the Oppressed, where participants are invited to show a particular situation of oppression or a dilemma that they have experienced themselves. Once they have shown this dilemma, other participants are invited to step onto the stage, replace the protagonist and change the course of action. This can be thought of as a "rehearsal" for social change outside of the theatre stage.[32] Building on Brecht's Epic Theatre (1964), which aims for social transformation, rather than to achieve emotional identification of spectators with the characters, Theatre of the Oppressed goes further by transforming the role of audiences as passive spectators, instead inviting them to take centre stage. Boal broke down the boundaries between actors and spectators, audience and the "sacred space of the stage" to allow participants to become "spect-actors."[33] This form of theatre developed as part of wider social movements and campaigns, for example, for literacy and land reform in South America. Boal elaborated a body of exercises and techniques to mobilize participants with the explicit aim of social change. This was achieved by training the participants in basic theatre skills. Using the body as a tool for expression, a series of games and exercises helped the participants to become conscious of how they use their bodies in everyday life. The exercises allowed them to build new ways of moving, acting and using their voice to represent characters other than their own.

Participants could use the theatre scene as an arena to rehearse challenging inequalities of power. Participants' interventions were about trying out different solutions and experiencing the steps necessary for social change. While interventions may not be successful in achieving the spect-actors' aims fully, they can nonetheless lead to a changed situation. First, trying out a different

course of action can allow the group to make visible and reflect on different factors playing into the oppressive situation. Second, it can allow participants to share with each other experiences of their own challenges to such oppressive situations. Third, it allows the group to reflect on the social construction of reality, underlining that social realities are not simply given, but enacted, and are also subject to change. Finally, all these processes, taken together, can encourage participants to try out interventions in real life, realizing that even if they do not fully achieve their aims, they may be able to change an aspect of their experience or they may contribute to incremental social change.

With regards to walking methods, walking as a methodology helps us to understand peoples "routes and mobilities" and that "social relations are not enacted in situ but paced out along the ground."[34] As described, walking interviews can be useful to understand how interviewees "create, maintain and dissemble their networks, neighbourhoods, and communities."[35] Drawing on O'Neill, we see walking as an arts-based, *ethno-mimetic* method that forms part of a biographical research approach that enables "a deeply engaged relational way of attuning to the life of another that evokes knowing and understanding" for when "walking with another we can engage in an embodied and corporeal way and attune to the narratives and lived experiences of research participants."[36] Taking a walk with someone can open a space for dialogue and communication in reciprocal ways because the "physical embodied process of walking, remembering, sensing—attuning—is constitutive and the relational shared process opens up a discursive space that can also be a reflective space."[37]

These participatory arts-based methods, forum theatre and walking methods are not only helpful in understanding the everyday lives of participants, but they are also generative, so that knowledge is not simply retrieved, but constructed in collaboration between arts practitioners, researchers and participants; it is "collaboratively made," not found.[38] Arts-based approaches reflect "the multidimensional, complex, dynamic, inter-subjective and contextual nature of human experience,"[39] and as such are particularly useful in challenging stereotypical racist representations of migrants. Through its collaborative ethos, arts-based participatory research is also well placed to destabilize the boundaries between researcher and participant as authors of knowledge, and therefore, it can provide space for migrants to tell stories of their own choosing and gain more authority in the framing and representing of their experiences, views and knowledges.[40] Our participatory arts-based approach thus aimed at creating what Fals Borda (1999) terms "symmetrical reciprocity" in participatory action research, where participants are viewed as subjects contributing to knowledge production alongside—"with"—researchers (for together we are greater than the sum of our parts). The participatory

arts-based methods created a visceral and emotional process that captured anger, fear, pain and hope. These feelings were part of the migrant mothers' and girls' everyday interactions with other members of society, and within their communities and families.

We combined participatory theatre and walking methods based on Erene Kaptani's (2008; 2016; 2017) and Maggie O'Neill's (2012; 2017) participatory arts for social research practice. The group work with the adults started with two sessions of Playback Theatre,[41] where personal experiences are shared and played back by professional actors and a live musician.[42] The workshops then proceeded with theatre and group exercises leading to Forum Theatre, as described above. In our analysis we observed that participatory arts-based methods were important for exploring the potential of racialized migrant mothers to enact citizenship. As researchers, we worked together with participants to understand social oppression, making it visible from the perspective of the participants and exploring how it can be challenged.

In our project, and drawing on these techniques, we asked participants to share stories of when they experienced a problem, conflict or dilemma relating to being a migrant mother or a girl from a migrant family. It is important to recognize that participatory theatre methods do not offer any simple solutions, but they are valuable in highlighting conflicts and the obstacles to effectively claim rights when recognition as an equal is withheld. Some of the strategies the participants rehearsed can be applied in real-life everyday encounters. Others are perhaps more suited to the fictional space of the theatre. Yet, by enabling participants to explore their experiences and different strategies for dealing with conflict situations, the research methodology created a space for making visible and reflecting on specific situations, as well as the structural inequalities and power relations that underpinned them. It also gave participants an opportunity to try out different strategies of challenging oppressive situations, making visible the ways in which social realities are constructed, and thus can also be changed. In this way, the group built up a collective repository of strategies for challenging exclusion, the denial of access and respect.

The participatory theatre methods are valuable tools in raising questions and initiating collective reflections. We underline that in participatory theatre, it is important to address structural power relations because the technique of forum theatre can otherwise become too individualized, focused on individuals' ability to deal better with oppressive situations rather than challenging the oppressive systems and structures themselves, as has been highlighted by theatre and social justice activists. As contemporary forms of oppression are complex, the workshop facilitators need to take care not to simplify social relations in suggesting that a conflict involves only the protagonist and an-

tagonist.[43] It is problematic to reduce a system of oppression to the character of the "antagonist" (oppressor). Furthermore, the forum theatre technique, if not facilitated carefully, may risk putting the onus for improving a problematic situation on the "protagonist" (oppressed).[44] Thus, it is crucial to embed forum theatre in a critical and emancipatory discourse of social transformation that highlights a range of different power relations on many levels, from structural, institutional, group and personal. Otherwise, the forum theatre technique can run the risk of reproducing neoliberal "victim blaming" rhetoric on social inequalities. Another risk is that strategies for intervention can emphasise the protagonist's need to conform to social norms, rather than challenging the oppressiveness of these social norms. Thus, while Theatre of the Oppressed holds the potential to empower participants to try out alternative modes of action and behaviour, it is important to embed personal development within a broader process of analyzing, highlighting and challenging social inequalities.

During the workshop process, we combined the aforementioned participatory theatre methods with arts-based walking methods, drawing on Maggie O'Neill's research practice.[45] As highlighted above, combining walking and participatory theatre is particularly fruitful, as both methods are embodied, performative, relational and reflective. They are also sensory and allow for multiple modalities of experience to be shared.[46] Both participatory theatre and walking methods constitute what Back and Puwar term *live methods*, "creative, public and novel modes of doing imaginative and critical sociological research."[47] O'Neill's use of walking as method and our use of it is

Figure 10.1. PASAR Project—Participatory Walk.
Source: Erel et al. Image: Marcia Chandra, 2016.

inspired by artists who use walking as part of their practice, such as Misha Myers, Clare Qualmann and Dee Hedden. This was then combined with Kaptani's approach to mapping.[48] As part of the workshop process, we invited migrant mothers and girls to map their everyday routes, and we walked with them, following their maps either in pairs (mothers with no recourse to public funds) or collectively (migrant mothers and migrant girls). We also explored the spaces and landmarks on their maps and associated positive and negative emotions attached to these spaces and landmarks using theatre-based methods. The mothers and girls created images individually, in pairs and collectively, taking the stories from their everyday experiences, routes and mobilities into the theatre space. By taking the mothers and girls' walks into the theatre space, we conceptualise the combination of walking and theatre methods as a mixed-methods process. On the one hand, the theatre methods bring the social world into the theatre workshop space to rehearse enactments of citizenship. On the other hand, by undertaking walks with researchers, the participants bring their own sociological imagination into the neighbourhoods and localities in which they conduct their everyday lives. The importance of bringing together movement and mapping in the participatory theatre workshops was to foreground and interlink place, space and personal narratives in exploring citizenship. A theatrical scene can only exist in a specific physical place of a street, office, home or school. At the same time, different spatial practices are becoming visible when the personal narrative is performed. Furthermore, by imagining an everyday route, making the movements and taking our workshop partner along on our everyday route, we start to make meaning of our actions, which are also validated and developed by the partner's witnessing. Images where bodies are included, placed, "sculpted" and moved in the workshop's space can transfer the everyday experiences of places and interactions to the workshop space, in a way that the one-dimensional mapping of routes drawn on a paper would not achieve. In addition, movements of the everyday brought into the workshop space can generate feelings, unspoken thoughts and a physical intelligence, that usually is not included, although always present in social interactions, including in the acts of citizenship.[49]

Participatory theatre and walking in combination as a research method can be mobilized for enactments of citizenship to reflect on shared experiences, building community and belonging. They can also lead to the articulation of collective subjugated knowledges to challenge pathologizing or oppressive representations of migrant families. Furthermore, as we will show in the following section, research using such methods within a socially transformative framework can become a way of constituting migrant families as rights-claiming subjects.

PERFORMING INTERGENERATIONAL CITIZENSHIP

After having worked for three months with a group of migrant mothers and a group of girls from migrant families in parallel, exploring their experiences of everyday life in London, we brought both groups together. The aim of this was to allow them to share their experiences with each other through arts-based methods. Each group was told we were working towards a number of short scenes that each group would show to the other. Both the mothers' and girls' groups were initially excited but also slightly apprehensive about what it might be like to share their work. Some of the mothers were worried the young girls may not understand their English spoken with an accent, or even look down on them for their limited language skills. In turn, some of the girls were concerned that the mothers might conform to their ideas of a "strict mother" and might be judgemental of their views and experiences. Each group was also worried that their acting skills might be under scrutiny.

The apprehensions each group had towards the other are not just idiosyncratic, but based on wider social discourses on migrant families, surmising an intergenerational conflict, where migrant mothers in particular are seen to be committed to the culture and language of their country of origin, while young people, in particular girls, are seen as more keen to adapt the cultural practices they find among their peers in the UK. This is often cast in public debates as a "culture clash," a conflict over integration versus cultural distinctiveness.[50] Instead, we found that both groups brought up similar topics they saw as important to the workshops: They were concerned with issues of safety in their neighbourhoods, enjoyed going shopping or to the park with their families and friends and were struggling to juggle and negotiate time dedicated to family, leisure, work and schoolwork. They also were concerned about how to maintain relations with family members abroad, and with access to health services.

While these were shared concerns, the mothers and girls also, of course, had their distinct perspectives on these issues, coloured by their age and life course. For example, while many of the girls found it difficult to negotiate with their parents for time to socialise with their friends, mothers were often concerned about the time their children spent on social media rather than on schoolwork. In subsequent interviews, it emerged that for both mothers and girls, one of the important insights from the intergenerational day was to be able to see the issues they faced in their everyday lives from the perspective of the other. An example of this is one of the scenes the mothers' group chose to share on the day. They called it the "Embarrassment Scene" (http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/intergenerational-day).

The scene is based on the experience of Nabila, one of the mothers. Nabila recounted that she is very tolerant of her own children, because as a young girl growing up in London, she herself had been "wild," going to parties and concerts with her friends, coming home late and wearing fashionable—rather than traditional—clothes. Her own mother, though she had no personal experience of this lifestyle, spoke with Nabila and trusted her. Although Nabila's mother worried, she allowed Nabila to go out late with her friends. In contrast, Nabila's older brother felt embarrassed by her appearance and behaviour, and he tried to talk her out of her friendship with this peer group. Nabila shared in her story that she felt that it was her mother's trust in her that allowed her to reassess her life and later on focus more on her education and decide to get married. This development, she felt, was an important factor in reconciling her with her brother. Her brother, on the other hand, now gives his daughters more freedom, as he has seen that Nabila—who enjoyed this freedom as a young girl—has become a "good person." This scene was first played out in the mothers' group and then we rehearsed it to show it to the girls during the "intergenerational day."

Nabila's story addresses the question of what it means to be a migrant mother in London by looking at how her experience of being mothered affected her own mothering practices. In this sense, she is constructing a connection between three generations: her mother's, her own and her children's. This relational aspect of Nabila's identity as mother (and daughter) is important as it addresses public debates on migrant families. These debates often cast mothers and daughters as antagonistically caught up in an intergenerational conflict. For migrant families, these conflicts are thought to be exacerbated by different uses of ethnically specific cultural resources, and these intergenerational conflicts are often thought to be ethnicised in that the mother's generation is seen as potentially preventing the daughters' generation from integrating by overly emphasising the language and cultural practices of the home country. Nabila's story contradicts such a simplistic view of migrant families by pointing out that people may inhabit both the roles of mother and daughter, and showing how mothers and daughters, even where they disagree, can find successful ways of negotiating these differences. The role of the brother who criticised Nabila for not wearing traditional clothes shows another model of negotiation of differences, closer to the antagonistic one. However, Nabila's mother's intervention into this conflict also shows that even such antagonistic relationships are nuanced. Furthermore, in Nabila's story we are made aware of the fact that such relationships change over time.

When we showed this scene to the girls' group on the intergenerational day, there was a sense of recognition among the girls. The girls could particularly

relate to the theme of different, potentially conflicting views among daughters and mothers on going out late, a topic they felt defined the experience of being a girl from a migrant family. They thought that their parents, feeling unfamiliar with the culture and surroundings in London, were particularly protective of their children. The girls, while not always agreeing with their parents, emphasised that they appreciated their parents' concerns. When watching the scene, they giggled in recognition and made appreciative sounds when Nabila's mother gave permission for her to go out, while gasping at the brother's reaction. In the discussion, they expressed their appreciation of the close and supportive mother-daughter relationship.

This example from our intergenerational work speaks to the importance of cultural citizenship as a means to represent one's own cultural identity, rather than being the object of mainstream, often stereotypical, public representations.[51] By creating a public space (albeit a small one) where different representations of what it means to be a migrant mother and a girl from a migrant family could be heard, and new understandings of these subject positions could be developed dialogically, the project enacted a form of cultural citizenship. It is important to keep in mind that to fully understand the different aspects of citizenship, we need to go beyond the relationship of individuals with the state, to explore rights claiming within the context of a range of social relations, on a number of different scales. For these women and girls, this centrally included the family, both co-resident and transnational, the locality and relationship with their schools.

MIGRANT FAMILIES WITH NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS ENACTING CITIZENSHIP

The second research strand of the project explored how we can use participatory arts-based methods to enable a group of racialized migrant mothers to engage in dialogue with practitioners and policymakers about a policy that deeply affects their everyday lives. The No Recourse to Public Funding (NRPF) policy means that migrants subject to immigration control are not allowed to access many benefits, tax credits or housing assistance. While this policy has been effective for decades, since the introduction of hostile environment policies in 2012, it has been widened to cover all migrants deemed "subject to immigration control." It now applies to a wider range of different statuses, such as those on spousal or student visas, migrants with leave granted under family or private life rules and dependents of a person with settled status, as well as those without legal residence status.

Migrant families often become aware that they are subject to the NRPF policy when they encounter a crisis situation, such as a family breakdown, unemployment, health issues or housing problems. At that point, they approach social services for support, only to learn that, due to this policy, they are not able to access support such as social housing or social security. As a consequence, they often find themselves pushed to the margins of society as a result of poverty and racism. Many of these migrant families include young children, who are among the most vulnerable people affected by this policy. While the policy foresees some exceptional support to families with children—those without children are excluded from any public support—local authorities and social services providers often make it extremely difficult for these migrant families to substantively claim these rights.[52]

These precarious circumstances can make it very difficult for migrants to participate in reflection and critique of this policy, because all of their energies are focused on day-to-day survival. In our research project, we used the arts-based participatory methods to work with a group of migrant mothers affected by NRPF to enable their collective voice to be heard. These methods were important as they allowed the women to share their experiences with each other and the research team, to develop collective knowledge, overcome stigma and articulate a critique of the policy's detrimental effects. Together we developed short theatre scenes shared at a workshop with policymakers and practitioners. The theatre methods allowed the women to be actors, directors and storytellers who could imagine and try out social interventions, rather than simply showcasing their vulnerabilities as a result of this dehumanising policy.

We developed a short theatre scene, which gave rise to discussion with workshop participants from public and voluntary sector organizations and activists. It is documented in a short video (Performance by the Mothers with No Recourse to Public Funds Group, http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/policy-day). The theatre scene is based on Elaine's experience, but it was further elaborated to articulate the collective experiences of participants. Elaine had been working for many years for a large supermarket. As the Home Office required her to sign into the Immigration Reporting Centre, she needed to take time off every two weeks to do so. Her manager used his knowledge of her vulnerability to bully her and change her on to an unfavourable shift work pattern: from midnight to four o'clock in the morning, even though she had just had a baby. When she approached her union representative, they were not supportive, but instead told her she should be glad to have a job at all as an immigrant! Her fellow workers also stigmatised her as a supposedly "illegal immigrant," and she eventually lost her job. As her husband was unable to work for health reasons, she was not able to pay

rent, and subsequently the family, including her six-year-old son, had to live in houses of friends and acquaintances, surviving on their monetary support for four years. Elaine's experience shows how racism, anti-immigration policies and austerity exacerbate the effects of racialized migration policies to render it increasingly difficult for migrant families to bring up their children in dignity.[53]

Theresa, another of the mothers who shared her experiences of this policy, has lived and worked in the UK for twenty years and, like all the women in our project who were either born in the Caribbean or West African nations, she expressed strong links with the UK because of colonial ties. Theresa's landlord increased her rent to a level she could not afford to pay on her low income as a care worker on a zero-hours contract. When she was consequently evicted, she approached the council for accommodation, only to learn she was subject to NRPF. The council therefore refused to help her, instead sending her on a circuitous route to a range of other organizations. When finally she approached our partner organization, Praxis, she was able to successfully claim her right to temporary accommodation because, despite its claims to the contrary, the local authority has a duty under Section 17 of the Children's Act to prevent children from becoming destitute. However, this did not address Theresa's needs, as the accommodation was unsuitable. Along with her three children, she was housed in a one-bedroom flat, where she had to sleep in the kitchen due to lack of space. Furthermore, this accommodation was located in a different London borough from where Theresa had previously lived. As we learned, it is an increasingly common practice for local authorities to house families affected by NRPF out of borough.[54] For Theresa, this meant she had to travel for over an hour to her youngest son's school.

Despite the increasing number of families affected by the NRPF policy, there is little awareness of it. Thus, when we organized the policy day in February 2017, we encountered interest from a wide range of organizations. One of the pernicious effects of this policy, we found, was that it increased the social isolation of families affected by it. Being subject to NRPF was seen as stigmatizing the family as being potentially "illegal" migrants, and also opened those affected by it to economic and sexual exploitation, as many participants had found it difficult to talk about their status. Within a broader discursive climate, where migrants are seen as outsiders to the nation, it was furthermore made difficult to claim "the right to claim rights."[55] By using arts-based participatory methods, the PASAR project was able to bring these migrant mothers into dialogue with practitioners, activists and policymakers. This happened using a range of formats, including keynote talks by Baroness Ruth Lister, a member of the House of Lords, and Colin Yeo, an immigration barrister; talks by the research team; the performance and discussion of the

Figure 10.2. PASAR Workshop.
Source: Erel et al. Image: Marcia Chandra, 2016.

short theatre scene; breakout small-group discussions between research participants and workshop attendees; and a closing roundtable.

The range of different interactions fostered by these different formats encouraged and permitted a range of ways for research participants to engage. Beyond simply showcasing their difficult situations, they were also part of discussions and exchanges. As a consequence of this event, we were invited by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration to show a short play we developed together about their experience of NRPF at the House of Commons, and we further took this short play to a range of events to highlight this problematic policy, including to migrant community organizations, statutory organizations, activist events and arts venues. We also developed a longer play performed at a theatre (https://richmix.org.uk/events/me-i-just-put-british/), and we produced, with Counterpoints Arts and filmmaker Marcia Chandra, a short film: *Black Women Act!* (http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos), which we were able to present at a range of community, arts and activist events and conferences.

While each of these occasions presented opportunities for different forms of engagement with different types of audiences and spect-actors, what became clear throughout these different engagements is that the research participants became increasingly articulate, not only on the detrimental effects of the NRPF policy, but also about their right to claim rights. Isin distinguishes between two different aspects of performative citizenship.[56] In the context of this project, they translate, first, to the struggle to challenge and end the No Recourse to Public Funds policy (making rights claims), and second, to "what

that struggle performatively brings into being (the right to claim rights)."[57] By claiming the right to claim rights, participants struggle against the injustice of this policy, which excludes them from taking part in the welfare state to which they themselves have contributed, as individual migrants, but also, they argue, through their colonial history. These racialized migrant mothers thus envisage rights "yet to come."[58]

CONCLUSION

The PASAR project explored the uses of participatory arts-based methods for creating understandings and representations of migrant families that can make visible their experiences and subjugated knowledges. We worked together as researchers, arts practitioners and participants, and with our partner organizations, to explore and challenge the marginalized positioning of migrant families in current debates on migration, characterised by a hostile climate to migrants.

We found that within a socially transformative framework, participatory arts-based methods can become enactments of citizenship. We saw how this arts-based research "gathered"[59] women and young girls who had not previously reflected on their experiences and social positioning as a group. As such, it contributed to building a community in which their individual experiences were validated, and they could articulate their collective, subjugated knowledges. This, in turn, was a precondition for claiming their right to represent their own stories and experiences, and in the process, make visible power relations and oppressions. By reflecting on these power relations and experiences of oppression through embodied, concrete situations, the participants and researchers were able to rehearse different strategies for intervening and challenging these power relations.

While we recognize that such challenges are not always successful and have their limits, we would underline that these are, in fact, processes where both participants and researchers work together to claim the right to claim rights, reflecting on and constructing new understandings of what can become a subject of political intervention, and who can become a political subject. These are the issues at the heart of struggles over citizenship. Furthermore, and in particular in relation to our work on the No Recourse to Public Funds Policy, we were able to mobilize these methods to engage a number of publics, including activists, practitioners and policymakers, as well as communities of other migrant families. By claiming centre stage to initiate and enter such debates about a policy designed to marginalize and silence migrant families, participants further enacted citizenship, claiming the right to equal participation.

Current immigration policy, including the No Recourse to Public Funds Policy, has cast racialized migrant families as outsiders to the nation who do not deserve the solidarity and care of welfare services to which citizens have access. Racialized migrant families are pushed into abject destitution and poverty by these racist policies, rendering it very difficult for them to participate in public deliberation, as they are struggling to secure the survival of their families on a daily basis. Against this background, the theatre stage and interactions with audiences, spect-actors and interlocutors became a stage for these families to perform themselves as equal citizens, a challenge to the roles into which current immigration policy had cast migrant families. In this sense, claiming space centre stage is also a way of envisaging a different, more just notion of citizenship.

NOTES

1. Lisa Tilley, "Resisting Piratic Method by Doing Research Otherwise," *Sociology* 51, no. 1 (February 2017): 27–42.
2. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (Zed Books Ltd., 2013).
3. See, for example, Gurminder Bhambra, *Connected Sociologies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), and Walter Mignolo, *Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border thinking* (Princeton University Press, 2012).
4. Sara Ahmed, *The cultural politics of emotion* (London: Routledge, 2013).
5. Erene Kaptani and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Participatory theatre as a research methodology: Identity, performance and social action among refugees," *Sociological Research Online* 13, no. 5 (2008): 1–12.
6. Helen Kara, *Creative research methods in the social sciences: A practical guide* (London: Policy Press, 2015): 14.
7. Laura Jeffery et al., "Creative engagement with migration," *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* 10, no. 1 (2019): 3–17.
8. Kara, *Creative Research*.
9. Maggie O'Neill and Mark Webster, "Creativity, Community and Change: Creative approaches to Community Consultation," in *The Social Animator: Role or Profession*, ed. P. Henzler and B. Skrzypczak (Warsaw: Centrum Wspierania, 2005).
10. Maggie O'Neill et al., "Participatory Theatre and Walking as Social Research Methods: A Toolkit," 2018, https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online/all/?id=20714.
11. Tracey Reynolds et al., "Migrant mothers: Performing kin work and belonging across private and public boundaries." *Families, Relationships and Societies* 7, no. 3 (2018): 365–82.
12. For more detail on collaborations, see O'Neill et al., "Participatory Theatre."
13. O'Neill et al., "Participatory Theatre."
14. Bryan S. Turner, "Citizenship, reproduction and the state: International marriage and human rights." *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 1 (2008): 45–54.

15. Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 50.

16. Engin Isin, "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship," in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. E. F. Isin and G. M. Nielsen (London: Zed Books, 2008): 39.

17. Guy Standing, *A precariat charter: From denizens to citizens* (A&C Black, 2014).

18. Umut Erel, *Migrant women transforming citizenship: Life-stories from Britain and Germany* (London: Routledge, 2016).

19. Nira Yuval-Davis, *The politics of belonging: Intersectional contestations* (London: Sage, 2011).

20. Carol Pateman, "Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship," in *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics, Female Subjectivity*, ed. G. Bock and S. James (London: Routledge 1992): 19.

21. Ronit Lentin, "Pregnant silence: (En)gendering Ireland's asylum space," *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 3 (2003): 301–22.

22. Reynolds et al., "Migrant mothers."

23. Louise Ryan and Elena Vacchelli, "'Mothering Through Islam': Narratives of Religious Identity in London," *Religion and Gender* 3, no. 1 (2013): 90–107.

24. Reynolds et al., "Migrant mothers."

25. Tracey Reynolds, *Caribbean mothers: Identity and experience in the UK* (London: Tufnell Press, 2005); Paul Kershaw, "Caregiving for identity is political: Implications for citizenship theory." *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 4 (2010): 395–410.

26. Umut Erel et al., "Participatory theatre for transformative social research," *Qualitative Research* 17, no. 3 (9 April 2017): 302–12, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117696029.

27. Engin Isin, "Performative Citizenship," in *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*, ed. Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Baubock, Irene Bloemraad and Maarten Vink, 500–23 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

28. Umut Erel, "Saving and reproducing the nation: Struggles around right-wing politics of social reproduction, gender and race in austerity Europe," *Women's Studies International Forum* 68 (2018): 173–82, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.11.003.

29. Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Vintage, 1980).

30. Augusto Boal, *Legislative Theatre: Using Theatre to Make Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998).

31. Kaptani and Yuval-Davis, "Participatory Theatre"; Erel et al., "Participatory Theatre"; Reynolds et al., "Migrant Mothers"; Maggie O'Neill and Brian Roberts, *Walking Methods: Research on the Move* (London: Routledge, 2019).

32. Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (London, Routledge, 2000); Sanjoy Ganguly, *Jana Sanskriti: Forum theatre and democracy in India* (London: Routledge, 2010).

33. Boal, *Theatre*, 98.

34. Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, ed., *Ways of walking: Ethnography and practice on foot* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008).

35. Andrew Clark and Nick Emmel, "Using walking interviews," Morgan Centre, University of Manchester, 2010, https://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/id/eprint/1323/.

36. Maggie O'Neill, "Participatory biographies: Walking, sensing, belonging," in *Advances in Biographical Methods*, ed. M. O'Neill, B. Roberts and A. Sparkes (London: Routledge, 2014): 74.

37. O'Neill, "Participatory biographies," 76.

38. Maggie O'Neill, "Transnational refugees: The transformative role of art?" in *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9, no. 2. 2008.

39. Jeffrey et al., "Creative Engagement," 7.

40. Jeffrey et al., "Creative Engagement."

41. Jonathan Fox, *Acts of service: Spontaneity, commitment, tradition in the non-scripted theatre* (Tusitala Pub., 1994).

42. We started the work with the girls' group with participatory theatre exercises, rather than Playback Theatre, as previous experience showed that it is difficult for young people to identify with adult actors performing their stories back to them.

43. G. Pratt and C. Johnston, "Turning theatre into law and other spaces of politics," *Cultural Geographies* 14, no. 1 (2007): 92–113.

44. Sonia Hamel, "When theatre of the oppressed becomes theatre of the oppressor," *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 18, no. 4 (2013): 403–16.

45. Maggie O'Neill and Brian Roberts, *Walking Methods: Research on the Move* (London: Routledge, 2019).

46. Maggie O'Neill and Phil Hubbard, "Walking, sensing, belonging: Ethnomimesis as performative praxis." *Visual Studies* 25, no. 1 (2010): 46–58.

47. Maggie O'Neill and Lizzy Seal, *Transgressive Imaginations: Crime, Deviance and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 6.

48. O'Neill et al., "Participatory Theatre."

49. Nigel Thrift, "Performance and. . . ," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 35, no. 11 (2003): 2019–24; David Grant, "Feeling for meaning: The making and understanding of Image Theatre," *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 22, no. 2 (2017): 186–201; Ralph Yarrow, "Performing agency: Body learning, Forum Theatre and interactivity as democratic strategy," *Studies in South Asian Film & Media* 4, no. 2, (2012): 211–26.

50. Julie Henry, "Muslim Mums Told to Speak English at Home," *Sunday Telegraph*, 14 January 2007; Gabby Hinsliff, "Speak English at Home, Blunkett Tells British Asians." *Observer*, 14 September 2002.

51. Jan Pakulski, "Cultural citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 1, no. 1 (1997): 73–86.

52. Don Flyn et al., "The 'No Recourse to Public Funds' policy in UK immigration law—a source of injustice, inequality and destitution," 2018, http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/publications-and-resources.

53. Erel, "Saving and Reproducing."

54. Flyn et al., "The 'No Recourse.'"

55. Isin, "Performative Citizenship," 506.

56. Isin, "Performative Citizenship," 506.
57. Isin, "Performative Citizenship," 506.
58. Isin, "Performative Citizenship," 506.
59. Jeffery et al., "Creative Engagement."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, Sara. *The cultural politics of emotion*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Back, Les, and Nirmal Puwar. *Live Methods*. London: Blackwell and Editorial Board of the Sociological Review, 2012.

Bhambra, Gurminder. *Connected Sociologies*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Boal, Augusto. *Legislative Theatre: Using Theatre to Make Politics*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed,* London, Routledge, 2000.

Clark, Andrew and Nick Emmel. "Using walking interviews." Morgan Centre, University of Manchester, 2010, https://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/id/eprint/1323/.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge, 2009.

Erel, Umut. *Migrant women transforming citizenship: Life-stories from Britain and Germany*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Erel, Umut. "Saving and reproducing the nation: Struggles around right-wing politics of social reproduction, gender and race in austerity Europe." *Women's Studies International Forum* 68 (2018): 173–82, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.11.003.

Erel, Umut, Tracey Reynolds and Erene Kaptani. "Participatory theatre for transformative social research." *Qualitative Research* 17, no. 3 (9 April 2017): 302–12, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117696029.

Erel, Umut, Tracey Reynolds and Erene Kaptani. "Migrant mothers' creative interventions into racialized citizenship." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 1 (2018): 55–72, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1317825.

Flyn, Don, Umut Erel, Maggie O'Neill and Tracey Reynolds. "The 'No Recourse to Public Funds' policy in UK immigration law—a source of injustice, inequality and destitution." 2018, http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/publications-and-resources.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. Vintage, 1980.

Fox, Jonathan. *Acts of service: Spontaneity, commitment, tradition in the nonscripted theatre*. Tusitala Publishing, 1994.

Fals Borda, O. "The origins and challenges of participatory action research." David Kinsey Dialogue Series, Lecture No. 1. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts. *Center for International Education*, 1999.

Ganguly, Sanjoy. *Jana Sanskriti: Forum theatre and democracy in India*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Grant, David. "Feeling for meaning: The making and understanding of Image Theatre." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 22, no. 2 (2017): 186–201.

Hamel, Sonia. "When theatre of the oppressed becomes theatre of the oppressor." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 18, no. 4 (2013): 403–16.

Heddon, Deirdre and Cathy Turner. "Walking women: Shifting the tales and scales of mobility." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 22, no. 2 (2012): 224–36.

Henry, Julie. "Muslim Mums Told to Speak English at Home." *Sunday Telegraph*, 14 January 2007.

Hinsliff, Gabby. "Speak English at Home, Blunkett Tells British Asians." *Observer*, 14 September 2002.

Ingold, Tim, and Jo Lee Vergunst, eds. *Ways of walking: Ethnography and practice on foot*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008.

Isin, Engin. "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship." In *Acts of Citizenship*, edited by E. F. Isin and G. M. Nielsen, 15–43. London: Zed Books, 2008.

Isin, Engin. "Performative Citizenship." In *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*, edited by Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Baubock, Irene Bloemraad and Maarten Vink, 500–23. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Jeffery, Laura, Mariangela Palladino, Rebecca Rotter and Agnes Woolley. "Creative engagement with migration." *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* 10, no. 1 (2019): 3–17.

Kaptani, Erene. "Embodied Methods and Acts of Power." Workshop Presentation at Open University, 23 June 2011.

Kaptani, Erene, and Nira Yuval-Davis. "Participatory theatre as a research methodology: Identity, performance and social action among refugees." *Sociological Research Online* 13, no. 5 (2008): 1–12.

Kara, Helen. *Creative research methods in the social sciences: A practical guide*. London: Policy Press, 2015.

Kershaw, Paul. "Caregiving for identity is political: Implications for citizenship theory." *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 4 (2010): 395–410.

Lentin, Ronit. "Pregnant silence: (En)gendering Ireland's asylum space." *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 3 (2003): 301–22.

Lister, Ruth. *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Mignolo, Walter. *Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border thinking*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

Myers, Misha. "'Walk with me, talk with me': The art of conversive wayfinding." *Visual Studies* 25, no. 1 (2010): 59–68.

O'Neill, Maggie. "Transnational refugees: The transformative role of art." In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9, no. 2. 2008, no pagination.

O'Neill, Maggie, Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani and Tracey Reynolds. "Participatory Theatre and Walking as Social Research Methods: A Toolkit," 2018, https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online/all/?id=20714.

O'Neill, Maggie, and Brian Roberts. *Walking Methods: Research on the Move*. London: Routledge, 2019.

O'Neill, Maggie. "Walking, well-being and community: Racialized mothers building cultural citizenship using participatory arts and participatory action research."

Ethnic and Racial Studies 41, no. 1 (07 June 2017), https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1313439.

O'Neill, Maggie. "Participatory biographies: Walking, sensing, belonging." In *Advances in Biographical Methods*, edited by M. O'Neill, B. Roberts and A. Sparkes, 93–109. London: Routledge, 2014.

O'Neill, Maggie, and Lizzy Seal, *Transgressive Imaginations: Crime, Deviance and Culture.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

O'Neill, Maggie, and Phil Hubbard. "Walking, sensing, belonging: Ethno-mimesis as performative praxis." *Visual Studies* 25, no. 1 (2010): 46–58.

O'Neill, Maggie, and Mark Webster. "Creativity, Community and Change: Creative approaches to Community Consultation." In *The Social Animator: Role or Profession,* edited by P. Henzler and B. Skrzypczak. B. Warsaw: Centrum Wspierania, 2005.

"NRPF is state violence!" North East London Migration Action (NELMA), https://nelmacampaigns.wordpress.com/nrpf-is-state-violence-2/, accessed 19 November 2019.

Pakulski, Jan. "Cultural citizenship." *Citizenship studies* 1, no. 1 (1997): 73–86.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books Ltd., 2013.

Pateman, Carol. "Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship." In *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics, Female Subjectivity*, edited by G. Bock and S. James, 17–31. London: Routledge, 1992.

Pratt G., and C Johnston, "Turning theatre into law and other spaces of politics," *Cultural Geographies* 14, no. 1 (2007): 92–113.

Puwar, N. and Sharma, S. "Curating sociology." *Sociological Review*, *60* (2012): 40–63, doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02116.x.

Reynolds, Tracey. "Black to the community: An analysis of 'black' community parenting in Britain." *Community, Work & Family* 6, no. 1 (2003): 29–45.

Reynolds, Tracey. *Caribbean mothers: Identity and experience in the UK*. London: Tufnell Press, 2005.

Reynolds, Tracey, Umut Erel and Erene Kaptani. "Migrant mothers: Performing kin work and belonging across private and public boundaries." *Families, Relationships and Societies* 7, no. 3 (2018): 365–82.

Reynolds, Tracey, Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani and Maggie O'Neill. "Practice Policy Briefing: Participatory Action Research-Engaging marginalised communities in policy and practice." 2017. http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/publications-and-resources.

Reynolds, Tracey, and Elisabetta Zontini. "Bringing transnational families from the margins to the centre of family studies in Britain." *Families, Relationships and Societies* 3, no. 2 (2014): 251–68.

Ryan, Louise, and Elena Vacchelli. "'Mothering Through Islam': Narratives of Religious Identity in London." *Religion and Gender* 3, no. 1 (2013): 90–107.

Standing, Guy. *A precariat charter: From denizens to citizens*. A&C Black, 2014.

"Women must integrate, Cameron tells Muslims." *Times*, 18 January 2016, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/women-must-integrate-cameron-tells-muslims-flmnk8c2kqq.

Thrift, Nigel. "Performance and. . . ." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 35, no. 11 (2003): 2019–24.

Tilley, Lisa. "Resisting Piratic Method by Doing Research Otherwise." *Sociology* 51, no. 1 (February 2017): 27–42.

Turner, Bryan S. "Citizenship, reproduction and the state: International marriage and human rights." *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 1 (2008): 45–54.

Tyler, Imogen. "Designed to fail: A biopolitics of British citizenship." *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 1 (2010): 61–74.

Yarrow, Ralph. "Performing agency: Body learning, Forum Theatre and interactivity as democratic strategy," *Studies in South Asian Film & Media* 4, no. 2, (2012): 211–26.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. *The politics of belonging: Intersectional contestations*. London: Sage, 2011.

Chapter Eleven

The Ground Is What We Have in Common

Solidarity Without Similarity

Dominik Czechowski and Abbas Zahedi

Abbas Zahedi is a London-based artist whose work combines social practice, performance, installation, moving image and writing. Zahedi discusses socialising, friendship and collaboration as a lifelong practice. He shares his reflections around working with marginalised communities, looking at the intersections of personal and collective history, the politics of hospitality, the categorical biases used to exclude diasporic bodies and the role of art, food, drink, care and community spaces in creating counternarratives that interrogate and complicate the notions of diaspora, identity and civil engagement. At a time of heightened xenophobia, culture wars and autocratic tendencies globally, when there is a lot of scepticism toward 'democracy' as an enabling and equal political system, this conversation between artist and curator asks, What is the meaning and practice of citizenship and our relationship to the world? Is there a potential for critical reformulation and extension of radical democratic citizenship through the personal? How can the dominant binary political and epistemological system and language around "belonging" be reclaimed, and its concept repossessed through contemporary artistic processes that are meant to return citizenship to those most lacking and excluded from society?

DC: I was surprised when you first told me that you hadn't really considered yourself an artist before you participated in the Diaspora Pavilion Exhibition at the Venice Biennale 2017. Can you start by talking about that experience, and how your concept of neo-diaspora was born?

AZ: I began studying art only shortly after I came back from Venice. And before then, I'd never been invited to such a complex show; the scale, the prestige—I was thrown in at the deep end. The Biennale's profile made it hard for me to work in a way I was used to—without prior access to the site and limited knowledge of local contexts. Ultimately, I don't think my

Figure 11.1. The Boulevard.
Source: Abbas Zahedi. Image: The Dots, 2018.

installation, *MANNA (Machine-Aided Neural Networking of Affect*, 2017), translated the ideas I was trying to explore in full. However, I was able to make a film as part of the same commission (*Me Myself & A I I I*, 2017), which included part of the installation that was not highlighted in the space. The film and the opening-day drinks performance (*#FakeBooze*) were quite successful—I thought I'd found a new approach to making work. Also, my installation came out of my experimentations with algorithms and machine-learning codes; I was feeding a lot of this information into the work. A text I conceived for the exhibition came out of a scripted algorithm I made that was just pumping out words that I edited into the transcript. I wanted to make my own personalised algorithmic poetics in a way. And the idea I was referring to at the time was *neo-diaspora*.

The term was my own 'label' for myself to avoid having any tag that had already been preestablished for me. A lot of my activities before going to Venice were community projects, art programmes and spoken word and poetry performances. I was quite active in the London community organising / activist and social enterprise scene. I'd set up a food bank and soup kitchens, I'd and made other various cultural interventions. In a way, they were political and social; however, there was always a cultural Trojan horse that was allowing other agendas to go through. I'd say that a key part of that horse was the concept of neo-diaspora. It was something I could use as a label or

framework, and it was quite ambiguous, but at the same time porous and unconstrained, and it opened up possibilities such as the Diaspora Pavilion to me. This idea of having a conceptual guise as a mode of navigation was more important than allowing someone to reduce my work to the idea of me being a British Muslim, or a child of immigrants to the UK, or anything to do with 'identity politics' per se. Neo-diaspora was my way of remixing all of these categories whilst thinking about globalisation, the financial crash, migration 'crisis,' technology, post-postmodernity and philosophy. The very *liquid* nature of this modern era, as famously described by Zygmunt Bauman, had a strong influence on me when developing these ideas.

I didn't have any formal arts training, but these were my ambitions for the show in Venice when the invitation arrived. Whilst there, I had a chance to meet other artists invited to exhibit in the Pavilion. Some of them I'd come across before, some were new to me, but everyone was inspiring. One artist was Khadija Saye.[1] As it happened, she lived very close to me in London, in Grenfell Tower. I still live in the area; in fact, I am part of the same housing group. When preparing for the show in Venice, Khadija and I would talk a lot and share ideas; we were conceptually very much in sync. She really related to what I described neo-diaspora to be, having her own ideas around faith, heritage and identity (her parents were both from the Gambia). One of my earlier projects was a philosophy symposium that I'd set up in our local fish and chip shop in Ladbroke Grove. Khadija never attended the symposium, but she'd go to the chip shop, so she was aware of us, and we were of her—the kind of knowing each other from a distance. When we came back from Venice, she was selected for a course at Central Saint Martins. She called me up and said: "Look, I'm going to meet this course leader, the course is a combination of art and philosophy, and seeing that you've done all this philosophy work, I think you should come along. Maybe there is a way we can both do it."

DC: So, it was she who, in fact, encouraged you to apply for the course?

AZ: Yes, as I had no intention of doing so myself. At the time, we would often spend time together, going to local galleries, to the Serpentine (I remember there was the Arthur Jafa show on there at the time). And eventually I agreed to join her at the meeting. It was quite clear they were very keen to have Khadija on the course—she was a standout artist from the Diaspora show, and her work had already made a big impact. She said: "If I'm going to do the course, Abbas is also going to. We go together." I was quite shocked that she was so insistent. She made me promise I'd apply, and we'd figure out the funding later. And two or three weeks after that, whilst we were still in the process of writing our applications, I looked out of my window one night, and I saw the tower was on fire.

I freaked out and got in touch with Khadija, realising she was still inside. I left my flat in a panic. The fire brigade were telling everyone to stay inside the building, and I was messaging her to get out. Because I could see the whole thing was on fire—it didn't look safe at all. I tried to get closer, attempting to establish contact the whole time, trying to see if I could even go inside the building, but I was in shock and momentarily passed out. When I came around, I was not hearing back from my friend. And then we later found out she didn't make it.

And so I went to Saint Martins later that year with all of this in my head. And in my personal experience previous to the Grenfell tragedy, I also suffered a lot of loss. I lost all of my immediate family at quite a young age, both my parents who came to this country and stayed here due to their medical conditions, and a younger brother. The Grenfell Tower fire was yet another enormous loss for me, and going into an art space at Saint Martins, I had two years to try to process how I could address a lot of this through contemporary art. I spent much time experimenting with a conceptual language I developed for myself. I wanted to engage with materials, and different media, and I was interested in the work being interactive. It was a way of trying to understand the dominant art historical canon with its top-down approach from cave painting to Marcel Duchamp, a very linear trajectory. I always felt that whenever there was someone who didn't fit the canon, there was another axis, like an x-axis that cuts across at whatever point an unorthodox artist works. They don't go into the canon; they go sideways.

DC: A rhizomatic kind of denial of the hierarchical structure.

AZ: It really spoke to me. I felt it was a way of disrupting the canon. The idea of something being a rhizome is very interesting because it still grows from something, like a mushroom sprouting on a tree. There is something that grounds the rhizome.[2] Whilst I love this idea and the philosophies around it, I felt there was too much emphasis on the horizontal aspect of rhizome, and not an understanding that there was still something beneath that holds it structurally together. I started to think how I could address these concerns in my work. I thought there needed to be an archival ground, something that is very much within the canon. And the rhizome happens on top of that, or more so—it's combined within it. When I studied, I thought along these lines whilst experimenting a lot with performance, sculpture and installation. I also had this history of working with drinks in my own family, who, on my mum's side, were ceremonial drink-makers for rituals around commemorating death and other religious memorial services—i.e., the death of saints in the Iranian-Muslim tradition. The relationship between drink offerings or something that is devotional became very interesting to me.

DC: Was it around the time of your MA degree show, in which you presented *Dwelling: In This Space We Grieve* (2019), dedicated to Khadija?

AZ: Yes. In the end, I wanted to make an offering, but in an empty way. When it came to the show, I became very aware that Khadija was not in it. She would have been there, were it not for the Grenfell fire. And that was very significant. I don't know if there were any other art students who died in that fire similar to Khadija—I don't think so—but anyway with she and I having come from the same area in London (North Kensington), it was quite rare to be artistically active in that environment. I did feel it was a major loss, and had Khadija been in our degree show, it would have been a big moment for her, for Central Saint Martins and in general for people interested in art and in the issues that we were exploring in our work. I wanted to highlight that loss somehow in the degree show by working the site specifically and being context aware.

My practice is about tuning in to the very moment a person comes across the work. I'm interested in all the strands that coalesce into creating that moment. For my degree show, I embraced drinking cultures that commemorate death—since libations are something that a lot of cultures have as a form of remembrance—by using a fridge that I had previously used in my other works to serve drinks in an art context. This time, the fridge was empty, and I lit it green from within and applied a hand-sign sticker onto it. When you put your hand on the fridge, you could feel the sounds vibrating through the surface transducers. Without speakers, the structure itself emanated the audio of grieving and lamentation. It became a sculptural, ready-made object in a Duchampian way, an installation because of sound and light, and an architectural form, too, the way it looked resembling a tower. The green light referred to the traditional practices of mourning in Shia Muslim culture, where the colour green is used to symbolise the gardens of heaven. And obviously it referred to Grenfell, as well. When people put their hands on the fridge, they activated the sculpture, and it broke the fixed idea that you can't touch artworks. There was also a text on the work with an explanation—which, as we know, is a complete no-no in contemporary art, since you just never put text *on the work*. But for me, doing so was like a small act of sabotage—this is not just a visual artwork; there's more at play here. The work became one of the highlights of the degree show that year; it resonated with a lot of people, allowing them a chance to grieve, catalysing a release for emotions. And it also helped me in that way. When I saw [the work] having this effect on people, I became very interested in continuing this approach.

DC: Your exhibition, *How to Make a How from a Why* (2020), at the South London Gallery this past August, was one of the first shows I saw after the

Figure 11.2. How to Make a How from a Why.
Source: Abbas Zahedi. Image: Andy Stagg, 2020.

spring lockdown ended, and it made a lasting impression on me. Harnessing post-minimalist aesthetics with almost corporeal lyricism, in that site-responsive installation you managed to pack such a punch intellectually and emotionally. Clearly, there are strong links between this exhibition and your degree artwork, the interplay between artefacts, settings and bodies moving through space, but also poignantly between the ideas embedded in the personal and the communal.

AZ: The SLG show was an opportunity to really take it further so that the whole gallery space could be dedicated to working in this way. I could activate the whole site, not just a single sculpture-installation. The fact that the gallery was a former fire station, and that Lakanal House on the Sceaux Gardens Estate just behind it had been on fire eight years before in a similar way to Grenfell, mattered hugely. There was no learning taken from the Lakanal House fire, and the government didn't commit any money to aid local councils in fire safety improvements. So there was the history of the location and the gallery space itself and my personal connection to it all coming together. It really informed my idea for the work, the notion of exits, or paths of safety. It came even more into focus when I heard Jacob Rees-Mogg on the radio one day. He said something along the lines: If you had common sense, you would have come out of Grenfell when it was on fire. When I heard that, I was just enraged. I thought, he's essentially telling people they should have

gone against what the fire brigade was telling them to do. To go against the authority in that situation. . . .

DC: . . . whilst himself being the figure of authority.

AZ: Exactly. It just made me think that having this conviction that one can just leave any situation that does not suit them is a very privileged idea. It made me realise that the notion of "exiting" for me meant an escape from danger. I became very curious about this idea of exits. In my subsequent research, I came across Jennet Kirkpatrick's paper, "Resistant Exit"; for her it's an idea that comes out of management theory, or investment, about how people have stock portfolios. She applied it to social politics. And that's where I relate to it. I've been given this label of being Muslim, or Iranian, or working class, or from a council estate, or having gone to a state school, or speaking with an accent that's referred to as MLE ('Multicultural London English'). All these classifications are parts of me that I can't exit really, but at the same time, I don't want to be trapped by/in them. Moving into art practice is a way of having exit strategies from any of these categories, or a way of avoiding them becoming too essentialised. I can still use them how I want, but as soon as I feel that someone else tries to confine me to any of them, I need an exit strategy—you know, in linguistics, they call it code switching. So this idea of resistant exits means that I can, for example, not be invested in Islam at a metaphysical or transcendental level, not having a belief in dogmatic principles, whilst still having an affiliation with Muslims and people of that background on a social justice level. Because we all experience Islamophobia and its consequences post-9/11. And I think that doesn't really get discussed in any sophisticated way. Sometimes you have people coming forward and saying, we are ex-Muslims, or we are secular Muslims, trying to create yet another identity group. Whereas I'm trying not to belong to anything anymore—I'm trying to exit.

DC: I find what you've said about trying to abandon the already assigned or preconceived identities very important. Rosi Braidotti argues that a process of transformation of identities might create a transnational space and expand our notion of citizenship, critically re-grounding and delinking ethnic identity from nationality and then recombining them in different ways. Her idea of the 'nomadic subject' and the concept of 'flexible citizenship' connect it instead to participation and multiple belonging.

AZ: If I think about it in a philosophical way: There is the Platonic model in which you have the world, the image and then the idea. In Plato, the idea is the highest form, and when we talk about identity and representation, we are projecting that idea onto people, whereas the Deleuzian model, where we talk about rhizome and simulacra, encourages us to stay at the level of the image, horizontally. We can have thousands of images, and there is no connection

to the ideal idea; the images are all different from each other. And we just appreciate each one as it is.

For example, if we stick to code-switching in the linguistic sense, I speak various languages: the language of philosophy, contemporary art language, English, Farsi and some Arabic. Growing up in London, I've also picked up lots of different accents. At the same time, growing up on a council estate with a working-class, immigrant background, I know a street-code. I'll give one example: In American films, or rap culture, if they see a police car, they say "5-0": That's the code for the police. Where I grew up, we would take this idea and translate it into Arabic. So "5-0" became *khams sefir*. It's taking it away from the mainstream language. Learning how to code-switch in that way, I think is basically my approach to how I do art, aesthetics, social justice and citizenship. I have to know all the codes in order to switch [them]. That's why when I make-work, I put a few ready-made codes in there, as with the SLG installation: a lamentation code, an interactive code, a poetic code. And depending on who sees the work, they may access one code, or they might be able to switch and access more than one. And that's how I understand my sense of self. I need to be able to switch to survive, in this kind of post-metropolis reality. It doesn't serve me to double down on any one aspect of myself, because that feels far too outmoded.

I'm trying to discuss it in a way that doesn't come across as cynical. It is not a Machiavellian sly manoeuvring. When I access and use these codes, I fully resonate with them. It's like downloading various software language apps that you can just switch between to achieve different interfaces.

DC: It's identity in Bauman's liquid modernity that you've mentioned—one constantly changing and transforming.

AZ: It really feels like that. And I think I try to embody this in both my life and my practice.

DC: I hear an allegiance to anti-identitarian politics that empathetically recurs in what you talk about, and I concur in principle. It echoes Paul B. Preciado's call for strategies of critical disidentification to break out of identity politics and instead focus on wider regimes of the violence that target different people. But isn't the code-switching a form of quick adaptation to a hostile environment—without ever changing it? How do you feel about living in a society that requires at least some of its citizens to constantly—and skilfully—code-switch in order to feel secure or fully realised? I am not talking about Bourdieu's habitus concept here or code-switching in the socio-cultural linguistics stratification, but more on a basic level—shouldn't we be trying to tackle the fundamental problems and systems of prevalent fear and exclusion that govern us, rather than learning the survival techniques or camouflaging, if they don't challenge the overarching structure?

AZ: It's a good question. I want to take this on—it's the crux of the issue in many ways. I believe in two things. First, if you don't have to code-switch and you can still get by, it's a privilege: Basically, you can afford your position. Also, if you come from a marginalised position, you don't need to code-switch; as long as you stay there, your peers will look after you. You will be okay, but you cannot access other parts of the society. It's a compromise. On the other hand, if you're socioeconomically advantaged, you also exist in an echo chamber, but you have more options. You may simply choose your codes more carefully. You may have different interests, such as Japanese medieval history, and access to various niche pursuits. Not having to code-switch is both a freedom and a safety mechanism. But if you need to code-switch, you must be resourceful and have a capacity to learn codes and be able to employ them in a useful manner.

The reason I rely on these survival mechanisms so much is perhaps because I lost my family when I was very young; I'm away from my original culture, and I grew up in the UK in precarious circumstances. And when I talk about the neo-diaspora, I don't even consider myself part of it. Because how would you understand an orphan in this context? I think I am part of something like a hyper-diaspora, or an ultra-diaspora. I don't even have an option of using one social code, one way of being. Whenever I've tried that, I felt precluded from being able to function, or having my needs met, or just finding a place for myself. The current schizoid code-switching way is a way of foraging—it's a scavenger-survival mentality.

Generally, I'd say it's not desirable to expect other people to have to take on this burden. People should feel free to live in the way they choose. If they want to have a discrete identity and can fulfil their needs within one paradigm, then why should that be a problem? I've never wanted it to be like this for me. I am having to code-switch, and at the same time, I am trying to see if I can use this approach to go against the very logic that created that position. When I talk about it as a method, I am aware it is not a solution. It's a tactic that has a certain benefit at a time when everything is becoming very liquid. If the ground beneath your feet is starting to look like an ocean, maybe you should learn how to swim. That's how I see it. As opposed to, let's try to build a boat whilst we are losing the ground. Once we find some land, maybe then we can build a boat and figure out the way forward. I guess code-switching is an exit strategy for those of us who feel most marginalised. It's not the solution. I believe we need more exit strategies than solutions because we don't really know what the solutions are yet.

These are clearly things very close to me, like the Grenfell Tower tragedy. I think about it every day, but to me there's a very reductionist tendency when we come to talk about such tragic events. And what I'm trying to understand on a different scale is, actually—why there's no time to grieve.

DC: Let's make some time to talk about it. The subject of grief comes up a lot in your work, likewise those strategies of exit, of dissidence, of being resistant. On a personal level, you have been exposed to enormous loss. More politically, in the present-day world the problem of grief is a complicated one, as we know from Judith Butler and her work on human vulnerability and her pressing questions: "Whose lives count as lives?" and "What makes for a grievable life?" Butler writes: "Such frames are operative in imprisonment and torture, but also in the politics of immigration, according to which certain lives are perceived as lives while others, though apparently living, fail to assume perceptual form as such. Forms of racism instituted and active at the level of perception tend to produce iconic versions of populations who are eminently grievable, and others whose loss is no loss and who remain ungrievable."[3] I can see how through your art practice, you've created a space that anyone can enter and in which the ritual of grieving and reconciling with death is at last possible, particularly for those "who remain ungrievable." The way you honoured Khadija in your degree show was not only about her as a fellow artist and friend, but also as a suffering human being in the tragedy that right-wing media described along the lines of being "caused by the faultiness of an immigrant's fridge." Yours was a beautiful act of civic and artistic refusal. But I wonder how you negotiate these intimate stories that you bring into your work with the normative and hierarchising institutions and their publics?

AZ: This has been one of the main questions I go back to because so much of my work is related to the personal. I try to expand it by using spaces, installations and objects as invitations for people to participate and interact with the work. It's a commitment to the idea of the aesthetics of everyday life. Often, I use objects that are familiar, but that are reframed through a subtle twist that does not try to draw attention to their "strangeness," but rather opens a space for them to function in relation to an emotional process, allowing a window of affect to the viewer. The sense of focus and immersion is important to me. When the public first entered the space at SLG, they could see an object that looked like an ordinary hand-pump, and they could smell the scent of rosewater and see a fire sprinkler system. Which generally speaking, you know exists, but you never see sprinklers at the level of your eye, presented in an unusual way, warped, dripping. And the story unfolds with a narrative at play.

For me, this goes back to being a spoken word poet, an MC, when performance is coloured by the way you speak: the tone of your voice, the speed you recite, the languages used, the accent(s). All these properties become an immersive aspect of a poem. And the words, the content and the specific breaks: Cuts, moments of silence—become the focal points that might give you an indication of a meaning. So for me, creating an installation is like

editing a poem. This kind of layering/code-switching approach becomes the way that I can blend personal and universal aspects of the work together, so that the personal element isn't privileged. These two facets can create an experience, which is shareable and engaging. Otherwise, it doesn't make sense to show something to an audience, if you're not willing to share something vital in there.

Your mention of refusal reminds me of Édouard Glissant and his "right to opacity" argument, but I am not trying to be "opaque" in my work in that sense. Rather, I endeavour to present it in a way that's very exposing, transparent. Even the sound system in the SLG space was visible—you could see the wires and transducers attached to the exit. The sprinkler system, as well, was fully revealed. So, the idea of camouflage or mimicry does not necessarily fit because, putting all the installation components out there, I tried to balance the immersive and the universal with these focal points that highlight the story from a particular perspective, but they don't go deep enough to fully entrench it, so enough gaps remain open for people to enter with their own perspectives—that's the balance I try to achieve.

DC: The way you conceptualised that installation was so compassionate, allowing other voices in to co-habit, notwithstanding it being concretely rooted in your own experience and emotional landscape. All in all, it was very moving to witness the social and personal histories interweave in such a resonant and thoughtful way. It brings to my mind this concept or rather, gesture—of generosity, which is present throughout your work. We live in a time of illiberal democracy and political atrophy, and for the purpose of this book, we are trying to think about what democracy and citizenship could look like in the future. Might a new model of shared coexistence based around care, generosity, mutuality or reciprocity be possible?

AZ: Generosity is a big part of how I think around my practice. When I use food and drink in my work, it is to emphasise this point of hosting one another. My main preoccupation is often about: How can I be a good host? Derrida critiques the notion of hospitality and talks about how the host has a power dynamic with the guest, and there's a truth to that as I, too, believe there's an inherent power play present in such relations; however, the idea of being a good host means you'd try to afford some of the power back to the viewer/guest. In my work, gestures of invitation, participation and keeping the right balance of ambiguity allows people to place their own stories within the work. That's my way of being a good host and giving people something of themselves back (otherwise it becomes ungenerous and self-interested).

I guess, I learnt some of these skills growing up in a culture that is known for hosting, but also through the community work I've done—setting up food banks or soup kitchens, creating spaces for various activities, whether it be

for marginalised and migrant populations, trying to bring them in together. There's a lot of insight into hosting that you gain from social practice. One of the cultural projects I used to run was an alternative community hub called Rumi's Cave in Kilburn (a kind of extension of my *Fish Bar Symposium*, 2010–2017). It was a place that didn't really have an identity, a broad mixture of people loosely connected to Islam or from various 'immigrant' backgrounds who would come to this multicultural space. On a Monday night I'd have a lecture on economics, on a Tuesday a medieval poetry class, on a Wednesday a music event, on a Thursday a prayer session, on a Friday some family time with food and drink, on a Saturday there might be theatre—every day would be different. Allowing this cross-fertilisation naturally and not defining the space too much, but rather allowing people to use their own curiosity, was the way I felt I could be a good host.

I'd say my idea of democracy is about learning how to host. I think we have lost that skill as a culture. When we talk about migration, this is really the main issue. People say no to other people arriving to a country; for whatever reason they don't want to host them. The current neoliberal paradigm also creates a fear of scarcity, which is translated through this xenophobic shift. Sometimes when I think about my work, I use the term *xeno-memento*, the memento of the *xeno*, or the thing that is not permitted to exist on its own terms. Xeno-mementoes are like aesthetic devices that make you curious about that kind of otherness. In my work, I try to create this kind of experience. And when I say "other," I don't mean it in a dualistic way—you've mentioned Butler, and we also have Derrida and other philosophers exploring notions of otherness that are rooted in the process of dialectics. I'd say it's coming back into fashion after this post-postmodern moment when people were trying to get rid of "otherness"; but now we are back in the time of binaries and social drift, so the notion of the "other" is made relevant again. Whereas with the xeno-memento, it's about offering something from (within) ourselves that makes others curious about other "others." It becomes more about difference.

DC: I think your whole practice is a testimony to you being a good host. What you do is basically a form of *practicing* hospitality. Achille Mbembe talks about "the ethics of passer-by"—creating bonds between people coming in, moving out, together creating acts of solidarity and care and recognition of common vulnerability and memory generated from the principal democratic right to mobility. This is against what he calls the "politics of enmity"—when hostility becomes the main way of experiencing the "other." You host "others" in, and into, your work. Your *Fish Bar Symposium* operated as an open-ended invitation with no boundaries for people to come and go, which could be such a strong metaphor for how to be together. Obviously, times have

changed dramatically since, not just because of COVID-19, with its impact on individual citizens, societies and borders and with its "social distancing" rhetoric (itself a loaded, potentially dangerous term), but also here in the UK, Brexit's (another *exit*) transition period is just about to end. As Britain leaves the EU and tightens its external borders against the idea of togetherness and solidarity, how do you see the work of building radical hospitality continuing, both physically and metaphorically?

AZ: It's, of course, a big challenge. My exhibition at SLG first closed, then reopened later in the summer, which in a way made it more poignant, but at the time there was a lot of panic about how I might be able to work. I was making myself busy in other ways, trying to survive. I had some projects that'd been planned, but I had to redevelop them, and through that I found new models of working. I created a drinks project for the Brent Biennial 2020—Soul Refresher, a *mountain rose soda*. I was invited back to the same area in Brent and Kilburn, where my earliest projects happened and where I also started a food bank in 2013. I thought that a drink work might be a good option during the pandemic, but I was looking at an alternative mode of distribution.

At one point, I spoke to the food bank just to see how they were getting on, and they were really struggling with so many requests for food in the middle of the pandemic. It became very clear to me that I should help them by donating drinks—we made over three thousand bottles, and most of them went to the food bank, which became the distribution hub across the entire borough, bringing drinks to the people who needed them most. That way, instead of asking audiences to attend a festival within certain engagement protocols (that require enough public to come in order for the organisers to justify their funding), we sent the artwork directly to the people who struggled most. By giving the drinks to Sufra [Food Bank], we strengthened the independent supply chain and highlighted the crucial work they do as a charity. At the same time, the drink was being sold at different prices at other local venues and online, and the money raised went back to the food bank. It created a different kind of economy. It was my way of saying that all of this infrastructure already exists. Because I had a history of working with these different people in the area, I could just walk around and talk to them. It was an idea of the gift-economy, the sociopolitical concept by Marcel Mauss, which inspired me a lot. A gift can be anything: time, a smile, food. A gift means that there is a sense of abundance, and nowadays most people are of a mentality that they don't feel they are able to *give*. I'd like to change that misconception, to go against the idea that the other is a threat, that scarcity mind-set. I am still trying to figure out a gift economy that does allow for visual work and artistic practice to take place in the public.

DC: The Brent drinks are a potent example of a critical, but not overly theorised social work. You have the intellectual background study of philosophy and creative imperatives, but you translate these complex ideas into something that is quite simple and accessible to a lot of people (not to mention, immensely enjoyable): performing citizenship-as hospitality-as-artistic practice.

AZ: I want to highlight another work in relation to that. It's called *The Boulevard* (2018), and it took place at Tate Britain, within the main gallery space with those grand European paintings along the walls. We made nettle soup from nettles that we picked in the gardens around the Tate. And we served the soup on a strip of a green-screen paper extended across the gallery floor. There was no specific invitation to the public; again, it was more of an invitation, which is quite familiar, or creating a situation where something is familiar, or which people have a tacit knowledge of. I'm interested in the idea of tacit knowledge as proposed by Michael Polanyi, and I often incorporate such signals in my work.

DC: What I like about this is that it [the installation] gives people the agency to decide to join or not. I love that your work is not prescriptive; you are not telling people what to do. You are just creating an environment, which is welcoming, and which incentivizes curiosity and chance.

AZ: In the past, I worked in bars a lot, and I also was involved with the company that produced my drinks for the Venice and Brent biennials, and in these work situations, we always had 'off-menu' item—i.e., special drinks that were not on the regular 'menu.' If someone was curious or asked interesting questions, we would offer the off-menu option. It was our way of rewarding curiosity. So, when it comes to Tate, people walk into the gallery space to look at paintings, and they don't expect to sit down. But if they did, I wanted to create a situation that was a form of reassurance: warm soup during wintertime, the green-screen, which relates to photography, to imagination. You choose what is good for you. Because the green-screen was laid down on the floor, it resulted in people turning their backs to the paintings, having to look at each other instead: That was also a value. It reminds me of Lyotard and his "The Assassination of Experience by Painting," this idea of going into a salon and looking at paintings in frames, which give you the impression that you can see the whole picture, that such a perspective exists. It indoctrinates you about the position of authority. I think in my work, there is this idea of always trying to go back to the ground, trying to establish horizontal perspectives in order to disrupt the top-down axis; but not in an overly confrontational way, but through what I call "convivial antagonism." Direct antagonism is very isolating and rejective, and being convivial—social, hospitable—allows a subtler form of resistance without needing to be divisive.

Émile Durkheim's concept of anomie—of being alienated in the society, broadly speaking—is a useful one here. During the twentieth century, anomie still felt like a novelty, and a lot of critical approaches to exclusion and xenophobia did not really account for the sense of alienation that was widespread. It was more of an alienation of a particular group versus the majority—the hegemon was clear. Now the sense of anomie (that one is a lone wolf) is almost ubiquitous. Many people feel destabilised in that way, going back to the idea that we're in a zero-sum game. If you present critical works that further entrench the estrangement or compound that sense of anomie, then you end up brewing a psychopathic backlash. I think the critical approach works better when it takes today as a given that alienation is widespread. What I mean is—and here we are going back to the concept of neo-diaspora—that even 'white people' in the so-called West are neo-diasporic in a sense. Even they feel disconnected from their cultural heritage. The best example is hipsters dressing like the Victorians. That's not so different from jihadists. The only difference is the latter don't know what irony is. Hipsters inherit irony as a cultural posture, whereas jihadists have too much literalism, too much belief. Most of the interventions that I create are for me to have a more hospitable space somewhere in the world, which is presented in a way that can be accessible to others. If you allow different people to be involved in the work, you have more hospitable spaces.

DC: With the imminent, and to a lot of people, intimidating deadline of Brexit, the idea of a nation-state with the reinforced border control and new quotas regarding migrants has been sold and sealed. What are your thoughts about potential ways of disrupting the overbearing rhetoric of "national belonging," "taking back sovereignty," "homeland" and "secure borders"—dangerous narratives that have been so cynically exploited by politicians and legalised by democratic consensus?

AZ: I think these are real dangers, and they put a lot of pressure on those of us who value open borders to come forward and to keep expressing the idea of being a good host to as wide a public as possible, and that includes the people we disagree with. Even in the role of a host in my projects, I am aware that many people may find me "unwanted" in the UK in one sense or another—whether it's because of the long-lasting aftermath of 9/11 or because I am a brown man with some "patriarchal agenda." I can be easily framed in different ways, which can make me undesirable to many people, both on the left and on the right. I often feel like a football that can be kicked whichever way any political party wants to use me to either promote or justify their cause. In that sense, I've been working in a very adverse environment. Likewise, many of my peers: Black, queer, trans and other communities that are very dear to me also have experienced a level of hostility for most of

their lives, if not for generations. Privileged middle-class establishments may have never even experienced any form of serious hostility until now in this new era of pandemic and social justice movements. They have not had their reality—or lives—questioned in that way, and now they have to face very difficult realisations.

One of the reasons I've moved to installation as an art form, as opposed to more hands-on community projects, is because so much of the logic behind the latter has been the logic of the "safe space." Whilst it sounds nice in principle—a safe space is where you incubate something vulnerable and delicate—yet the question remains: What happens when you outgrow the safe space? If it's too safe, it suffocates you. I needed to exit from that and ask myself instead: How do I create a similar quality in spaces, which are productive but not sealed off and not of an exclusive mindset? This is a real challenge, because now the society doesn't feel safe anymore; with the invisible "other" around, people don't feel safe. So, for me, the task is how to allow people to safely exit the "safe space"—their enclaves—and come into a broader public realm in order to resurrect it—to make it safe again. These are the kinds of spaces I'm interested in creating in my practice, whether it's interactive exhibitions, films, sound or conversations. My exhibitions are spaces for social mixing, for people with different viewpoints to come together and just be.

Just to make it clear, I am not interested in the notion of social mixing and "multiculturalism"—an idea that was popular during the Blair era (although right now, it's the opposite dogma, one of the full-on neoliberal, everyone-out-for themselves, a sort of Ayn Rand fairy tale—but that's another topic). My job is to bring different people to spaces that take them out of their usual comfort zones whilst still trying to be a good host, and to understand what that means. If people really value social mixing and "diversity," then it is on them to actually do it in an earnest way. We need to find a way for something that is integrated but not pinned to any political agenda, and I hope my work can help achieve that. It's an approach of basic questions and values—again, how to be a good host? How to be altruistic but not in a devotional way?

Once we start making these steps, we will get to the position where we can reimagine democracy and radical citizenship more in line with what you said about the philosophy of generosity, and the idea of a gift economy.

DC: You suggest that in the first instance, we should try to retrain ourselves to become more welcoming to each other...

AZ: …definitely, but also to ourselves. Perhaps we should dig deeper into ourselves not to lose the more cosmopolitan agenda and *genuine* diversity. It's crucial that we stop people only speaking to their own echo chambers. On social media, you can block anyone you don't like, so it just reinforces you to feel comfortable at all times. But this is illusory, of course. It is actually either

the discomfort of isolating yourself and realising the society is not how you wanted it to be, or the discomfort of trying to be open, to host, to be in spaces that are genuinely diverse and maybe uneasy or awkward sometimes, but you may have a healthier society of people who can interact one with another and in a way that's not going to result in conflict, but a conversation instead.

DC: This brings to mind Piotr Piotrowski's concept of the "critical museum" parallel in structure to both "radical democracy" and "horizontal art history," which advocates for a museum (but we could apply it to art-spaces, as you've been mentioning them) to be more of a testing ground/lab for democracy and self-criticality.

AZ: There are so many areas to address here. I think in the way I work, all these matters are at the forefront of my [exhibitions] spaces/installations/interactions… Sometimes it's best not to go about creating them in a rational way. It's the experience that is being created and the conversation about it that allows for something else to occur. It's about having a sense of trust in the ability of people to deal with affects and aesthetics—something that is not a technocratic worldview.

In creating an art installation, the medium is the people, and the space is the vessel. The viewer, the guest, the person moving through is the medium. The experience they have is my medium. All this orients me to the ground, puts me back on the earth, its physical substance, not just a romantic conception. It is a matter of fact—the ground is what we have in common. Our concepts, ideas, exit strategies, identities—those are all up for grabs. The work starts from there.

London, November–December 2020

NOTES

1. Khadija Mohammadou Saye (1992–2017), also known as Ya-Haddy Sisi Saye, was a London-born photographer. Her work explored her Gambian-British identity and the "migration of traditional Gambian spiritual practices." Her renowned series of nine tintypes, entitled *Dwelling: In this space we breathe*, was exhibited in the Diaspora Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2017. Saye and her mother died in the Grenfell Tower fire.

2. In their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972–1980) project, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use the terms *rhizome* and *rhizomatic* to describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation.

3. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009), 24.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.
Braidotti, Rosi. "Writing as a Nomadic Subject." *Comparative Critical Studies* 11, no. 2–3 (2009): 163–84.
Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* London: Verso, 2009.
Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
Derrida, Jacques. *Of Hospitality*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
Derrida, Jacques. *The Work of Mourning*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001.
Durkheim, Émile. *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: Free Press, 1997.
Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.
Kirkpatrick, Jennet. "Resistant Exit." *Contemporary Political Theory* 18 (2019): 135–57.
Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Assassination of Experience by Painting, Monory*. Jean-François Lyotard: Writings on Contemporary Art and Artists. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013.
Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchanges in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge, 2002.
Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.
Piotrowski, Piotr, and Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, eds. *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum.* London: Routledge, 2017.
Polanyi, Michael. *The Tacit Dimension*. London: Routledge, 1966.
Preciado, Paul B. *An Apartment on Uranus*. London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2020.

Chapter Twelve

For a Return to Radical Agency

A Critique of the Fetish for 'Humanising' Migrant Narratives in the Arts

Hassan Mahamdallie

Humanity. *Humans*. *Humanising*. These words litter our cultural and political conversations in relation to "the other," particularly migrants to the West. In the arts and cultural communities in Europe and elsewhere, amongst those artists who see themselves as liberal and progressive, there has been a marked turn in recent times towards depicting and staging individualised "authentic" narratives of migrants and minorities, alongside a fetish for the "humanising" power of "good stories" against what are regarded as those "bad stories" pushed by the established press and reactionary politicians.

Take, for example, the photographer and blogger Debra Barraud, of *Humans of Amsterdam* fame, who "prefers to focus on humanity rather than politics: 'I believe that when we bring humanity to the table we can have a new conversation.'" In 2019, Barraud was appointed a "Changemaker Correspondent" for the philanthropic arm of US-based cloud software company Salesforce, for a project with NGO War Child Holland:

> Brought together by Salesforce.org, Barraud and War Child Holland are telling stories from people who don't have a voice; they would otherwise remain untold. Now, they could change minds and open hearts. 'It's much harder to feel hate for someone when you know their story,' says Barraud. 'What keeps me going is sharing stories of ordinary people, because we all have a story and we all deserve to be heard.'[1]

Or take the Rockefeller-funded Pop Culture Collaborative, which defines the "socially engaged" artists around them as components in an extremely broad

cross-class alliance of powerful influencers using existing mass-media industry platforms to humanise the oppressed:

> A diverse eco-system of artists, social change leaders and activists, researchers, strategists, philanthropists, industry executives, and others who use pop culture storytelling and strategies to promote just and humane narratives about groups of people historically excluded from the American story and society. The field focuses primarily on the entertainment, advertising, and media industries, which reach very large audiences (i.e., millions of people), are dynamic and ever-changing, and include opportunities for relatively small numbers of people to have enormous influence.[2]

But as journalist Nesrine Malik has observed in her essay, "Humanizing Stories: Migrants in the Media":

> 'Humanizing' is a tricky business. We are always told that migrants need to be 'humanized' if they are to be accepted, if an effective counter narrative to the populist one is to be written. And so now there is a cottage industry of humanization, a whole sub-genre of reporting and factual entertainment starring the human migrant. . . . But the message is uniform. There are broadly two things that migrants are allowed to be: positive success stories, or objects of pornified pity. They are either drowning children or cheeky entrepreneurs, they are either camp dwellers or restaurateurs. . . . They are either dispossessed, or Nobel prize winners.[3]

This tricky business of "humanizing" in relation to poor migrants and refugees is strewn with hidden (and often not-so-hidden) value-judgements of the innate superiority of the West, and the Western view of the world as intrinsically and singularly universal and historic. As Ziauddin Sardar has written: "The dominance of western culture, and its globalization through this dominance, should not be confused with universalism. Just because a particular discipline or a discourse is accepted or practiced throughout the world, it does not mean that discipline or discourse is universally valid and applicable to all societies."[4]

In the Western liberal mind, this superiority is often obscured by harnessing the language of identity politics and its twin codes of individual privilege and guilt. The psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary Franz Fanon characterised this guilt as channelled through the unconscious, in direct contrast to that of the oppressed, whose conscious feelings of inferiority and of being discriminated against is inevitably a societal drama "played out in the open." This guilt that Fanon touches upon in his 1952 book, *Black Skins, White Masks*, is a symptom of a lack of self-consciousness and self-awareness brought about by an innate feeling of civilisational superiority—it is not for

the West to know itself; it is for the rest of the world to know the West, and even to have the ability to divine its capricious nature (or suffer the consequences).

As the revolutionary theatre director Milo Rau, of the National Theatre of Ghent, argues:

> Modern man . . . is incapable of recognizing himself in his actions, in his practice. I once called this 'cynical humanism': practice and thought walk alongside one another in the case of the modern, post-medieval human, like two ponies separated by an opaque wooden partition. . . . One can sign a petition against blood minerals without any problem at all, using a cheap mobile phone bought with the blood of thousands of displaced or massacred Congolese hill farmers. Whoever actually rebels against the world though is a dangerous madman, a 'rabid dog,' as Luther said, a 'terrorist,' as Assad and Putin would say, but at best a fool.[5]

There is much talk of "the other" and "othering"—how to reach the other and avoid othering them—how to bring them closer to us—to be more like us. But do they want to be like us? Are they eager to become us? "The other" is, in reality, the truth about us that we are unable to confront. The other is merely a wraith, conjured up by our own fears and anxieties—aspects of us we would rather not acknowledge, projected on a minority group designated for that purpose. The demons are not without; the demons are within. In short, the other reveals more about us than it does about them. An example: Western governments, of the right and left, have spent decades passing immigration laws to define who belongs and who does not—who is "us" and who is the "other."

It continues in relation to Brexit. A few of "the others" are allowed to become "us"—in the case of France, if they scale a building to rescue a child dangling off a balcony, they can become "us," so those in power can pretend it's not about racism. This conditional citizenship has found expression in the era of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In November 2020, two wealthy Biotech company owners based in Germany, who had succeeded in developing a vaccine for COVID-19, were picked out by the media as a good news story for reasons other than their scientific excellence or bank balances. Uğur Sahin and Özlem Türeci found themselves celebrated because they somehow exemplified the "successful integration" of immigrants. Sahin and Türeci are the children of Turkish immigrants to Germany, which, in itself, highlights the institutional racism of the German state. Sahin and Türeci came to Germany from Turkey young (in Sahin's case, at the age of four). These children of *Gasterbeiter* grew up in a German state that applied the "right of blood" principle to its citizenship. Automatic citizenship was barred to those not of

German ancestry, such as Sahin and Türeci, instead they had only been conferred *Aufenthaltsberechtigung* status (the "right to reside"). They could be deported at any time. As adults, they could be granted full legal status—if the German state judged their worth as good and productive citizens.[6]

There remains a feeling of unease that you are never truly accepted, that you do not really belong and are at best tolerated, and often despised. After 9/11 and the backlash against Muslims that followed, my late father, who came to the UK in 1954 from the British colony of Trinidad, and who worked six, sometimes seven, days a week, who never broke the law, who paid his taxes and raised a family, turned to me and said, "After all these years, I feel I don't belong here—they have made me an immigrant again." The Windrush deportations scandal in the UK is this precarity writ large. In recent times, this state of unbelonging has been intensified by the "hostile environment" set in motion by the Tory government as it hunted down the post-war generation of Windrush migrants from colonial Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, who found themselves in their retirement years declared stateless, criminalised, detained and deported. This was a deliberate Home Office project (running alongside the campaign for Brexit) to bend Britain's immigration and citizenship laws to the brutal task of reverse-engineering Britain's contemporary multicultural society back to a mythical racially pure "Little England."

When does an immigrant, refugee or asylum seeker stop being "the other"? There has been significant Somali migration to Europe since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The civil war and accompanying exodus took place in 1989 to 1991—three decades ago—yet in Britain and across Western Europe and the United States, Somalis are still widely considered a refugee community and treated as though they arrived yesterday. To quote African American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois, how long must it be before refugee communities are allowed to "lay aside the status of a beneficiary and ward" and fully become "collaborators and participants" in society? What must it take for them to become "a people, rather than a problem"? Carried forward by their own history, not forever swept along in someone's else's?[7]

Indeed, the effort to make us all assimilate (or integrate or be included, if you prefer), into one dominant culture or set of cultural norms, risks silencing voices from the margins we all need to hear. For example, Muslims in Britain are told how to behave, how to dress and even what they should and should not think about, in ways that do not apply to their fellow citizens. But citizenship should not be conditional on whether you can convince the state or politicians that you are not a threat, or that you are a Good Person; or a Good Muslim; or a Good Immigrant; or a Good Refugee made passive and nonthreatening by having a sad, touching but ultimately uplifting story to tell.

The true measure of equality is not whether you behave yourself and keep your mouth shut, even when faced with discrimination or unjust laws or rules. The true measure of equality is whether you can be subversive, offensive, selfish, violent or ridiculous, and, as with anyone else, for these actions to be judged as the acts of an individual, not based on irrational prejudices attached to the colour of skin, religion or minority group, whether or not you were born here, or how and when you got here.

The Western media and the cultural industries, with some exceptions, choose to commodify and fetishize what are packaged as "migrant stories." A dominant binary framework that is difficult to escape from has accumulated around these stories, that feature morality tales of either good or bad migrants and refugees, depending on your perspective. As Malik observes: "Migrant stories are told like parables, with endings that tie up neatly, reaffirming our faith in mankind, or sounding a warning about what mankind is capable of."

But what is the process of humanisation for which we are striving? Of course, against racist and xenophobic characterisations of the Migrant-Muslim as a rodent or other vermin, to assert that an individual or group are human is an important obligation. But if we proceed further, what is the content of the humanity that we are conferring upon this "Other"? That we are of the same species? That they have "rights" like we do? That they are "like us"? That they and us are "the same"? That they can become like us "given a good chance"? That they have a right to be different, if they agree to live alongside us without causing too much trouble?

It is not difficult to see the problem here—all the above, to a lesser or greater extent, confer human attributes and aspects of belonging upon migrants and refugees, without their consent or assent. In plain terms, it robs them of their agency—of having an active relationship to the world and the freedom to shape their lives, albeit "in circumstances not of their own making," to paraphrase Karl Marx. If that agency is not present, made active or released in all its potentiality, how far can we argue that this actually represents a humanising process? As Fanon laments in *Black Skins, White Masks*: "Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep."[8]

To explore this further, let us move from the subjective process of humanising to possibly a more objective category: the Human Condition. "You need to bring the essential part of your nature into play so as to be the more fiercely conscious of its existence." So says one of the characters in André Malraux's celebrated 1930s novel, *La Condition Humaine*.[9] The philosopher Hannah Arendt, in her 1958 treatise on the subject, asserts the primary importance of bringing "the word and the deed" into play:

> Speech and action . . . are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but qua men. This appearance, as distinguished

> from mere bodily existence, rests on initiative, but it is an initiative from which no human being can refrain and still be human. . . . A life without speech and without action…is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men. With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world. . . . This insertion . . . may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative.[10]

So, according to Arendt, unless we speak and act on our own initiatives, and have the power and freedom to do so, we are "literally dead to the world." Each person springs into the world as a unique being, certainly influenced by the conditions they find themselves born into, but not defined by them. But speaking for someone, on behalf of someone, may be an act of last resort (for example, pleading for someone's life), but it is not a strategy for "humanizing" an individual or a group.

Arendt and Fanon drew from Enlightenment philosopher Friedrich Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic, in which he examined how an individual's self-consciousness develops. Hegel took as a metaphor the relationship between the Slave (or bondsman) and the Master. Both recognise each other, and therefore attain a level of self-consciousness. However, this self-consciousness cannot be fully developed because of the unequal relationship between the two. The Slave, fearing the Master, turns in on himself and negates his own consciousness, and thereby his place in the human world (to use Arendt's concept). But as the slave toils, and produces things for the Master, he becomes more and more aware of his humanness, and at the same time, the Master becomes detached from the world because of his dependency on the labour of the Slave.

Labour, or work, is fundamental to the human condition and to the advancement of the species, creating a collective memory—a history. This explains why asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are barred from working—it is a negation by the nation-state of their humanity. Arendt argues that "labour assures not only individual survival, but the life of the species. Work and its product, the human artefact, bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time. Action, in so far as it engages in founding and pre-serving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance."[11]

This is something almost entirely overlooked by liberal humanisers—that an individual cannot be fully rescued, or restored to humanity, if they lack the agency to change the world around them. This "labour" or "action" is important to us all. It can result in "remembrance"—the notion that although no being can be immortal, when we die, we can exist in the minds of others

through the things we have done (good or bad). We all strive for this, and its denial ultimately renders us invisible. No wonder, then, that the growing realisation by the Slave through labour and action, of his independent place in the world, produces what Charles Villet has described as "a spirit of resistance and rebellion against the master. Through this rebellion the slave comes to see himself as existing on his own accord by negating the object of his fear, namely the master. As a consequence, the master becomes other to the slave, which also heralds the slave's entry into subjecthood."[12]

Fanon took Hegel's theory and applied it to the colonial struggles that erupted after World War II, and the role of conflict and violence in the process of liberation. He posited that the Master-Slave relationship, unless resolved, would lead, in Hegel's phrase, to a "struggle to the death." As Leo Zielig, in his biography of Fanon, explains:

> Fanon uses Hegel's metaphor of master and slave to illustrate his argument that only when the slave is prepared to risk his or her life, can freedom be recognised. . . . For Fanon, *to literally to be seen* it is necessary to grasp and seize recognition: 'this human reality in-itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies. Only through such 'conflict' can the non-person (the slave, the black person confronting racism, the colonised) be realised.[13]

As Villet concludes of Fanon's reworking of Hegel: "Conflict, it seems, is a central feature in human reality if one is to be transformed from being an object to being a subject, thus facilitating the entry into self-consciousness."[14] Therefore, can we truly claim for a process to be humanising if it does not involve conflict of some sort? However, Fanon, after asserting the necessity of Hegelian conflict and violence in recovering the humanity of the oppressed, then moves his argument further on towards the liberation of the oppressor himself from the Master-Slave dichotomy; Zielig also points out that:

> Here Fanon's analysis assumes a further Hegelian depth. If the black person—in such racist circumstances—is denied his humanity and depersonalised, then so is the white person. As Lewis Gordon has written, the white man is 'anti-man' and needs also to discover humanity, 'to emerge out of the ashes of his own desiccation.' . . . Simply put, if we do not recognise the humanity in the person who is before us, how can we reclaim the humanity that is in all of us?[15]

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon documented, through his professional work, the impact of colonisation on individuals by describing several case studies of Algerian victims of physical and mental damage caused by their treatment at the hands of their French oppressors during that country's war of independence (1954 to 1962). He also described psychiatric cases of their

oppressors, whom he also treated in the hospital where he worked: a European policeman with severe depression and anxiety who had witnessed and carried out torture, and a police inspector in severe mental crisis whose job it was to torture Algerian freedom fighters, who in turn took to torturing his wife and children.[16] But this reversal—placing the perpetrator as victim of his own crimes, is rarely explored on a societal basis. I am not talking about an individual recognition of privilege he or she might have; rather I am referring to the structures and institutions that embed and profit from inequality. The Windrush scandal in the UK was not the result of a collection of bad thoughts by individuals unaware of their own privilege; it was an expression of a systematic racist drive to expel those who were deemed as not belonging.

Like Fanon, the African American novelist, essayist, and polemicist James Baldwin also explored the linked destiny of the oppressor and the oppressed. In 1963, he published a small book of immense reverberating power—*The Fire Next Time*. In it, Baldwin argued that the fate of Black and white Americans was inextricably entwined, as it had been from the very first days, when England established a colony in Jamestown, Virginia, and having run out of white convict labour, reached out across the Atlantic and began to enslave Africans and put them to work on the tobacco plantations.

Like Arendt, writing in the shadow of the Nazi Holocaust of the Jewish people of Europe, Baldwin argued that the coupling of "Europe" and "civilisation," as an historical claim to superiority over the other races on the face of the earth, had ended. The past notion, even adhered to in some ways by sections of the reformist left—that the European enlightenment, and its foundations on science, knowledge and rationality, would somehow inoculate the continent from the "barbarism" that was seen as the underlying reflex of societies in the Global East and the South—dissolved in the mechanised, time-tabled genocide of the Jewish people, the Roma and others, carried out by the Nazis.

Baldwin argued that the only way for Western societies to once more advance humanity was for them to accept themselves as they are—not some invented, ahistorical, superior, ethnically pure nation-state that never was. To do this, they needed to liberate and make visible all those whom they had made invisible, devalued, persecuted and oppressed, and by doing so "bring new life to the Western achievements and transform them." Baldwin argued that it would not do for those previously exiled from the centres of power to be invited to assimilate into a civilisation destructively locked into its own falsehoods—for, after all, as he put it, who wants "to be integrated into a burning house?" A new house for all had to be built.

Baldwin concluded: "White people cannot, in generality, be taken as models of how to live. Rather, the white man is himself in sore need of new

standards, which will release him from his confusion and place him once again in fruitful communion with the depths of his own being."[17] Fanon makes a similar point when he writes, "If we want humanity to advance a step farther, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries."[18] It is through an examination of the human condition, as articulated by Arendt, Fanon and Baldwin, that we can usefully critique the process of "humanising" poor migrants and refugees and go beyond that which Malik describes as stories "told from the host's perspective . . . spun to fit a larger fabric, stitched in neatly, blending into the host's society's values, agendas and even storytelling techniques."

There is a continuum between Baldwin and Fanon's dehumanising racial categories in the latter half of the twentieth century and the scapegoating of poor migrants and refugees today. Professor Jennifer A. Gonzalez, analysing Isaac Julien's audio-visual meditation, *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007), which takes as its starting point the drownings of migrants attempting the crossings by sea into Europe, writes that "Julien's exploration of migratory experiences in 'Western Union: Small Boats' reveals the degree to which a complex history of race discourse shapes the conditions of international migration today." Gonzalez, echoing Arendt and Fanon, draws the conclusion that "national boundaries, economic policies, and international law are shown to be effective forms of capital punishment, in practice if not in name. In a world of global migrations, 'illegality' has become an ontological state that is defined by the 'not-yet' or 'not-quite' human."[19]

Isaac Julien's piece is a multiscreen installation "where individual voyages, journeys and travel are explored locally, in order to allude to the global scenario." Two things stand out about Julien's approach: First, he eschews linear storytelling for "an environment in which an accumulation of sensations, through images and sound, creates a complex, thought-provoking and intriguing piece." Second, he riffs off an earlier work of art—Italian filmmaker Visconti's 1963 film *The Leopard*, set in Sicily on the eve of its seizure by the radical nineteenth-century nationalist Garibaldi. It was Garibaldi who had brought about the *Risorgimento*, the unification of Italy by ousting the old aristocracy ensconced in its feudal kingdoms, including Sicily. (Visconti's film is itself a Marxist-influenced take on the 1958 novel of the same name by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa.)

Modern Sicily has become one of the staging points for refugees and migrants crossing from north Africa into Europe. Up until 2019, the island was the site for Europe's largest holding centre—the Cara di Mineo refugee camp, which contained four thousand refugees at its height (the camp was shut down by far-right interior minister Matteo Salvini).

Julien shot his film in the same locations used by Visconti, but with the "occupiers" transformed from Garibaldi's troops to African migrants. The narrative of *The Leopard* is in part about the creation of the Italian nation-state by forcibly dissolving the internal borders put up by the old feudal caste. The new transgressors to Sicily, whom Julien depicts, represent a contemporary radical challenge to the same singular border that Garibaldi and his troops fought to realise. As Julien has commented of Visconti: "The whole film shows power meditating on its domain, looking at the landscape and trying to come to terms with different bodies suddenly occupying it, doing different things . . . but I was talking about another population [of African migrants] to Italy."[20]

In Europe, older and existing forms of racism have merged with and been revived by the growth in xenophobia and Islamophobia. As I have argued in my essay "Islamophobia: The othering of Europe's Muslims," the effect of Islamophobia has been to overlay a negative religious identity on top of a preexisting negative racial identity. The two have become merged and mutually reinforcing:

> Alongside, but not separate to, the rise in Islamophobia has been a spiralling debate on immigration into the European Union. One of the consequences, which bridges hostility towards Muslims with xenophobia, has been the insistence by various states that a prerequisite of citizenship is declared allegiance to what are called "core national values"—a measure clearly targeted principally at Muslims. Policies towards asylum seekers are also being refashioned. European states have been eager for some time to have humanitarian agencies set up refugee camps inside or on the borders of conflict zones such as Syria in an effort to avoid a commitment to granting "in country" asylum. The British government, going one step further, to avoid accepting male Muslim refugees (seen as potential terrorists) have drawn up criteria that allow for a handful of "women and girls at risk of sexual violence; the elderly; the disabled and survivors of torture" the chance to be granted asylum. The mutually reinforcing effects of anti-Muslim, racist and scapegoating politics have . . . changed the political landscape in Europe.[21]

The Islamophobic context, particularly in relation to the demonisation of refugees, has barely been touched upon in European cultural and artistic responses to anti-migrant attitudes and policies, even though most refugees entering the EU are from Muslim majority countries, such as Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, Bangladesh and so on. However, at the same time, the xenophobic and fascist forces in Europe thrive on essentialist and nativist ideologies that merge migration with the "Islamic threat" and the entry into the mainstream of formerly fringe far-right ideas, such as "the great replacement theory" (murderously articulated by Serb nationalist leaders during the civil war in Bosnia), which are simultaneously anti-migrant *and* anti-Muslim.

Unfortunately the cultural class across Europe has been largely resistant to recognising the "Muslimness" of refugees or migrants about whom they make art or with whom they work. "The refugee" and "the Muslim" are artificially decoupled (with possible exceptions; for example, dreary plays about women in hijabs or cast as victims). This separation echoes the dominant ideology across Europe embraced by liberals and conservatives alike, that religion (specifically Islam) should be kept out of the public space (and most certainly the artistic space). However, it is difficult to see how one can simultaneously defend the Migrant, unless you also defend the Muslim, when both categories, or identities, are contained in the same individual or minority group, and are the target of far-right propaganda.

The handmaiden of the "cottage industry of humanization," and the "subgenre of reporting and factual entertainment starring the human migrant" that Malik describes, is the now-ubiquitous pursuit of ways of stimulating "empathy" in audiences and cultural consumers. Empathy is seen as a compassionate emotional force that can dispel "bad stories" about migrants, imbuing it with the properties of some sort of moral detergent. But as the writer Namwali Serpell argues in her essay "The Banality of Empathy," empathy is selfish—it is all about the "me." Its claims to the moral good are also suspect:

> Emotional empathy is often beside the point for moral action. You don't have to feel the suffocation, the clutch of a throat gasping for air, to save someone.

Figure 12.1. The Crows Plucked Your Sinews.
Source: Hassan Mahamdallie. Image: Rehan Jamil, 2017.

> The slippage between emotional empathy and the good in our public discourse also presumes that when we do feel the suffering of others, we are prompted to relieve it. But this is not always true. Sometimes, we just want it to go away.[22]

Serpall goes on to argue that the pursuit of empathic characters and storylines in popular culture reinforces the feelings of moral and civilisational superiority that Baldwin intellectually dismantled in *The Fire Next Time.* She writes:

> Perhaps worse, it has imposed on makers of art, especially the marginalized, the idea that they can and ought to construct creative vehicles for empathy. This grotesque dynamic often makes for dull, pandering artworks. And it in fact perpetuates an assumed imbalance in the world: there are those who suffer, and those who do not and thus have the leisure to be convinced—via novels and films that produce empathy—that the sufferers matter. The scales remain tilted and this is why cultural appropriation still runs only one way, as does what we might call ethical slumming.[23]

By contrast, Serpall draws on Arendt's theory of "representative thinking," in which Arendt argued that art (specifically literature) has the ability to adopt the viewpoints of others, but that this quality was "geared not to ethics but to politics." Serpall quotes Arendt from her 1967 essay, "Truth and Politics":

> I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them. This process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else . . . but of being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions.[24]

Elsewhere Arendt had argued that "the immediate source of the artwork is the human capacity for thought."[25] Against empathy, the revolutionary theatre director Milo Rau argues for a theatrical distancing (in an echo of Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, and his Verfremdungseffekt—distancing effect) that allows us to discern the historical forces at work, or as he puts it, "the storm . . . we call progress. We must fix our eyes upon the catastrophes that we have behind us—and on the catastrophes of which we are the witnesses. For the atrocious has not happened, it is happening now, it is about to happen. We are entering an era of catastrophes."

In a global sense, Rau is turning away from the postmodern trends in art and philosophy and returning us to the "grand narratives" (also known as

the "emancipation narratives"). These grand narratives rejected the notion that we are individuals floating in an ocean of separate, disconnected stories made up of things that have only happened to us, but instead that that we can place ourselves in a world that has interconnectedness—that events lead to other events, that there are social systems that can not only be erected, but also demolished and replaced, and that there is an overarching narrative by which we can make sense of the world (and our connection to it). But for that grand narrative to work, we do need truth (as opposed to authenticity—which is often reduced to a commodified, identity-laden viewpoint) expressed at the individual level. Malik, in her essay, concludes, "There is no way forward other than to handing the tools back to those from migrant backgrounds to do what they want with them" if one is to avoid "inadvertently reifying all the dehumanizing stereotypes about migrants that [one] wishes to avoid." To go back to Arendt's original depiction of the human condition, it is "with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world."

Tania Cañas, the Melbourne-based artist researcher and arts director of RISE Refugees, like Malik and Rau, asserts the agency of refugees against being forced into being "posters for humanitarianism." Cañas vehemently argues against theatre where:

> [R]efugee narratives, on stage, often sit within unchallenged binaries of old and new country, despite our very existence as refugees being disruptive to statehood ideas of borders, order, and identity. I continuously encountered these predefined expectations of me as, 'refugee performer,' and thus what constituted a refugee performance. Therefore, as an act of resistance, I am angry. I am an angry refugee, as equally as I am an angry Australian.[26]
>
> Point 7 of RISE Refugees guide to '10 things you need to consider if you are an artist—not of the refugee and asylum seeker community—looking to work with our community' states: "Do not expect us to be grateful. We are not your next interesting arts project. Our community is not sitting waiting for our struggle to be acknowledged by your individual consciousness, nor highlighted through your art practice."[27]

As Rau argues: "Realism—realistic politics, realistic art–can only be to listen to those voices that know what is going on—and draw upon these voices in establishing one's own view of matters." Of the plays, stories and films written and made about refugees, the most-common narratives orbit around the fleeing—the journey-arriving motif. "If you could only walk a mile in my shoes" is the empathetic subtext. The crossing of borders is merely a staging post or challenge to be overcome on the journey to the European destination and the promise of a new life, or new Jerusalem. Their human content only becomes realised at the point of destination or salvation—and

as we have seen, that is invariably contingent upon them assimilating into the "host country."

But this narrative form, with its Western cathartic end point, is to ignore Cañas's assertion that: "Our very existence as refugees [is] disruptive to statehood ideas of borders, order, and identity."[28] An example of this disruptive force that Cañas addresses is the way in which, in 2015 to 2016, 1.2 million refugees and their allies made and remade the Balkan Route into Europe, and by doing so disrupted not only the official channelling securitised border apparatus set up by the European powers, but actively and consciously challenged borders themselves. Anthropologists Nadia Al-Shaarawi and Maple Razsa, in their essay "Movement upon Movements: Refugee and activist struggles to open the Balkan route into Europe," identify what they describe as the "refugee-activist conjunction." They found that:

> [M]any refugees had their own history of politicization, from the varied strands of the Arab Spring. . . . Others have been politicized by their experiences at the hands of the authorities all along the Route, or through encounters and collaborations with activists in the squats of Athens, Thessalonika, or Ljubljana.[29]

The activists include those the refugees linked to in the Balkans (including the former Yugoslavia), who already had histories of being unified and separated across borders, who reactivated historic transborder routes of migration and escape from oppression and war. Al-Shaarawi and Razsa conclude from talking to people along the Balkan route that:

> The struggle to move, or to stay, regardless of border practices, is the most elemental of border struggles, an active struggle we see across all nodes of the Route. Most fundamentally, earlier clandestine activity and mobility served as the very foundation of the [official] Route. As the number of people on the move expanded, they enacted the kinds of actions that we more traditionally recognise as activism—protests, chants, demands and direct action against the borders.[30]

Both in Cañas's observation that those we call "refugees" represent an intrinsic challenge to "statehood ideas of borders, order, and identity," and in the organic activism of those retracing old and forging new cross-border routes, there is a fundamental challenge to twenty-first-century concepts of national citizenship, which we presuppose is the state of belonging that migrants seek and that we in the West have the power in confer.

But as I have already argued, there are significant categories of people within Europe's national borders for whom citizenship is circumscribed, permanently conditional and precarious. Perhaps citizenship is the problem, not the solution. Citizenship, particularly in the West, has become less and less an emblem of equality and a guarantee of the rights of man, and more a sym-

bol of superiority, privilege, exclusivity and inequality. Even if we explore diverse and radical forms of citizenship, we cannot escape its historic roots. After all, throughout the era of the modern European project, for many people and peoples, one can argue that full citizenship has been the exception, not the norm. The modern bourgeois capitalist state has variously withheld full citizenship from serfs, peasants, immigrants, labouring classes, women, those without property, those who were enslaved and their descendants, nomadic peoples, outlaws, *san papiers*, *gasterbeiten* and national, ethnic and religious minorities. Free movement, even within national borders, was curtailed: Jews were confined to the Pale of Settlement and prohibited from residency in cities and villages beyond it. The poor and the dispossessed were punished through laws such as the Vagrancy Acts from travelling the highway (elements of which were revived in twentieth-century Britain in the SUS [stop and search] laws as a mechanism by which the police could terrorise and restrict the movement of young Black people in the inner cities). In this sense, "the border is everywhere." On a global level, there are estimated to be more than ten million people (including over a million refugees) who have no legal nationality, deprived of basic rights to such an extent that in many cases, their children inherit their statelessness.[31]

I have been involved in, and reported on, many antideportation campaigns, to understand that "leave to remain," or citizenship papers, or a passport, can make the difference between living some sort of stable existence or being expelled into Nothingness. I also understand in these campaigns there is always a tension between collective activity in support of an individual or family, such as petitions, public meetings and rallies, imbued with emancipatory arguments, radical political demands and visions for a different future, and the *Individual v. the State* legal strategy (necessarily) based on precedent and disputed interpretations of domestic and international laws. Most times there is no choice but to pursue legal remedies, but the courts are a different space than that of the collective town square. Radical change cannot be imposed from above, by a privileged elite who believe themselves to be possessors of wisdom and universal truth. Fundamental change wells up from the grassroots; it does not descend from on high. Solidarity is generated by all those locked out of power who need to come together in a common purpose to make change—just as divide-and-rule is a weapon wielded by the powerful to resist that change. Transformation is sparked at the margins, not generated at the centre.

I like to call my chosen art form, theatre, the playground of dangerous ideas. It has that spatial dimension, the tangible feel of a citizens' arena and the infinite possibilities of the imagination. All forms of art, in their specific way, have the ability to act as spaces for contested ideas and representative

thinking, where the outer limits of the truth can be put into play, possibilities can be pursued and human consequences can be revealed.

Stories are not virtuous in and of themselves; they are imagined vehicles by which human traits, thoughts and actions are put to the test by external circumstances. As a playwright, I do not write to evince empathy. I see writing as a constant cycle or spiral of re-examining, remaking and reconfiguring notions of humanness and solidarity. At the moment, I am writing a play about an historical event known at the Spaghetti House Siege, which took place in London in 1975. Three armed young Black men held up an Italian restaurant in Knightsbridge for its takings. The raid, a stone's throw from Hyde Park Corner (the old site of public hangings of outlaws and highwaymen and the like), turned into a high-profile armed siege; the first in London since 1911, with the restaurant's Italian staff held hostage in a basement. It took place at the same time as the concerted IRA bombing and assassination campaign across London and other cities, as well as escalating tensions between the police and Black youth, which broke out into violent battle a year later at the Notting Hill Carnival. After a five-day standoff, involving four hundred police, the men released the hostages unharmed. A year later the three were found guilty at the Old Bailey and sentenced to seventeen, eighteen, and twenty-one years in jail.

The Spaghetti House Three were widely painted as gangsters and Black thugs, whose motive was greed. However, during the siege, the men had claimed they were members of the UK Black Liberation Front, a revolutionary Black political group, and they made increasingly political statements highlighting police and state racism. The London police, politicians and the press were dismissive, insisting the three were merely the violent issue of a Black criminal subculture. At the start of their 1976 trial, the three men made Black Power salutes from the dock, held up posters protesting racism, turned their backs on the court and when asked to plead, one shouted, "We have stopped pleading—we've been pleading for five hundred years." The judge ordered them to be taken down to the cells, where they remained until the trial's end. He then prevented two from making a statement from the dock before he passed the heavy sentences of eighteen and twenty-one years.

One of the three young men was Wesley Dick, a charismatic, politicized twenty-four-year-old African-Caribbean. In prison, he changed his name to Shujaa Moshesh, to symbolise his African ancestry from which slavery and colonialism has disconnected him. Moshesh considered himself a political prisoner and spent most of his sentence in Britain's high-security jails. His refusal to engage with the prison authorities or express remorse for his crimes meant he was denied early parole. He was finally released in 1988 after serving thirteen years. After regaining his freedom, Moshesh travelled

Figure 12.2. Orphans—The Spaghetti House Siege.
Source: Hassan Mahamdallie. Image: Rehan Jamil, 2017.

to West Africa in pursuit of knowledge of the origins that had been denied to him. There he walked into a village in the Gambia, in the region he believed his ancestors had lived before being enslaved and he was taken in by its inhabitants. Back in London, his friends awaited news of his journey—both geographical and metaphysical. His close friends sensed that Moshesh was on a momentous pilgrimage transcending time, place, name and identity, nations, borders and multiple states of unfreedom. He was painfully unwinding centuries of enslavement, exile and invisibility, doggedly seeking a humanity and a hope denied him throughout his troubled life. Eventually one of his friends in London received a letter:

> BAKAREY JABAI: Thursday, April the fourth, 1997. Sutukoba Village, the Gambia, West Africa.
>
> About four weeks ago, a complete stranger by the name Shujaa Moshesh came to our village 300 kilometres from the coast. He had since been living with us, and very quickly became like a family member.
>
> Through daily conversations we came to learn about him: He is a British citizen. His mother left Guyana for England when she was pregnant with him. She left his father in Guyana, where he is a retired policeman. Shujaa informed us that he met his father first time only four years ago when he left London for Guyana. We learned from Shujaa that after being in Guyana for some time, he

> moved to Brazil and while there he had journeyed thousands of kilometres on foot through the Amazon.
>
> After a few days' stay with us, Shujaa spoke of how good it felt to come back to his ancestral home at last! He was determined to build a home here. . . . Shujaa got allocated a sizeable piece of land, and soon started cutting down trees. Ever since he started Shujaa kept working daily. Last Tuesday morning Shujaa went to fell more trees on his site. He was out alone and sometime after 1500 hours a message came to us from another village on the other side of the river. Two women saw Shujaa dive into the river for a swim. When these women eventually felt that he was abnormally long under the water, his clothes and shoes were sent to us, alarming the family. The whole village went out on a search mission, and the next day Shujaa was found dead in the water. He was buried the same day. . . . Please accept my family and entire villages' deepest condolences.[32]

There is a New Humanism to be forged, which bears little relation to that which manifests itself today. It is *activist*; it is in Rau's alternative to cynical humanism, the search for "solidaric liberation"; it is, as Cañas asserts, "disruptive"; it is also, in Arendt's conception, "an impulse that springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born"; it is, as Baldwin envisaged, "a new house for all"; and above all, it is "transcendent." It is in the final pilgrimage of Shujaa Moshesh and in the utterance of the prayer by which Fanon closes *Black Skin, White Masks*:

> "O my body, make of me always a man who questions!"

NOTES

1. Veronica White, "How War Child Holland Helps Children Affected by War Be Kids Again," *Salesforce.org*, 12 November 2019, https://www.salesforce.org/how-war-child-holland-helps-children-affected-by-war-be-kids-again/.

2. "Pop Culture for Social Change Terms and Definitions," *Pop Culture Collaborative*, 2021, https://popcollab.org/about-us/pop-culture-for-social-change-terms-and-definitions/.

3. Nesrine Malik, "Humanizing Stories: Migrants in the Media," in *Lost in Media: Migrant Perspectives and the Public Sphere*, ed. Ismail Einache and Thomas Roueché (Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation & Valiz, 2020).

4. Ziauddin Sardar, "Foreword to *Black Skin, White Masks*," *ZiauddinSardar.com*, 8 May 2017, https://ziauddinsardar.com/articles/forward-black-skin-white-masks.

5. Milo Rau, "Recapturing the future Milo Rau," speech delivered by Rao at the Odeon Theatre in Vienna, 24 November 2017, Dialectics of Liberation Symposium, part of Vienna's *Literature in Autumn* festival.

6. Ahmed Gurhan Kartal, "Turkish-German vaccine founders FT's People of the Year," *Anadolu Agency*, 16 December 2020, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/culture/turkish-german-vaccine-founders-fts-people-of-the-year/2079121.

7. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (London: Penguin Books, 1996).

8. Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press 2008).

9. André Malraux, *Man's Fate* (London: Penguin Modern Classic, 2009).

10. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 176.

11. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 8.

12. Charles Villet, "Hegel and Fanon on the Question of Mutual Recognition: A Comparative Analysis," in *Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 7 (November 2011): 39.

13. Leo Zeilig, *Franz Fanon: The Militant Philosopher of Third World Revolution* (London: I.B. Tauris 2014), 39.

14. Villet. "Hegel and Fanon," 39.

15. Zeilig, *Franz Fanon*, 39.

16. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001). Fanon also writes movingly of the psychosis among Algerian women refugees living on the Moroccan and Tunisian frontiers, who were pregnant or had recently given birth: "These disorders take various forms. Sometimes they are visible as states of agitation which sometimes turn into rages; sometimes deep depressions and toxic immobility with many attempted suicides; are sometimes finally anxiety states with tears, lamentations and appeals for mercy. In the same way the form which the delusions take are many and diverse. We may find a delusion of persecution against the French who want to kill the new-born infant or the child not yet born; or else the mother may have the impression of immanent death, in which the mother implores invisible executioners to spare their child."

17. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (London: Penguin Books, 1964).

18. Fanon, *Wretched*, 254.

19. Jennifer A. González, "Sea Dreams: Isaac Julien's *Western Union: Small Boats*," in *The Migrant's Time: Art, Dispersal, and Difference*, ed. Saloni Mathur (Williamstown and New Haven: Clark Institute, 2010): 115–29.

20. Isaac Julien, "The Leopard (Western Union: small boats), 2007," Royal Academy, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-leopard-western-union-small-boats, and Isaac Julien, *Western Union: Small Boats*, Isaac Julien Studio, 2007, https://www.isaacjulien.com/projects/western-union-small-boats/.

21. Hassan Mahamdallie, "Islamophobia: The othering of Europe's Muslims," in *International Socialism Journal* 146, 11 April 2015, http://isj.org.uk/islamophobia-the-othering-of-europes-muslims/.

22. Namwali Serpell, "The Banality of Empathy," *New York Review of Books*, 2 March 2019, https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/03/02/the-banality-of-empathy/.

23. Serpell, "The Banality."

24. Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics," in *New Yorker*, 25 February 1967, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1967/02/25/truth-and-politics.

25. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 168.

26. Tania Cañas, "Three Angry Australians: A Reflexive Approach," in *Performing Exile: Foreign Bodies*, ed. Judith Rudakoff (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2017), 59–74, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9hj90p.7.

27. Tania Cañas, "10 things you need to consider if you are an artist not of the refugee and asylum seeker community looking to work with our community," *Rise*, 5 October 2015, https://www.riserefugee.org/10-things-you-need-to-consider-if-you-are-an-artist-not-of-the-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-community-looking-to-work-with-our-community/.

28. Cañas, "Three Angry Australians."

29. Nadia El-Shaarawi and Maple Razsa, "Movements upon movements: Refugee and activist struggles to open the Balkan route to Europe," in *History and Anthropology* 30, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2018.1530668.

30. El-Shaarawi Razsa, "Movements."

31. Marion MacGregor, "Living in limbo: Europe's stateless refugees," *Infomigrants*, 12 September 2018, https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/11941/living-in-limbo-europe-s-stateless-refugees#:~:text=Around%20the%20world%2C%20more%20than,like%20education%2C%20healthcare%20and%20employment.

32. The author thanks Liz Obi for access to this letter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. London: Penguin Books, 1964.

Cañas, Tania. "Three Angry Australians: A Reflexive Approach," in *Performing Exile: Foreign Bodies*, edited by Judith Rudakoff, 59–74. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2017, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9hj90p.7.

Cañas, Tania. "10 things you need to consider if you are an artist not of the refugee and asylum seeker community looking to work with our community." *Rise*, 5 October 2015, https://www.riserefugee.org/10-things-you-need-to-consider-if-you-are-an-artist-not-of-the-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-community-looking-to-work-with-our-community/.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. London: Penguin Books, 1996.

El-Shaarawi, Nadia, and Maple Razsa. "Movements upon movements: Refugee and activist struggles to open the Balkan route to Europe," in *History and Anthropology* 30, no. 1 2019, https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2018.1530668.

Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth.* London: Penguin Classics, 2001.

Fanon, Franz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

González, Jennifer A. "Sea Dreams: Isaac Julien's Western Union: Small Boats," in *The Migrant's Time: Art, Dispersal, and Difference*, edited by Saloni Mathur, 115–29. Williamstown: Clark Institute, 2010.

Julien, Isaac. "The Leopard (Western Union: small boats), 2007." Royal Academy, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-leopard-western-union-small-boats.

Julien, Isaac. "Western Union: Small Boats." Isaac Julien Studio, 2007, https://www.isaacjulien.com/projects/western-union-small-boats/.

Kartal, Ahmed Gurhan. "Turkish-German vaccine founders FT's People of the Year," *Anadolu Agency*, 16 December 2020, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/culture/turkish-german-vaccine-founders-fts-people-of-the-year/2079121.

MacGregor, Marion. "Living in limbo: Europe's stateless refugees." *Infomigrants*, 12 September 2018, https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/11941/living-in-limbo-europe-s-statelessrefugees#:~:text=Around%20the%20world%2C%20more%20than,like%20education%2C%20healthcare%20and%20employment.

Mahamdallie, Hassan. "Islamophobia: The othering of Europe's Muslims," in *International Socialism*, 146, 11 April 2015, http://isj.org.uk/islamophobia-the-othering-of-europes-muslims/.

Malik, Nesrine, "Humanizing Stories: Migrants in the Media," in *Lost in Media: Migrant Perspectives and the Public Sphere*. Edited by Ismail Einache and Thomas Roueché, 117–28. Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation & Valiz, 2020.

Malraux, André. *Man's Fate*. London: Penguin Modern Classic, 2009.

"Pop Culture for Social Change Terms and Definitions." *Pop Culture Collaborative*, 2021, https://popcollab.org/about-us/pop-culture-for-social-change-terms-and-definitions/.

Sardar, Ziauddin. "Foreword to *Black Skin, White Masks*." *ZiauddinSardar.com*, 8 May 2017, https://ziauddinsardar.com/articles/forward-black-skin-white-masks.

Serpell, Namwali. "The Banality of Empathy." *New York Review of Books*, 2 March 2019, https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/03/02/the-banality-of-empathy/.

Villet, Charles. "Hegel and Fanon on the Question of Mutual Recognition: A Comparative Analysis," in *Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 7 (November 2011): 39+.

White, Veronica. "How War Child Holland Helps Children Affected by War Be Kids Again." *Salesforce.org*, 12 November 2019, https://www.salesforce.org/how-war-child-holland-helps-children-affected-by-war-be-kids-again/.

Zeilig, Leo. *Franz Fanon: The Militant Philosopher of Third World Revolution*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2014.

Index

About the Editors

Agnes Czajka is senior lecturer in politics and international studies at the Open University. Agnes's research interests include contemporary social and political thought, continental political philosophy, democracy, citizenship, contentious politics, migrant and refugee politics and European and Mediterranean politics. Her recent publications include *Democracy and Justice: Reading Derrida in Istanbul* (Routledge) and *Europe after Derrida: Crisis and Potentiality* (Edinburgh University Press).

Áine O'Brien is curator of learning and research and cofounder (codirector 2012–2020) of Counterpoints Arts. Her productions to date (spanning documentary film, print, exhibition and curation) explore global storylines linking migration with human rights and social change. Counterpoints Arts navigates cross-sector partnerships, supporting artists and communities who have firsthand experience of displacement, alongside artists who are committed to exploring migration as a defining narrative, shaping contemporary culture and society. Many of the artists and contributors to this publication form part of the Counterpoints Arts network: https://counterpointsarts.org.uk.

About the Contributors

Dominik Czechowski is a London-based curator, researcher and writer. He received an MA in History of Art at University of Łódź, Poland, and completed a post-master's course in Commissioning and Curating Contemporary Public Art at HDK-Valand Academy of Art and Design, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. He has held curatorial positions at Jewish Museum London, Hayward Gallery, Arnolfini Gallery, Calvert 22 Foundation and Barbican Art Gallery and has curated exhibitions, performances and public programmes for institutions such as Freud Museum and Liverpool Biennial. He is an editor of and contributor to artist publications and exhibition catalogues, as well as magazines such as *Art Monthly*, *MAP*, *Foam* and *Postmedia*. He is a member of AICA-UK (Association of International Art Critics).

Natasha Davis is a performance and visual artist and producer with over forty projects in a range of media, including live performance, installation, film and publication. Her work has been presented across five continents in venues such as Tate Modern, National Theatre Studio London, Power Station of Arts Shanghai, Project Arts Centre Dublin and Theatre Works Melbourne. Her performance *Internal Terrains* heads the British Library's online digital performance archive, and she is featured in *Traces*, a public project about migrant artists significantly contributing to UK arts. Natasha's work has been funded by Arts Council England, British Council, Humanities Research Fund, Transatlantic Fellowship and numerous commissions and residencies. She holds a doctorate from the University of Warwick.

Mary Ann DeVlieg is an independent consultant currently researching policies and citizenship rights of artists impacted by displacement, and she has been a caseworker for persecuted artists since 2010. A co-founder of IARA,

International Arts Rights Advisors, she also founded the EU working group, Arts-Rights-Justice; was Free Dimensional's director of strategic development (2013–2015) and is a cofounder of the Arts-Rights-Justice Academy, University of Hildesheim. She evaluates international cultural collaboration projects, policies and programmes for the European Commission's culture, research and international development programmes, the EESC and private foundations. The former secretary general of IETM (1994–2013), international network for contemporary performing arts, she founded On the Move and the Roberta Cimetta Fund for Mobility in the Mediterranean.

Umut Erel is professor of sociology at the Open University, UK. She has widely published on the intersections of migration, ethnicity, citizenship, racism, gender and class. Her methodological interests are in creative and participatory methods for research and engagement. She was PI of Participatory Arts and Social Action in Research, exploring theatre and walking methods for research. She led the Open University's contribution to the *Who Are We?* Project at Tate Exchange (whoareweproject.com), reflecting on migration, citizenship, participation and belonging across arts, activism and academia. For recent publications, see http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ue27.

Hossam Fazulla is a digital creator and producer from Cairo, based in London. Fazulla's work merges art and new media with human rights and social justice. The author of three books and several publications, Fazulla has worked for academic and human rights institutions, such as the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE), the MedCulture program by the European Union and Essex University, Department of Film, Literature and Theatre Studies. Besides being the digital consultant for PEN International, Fazulla works as a digital journalist/producer for the BBC World Service.

Bojana Janković is an Eastern European artist exploring immigration. Her performances, installations, texts and nondenominational works have appeared in physical and digital spaces in the UK, Serbia and internationally, including at Tate Modern (London), Center for Art on Migration Politics (Copenhagen) and in collaboration with Home Live Art (Hastings) and Performing Arts Hub (Norway). Bojana is part of Critical Interruptions, a Serbo-Romanian cooperative thinking/writing about borders and internationalism, as well as Migrants in Culture, a network organising against border regimes in the cultural sector. Her PhD research at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama investigates performances of Eastern European identities in the work of immigrant artists.

Isabel Lima is a Newcastle-based artist whose practice addresses the overarching themes of identity, culture and place. A family history of displacement is the catalyst for her research interests. Isabel develops artist-led projects in collaboration with groups of people who have systematically suffered injustice and/or oppression caused by capitalism and colonialism. In her current research, Lima approaches socially engaged art as a site of production and transformation that goes beyond representation, containing within its scope the possibility to enact change. Lima's projects include: *Gresham Neighbourhood Plan* (Beyond the Now/Counterpoints Arts, 2020); *5Rs*, *Who Are We?* (Tate Modern, 2019); *Gresham Wooden Horse* (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art/Tate Modern, 2017) and *Broken Chords Can Sing a Little* (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, 2016). Lima is currently a PhD candidate at Teesside University.

Hassan Mahamdallie is a playwright, writer, activist and specialist in diversity and art. He is a former director of the Muslim Institute (UK) and is the senior editor on its journal, *Critical Muslim*. Hassan is the founder of the radical theatre company Dervish Productions, whose mission is "to amplify voices from the edge." He has written extensively on culture, working class history and politics, punk rock, Black British history, racism and Islamophobia. He is the author of *Crossing the River of Fire: The Socialism of William Morris* (Redwords, 2008) and *Black British Rebels: Figures from Working Class History* (Bookmarks, 2012), and he is the editor of *Defending Multiculturalism: A Guide for the Movement* (Bookmarks, 2011).

Elena Marchevska is a practitioner, academic and researcher interested in new historical discontinuities that have emerged in postcapitalist and postsocialist transition. She is researching and writing extensively on the issues of belonging, displacement, the border and intergenerational trauma. Her artistic work explores borders and stories that emerge from living in transition. She is an associate professor in performance studies at London South Bank University.

Dana Olărescu is a London-based, socially engaged artist with a focus on challenging minority exclusion and environmental injustice. Through participatory methodologies that democratise access to art and knowledge, she aims to give agency to underserved migrant groups so they can become active coproducers of culture. Most recently, she has co-designed and built a low-impact straw-bale classroom with young asylum seekers at May Project Gardens, London, and engaged with residents affected by West Burton A

power station's decommission in Gainsborough, as part of the 'Decommissioning the Twentieth Century' investigation run by Keele University. Her projects have been presented at British art institutions, including Tate Modern, London Short Film Festival, Low Carbon Design Institute and Incheon Art Platform in South Korea, among others.

Evgeny Shtorn is a writer and researcher from Saint Petersburg. Due to his involvement in civil society work, he was forced to leave Russia in 2018. In 2019, he was granted international protection in Ireland. He works as a social and cultural diversity consultant, collaborating with different universities and NGOs. In 2019–2021 he cofacilitated a project with people seeking asylum, *Something from There*, at the National Gallery of Ireland. Shtorn's writing has been published in academic journals, anthologies and new media outlets. In 2020, his book, *#khronikibezhenstva* (Refugee Chronicles), about his experience of seeking international protection, was published in Russian with an introduction by Masha Gessen and translated into English by renowned American translator, Bela Shayevich.

Abbas Zahedi studied medicine at University College London before completing his MA in contemporary photography: practices and philosophies at Central Saint Martins in 2019. His interdisciplinary practice blends contemporary philosophy, poetics and social dynamics with sound, sculpture and other performative media. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including: Thinking Time, Artangel (2020); Jerwood Arts Bursary (2019); Aziz Foundation Academic Scholarship (2018); and Khadijah Saye Memorial Fund Scholarship (2017). Recent exhibitions include*: 11 & 1* (2021), Belmacz, London; *Brent Biennial* (2020), London; *How to Make a How from a Why?* (2020), South London Gallery; *In Hindsight…* (2020), Bladr, Copenhagen; *B* (2019), Belmacz, London; *Pressure Makes Diamonds* (2018), Rich Mix, London; *Diaspora Pavilion* (2018), Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Venice Biennale (2017); *rb&hArts* (2008), Royal Brompton Hospital, London.

Basel Zaraa is a UK-based Palestinian artist whose work explores how war, occupation and displacement are experienced through the everyday struggles of his people. His forthcoming installation, *Dear Laila* (commissioned by Good Chance Theatre), re-creates his childhood memories through a miniature replica of his family home. Since 2016, he has collaborated with Tania El Khoury on *As Far as My Fingertips Take Me* and *As Far as Isolation Goes*, one-to-one installations that use painting, touch and sound to connect

audiences with the stories and struggles of refugees. As a musician and hip-hop artist, Basel has collaborated with artists including Akala, Lowkey and Katibeh Khamseh, and he has toured internationally with PsycheDELIGHT's Borderline. He is part of the Alleyway Radical Theatre, which combines hip-hop with shadow theatre.