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The Arts of Integration:

Scottish policies of refugee integration and the role of the creative and performing arts

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the growing scholarly and policy interest in participatory arts practice and the integration of refugees within the UK and across the Global North. Situated in Glasgow the thesis offers an under-represented Scottish perspective, one that seeks to capture the personal and social role creative projects can have, whilst remaining critical of the arts being instrumentalised as a tool *for* integration as per policy definitions.

Narrated from the perspective of Artist-Researcher, this thesis tells the story – or one version of the story – of a practice-based study that took place over eighteen months. Adopting an affective register, the thesis begins with an in-depth analysis of the intersecting themes and concerns that contextualise the research, before embarking upon an exploration that covers issues of representation, collaboration, and agency. It goes on to offer an interpretation of what might be referred to as the politics of arts practice with and by refugees, concerning itself with hospitality, reciprocity and affect. The final section of the thesis examines how individuals reflected upon their personal experiences of the projects and theorises the role creative practice has in supporting the (re)construction of individual and community identities. The thesis finishes with an in-depth analysis into the emotional labour that was made visible when attention was paid – through an arts-based methodology - to the question 'what does integration look and feel like'.

The research asserts that individuals integrating in Glasgow are positioned in a unique space between two, often oppositional, national narratives. Moreover, it reveals an ongoing tension between Scotland's welcome response and the everyday, and structural challenges faced by those labouring through processes of integration. This thesis seeks to illuminate how arts projects can intersect with this tension, and also where they can offer alternative forms of engagement that allow individuals to escape the confines of categorisation, as well as the burden to (re)tell their story, and instead focus on discovering imaginative and bold forms of aesthetic expression.

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List of Images

Note on crediting photographers: *Where any images were not taken by me, I have listed the initials of who to credit in the image description - EMH: Elena-Mary Harris; NA: Najma Abukar; Tf: Tinofara; MIN: Maryhill Integration Network. Permission for the use of these images was granted through the project producers and they cannot be re-produced beyond this thesis without specific permission.*

List of accompanying material

A visual appendix is included at the back of this thesis, as well accessible through University of Glasgow's repository. The folder is named 'Thesis Accompanying Material': http://dx.doi.org/10.5525/gla.researchdata.1058
It also contains two shorts films, and two short audio pieces in a digital format to accompany this thesis.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to extend my immense gratitude to the individuals who took part in the three arts projects that I researched within. The creativity, imaginative capacity and pure heart from project members, translators, volunteers, made all three projects such a rich artistic and research experience. And then, thank you again for the willingness of people to go to the extra step and repeatedly engage with me, with patience and commitment, as I attempted to explore their deepest reflections on their projects, and my research themes. It was a true gift.

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I am incredibly grateful to my three supervisors: Professor Alison Phipps, Dr Gareth Mulvey and Gary Christie, whose expertise, critical minds and compassion have been an anchor during this research journey. I am also most pleased that I have inspired Professor Phipps to buy herself a new boardgame.

This research would not have been possible without the Arts Humanities and Research Council, who granted me this research scholarship and were so supportive when I undertook my first, and then second maternity leave during my doctoral study. And again, to the Scottish Refugee Council for co-sponsoring my research and in particular being open to my suggestion of transferring the expenses budget they had allocated to me, to project members. This allowed me to cover travel and childcare so they could participate in the reflective

research sessions.

I thank the University of Glasgow colleagues and peers, including Helene and Anika who kept me connected to the theatre department and always inspired me. And all the PhD mammas who I met along the way, particularly Lucy, Sarah, Esa, Anna and Effie, who I very rarely saw due to juggling study with parenting, but whose existence – and our snatched conversations - were a source of constant strength. I'd also like to thank Govanhill Library and all those who work and use the space there. Their silent companionship, plus the quiet smiles and passing banter got me through my final few months of write up. Public libraries truly are spaces where solidarity is practised every day in these hostile times.

I thank the mighty GRAMNet for creating so many spaces for people to meet and share ideas and practice, and to the UNESCO RILA team, who treat me like one of the family and who have provided me with many opportunities. A special thanks to Lauren who was always on call to navigate administrative quandaries and guided me through organising my maternity leaves. Bella, also, who is such an enriching person to work alongside.

I thank everyone involved in A Moment's Peace Theatre Company. All the artists, producers (especially Rhea and Sara) and volunteers who have taken on and brought to life so many brilliant projects while I took a step back from delivery so that I could do this doctoral research. The Board also for always thinking about what will serve my development and for strategizing us through some happy and hairy times.

Finally, I'd like to thank my friends and family who have supported me throughout. My parents and sisters for always being on hand with support, to Marisa, Jen and Vez for reading and inputting into my chapters. And to Pete – who is just one of the best humans you could hope to have in your life as well as being an excellent editor, and whose understanding of my commitment to my work has been unwavering. Finally – Otis and Remy. Both born during this research journey, they have been incredibly patient with me in the final stages of this research, and whose energy, comedy-timing and love provide such a light in my life.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: _____CATRIN EVANS

Signature: _____

Terms of Reference / Style notes

Dixit – As part of one of my reflective research sessions I utilised 84 visual images from a board game entitled **Dixit**. First released in 2008, the game is produced by Libellud, and the cards I used were designed by Marie Cardouat. Libellud suggest that fundamental to this game is engaging with the imagination and adopting the role of storyteller. More can be discovered about the game via its website: https://www.libellud.com/Dixit/?lang=en. Within the thesis I discuss how the game formed a part of my methodology before sharing the cards and narratives that emerged out of the imagery. I have emboldened reference to **Dixit** throughout to remind the reader that this is Libellud's game.

Fortress Europe – Described by Malik (2018) as 'a citadel against immigration, watched over by a hi-tech surveillance system of satellites and drones and protected by fences and warships', Fortress Europe refers to the bordering practices carried out by and on behalf of the EU and surrounding European states, as well as non-European nation states in partnership with Europe. I use it throughout this thesis when referring to both the material, legal and linguistic exclusionary approaches contained within the idea of preventing people from entering Europe.

Hostile Environment - In 2012 Theresa May (in her role as Conservative Home Secretary) introduced the Hostile Environment policy. This was a set of legislations and Home Office practices designed to make life as hard as possible for those navigating the immigration system, supposedly 'illegally'. However, the hostile environment I refer to throughout this thesis is not just that of the most recent Conservative Governments. I use the term to refer to a wider and much more historical political and public discourse that is rooted in anti-immigrant and anti-racist practices, ones that have been implemented by both Labour and Conservative Governments and exacerbated by mainstream media discourse. As such, following Goodfellow (2019) I use the term in connection to 'the UK's colonial past and its imperialist present'.

Neoliberalism – This is a far-reaching concept that frames and is critiqued within all of the scholarly fields my research intersected with. It is, at its centre 'a theory of political economic practices' (Harvey, 2007, p.2) that prioritises a free market global economy. Its ubiquity across discourses however is indicative of the vision contained with these practices, one that 'seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market' (p.2), and that has involved the 'creative destruction' (p.2) of public assets and infrastructure across the globe.

Consequently, I follow Hall (2016) in acknowledging it is a 'global pedagogical project' that 'aims at the dispossession of free time and space' (p.1006) across all aspects of society.

New Scot – This term has been adopted widely in Scotland since it was utilised in the Scottish Government's New Scots refugee integration strategy (first introduced 2014-2017). While the term is used within the strategy as the title of the policy itself, throughout my research I have seen the term adopted as a descriptor for individuals themselves who are settling in Glasgow as refugees. The publication of the edited collection *New Scots: Scotland Immigrant Communities since 1945* in 2018, demonstrates how the term is increasingly being stretched to refer to migrant communities within Scotland more broadly. At times in this thesis I have adopted it as a descriptor but I have chosen to present it as 'New Scots' so as to draw attention to it as a category and label born out of policy discussion, and is not necessarily how the individuals I worked with would necessarily choose to self-identify.

New(ish) – I adopt this hybrid word within the thesis when referring to a group of people's collective relationship to the city of Glasgow as a new(ish) home. I do this as a way of acknowledging the multiplicity of experiences within each group I worked with throughout the research, i.e. a number individuals involved in the arts project were navigating the city within the first few weeks/months of arrival, whereas others had been in the city a considerable amount of time – some for nearly a decade.

Participatory Arts - I will be referring to all forms of arts practice that took place within the projects I researched within as participatory arts practice, including visual, performance, dance, music and/or craft. Here I follow Bishop (2012) who acknowledges that arts projects happening outside of conventional arts/theatre/studio spaces or contexts, go by a lot of different names. For example, I could have chosen applied arts, socially engaged practice or community arts. But, like Bishop, I have chosen participatory arts because I believe this term has the least historical baggage and it encompasses the fact that 'people constitute the central artistic medium and material' (p.2).

Performance – The use of the word performance is prominent in this thesis, and it has multiple resonances. It is 'as an inclusive term for all those artistic practices that include the participation of groups and individuals as they present themselves to others' (Thompson, 2011, p.7). At times it refers to the staged public events that were produced to share the artwork created with an audience. It also refers to the sharing of work that individuals performed within workshops, for one another. As with my definition of participatory arts, I utilise

it across artforms, as a way of acknowledging the way in which these forms intersected within the research and to draw attention to the fact that all of the projects were, to some degree, cross-artform endeavours. I also follow Thompson in choosing performance in order to suggest that the events discussed are also 'performative in the linguistic sense': 'that they do something beyond their mere existence' (p.9). Sometimes the performative intention is explicit – ie. the performance within a project actively seeks to inform/persuade an audience, and at other times it gestures towards the more elusive act of 'moving' people and/or it is a way of recognising that all '[p]erformances with communities are happening within wider social performances' (p.9). Performance is also utilised – especially in the latter parts of the thesis – through the theoretical lens associated with Goffman, to refer to the daily performances undertaken by refugees as part of everyday integration practices.

Project Members – Despite the ubiquitous usage of the term 'participants' across academic research fields and the arts sector, in this thesis I have chosen to use project members when talking about individuals I worked with. Firstly, I do this to encourage the reader to acknowledge the agency and influence that each individual had throughout. Secondly, it is a way of acknowledging that I did not recruit the people who I worked specifically as participants for my research. They were first and foremost participating in the arts projects, and they came to be involved in my research through that engagement.

Refugee, refugee and seeking asylum (or, why I won't be using the term asylum seeker) – Throughout this research I have taken guidance from many people working in the field of refugee support, including personnel from the Scottish Refugee Council who chose, where possible, to use the term refugee (with a small r) to refer to anyone who has been forced to flee their country, regardless of whether they have been gifted legal Refugee status or not. This is partly to do with the fact that those involved with the research were at varying stages of the asylum/refugee journey and appealing for status through a number of humanitarian routes. But it is also connected to a thread that runs throughout this thesis, which is a critique of risks involved in labelling and categorisation. For this reason, I have considered carefully how I adopt legal and policy terminology. The most contentious of labels I have encountered is that of 'asylum seeker'. Many of the individuals I worked with associated shame with it and on more than one occasion project members stated: 'I hate this word. I hate this label'. In good faith then I have worked hard to avoid using it within my own written work. Where the reference to someone's specific status serves the theoretical discussion, I choose instead to utilise phrases such as 'individual/s seeking asylum' or 'individual/s navigating the asylum process' and only where using someone's pseudonym is not appropriate.

'Refugee crisis' – This term is often used interchangeably with 'migrant crisis' within mainstream and media discourse. It also, misleadingly, often specifically refers to the crisis that Europe (and the Global North more broadly) believes it is facing, and often shores up the sense of a threat from refugees themselves that have arrived, rather than a humanitarian crisis developed or unfolding due to political/structural dimensions (Ellis, 2019). There is no doubting the scale of the crisis; people are being let down and left to die globally because of the refusal of nation states to allow for safe passage across land and water. I chose however, to present the term in inverted commas to draw attention to the fact that the crisis should rather be considered 'one of politics, not capacity' (Roth, 2015) and/or a 'crisis of the imagination' (Phipps, 2017a).

Repeat concepts –There are a number of theoretical concepts used repeatedly throughout this thesis, some coined by individual scholars, and some that are used widely within or across disciplines. I have chosen not to present them all at this stage, because their introduction and explanation are embedded into the analysis they first appear within. I do, however, draw the reader's attention to the stylistic rules that I have established for these repeat concepts: 1) The first couple of instances they are used they will be presented in 'quotation marks' with appropriate citations; 2) Subsequent use of any such concept will then be presented in italics, without repeated citation information – unless new aspects of the concept are being examined. This approach is an attempt to embed conceptual and theoretical ideas into the flow of the writing, whilst reminding the reader of its original introduction and citation. Where I coin a conceptual term, I also present it in italics throughout thesis.

Introduction

Image 1: Share My Table co-produced map – tracing our journeys to the workshop (EMH)

An overview

This thesis explores the ways in which the concepts and practices of integration experienced by refugees, and those within the asylum system, interact with their participation in the creative and performing arts. It focuses upon this interaction within a Scottish context.

The research took place over eighteen months during 2017-18 and centred around my involvement in three participatory arts projects, which saw me work with over sixty individuals. The first project, *Share My Table*, a large-scale performance and visual art project, was produced by the Scottish Refugee Council and Tramway. The second – *Echo*: a dance piece - and third – *Maryhill Integrated Sound*: a sound project – were both produced by Maryhill Integration Network, in collaboration with external organisations. Though my role within each project varied, I approached this research and its subsequent writing up as an Artist-Researcher. This thesis takes the form of a practice-based study, in that the creative outcomes and processes were a key part of the investigation, and that this thesis cannot be fully appreciated without continuing reference to the work itself (Candy & Edmonds, 2018).

The weight of analysis lies with *Share My Table*, due to the nature of my engagement as lead artist and the 10-month length of the project. The two other projects provide alternative routes into exploring the themes that emerge as the thesis unfolds. It is not my intention to pit the approaches taken by the three distinct arts projects against another. Each project had its own intention, its distinct broader context, and its own artistic interests and explorations, which frame much of the discussions throughout the chapter. But by weaving the experiences of these projects alongside each other I hope to illuminate, critique and ask questions of the implications of participatory arts work in this context.

I deliberately resisted fixing my research questions, as it was in the *doing* of these projects, and in the act of 'thinking, talking and writing in and with the world' (Ingold, 2011, p.241) that I developed the direction of my study. Not only

inquiring into arts' relationship to integration but upending the focus to explore what arts research and artistic methods can contribute to understandings or articulations of integration itself. And yet, integration was very rarely the specific subject of this artistic inquiry. Instead its presence, influence and impact on people's lives was what the research remained alive to. In doing so the research was able to attend to the labour of integrating - the work that individuals and communities undertake in order to negotiate the expectation to integrate, and more urgently to survive within a system that often is the very source of persistent and aggressive anti-immigration sentiment.

While my analysis is philosophical in nature and often calls upon discourses within critical theory, my tone is deliberately ethnographic. I write in what Thompson (2011) defines an 'affective register', one that is 'both practice-based and analytical' (p.7). I do this as a way of acknowledging my position, as well as my subjectivity within this research. At times I also call upon my own creative voice within the thesis, as a means of demonstrating how artistic expression underpinned my analytical process, as well as what might traditionally be seen as the practical field research.

A precondition for the reader is for there to be no illusion of fact-finding within this research. Its aim was never to *prove* the value of the arts as tool for promoting or facilitating integration, nor was it to demonstrate the arts transformative potential. Rather than a focus on large universal claims of what has been achieved, I look instead to what is being experienced and from there gesture – gently – towards what effects and affects that work may be provoking. Throughout this research I have sought to enact an 'epistemology of humility' (Foster, 2016, p.117) by resisting the pull to inappropriately orchestrate my findings 'hegemonically into purported coherence' (Law, 2004, p.6). This is an approach that Dear (2017) argues is one that pushes back against the desire to claim mastery over your subject, and instead seeks to share critical insight from within it (p.8). In conjunction, the research has been framed by what Leavy (2015) describes 'aesthetic knowing' (p.20); an expressive and exploratory practice through which to reflexively 'disrupt the ordinary' (p.20)

As such this thesis draws together reflections on the ethical, aesthetic and conceptual ideas that permeated the plans, discussions and activities that took place across the three projects. It is a critical inquiry into the contexts and agendas that surrounded the work, how these influenced their direction and created opportunities, as well as tensions throughout the journeys. It is a contribution to the ongoing discourses surrounding the representational dilemmas of staging refugee experiences, exploring how these interplay with wider issues of authenticity, agency and power. It is an exploration of how an interaction with arts practice might play a role in defining and constructing oneself whilst navigating the asylum system.

This thesis is a provocation to arts practitioners and organisations (specifically those with no lived experience of forced migration) wanting to make work with, by and for those seeking refuge to 'exercise a little critical vigilance' (Phipps, 2014, p.110); to ask themselves why, what drives their impulse, and who are they really doing it for. Especially in a field of work where the political context is deeply intertwined with neo-colonial and neoliberal geopolitics, and where stories risk being extracted, re-contextualised or presented in ways that over-simplify or misrepresent individual experience and complexity, and where work has too often tended towards an 'aesthetic of injury' (Salverson, 1999, p.35).

It is also an offering that contends that arts spaces and creative practice might – in certain conditions – provide us with an opportunity to test out, rehearse and embody alternative ways of being in the world with one another: 'to make visible a better world' (Thompson, 2011, p.2). By dismissing the labels prescribed to individuals navigating the immigration and asylum system and seeking out new forms to interact and express ourselves that centre around creative expression, and joyful encounters. And it might, tentatively, be a response to thinkers like Scarry (2006), Thompson (2011) and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2019a) who have called for greater recognition of beauty's resistant potential, by articulating what the aesthetic resonances and creative processes within the

projects allowed myself and those involved in the work to see and feel anew.

With an awareness of the 'interwovenness of beauty, ugliness and power' (Nuttall, 2007, p.21) what I hope this thesis does is tease out what some of the work might be, in order to contribute in some small way to the development of 'a properly global epistemology' (Nuttall, 2007, p.8) of aesthetic justice. One that impresses upon the cultural sector in Scotland to not uncritically instrumentalise the arts as part of social or political agendas, but to take seriously the artistic contributions that people experiencing forced displacement develop. To allow the wider cultural landscape to be changed by these contributions and to simultaneously understand that arts practice is not necessarily about what an audience can see, but about what an arts practice can bring to a person and to groups of people as they work to rebuild their lives, and to demand social and personal justice.

What brings me to this place

Before turning my attention to outlining the shape this thesis takes, I pause to reflect upon what brought me to this work, and to interrogate my desire to take this research on. I do so because I have adopted a methodological and epistemological approach proposed by Trimingham (2002) that advocates acknowledging, throughout the process, 'that the researcher is intimately involved in the research and affects its outcomes' (p.57). Moreover that the researcher's 'point of entry' (p.57); their professional, personal, theoretical and political standpoints - both at the start and as they develop throughout the process – are a key part of the work itself. Trimingham argues that an awareness of the self within research is not simply about being accounted for, instead it explicitly serves as a tool to the research, with pre-existing and acquired knowledge working to identify how each stage of the research develops and moves.

I arrived in Glasgow as an undergraduate in 2001, at the same time that many people seeking asylum were being moved to this city through the UK Home

Office's then, new, Dispersal Project. I came here through choice, and via the privileged circumstances of race, class and nationality that allow me to move freely across borders; living and studying where I am most drawn to. My situation was very different from those individuals and families for whom the Home Office were making decisions on behalf of. Slowly my attachment to the city grew, and with it my engagement with what was happening around me. 'Dawn Raids', 'Detention', 'Voluntary Return' entered my lexicon and I became more and more involved in the grassroots campaigns around the injustice being faced by so many residents of the city.

At the same time, I was developing my practice as a theatre artist and activist. My interest in working with art - mainly performance and theatre - to challenge mainstream narratives was growing and my interest in the relationship between personal stories and political issues began to frame my approach. I joined the Rebel Clown Army, a subversive group using clowning as a form of protest, which started in response to the G8 meetings of 2005 but was keen to engage beyond that global moment. We increasingly found ourselves outside Brand Street - the Home Office in Glasgow - offering support in the form of solidarity to those going to sign in. Alongside grassroots groups like UNITY we worked to try and make more visible the oppressive and brutal tactics being imposed upon people trapped within the asylum system. My involvement journeyed hand in hand with the knowledge I had acquired as an undergraduate at the University of Glasgow, which had seen me become increasingly critically conscious through an exposure to performance activism, post-colonial literature, critical theory and feminist analysis. Whilst I still had, and continue to have a lot to learn, my political consciousness had been activated and I began to locate myself within an anti-racist, anti-imperial, anti-borders and feminist discourse.

In 2006 I started my first project as a theatre director out of university. It was a six-month contract with the Village Storytelling Centre and conFAB, working to create *The Flats* alongside writer Liam Stewart. This was a piece of theatre scripted with and performed by fourteen asylum seeking individuals and four members of Pollok's 'host' community. The production was met with

declarations of solidarity and inspiration as part of Refugee Week 2006. I remember vividly the image of the participants performing an anti-detention protest on stage; expressing themselves wittily and angrily, with a freedom and safety they felt they did not have offstage. That first project was integral to my development as an arts practitioner; offering me an exhilarating introduction into the potential personal and social impact of participatory arts for everyone involved, myself included, and an illuminating and often shocking insight into living within the UK asylum system.

During this doctoral research I had the pleasure to be reunited with one of the project members from *The Flats*. Now a community development practitioner *Souso* was volunteering on the dance project at Maryhill Integration Network. Each week she gave me a lift home and we pretty much exclusively reminisced about *The Flats*. She talked about how she had recently had one of the other women from the show, who now lives in London, up to stay for a week. She told me how her daughter (who was six at the time and is now approaching her twenties) quite often gets out the photo documentation of the project and talks about her memories of 'finding her new family' in the creche. This is a family connection that continues to exist, now in the form of finding each other on social media platforms like snapchat. *Souso* shared that she believed it was her involvement in *The Flats* that prompted her to work in a community context. She talked about how much we used to laugh. And how proud she was - still is - that she got up on stage and performed in a language that was not her own.

What struck me most about our conversation was the clarity with which she was able to tell me what that space, that process, that time had been for her:

> I used to say
> *(takes a big deep breath)*
> this is our oxygen
> we come here for new oxygen
> new life
> even with my daughter
> we
> in the day we would have a very very hard time
> and then in the evening we would go to The Village

and we breath
and we meet
and we laugh
otherwise
if there was not that project
all our life is like trauma

In amongst all the ethical wrangling and serious theoretical thinking I was embarking upon during my study, those car journeys nourished me. They reminded me of the sheer joy of the work when it goes well, when the circumstances come together to afford you the time, space and energy to make genuinely good artistic work that manifests in forms of solidarity.

After *The Flats* I went on to develop multiple projects with asylum and refugee communities in Glasgow. Some of which were overtly political in their content - like *Petrified Paradise*, a site-specific verbatim theatre piece examining the Home Office's use of detention with the UK asylum system. But it was through others like *Belonging* and *Playing With Food* that I became increasingly interested in how form, style and process could be a political act in and of themselves. Inspired by bell hooks' work on pedagogical spaces of possibility, which I call upon in this thesis, I began to discover and value the fact that arts projects did not just bring people together to share stories and experiences in beautiful and striking ways. They offered opportunities for creating spaces that could, temporarily at least, create counter cultures. Spaces where hierarchy could be challenged. Where one's feelings and thoughts on the world could be explored and given time to evolve, where people could feel safe to ask questions and where structures of inequality could be contested. I am not suggesting that all artistic processes do this - in fact in my experience the opposite can also be true - but my fascination between arts practice and challenging political and ideological hegemony began to firmly take root.

During this time, I also became a member of Scottish Detainee Visitors. A small volunteer-led charity which provides practical and emotional support to individuals being detained in Dungavel, Scotland's only Immigration Removal Centre within the UK's Detention Estate. This experience made me increasingly

aware of how the asylum - as well as the wider immigration system - is predicated upon structurally unjust systems, and historically colonial, and therefore racist, discriminatory practices. It prompted me to consider the difference between charity and solidarity. Between wanting to support people to cope within systems and wanting to eradicate those systems. Both seemed necessary, and yet there was a tension between them that I continue to grapple with. I also became profoundly aware that individuals within the asylum system were often referred to as 'vulnerable', a term also used regularly within the participatory arts sector in many contexts. Whilst I did not want to deny people's vulnerability, as I saw it the system was enacting vulnerability upon them. So, I wanted to use *vulnerabled* instead because it would operate as a constant linguistic reminder that decisions, actions and structures are what are causing these vulnerabilities, not the people themselves. It would still be some time before I would return to an academic context, but it was here that I can recognise the theorist in me, was rising to meet the activist and artist in me.

Over the following twelve years these are the ideas I have tested and explored within all of my work, and many of the projects I have been involved in creating have centred around themes of migration, dislocation, isolation and fighting back. Throughout of all these processes, and in amongst developing my professional practice, I have also made and lost friends. I have hung out and shared with people whose lives, cultures and interests are so different from mine, and yet our conversation and creativity has drawn us tightly together. I have, and continue to grapple with gratitude, grief and guilt. Gratitude that my life choices have led me to being in spaces where I witness and feel the strength of compassion between individuals, as well as the force of collective creative energy. Grief at the horror of losing people to a system that is so unnecessarily cruel. And guilt that my actions do not trigger the changes I long for. Sometimes these feelings have been so overwhelming that I have stepped away from direct action, and sometimes they have been at the heart of my behaviour.

When I dig deep to consider what prompted me to enter into this doctoral research - beyond the intellectual inquiry and the desire for the work that I do,

and the sector that I work in to be an ethical and impactful as possible - I believe I also was looking to find a way to grapple further with my own emotional connectivity to this aspect of the world that so troubles me.

For friends I have made and lost

I see his face
and I see hers
He smiles openly
and she looks terrified
> Just under her chin I see the tops of her children's heads
> she is
> as ever
> trying to shelter them from the worst of us

He smiles out at me from a photocopy of a grainy photograph
my friend printed it out
it was our attempt to make his suffering visible
She looks away
concentrating on where they are taking her
thinking about what's coming next
> unaware of me
> standing on the other side of the window
> realising that it is my friend in that van
> in that van going through
> those gates

He was someone I visited
someone I befriended
She was someone I interviewed
someone I came to love
Meetings prompted by my desire to *do something*
both people I fear I failed

He wanted
banter
and he wanted to stay in the UK
She wanted stability
> fun
> laughter
> safety for her children
Neither of them wanted to want my help

He and She
She and He
Two people
their lives intersecting with mine
momentarily
side by side in solidarity
and then they disappeared
        Returned
and the work I had done achieved nothing

And yet their work continues
He still smiles at me out of that photograph
frozen in time
willing me on
And she
she keeps going
somewhere
        holding those growing boys in her arms
        just about under her chin
        still sheltering them from the worst of us

And me
I keep trying
because
to not
is to fail them again

(Author's Poetic Reflections)

Structure of the thesis

I request that where possible, any reader of this thesis engages with the photographic, film and audio documentation of the projects that this writing examines. To do so please follow this link to access a folder 'Thesis Accompanying Material':

http://dx.doi.org/10.5525/gla.researchdata.1058

Throughout the thesis I direct the reader to specific items in this folder, and there is also a PDF Visual Appendix document, which can be referred to whenever the reader wishes. In addition, where there are aspects of each project that are available to the public online, I provide a reference for the reader within the text.

I hope these additional materials will enrich the reader's journey as they make their way through the following chapters, which have been divided into four sections.

Part One focuses on the contextual landscape of the research, positioning it as both key to the study and as a backdrop for 'New Scots' as they establish themselves and build their lives within Glasgow.

Chapter One offers an overview of the global and UK political context surrounding the discourses of forced migration and refugee settlement, before moving into a scholarly review of key theoretical concepts framing this research: 'refugeeness' and 'integration'. **Chapter Two** examines the field of refugee arts, with a specific focus on participatory arts within a UK context. I draw attention to key concerns emerging from existing literature and connect these to wider questions circulating within the field of participatory arts practice. I end the chapter by examining how the arts and integration co-exist within a Scottish policy and lived context. **Chapter Three** provides an account of my epistemological approach and my chosen methods for this research. I describe the three projects and offer an insight into the kinds of arts practice that was taking place within each one. I end the chapter by discussing how ethics manifested throughout the research and offer an explanation of 'data' re-presentation.

Part Two marks the beginning of the analytical and critical work directed towards my own research, with a focus on how issues of representation were managed within the arts projects.

> **Chapter Four** examines the theme of staging suffering, by offering an insight into how the ethical, artistic, and social implications manifested within the work. I explore the contextual constraints surrounding the projects, before providing an analysis of encounters where nuanced and careful arts processes sought to upend or complicate a focus on suffering. **Chapter Five** introduces and examines the concept of *creative self-authorship*. Through an exploration of what this term means in practice, I offer examples of where individual and collective creative agency gave way to bold and exciting aesthetic creations. The chapter ends with an exploration of the strength that lies within the intersection of *creative self-authorship* and collaboration.

Part Three shifts the focus of my inquiry towards trying to discover and articulate what the politics of arts and integration might be, within the context of participatory practice with and by refugees might look like.

> **Chapter Six** explores how the sites of activity were set up to encourage forms of interaction that operate as a counterpoint to the hostile practices of the asylum system. The chapter goes on to examine the manifestation of hospitality as a co-created act within *Share My Table*, drawing attention to how host/guest binaries were troubled within the space, and in the everyday lives of project members. **Chapter Seven** digs deeper into the aesthetic encounters, interactions and workshop dynamics within the projects, with a focus on understanding the affect of the work that took place. I position the creative practice itself as a form through which care and solidarity can be enacted, and where strategies for imaginative resistance can be modelled.

Part Four extends the reach of my study beyond the projects themselves,

looking at how arts practice impacted individuals personally, and how it shed light on scholarly and lived experiences of integration itself.

Chapter Eight marks a return to theme of self-authorship. This time I examine how the creative work within the project spaces intersected with individual processes of (re)construction and a desire to live a self-authored life both within, and out with of the projects. I then extend this analysis to consider whether arts projects, and the shared memories that they produce, can act as forms of remembrance which operate as a shared site for identity formation. **Chapter Nine** shifts the focus towards the learning that has emerged about the concept of integration. With a focus on articulating the messier aspects of the concept, I analyse how project members engaged a metaphorical register to shed light on what integration looks and feels like. This chapter makes visible the labour that goes into living an integrated life.

The thesis is completed by my conclusion, followed by a short visual and narrative **Coda**.

"What is this integration you all keep talking about? How can *you* tell if I have integrated?"

Part One

Understanding the Canvas
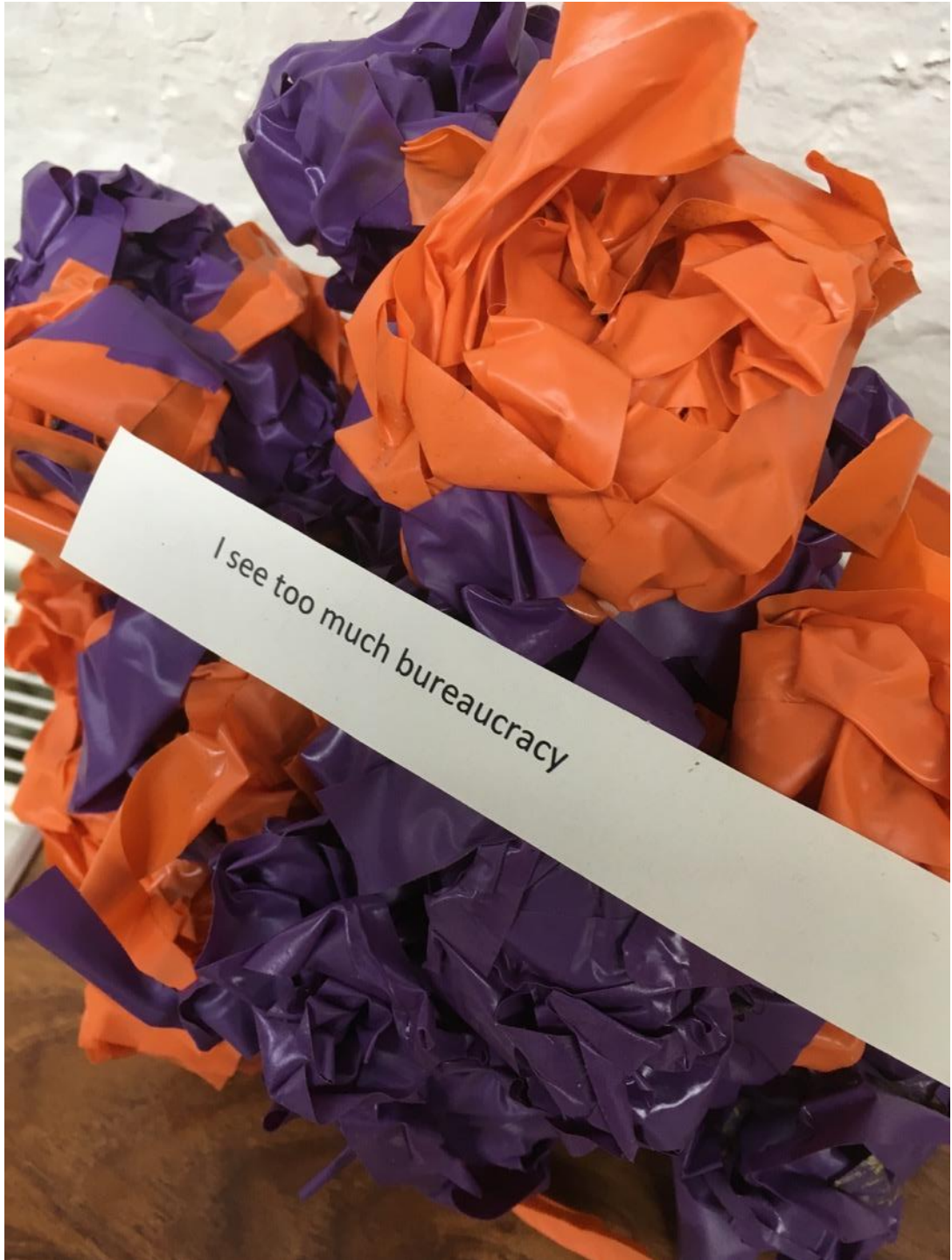
Image 2: Share My Table – aftermath of the 'I See…' exercise

1   A contextual and scholarly review

Introduction

Across this thesis portraits emerge. Firstly, in relation to a creative exercise undertaken by research project members. Then in connection to the importance of authorship within collaborative participatory practice. Finally, as a metaphor for understanding the significance of individual autonomy, agency and self-representation when (re)constructing a new self-portrait within new settings. Whether the self is painted in watercolour, teased out with charcoal or sketched in pencil, the canvas upon which a portrait is rendered matters a great deal. Unlike most conventional self-portraits brought to life on or with a blank canvas, the canvas upon which a 'New Scot' might be trying to mark themselves out is complete with guards, borders and structural inequalities. Ideas, ideologies and everyday interactions overlap to create a bumpy, rough and well-trodden starting point. This canvas is predictably dictated to by competing macro and global politics that continually lurch backwards and forwards along a spectrum containing hate, blame, empathy, solidarity, and resistance. Moreover, localised contexts affecting the way one might reimagine oneself are often acutely felt.

Chapter 1 intends to offer an overview of the political and scholarly canvas upon which the self-portraits of 'New Scots' are being rendered. It begins by outlining the international as well as national context, with a focus on the political narratives that circulate around issues of forced migration. It explores how forced migration policy is a means through which nation-building takes place and draws attention to the ways in which British and Scottish national narratives have diverged in response to the 'refugee crisis'. It goes on to undertake an exploration of two of the crucial scholarly discourses that have surrounded this research. First, I turn to 'refugeeness', which I interpret throughout the thesis as the:

> site of contestation where discourses regarding culture, society, economy, and politics constantly interact to construct what it means to 'be a refugee' (Suzuki, 2016, p.1).

I pay particular attention to the way in which labels and categories intersect with political (in)action to render the figure of 'the refugee' as someone who needs to be protected and protected from. Before analysing the ways in which essentialised representations of 'refugeeness' have been pushed back against, across scholarly disciplines.

To complete the chapter, I offer a critical overview of integration, both as a concept and policy intention. I examine the roots of the concept in relation to assimilation and multiculturalism, and then proceed to explore how it has taken centre stage within much migration policy in the Global North. I examine its limitations both conceptually and in its practical implementation, and present the ways in which scholars have sought, and continue to seek out, alternative ways of understanding living within diversity.

The macro canvas

As of 2020 there are estimated to be 70.8 million people facing forced displacement across the globe (UNHCR, 2019), and 'the reasons for this movement are as manifold as the migrants themselves' (Jünemann, Fromm and Scherer, 2017, p.1). Consistently their experiences are being affected by the ongoing radicalisation of a security-migration nexus that surfaced in the 1990s, and has continued with vigour across the globe since 9/11 (Khosravi, 2009, p.40). Contemporary media reporting may be becoming more nuanced (Cox, 2017): with both pro and anti-immigration news stories demonstrating their the capacity to 'render refugees and migrants emotionally legible – to characterize them, in effect, if not to advocate for them' (p.479). But, for Khosravi (2009) this rendering only exists within a society where:

> migration has been increasingly criminalised and immigration control governed more and more through the techniques and discourses used to regulate, control and, above all, emphasise crime (p.40).

At a global level this can be identified in places like Manus Island, the site of Australia's provocatively named *Pacific Solution*, subsequently *Operation Sovereign Borders*. Here thousands of people have been held indefinitely on the Island in conditions reminiscent of concentration camps (Gessen, 2019). It can

be felt at the border between Mexico and the USA, which continues to be the locus of hostility towards Central-American migrants for the US administration. Across the Global North '[b]order fences are getting higher and higher' (Jünemann, Fromm and Scherer, 2017, p.1). The notion of ensuring safe and legal passage for those on the move globally is becoming further and further removed from political rhetoric, or public consciousness.

The reality of this becomes starkly apparent at the borders of Europe, where 'the current international legal framework' has failed 'to adequately address the unfolding humanitarian crisis' (Hassouri, 2017, p.12). Acts of sympathy and solidarity, like Germany's short-term 'Wilkommenkultur', which saw Angela Merkel temporarily 'open the German borders almost unconditionally' (Jünemann, Fromm & Scherer, p.2/3), are framed by an EU that has created exclusionary policies which 'make it almost impossible to enter Europe regularly' (UNITED, 2019). UNITED for Intercultural Action argue these policies have been directly responsible for 'at least 36,570 refugee deaths' (UNITED, 2019) since 1993. This includes thousands of deaths annually at sea.

A recent example of these exclusionary policies is the partnership between the EU and Libya. Funding the national coastguard to prevent boats making it out of Libyan water, despite increasing evidence of human rights abuses and slavery rings taking place in Tripoli, exposes the 'tension between the E.U.'s ambitions as a normative power and its perceived self-interest in reducing migration at any cost' (Fine & Megerisi, 2019). Exclusion is also evidenced in the reports of the 'push-backs' of people at the EU's external borders (Breen, 2019, p.6), the increasing criminalization, or threats to implement criminalization of individuals and organisations intervening and rescuing boats crossing the Mediterranean Sea, as well as in legal agreements like the 2016 EU-Turkey deal, and the 2003 Dublin Regulation. The result of this is that the:

> crisis is seen as a 'crisis' '*caused* by refugees rather than *lived* by refugees' (De Cleen et al. 2017, 34), showing a growing tendency to see refugees and asylum seekers as a threat to the social and economic status quo (de Smet, De Haene, Rousseau & Stalpaert, 2018, p. 243).

Following Inda's (2006) work on border technologies, Khosravi (2009) expands

this position, arguing that it is not just about placing blame, it is about criminalising the very act of crossing borders 'in order to be able to punish them' (p.40). That the:

> justification presented for this criminalisation is the need to protect citizens from the threat of 'anti-citizens'; undocumented migrants and unidentified asylum seekers are seen as dangers to the well-being of the social body (p.40).

In light of this, individuals facing forced migration are not just blamed for their own situation, they are also expected to carry the blame for any social unrest that might exist within whichever country they finally make it in to.

The UK Government, as well as media outlets and the recent rise of far-right anti-immigrant rhetoric, have been active contributors in the game of blame and criminalisation. Mulvey (2010) contends that:

> In policy terms the hostility of the public was used as a rationale for policies that would not only prevent arrival, but would negatively impact upon the lives of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK, and subsequently the ability of refugees to integrate. This perceived lack of integration would then become the focus of yet more policy and pronouncements, which began the vicious circle once more (p.454).

As a consequence, the UK has come to embody Balibar's (2002) contention that 'some borders are no longer situated at the borders at all' (p.84). Increasingly resources are targeted towards geographically external bordering practices (Léonard, 2010; Vollmer, 2019), whilst inside the UK, borders are proliferating into everyday practices through state institutions (Guentner, Lukes, Stanton, Vollmer & Wilding 2016; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss & Cassidy, 2017).

In spite of the increase in everyday borderwork (Rumford, 2008; Cassidy, Yyval-Davis & Wemyss, 2018), the narrative of 'the soft touch nation' (Ahmed, 2004, p.2) remains the national myth utilised to justify the 'tightening of asylum policies':

> the metaphor of 'soft touch' suggests that the nation's borders and defences are like skin; they are soft, weak, porous and easily shaped or even bruised by the proximity of others (p.2).

This narrative is utilised to position the UK's so-called open-door policy, and

therefore immigration (in all its forms) as the reason for much of the economic and social instability across the British Isles. This is an idea that has become so mainstreamed that Theresa May's tenure as Home Secretary was marked by an explicit commitment to the Hostile Environment, and a flagship speech in which she declared that '[w]hen immigration is too high, when the pace of change is too fast, it's impossible to build a cohesive society' (May, 2015). Even the death of thirty-nine individuals whilst being smuggled/transported into the UK in a refrigerated lorry in October 2019 was cited as a reason by the current Home Secretary for further hardening borders (Siddique, 2019) rather than considering the incident as a catalyst for a re-think on the criminalisation of border crossing.

The advocation of immigration as *the* blight on British society operates as a strategic distraction, with political and media discourse using what Crawley (2008) refers to as a 'touchstone issue' to deflect from a 'growing distrust in public authorities and the political establishment' (p.19). So much so that 'anger with de-industrialization, globalization or the political system comes to be reflected in concerns over immigration' (Mulvey, 2010, p.450). As such, the issue is simultaneously being operationalised to present the image of a 'strong Government' (p.454), or as Ahmed describes it, a government acting on behalf of 'a nation that is less emotional, less open, less easily moved, one that is 'hard', or 'tough' (2004, p.2). This hardness, which Ahmed is quick to remind us 'is not the absence of emotion, but a different emotional orientation towards others' (p.4), is the ubiquitous performance taking place within UK/Westminster politics at the moment. One being performed to assuage a very hostile audience (Mulvey, 2010, p.456), whilst simultaneously shaping a specific perception of Britishness itself.

Through a 'whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices' (Billig, 1995, p.6) relating to immigration, the imagined community of British nation-ness (Anderson, 1991) is being reinforced and rendered more and more difficult to contest. In doing so, a hegemonic image of national identity is presented and represented, and it is one reliant upon the need for others to not belong (Ahmed, 2000). Bhabha (1990) places this post-structuralist outlook on

nationhood within the context of narration, where thresholds of meaning are 'crossed, erased and translated in the process of cultural production' (p.4). We tell ourselves stories, we project images of ourselves within our nation, and in doing so we create and bring into being the very nation we narrate (Hall, 1992). Through this critical lens we can begin to see that the language surrounding migration and refugee discourses is in itself performative. In speaking it is being brought into being: 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of the action' (Austin, 1976, p.6) and the action is the construction of nations, national identity, as well as the very concept of the 'refugee'.

The UK Government's performance of nation-ness becomes further complicated when due acknowledgment is given to the growing 'strength and durability' (Hepburn, 2009, p.478) of sub-state nations within the UK. The Scottish National Party's move 'from the periphery to mainstream politics' (p.479) has seen Scotland foreground its own contemporary national narrative, and in doing so the very existence of a universal concept of Britishness is consistently challenged. In particular, Scotland can be seen to be performing its own narrative in connection to forced displacement, and to 'immigrant-generated diversity' (Jeram, van de Zwet & Wisthaler, 2016, p.1230) more broadly: 'crafting an image of 'Scottishness' that is cosmopolitan and open to diversity' (p.1232). Whilst the UK has been 'hardening', the Scottish Government has been actively promoting the image of 'the soft national body' (Ahmed, 2004, p.2) through its high-profile and ongoing Scotland Welcomes Refugees campaign, which has become part of broader pro-immigration position in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. The Scottish narrative champions the notion of integration from day one, in active contrast to the UK Government who maintain an immigration system that actively presents obstacles to integration (Mulvey, 2010, p.457).

This performative positioning in opposition to Westminster politics is part of a long-standing tradition in Scottish nation-forming. For the purpose of this thesis I am concerned with how this oppositional framing may impact the way in which lives are lived, and identities are formed in the Scottish context. Firstly, it is

important to acknowledge that the construction of these national narratives forms part of the frame within which all community, arts and cultural activity take place in the current climate. Furthermore, in considering the UK and the Scottish Government's performances in relation to immigration we might begin to identify a uniqueness to being a 'New Scot' in comparison to individuals settling in England, for instance. In Scotland the canvas contains not just one but two, often opposing, national narratives about Britishness and Scottishness, upon which individual and community portraits are being constructed.

'Refugeeness'

In her 1943 article *We Refugees*, Arendt proposed that Jewish refugees had, throughout WWII and beyond, worked to avoid the label, and stigmas associated with the category of 'refugee'. By putting up a front, hiding the facts and playing roles (1994, p.115), individuals sought to prove at the very least 'that we were just ordinary immigrants' (p.110). With optimism and shame manifesting as a rejection of 'refugeeness', individuals sought to declare themselves 'to be Frenchmen or an American' (p.111) in order to be included. Arendt's insights pre-empt Goffman's work on everyday performance and stigma (1956 & 1963), as well as predicting the enduring 'centrality of stateless refugees to nation-states' (Berkowitz, 2011, p.61). This is together with the way in which European nations utilise the very notion of 'refugeeness' to:

> place the shame of being a refugee firmly on refugees' shoulders, whilst at the same time removing from themselves any taint of guilt for producing the conditions that created refugees (Jeffers, 2012, p.7).

Moreover, this early articulation of the ongoing peril refugees face when 'unprotected by any specific law or political convention' (1994, p.118), triggered a now longstanding theoretical inquiry into being 'nothing but human beings' (p.118).

Arendt expands upon this concept by problematising the assumptions built into 'a right to have rights' (2004, p.376) and drawing attention to the hazard of 'the abstract nakedness of being nothing but human' (p.380). Despite a call for universal laws and the establishment of post-national or world citizenship,

ultimately international law 'operates in terms of reciprocal agreements and treaties between sovereign states' (p.379). Consequently, a person's only means of protection, if at all, remains within the confines of nationhood. This protection – as a naked human – cannot, however, be guaranteed, as long as rights are inextricably bound with what is considered 'good for – for the individual, or the family, or the people, or the largest number' (2004, p.379). Arendt foresees, with a haunting clarity how the twenty-first century operates: that there is always the 'practical political possibilities' (379) the eradication, or in fact the mistreatment or imprisonment, of some individuals can be deemed 'better' (p.379) for the majority of society, or a nation. And so, '[t]he liberty of self-determination blends seamlessly with the dangers of ethnic cleansing and genocide' (Berkowitz, 2011, p.61).

Activated by Arendt's work and calling upon Foucault's theories on the ways in which 'human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1982, p.208) both of and to power, Agamben (1995) argues that refugees are the material and symbolic pinnacle of this power. Their 'bare life' (p.116) occupies a space that results simultaneously in international attention, control and neglect. As biopolitical objects their treatment 'demonstrates how modern politics works' (Schuilenburg, 2008, p.1): subjected to discipline and governmentality at a macro and micro level, from nations and governments to international NGOs to local community charities. Absorbed in abstract variables called 'nation-state', or 'society' or 'law' or 'citizen'' (p.2) refugees find themselves trapped within a liminal space, whilst concurrently throwing 'into crisis the original fiction of sovereignty' (Agamben, 1995, p.117).

'On the edges of possibility' (Jeffers, 2012, p.36) individuals have little access to the rights of the political citizenship they are supposed to be protected by. By default, this leads to exclusion from social practices of citizenship (Benhabib, 1999), which form the processes of the everyday and 'inserts us into a complex network of privileges duties, entitlements, and obligations' (p.718). In turn, Bigo (2002) argues that the 'securitisation of migration' is operationalised 'as a mode of governmentality' to generate:

a structural unease in a "risk society" framed by neoliberal discourses in which freedom is always associated at its limits with danger and (in) security (p.65).

Read altogether then, these theories demonstrate that the concept of 'refugeeness' is underpinned by a figure of the 'the refugee' that simultaneously needs protection and requires protection from.

The material and exclusionary consequences of these biopolitical methods become most felt in the 'nowhere places' (Zaroulia, 2015, p.197) born out of 'asylum processes and detention camps' (p.197). It is there that individuals become 'subject to various forms of violence without legal consequence on territory that is outside the normal juridical order' (Owens, 2009, p.572). Not only does this illuminate on the structures, laws and reality of political order (Owens, 2009), these methods become a form of dispossession:

> an authoritative and often paternalistic apparatus of controlling and appropriating the spatiality, mobility, affectivity, potentiality, and relationality of (neo)-colonized subjects' (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p.11).

These strategies therefore, perform a function beyond that of their material goal; they define, as well as confine the refugee. Moreover, by suspending the ordinary conventions of the law when detaining refugees, they consequently become an exploited site upon which the state works to legitimise and empower itself because:

> sovereignty is reintroduced in the very acts by which state suspends law, or contorts law to its own uses. In this way, the state extends its own domain, its own necessity, and the means by which its self-justification occurs (Butler, 2004, p.55).

In doing so the state holds refugees within the 'politically induced condition' of 'precarity' (Butler, 2009, ii). Their already vulnerable legal status - their 'inclusive exclusion' (Agamben, 1998, p.12) - is compounded and exploited in order to reinforce and reconstruct the powers of the state itself.

The stratification of people into categories, where some are included 'in the body politic' and others are prevented from 'entering this charmed circle'

(Cohen, 1989, p.161), has become a central thread of the contemporary discourse of 'refugeeness'. It points to the rise in the status of holding national citizenship (p.161), and Zetter (2007) asserts, has been 'driven by the need to manage globalized processes and patterns of migration and forced migration in particular (p.174) rather than a desire to necessarily better understand the conditions facing refugees. Bardak (2017) following a line of scholars (Malkki, 1995; Koser and Martin, 2011; Collyer and de Haas, 2012) argues that 'classifying migration into distinct types (labour/economic, refugee, family or voluntary vs. non-voluntary)' (p.36) oversimplifies and misconstrues the reasons people migrate, because 'these migration types reflect legal rather than sociological categories' (p.36).

There is recognition that the intensification of labels and categories utilised to differentiate between distinct, yet overlapping forms of migration, has often 'intended to bring into the purview of the international protection regime those trapped in the space between 'refugee' and 'migrant'' (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017, p.4) However, Crawley and Skleparis suggest that this 'categorical fetishism' (Apostolova, 2015), has primarily served to further exclude people. Calling upon Zetter (2007) and Polzer (2008) they argue that since the rise of the 'migrant crisis' in 2015 categories have been 'used to fragment the international protection regime and limit responsibility for what is perceived to be an unsustainable number of arrivals' (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017, p.5).

The impact of these 'binary analytical distinctions' (Jünemann, Fromm & Scherer, p.5) can be profound, in that 'when categorised as an 'illegal' person, for instance, a person is deprived of fundamental rights' (p.5). Anderson (2015) contends that the:

> citizen/non-citizen binary underpins the justificatory logic that
> immigration controls on non-citizens are necessary in order to protect and
> prioritise citizens (p.43).

The non-citizen then is used to re-produce a myth of full citizenship (Cohen, 2014, p.12), a myth upon which migrants are simultaneously played off against (Anderson, 2015, p.47). Khosravi (2007) alludes to this myth when discussing his

position as a 'quasi-citizen' (p.332), whose membership to the sovereign body 'is situational, conditional and unconfirmed' (p.332), and who is, when stripped of those rights 'not expelled by the border, they are forced to *be* border' (p.333).

What these categories do when translated out of legal and scholarly frameworks and into public discourses is that they imply 'one category rather than another are somehow more 'deserving' (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017, p.13); in turn creating another category that is simultaneously reinforced by UK asylum policy (Sales, 2002, p.456). Consequently, this emboldens the already morally problematic presumption that the majority of those seeking asylum are 'bogus' (p.464) and places all *other* forced migrants into spaces of everyday discrimination via the implication that they are underserving or transgressive. Consequently, these 'dominant knowledges shape human life by naturalizing and normalizing the construction of social identities and norms' (Seidman, 2012, p.192), which then become the basis of lived realities. Anderson (2015) raises this issue in her interrogation of the way class and migration are played off against each other in public discourse:

> [i]n public debate the migrant tends to be strongly imagined as the global poor: not the football star but the person who cleans his house. There is a certain self-fulfilling prophecy about migrants being in the poorest jobs – for when foreigners are in well-paid jobs they are no longer 'migrants' (p.44).

Through these practices the perception of what a migrant is or can be - and even more so a 'refugee' - becomes narrower and narrower, not just legally but imaginatively. With this the idea of an 'authentic' or 'real' refugee becomes built around the notion of 'a single, essential, transhistorical refugee condition' (Malkki, 1995, p.511), which in turn leads to a 'tendency, then, to proceed as if refugees all shared a common condition or nature' (p.511).

Individuals encountering the overlapping, yet essentialising definitions and norms contained within 'refugeeness' respond by re-configuring notions of their own self-identity (Dobson, 2004, p.27), or loss thereof, as they settle or seek to settle in new locations. This can be seen in Crawley and Skleparis's research (2017), following Zetter, where they argue that the international and

bureaucratic practices defining and re-defining certain forms of migration is leading to people coming 'to realise the need to narrate their stories in a particular way to fit the existing policy and legal categories' (p.3). In a global context where 'claiming the refugee label is no longer a right but a prized status and expensive commodity' (Zetter, 2007, p.188), these dominant knowledge forms lead people towards a place whereby their personal story becomes their currency. Once again, we are reminded of the performative nature of being or rejecting the label of 'refugee' so starkly illuminated by Arendt.

The growing recognition of an essentialist reading of the 'refugee' (Malkki, 1995) has pushed scholars to grapple with the 'reduction of refugees to corporeality' (Suzuki, 2016, p.2). A perception that Suzuki suggests:

> diminishes and neglects refugees' agency through acts of resistance and subversion (Kibreab 2004, Peteet 200), it over emphasises the power and reach of the sovereign (Butler and Spivak, 2007), and that there are multiple ways of conceiving the political (Turner 2005; Rygiel 2012; Redclift 2013) (p.2).

In response, these enactments of agency, and the acts of resistance both individual and collective have become the subject of significant study. Theorists and cultural critics are seeking to upend or decentre the presumed precarity (Butler, 2009, ii) of refugees by documenting, analysing and creating new forms of knowledge out of border crossings (Khosravi, 2007), camps (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016) protests (Erensu, 2016), artistic activism (Bhijmi, 2016a) campaigns (Turner, 2016), selfies (Risam, 2018) and the work of community organisations (Piacentini, 2012). The scholarly trend is undergoing a shift from discourses of vulnerability to discourses of resilience, resistance and representation. It has been through this widening of analysis, and 'the contestation of marginalisation' (Turner, 2016, p.151), that the academy has begun to re-focus its lens on 'refugeenees'. The 'asylum seeker' is increasingly being represented as an 'equal citizen included within the social body' (p.151), even if within legal terms this identification feels further away than ever.

A reliance upon individual and community resilience has, however, been fiercely contested – with literature suggesting that the discourse 'overlooks conflicts

over resources and the importance of power asymmetries' (Brown, 2014, p.109). For some, it is even being read as a means through which neoliberal and conservative values are being reinforced (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012). As with the role of shame, these readings of resilience risk placing the responsibility of 'refugeeness' on refugees themselves – on individual capacity to be resilient, to adapt and survive. This diverts attention away from the structural realities which induce a state of 'refugeeness' (Mulvey, 2015). However, DeVerteuil and Golubchikov (2016) argue that this critical position undermines the 'emancipatory potential' (p.145) of resilience and compounds the 'the fiction of the all-embracing nature of neo-liberalism' (p.145). Instead they suggest the concept undergo, 'not just its deconstruction but also a reconstruction along critical lines' (p.145). One that leads them to the concept of critical resilience, a 'heterogeneous de-neo-liberalized reading of resilience' that is based upon the potential for resilience to sustain alternative practices, resist passivity and underpin survival which can lead to 'more obviously transformative action such as resistance' (p.146).

It is this approach to recognising the potential of, not just individual, but community and collective resilience, where a re-imagining or reorientation of what can be understood from an intellectual engagement with 'refugeeness' can make a difference. As Malkki has it, 'refugeeness' is not a fixed state and it is not a state of being that can be defined simply in legal, philosophical, symbolic or metaphorical terms. It can and must constantly be re-imagined.

Integration

Alongside the figure of the 'refugee', migration has increasingly been positioned as posing a threat to 'the sovereignty of states' (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014, p.5). So much so that across the twentieth and twenty-first century political and academic thinking in the field (from the perspective of the Global North) has been directed towards developing theories for understanding, and strategies for managing the existence of 'the resulting ethnic and racial diversity' (p.1), as well as contrasting theories that challenge the need for such management.

The first major manifestation of these ideas can be understood as assimilation, a model based upon 'the acceptance by immigrants of a way of life typical of the receiving community' (Johnston, 1969, p.1). The expectation is for private and public 'attitudes, beliefs and values' to eventually mirror those of majority society (p.2). Whilst scholars have argued the early vision for assimilation was 'to encourage the emergence of a new mainstream' (Glick & Park, 2016, p.506), it is widely acknowledged that policy focus sought to 'assimilate people against their will' (Brubaker, 2001, p.534). The most critical interrogations interpret it as a practice of cultural domination that demands migrants eradicate their difference 'while at the same time segregating them and marginalising them' (Vasta, 1993, p.223). Viewed through this lens, assimilation looks more like the imperial and violent practices of Colonialism (Ness & Cope, 2016).

In the wake of WWII, 'in reaction to the extremes of nationalism, fascism and the suppression and expulsion of minorities,' contemporary thinkers and practitioners in the UK, in the main, came to reject assimilation (Bosswick & Heckmann, 2006, p.4) seeing it as something that 'rarely worked' (Brubaker, 2001, p.534). Vasta (1993) maintains that this rejection was less to do with an acknowledgement of the structural racism embedded within assimilatory approaches, and more to do with a fear that the policies had in fact 'reinforced non-assimilation' (p.210) by triggering resistance from the communities it was supposed to control.

From the 1970s onwards critics began to develop and defend new conceptualisations for how migrating individuals and communities could be 'incorporated into host societies' (Rodríguez-García, 2010, p. 253).With a focus on living within 'pluralistic understandings of persisting diversity' (Brubaker, 2001, p.531) the concept of multiculturalism emerged. This brought with it a scholarly acceptance that so-called minority cultures are to be celebrated and retained (Vasta, 1993, p.211) and that cultural traditions have a right to be protected. While Bhabha (1996) asserts that the concept has become a 'portmanteau term for anything from minority discourse to postcolonial critique'

(p.3), Parekh (1997) argues that multiculturalism has brought a material change to society. In that marginalised groups no longer accept a 'subordinate status' being thrust upon them, and that individuals and groups have moulded multiculturalism through their demand for 'public recognition and respect for their self-chosen ways of life' (p.54).

Taylor (1994) argues that fundamental to a functioning multicultural society is equality: equal dignity and equal respect. Modood (2005), expands upon this position by advocating for a greater emphasis to be placed upon the latter, for it is there where 'the politics of recognition' has met most resistance within the UK. This is, Modood contends, because it involves a multiplicity of cultures, including 'their values, their norms, and voice' being part of structuring 'the public sphere' (p.64). Simply, it involves so-called minority cultures taking up more public space, demanding representation and refusing to have their 'identities privatised' (p.65). Modood contends that it is this aspect of multiculturalism that creates tension for secular liberalism because it has focused on 'advocating tolerance, rather than equal social positioning or representation' (p.65), or in fact the protection of rights. Rodríguez-García (2010) suggests that the multicultural structure in the UK can be understood through Grillo's theoretical framework (2007) as a form of 'weak' multiculturalism. With scholars like Vasta (2010), and Anthias (2011), arguing that these shortcomings of multiculturalism – or 'multiculturalisms' (p.206) – are more to do with limitations built into the concept itself, which 'treats culture as a commodity or a normative system which is statically present and is 'possessed' by people from specific national or territorial regions' (p.205).

Conversely, other critics of multiculturalism contend that the concept implies that immigrants are '*products* of culture' who are 'unable to exercise individual judgement (Wikan, 2002, p.81), whilst others critique its fixation on 'groupism' (Brubaka, 2002). What runs through these critiques is a concern that the conflation of culture - as limited to 'language, folk traditions and cuisine' (Vasta, 1993, p.211) - with ethnicity and ethnic identity, and as such 'cannot deal adequately with the idea that migrant cultures embrace regional, class, and

gender differences' (p. 211). Whilst due acknowledgement must be given to the political, social and legal safety that this understanding of culture has provided, Anthias (2011) contends it 'underplays the political dimensions of ethnicity' as a 'a dynamic and politically inflected set of practices and struggles' which are often played out against structural inequality, and less driven by a desire to preserve culture (p.207).

Anthias reasons that the rise of intersecting understandings of self, culture and inequalities championed by black feminists like hooks (1981), as well as the concept of cultural fluidity advocated by cultural theorists like Hall (1992), has begun to break down this rigid view. These explorations attest to taking a more intersectional approach; acknowledging the importance of locality, race, gendered and generational experience, socio-economic status, as well as social capital and educational experience.

Moreover, many scholars have sought to move beyond a reliance upon multiculturalism to understand contemporary pluralistic society. This has been marked as a 'shift from a bounded and fixed understanding of culture and communities to one that assumes fluidity and unboundedness' (Brettell, 2016, p.41). It has taken the form of research around concepts such as transnationalism (Vertovec, 2006), flexible citizenship (Ong, 1999), as well as denationalised understandings of citizenship and pluralist living (Sassen, 2002). It includes the advocacy of forms of interculturalism that, for instance, value negotiation and conflict-resolution predicated on 'the possibility of mutual criticism between groups and mutual learning across difference' (Rodríguez-García, 2010, p.261), as well as calls for intercultural dialogue to be re-politicised in light of 'the creeping conditions of precarity' that define contemporary globalisation (Phipps, 2014, p.108).

Simultaneous to the expansion in scholarly thought around pluralism, political debates have fiercely contested multiculturalism. Mainstream discourses in the late 1990s and into the twenty-first century have been marked by a fear

mirroring those associated with assimilation's failure, a fear 'that immigrants are failing to integrate, deliberately maintaining distinct cultures and religions, and have become a threat to security and social cohesion' (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014, p.5). As such, the political discourse led by the New Labour Government, moved away from multiculturalism towards a drive for social cohesion, with a shared or 'common value system' (Mulvey, 2010, p.451). This shift in discourse, Mulvey argues, began to sound like a return to the language of assimilation (Worley, 2005) and the control of difference (Vasta, 2010). In turn this has given way to a retreat, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, towards more rigid forms of inclusion and exclusion throughout the UK.

It is within this contextual landscape of social cohesion, that integration emerged as a popular concept. Initially critiqued for being chaotic, or 'individualized, contested and contextual' (Robinson, 1998, in Ager & Strang, 2008, p.167), in 2002 the UK Home Office commissioned a study to establish Indicators of Integration. Ager and Strang, the scholars who led the research, set out to 'improve understanding of what refugee integration actually means' (Ager & Strang, 2004, p.2). The framework that emerged offered up 'normative understandings of integration' (2008, p.169), so as to be implementable at a policy level.

The framework has gone on to be a ubiquitous force within the UK and internationally, as well as prompting a surge of critical scholarly discourse. In 2019 the Home Office published an updated framework, which has responded to this 'growing body of research and expertise' (Ndofor-Tah et al, 2019, p.13). Significantly, the framework now expands beyond refugee integration, being put forward as a framework that 'can contribute to the measurement of the experiences of any group of people whose integration into communities or society is of concern' (p.13).

The Home Office framework is made up of 14 domains categorised under four umbrella themes:

- *Means & Markers* containing Work, Housing, Education, Health & Social Care, and Leisure;
- *Social Connections* involving Social Bridges, Social Bonds and Social Links;
- *Facilitators* being Language & Communication, Culture, Digital Skills, Safety and Stability;
- *Foundation* with Rights & Responsibilities underpinning all of the above.

Each of the domains is identified as playing a significant role in individuals and communities achieving integration, with some operating as public as well as structural indicators and others functioning on a more personal or individual level (p 6). Fundamentally these domains are dialogical - interacting with one another at different points for different people. Integration cannot happen as a 'uniform and pre-ordained process as these cannot match all journeys' (Da Lomba, 2010, p.418). The multi-dimensional nature of these processes (Favell, 1998 in Da Lomba, 2010) needs to be flexible and possible to enter into, from a variety of points, and any policy responses to Ager and Strang's framework need to acknowledge the importance of personal and local connections and relationships.

Integration cannot happen in isolation and so an individual's interaction with structural and institutional policies and practices will be of fundamental importance (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002). This was initially complemented by the understanding that integration required a 'two-way' approach predicated on a 'process of mutual accommodation' (Ager & Strong, 2008, p.177). In reality though critics argue this approach operated 'as a smokescreen' for a one-way process where 'it is immigrants who have to integrate (Vasta, 2010, p.509), and that ultimately the mark of integration is entirely contingent upon respecting and upholding *established norms*. If these are seen to be flouted, Khosravi (2009) contends, individuals become seen as 'dangers to the well-being of the social body' (p.40). In the 2019 edition references to a two-way approach have been replaced by calls for the framework to be understood as 'multi-directional' (p.11), and for integration to involve 'adjustments by everyone in society' (p.11).

Despite its wide acceptance at a policy and social level, the framework and surrounding concept faces ongoing critical interrogation. Some argue it marks a retreat from intercultural and multicultural practices, pacifying the fears of those concerned that pluralism has 'gone too far' (McPherson, 2015, p.551). And whilst Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec (2002) cautioned early on against the creation of a binary definition of successful or unsuccessful integration, the 2019 report offers itself up as helping to show:

> 'how practitioners might measure what **good looks like** in relation to measuring progress towards integration over time' (p.9) [their formatting].

Integration discourse in this context risks playing a role in constructing the image of the *ideal* or *model* integrator, especially in light of criticism that implementations of the framework have been said to neglect to adopt a 'polycentric' approach to integration policy (Mulvey, 2015, p.363). The consequence of this being that communities or individuals - rather than policies or strategies - become held responsible for a perceived lack of integration (p.363). Furthermore, with a large percentage of individuals seeking asylum being integrated into poverty, amidst a high surveillance culture increasingly suspicious of outsiders, and the ever-present risk of indefinite detention, there is a critical concern about what kind of society individuals and families trying to settle in the UK are being expected to integrate into (Mulvey, 2013, p.134). As one of its harshest critics Vasta (2010) suggests that 'without a strong drive for equality, which includes tackling racism', as well presumably as other forms of injustice including poverty, 'solidarity born from any form of integration will be weak' (p.509).

The concept's commitment to national citizenship as a 'bedrock to the integration of any individual in society' (p.18, 2019) can also be critiqued. It underestimates the prevalence of transnationalism (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002, p.5): a mode of being that sees people fostering 'social and economic relationships in two or more societies at once' (p.5), as well as the impact of traversing cultures at local levels. Moreover, whilst the framework

positions citizenship as an access point to rights, its commitment to nationhood places the conceptualisation of integration firmly within a foundation that is predicated on exclusionary lines (McPherson, 2015). Nowhere in the work does the framework name or advocate for specific rights that must be available to refugees. So, whilst there is an assumed benchmark for fair treatment, theoretically there is scope within this framework to allow for nation-states to promote integration whilst simultaneously rendering refugees - and since 2019 migrants more generally - excluded from both political and social forms of citizenship, a position that the UK currently holds (Mulvey, 2010).

When there are two nations at play within one site - as there are for those seeking asylum within Scotland within the UK - the idea of citizenship itself is thrown into question, and the notion of national responsibility becomes instead a space of contention. And it is within this space of contention where the complexity at the heart of lived practices integration discourse lies. Integration is about negotiating, responding and operating around existing forms, many of which are shaped by historical and ongoing discriminatory practices (Khosravi, 2012).

Brettell (2016) argues that the increased interest in the multifarious forms that citizenship can take, 'demonstrates the significance of anthropological theorizing' (p.52) on formulations of pluralistic living. She contends that it has had particular impact in relation to understanding how citizenship 'is practiced as part of every-day lived experience' (p.52). It is in every-day lived experience where I have located concepts that have proved most pertinent to my own research, and not just every-day forms, but localised forms, which focus less on border-crossing and more on the maintenance of multiple forms of the self within one locale, and how these multiplicities exist alongside one another. Though the policy frame surrounding my work has remained that of integration due to its dominance within Scottish discourse, and has taken influence from multicultural, intercultural, and transnational discourse, my theoretical analysis around the findings within my research has relied most heavily upon localised and everyday formulations.

Yuval-Davis' work on emotional practices of belonging, as well as the manifestations of projects of political belonging (2007 & 2016) have influenced my thinking in relation to the interplay between individual and community experiences. Askins' (2015) theorising on 'the spatialities of interethnic encounters' through the lens of a 'transformative politics of encounter' (p.471) has similarly assisted in framing some of the interactions encountered throughout my research process. Both theorists explore the place of care within pluralistic encounters, a feature of interactions I witnessed regularly throughout my work, and Gilroy's conceptions of 'diaspora-consciousness' (1994) and 'conviviality' within multicultural living (2005) have strengthened these explorations by offering a more explicitly politicised dimension to living with difference (Shire, 2008, p.15). I have taken influence from Vasta's work on social solidarity (2010), one that can work across differences and is 'inclusionary without being nationalistic or based on homogeneity' (p.509). In addition, hooks' work on the 'location of possibility' (1994), and Stuart Hall's theories of the produced nature of identity (1994) have offered up frames through which to view multicultural encounters, as well as individual and community identity constructs.

Conclusion

This first chapter has provided an insight into the complex, contradictory and rich political and scholarly discourses circulating around my research. It has positioned the macro canvas as a site of increased and hardening borders and presented the UK and Scotland as nations (re)formulating themselves around their relationship to migration. I examined the ways in which 'refugeeness' is understood and contested across disciplines, and explored how it intersects with a categorical fetishism, which has given way to myth-building around full and non-citizenship. In turn, I offered insights into the discourses seeking to understand and manage diversity. With a critical focus on integration I acknowledged the crossovers and tensions between scholarly theory and policy implementation, before making space for a consideration of alternative and more localised forms of multicultural and intercultural dynamics.

What I examined in this chapter is by no means every detail of the landscape upon which a 'New Scot' might construct their new self-portrait. It would be unrealistic, and reductive to try to do so. Instead, the intention here has been to provide an insight into some of the contours upon which lines of a portrait might be drawn, which brings us again to the image of 'the refugee'. Malik (2017) argues that 'if we want integration, then we need representation'. And so, it is at this point that I turn my attention to another aspect of this particular canvas: the field of refugee arts.

"I need my voice I am shouting"
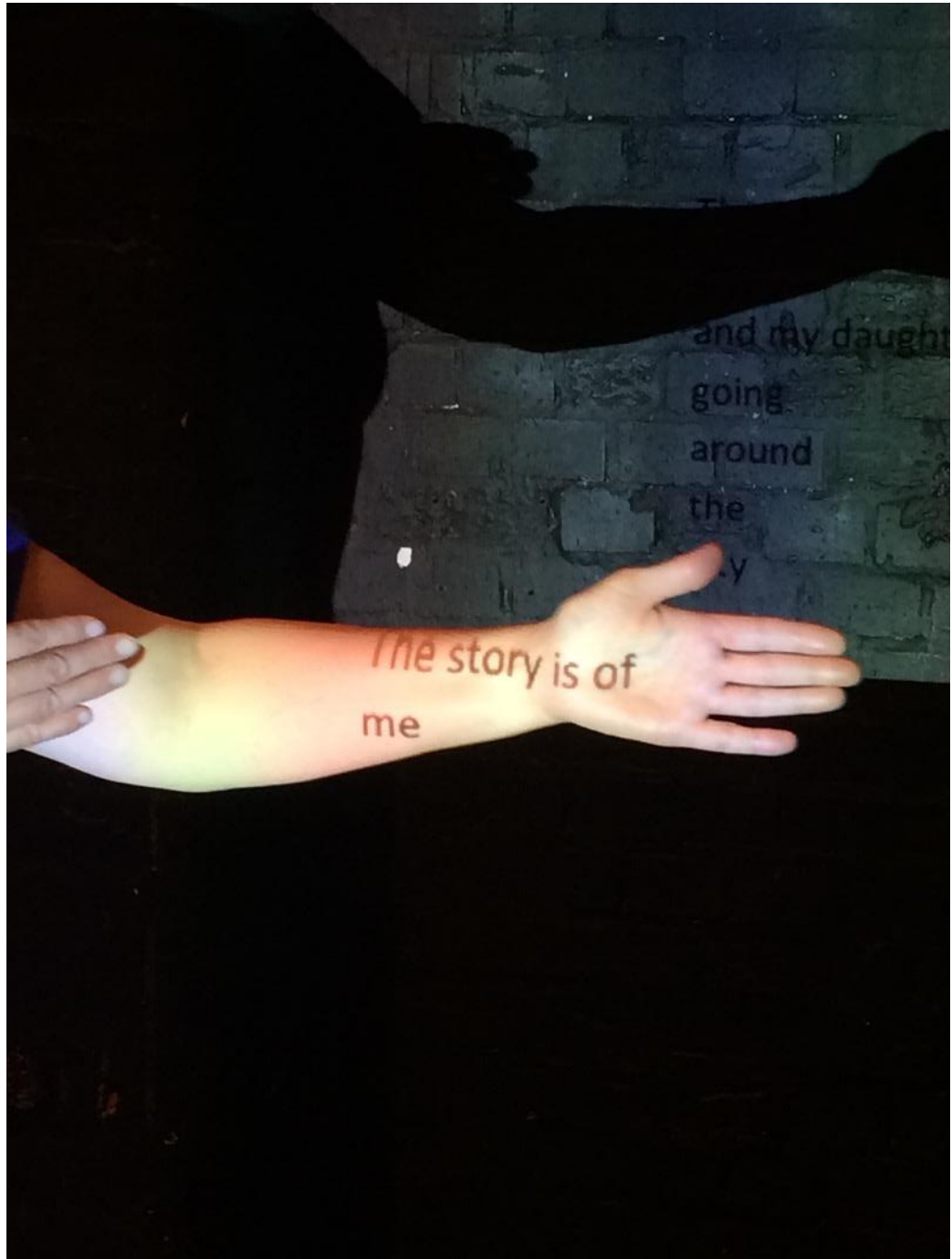
Image 3: Share My Table – projecting stories on to our bodies

II   The Arts

Introduction

The arts sector is perpetually representing, misrepresenting and re-imagining the complex narratives of people's experiences of forced displacement. It is yet another contributing part of the contextual canvas for 'New Scots' in Glasgow. This chapter's function therefore is two-fold. It offers a scholarly and thematic frame to the research, and it works to offer an insight into the shifting representational canvas upon which individual and community (re)construction takes place.

Over the course of the last thirty years reflections upon and the documentation of the considerable and diverse artistic work with, by, for and about refugees has gone from being 'scattered and sometimes hard to find' (Balfour, 2013a, p.xxi), to forming an increasingly divergent field of study. In particular 'work on the intersections between performance and asylum has proliferated' (Cox and Wake, 2018, p.141) over the last decade.

Due to the site and nature of my doctoral inquiry, throughout this chapter I deliberately focus on literature concerned - in the main – with work coming out of the Global North. Furthermore, my concern is with arts practice that could be categorised as participatory arts, or performance work *with* refugee individuals and communities. Work that is primarily led by professional artists and producers, who may or may not have their own experience of forced displacement. Some of the key representational issues that are relevant to my study, do however cross over with artistic work being created *about* the figure of the 'refugee'. So much so that the first section of this chapter is dedicated to an analysis of that arena of work before moving on to an analysis of the discourses surrounding participatory arts.

I complete this chapter by offering an insight into how the arts and culture more broadly have entered into the Scottish integration policy landscape, and the way in which the arts with, by and for refugees has manifested in Glasgow to date.

Key themes emerging from an interdisciplinary field

The existing literature across refugee arts explores a broad range of artforms and styles, with theatre and performance occupying a central focus. This includes staged drama (Burvill, 2008; Cox, 2008, 2012 & 2014; Cummings, 2016; Donald, 2018; Fragkou, 2015; Hazou, 2018; Laera, 2011; Jeffers 2012; Kurahashi, 2013; Schwartz, 2016), autobiographical performance (Nicholson, 2014; Hazou 2008; Gilbert & Lo, 2007), playback (Dennis, 2008 & 2013) and verbatim (Bhimji, 2016a, Burvill, 2013; Jeffers, 2008; Cox & Zaroulia, 2016; Oberkrome, 2018; Summerskill, 2018; Wake, 2008, 2013, 2014; Wilson, 2013). The field also concerns itself with literature (Woolley, 2014), drawing (Bell & McCormack, 2018) dance (McMahon, 2013), as well as photography (Balfour, 2013b, Belvis Pons, 2018; Bachelet & Jeffrey, 2019; Cox, 2017; Myers, 2016; Nedeljkovic, 2018) poetry and sound (Evans, 2016), television and film (Romeyn, 2016; Zaroulia, 2018), music (Hughes, 2016; Lenette & Procopis, 2016; Lenette, Weston, Wise, Sunderland & Bristed, 2016), sculpture and installation (Balfour, 2013b; Hughes, 2018, Zaroulia, 2018).

The literature also extends its lens across multiple sites including creative work in schools (Khan, 2008), within refugee camps and sites of ongoing conflict (Wickstrom, 2012; Hazou, 2013; Conquergood, 1988; Sliep, Weingarten & Gilbert, 2013; Yoxall, 2018, Thompson, 2011) public art and festivals (Jeffers, 2012), as well as artistic interventions in public or non-artistic spaces (Bhimji, 2016b; Cox & Zaroulia, 2016; Cox, 2017; Lewicki, 2016; Marschall, 2018; Price, 2018). In these spaces creative actions become explicitly performative; presented to draw attention to the plight of those seeking refuge, or unambiguously seeking to challenge the authorities responsible for that plight. The arts have been considered in relation to language learning (Smith, 2012) and in the context of activism as performance (Anderson & Menon, 2009; Balfour & Woodrow, 2013; Jeffers, 2012; Richards, 2005; Soguk, 2006, Walsh, 2016).

The expansion of this interdisciplinary field, as well as the attention being paid to it - specifically in Europe (Cox & Wake, 2018) - coincides with a burgeoning interest and concern about global migration trends within the Global North. The critical dialogue surrounding the work is fraught with contradictions and ethical complexities (Balfour, 2013a). It has been championed as a space to search for 'creative' and 'humane solutions' to 'the unprecedented, sweeping, and systematized political and economic violence of the 'new world order' (Sellars, 2014, xii). Similarly, theatre has been positioned as a site where audiences can be encouraged to consider refugees 'as new co-members of a national community' (Cox, 2014, p.47), and as spaces where the artistic content can 'phenomenalise the political' (Garner, 1994 in Hazou, 2008, p.185). It has also been situated as a space for 'performative agency' and where the 'formation of political identities' (Bhimji, 2016a, p.83) can be worked out. Jeffers (2012) identifies the thread running through it as its function as 'a tool for education and awareness-raising about refugees in ways that have opened up possibilities for empathy, solidarity, and even political action' (p.43).

Scholars caution however, against creating a mythology round this field (Balfour & Woodrow, 2013), and due recognition must be given to the fact that artistic projects are rooted in a context whereby narratives of trauma and exceptionalism dominate the framing of refugee experience (p.28). As such regardless of the thematic or stylistic focus of the work 'the testimonies/life stories/narratives of refugees are framed and defined before a word is spoken or a gesture made' (p.28). Within the majority of 'theatricalized refugee narratives', this has given rise to 'a victimhood-hope dialectic' (Cox, 2012, p.118). Whereby the prevailing image of refugees presented to audiences are ones of victims, desperate to escape and yet determined to survive. Cox argues that this work is often received by critics as performing 'an uplifting trajectory' (p.128) which in turn allows the horror of the geopolitical realities to be mediated through individuals to become what she describes as hope becoming 'an emotional commodity' (p.128).

Dennis (2008) too warns that whilst the field 'shores up the promise of mutual understanding and the redemptive power of empathy' (p.212) it is often in danger of confining the 'refugee subject' into a 'particular conception of representation' (p.212). This confinement has resulted at times in the industry wilfully 'ignoring or downplaying the complexities involved' (Jeffers, 2012, p.44) in individual experiences, as well as the role of the immigration systems producing such conditions. Jeffers roots this in what she refers to as the 'bureaucratic performance' (p.13) that underpins all interactions between those categorised as refugees and the authorities they interact with. This, Jeffers argues, involves being 'compelled to produce' a story that does enough to 'convince the authorities of their right to stay' (p.13). The necessity to convince often forces individuals, Jeffers argues, to perform the role of a victim, in order to combat the climate 'where all asylum seekers are assumed to be lying unless they can prove otherwise' (Jeffers, 2008, p.218). They must behave in a certain way, emote in a certain way, tell their *convincing* story in a certain way. They must present 'the appropriate qualities associated with 'refugeeness'' (Nyers, 2006, p.45).

Bureaucratic performance extends well beyond immigration spaces and officials, to anywhere where 'refugeeness' is a focal point. In particular, it has often been a fundamental part of how refugee advocacy organisations attempt to counteract 'the negative semantic slide of the term *asylum seeker* before it becomes synonymous with illegal immigrant' (Jeffers, 2008, p.219). In doing so a *bureaucratic performance* moves beyond the need for an individual to convince officials or the public, for their own sake, and instead becomes representational. It becomes about embodying:

> the refugee subject as a humanitarian subject worthy only of pity, a 'good' refugee who simply wants a better life for him-self (and it usually is a male figure) and his family, a hard worker with aspirations; someone, in fact, a little bit like themselves' (Jeffers, 2012, p.60).

Seen through the frame of *hard work*, this performance and these narratives – proliferating through all aspects of life – take on 'a complex cultural, political, and social currency' (Dennis, 2013, p.282). In a UK context where those seeking asylum are prohibited from employment, these performances are not merely

about defining whether a person is *worthy of pity*. They are also 'the path by which one might obtain monetary currency' (Cummings, 2016, p.168): in that your story will either be believed and, in theory, you will be invited to come and contribute, or you will be disbelieved and your potential *worth* rendered undesirable.

What has happened in an arts context, Jeffers argues, is that, in an attempt to circumnavigate any negative perceptions, the performing arts sector in particular has shied away from presenting complicated narratives or complex representations. Instead utilising forms of *bureaucratic performance*, and in doing so, constructing the archetype of the 'endearing refugee' (Jeffers, 2012, p.44). This fictional person is presented as suitably gifted, traumatised, vulnerable, resilient, hopeful and always grateful of the support offered to them. Transgressions, 'resistance and resourcefulness' (p.46) are, she argues, strategically avoided within the narrative of the *endearing refugee*. She states 'practitioners tread a precarious line between producing validation, on the one hand, and victimhood, on the other' (p.143), which in turn, contributes to, and compounds the good/bad, deserving/undeserving binary (Sales, 2002) that dominates much media coverage on migration.

Cox (2014) argues that a key concern within the field of refugee arts ought to be about 'who does the imagining' (p.5); who controls the narrative of the mainstream work which is circulating alongside media and political imaginings of 'foreignness' (p.3). Cox describes this as considering 'the politics of position' (p.22) involved in representation, and contends that:

> there can be different interests at work when 'outsiders' are written and performed into being by 'insiders', as contrasted with 'outsiders' enacting some kind of self-representation (p.22).

In asking these questions, Cox draws attention to how power affects opportunities for participation especially in relation to authorship and directorship.

In a challenging discussion on empathic economies within refugee performance Cummings (2016) connects this idea with the role of the audience. She argues that in much fictional work within the field (often written by Cox's 'insiders'):

> the audience's empathy is the goal of the process, and where stories told in the theatre are seen as having political or humanitarian "currency". In this model, the audience is figured as having the authority to "give" personhood, recognition, and healing in much the same way that government officials in the asylum process possess the authority to "give" refugee status and residency (p.161).

These fictional worlds, then, work to place the audience in positions of power, or reinforce their existing positions of power by invoking a need for their understanding. Though not necessarily in search of the same truths that an immigration official might require through an institutional *bureaucratic performance*, this focus on the need for an audience to be sufficiently moved determines the type of story or narrative that can be told, and contains it within the discourse of a 'reliance on credibility' (p.172). Furthermore, with the emancipatory or redemptive potential of disclosing one's story operating as recurring narrative thread throughout refugee representation, the audience is reassured 'that when we watch, read, or otherwise witness stories of suffering, we become vehicles for the sufferer's renewal' (p.176). This relationship places the audience in a comfortable position of empathetic alliance, that negates the need to interrogate the geo-political picture and the audience members' own complicity within that.

These critical conversations become most fraught when analysing the popular use of documentary theatre, or verbatim transcripts within performance-based work. The popularity of this practice, Jeffers suggests, is underpinned first by a need to authenticate the narratives being presented, and secondly by a desire from artists involved (often artists with no experience of forced displacement themselves) the authority to present on such a subject (2012 p.49). While Balfour and Woodrow (2013) recognise that work of this type 'is often part of an effort to empower refugees through the sharing of the subaltern experiences with a wider audience' (p.18) Evans (2013) refers to the use of real life testimony, whether in performance, audio or film, as 'the fetish of the verbatim' (Evans in Wilson, 2013, p.122). Wilson (2013) expands upon this critique,

suggesting that the kind of performance work that relies upon verbatim encourages an audience to consume these narratives, but not necessarily to critically engage, and in doing so can 'provoke an unintended voyeurism' (p.122). In turn 'the refugee/s' on stage - or being presented in artistic form – are presented as the object of scrutiny within art, which ultimately 'undermines the goals of the performance' (p.122).

In reaching for emotional credibility, paradoxically these stories potentially essentialise and universalise the experience of the refugee and in doing risk presenting narratives that 'de-historicise, de-personalise and de-politicise their being' (Suzuki, 2016, p.1). Furthermore, Danewid (2017) argues that a 'focus on the ontological condition of vulnerability' (p.1683) across migration discourse more broadly, is leading to an 'erasure of history, because it substitutes abstract humanity for historical humanity' (p.1683). In turn, Danewid suggests this focus leads to a rejection of political responsibility, and in doing so:

> these interventions not only transform the migrant into a predetermined universalised figure in need of Europe's help and hospitality, they also reproduce a narrative of European goodness and benevolence (p.1682)

Viewed through Suzuki and Danewid's critical frame, the audience can leave feeling they have fulfilled an important, or vital role: that because there has been an 'exchange of stories for empathy, personhood and healing' (Cummings, p.178) their work as Europeans has been done. 'At least, this is a story we may tell ourselves' (p.178).

Refugee arts within a participatory context

The stories being told, and the stories that audiences tell themselves in response to what they have heard remains of critical importance when considering arts practice within a participatory context. In this field the work being created is under additional pressure to be 'transformational, resilient and empowering' in response to the climate of fear generated by mainstream and far-right depictions of those forced to flee (Phipps, 2017, p.15).

This need to transform can be seen within a major section of refugee

participatory work, which has and continues to take place within Refugee Camps often situated in African countries and the Middle East. The literature on this work focuses primarily on the therapeutic and healing power of art and ritualised narrative (Kiruthu, 2014; Dokter, 1998; Kalmanowitz & Llyod, 2005; Mollica, 2008; Musonye, 2011), with Conquergood (1988) contending that 'through performance flexibility' individuals 'can play with new identities, new strategies for adaptation and survival' (p.180). Since 2015 there has been a rise in media attention of art projects happening within Refugee Camps, and they are often presented as an important part of the ways in which NGOs, typified by UNHCR, interact with the lives of those in temporary and long-standing refugee camps (Parater, 2015).

There is also a growing trend for some of this work to be exported, and exhibited both within cultural venues, public spaces and in political arenas across the globe. In 2015 and 2016 the UNHCR supported the work of the photographer Reza, who worked with Syrian refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan, to exhibit his photographs on the banks of the River Seine. They have also gone on to tour a set of UNHCR tents which were painted by refugees in Jordan, and in 2016 *The Queens of Syria* toured the UK and other parts of Europe, opening at the Young Vic Theatre in London with the support of the British Council.

Salverson (1999) expressed her concerns about an emerging trend in the field of refugee performance - that of an 'aesthetic of injury' (p.35); one which positions the 'refugee' storyteller in the role of the injured. This approach to creativity within participatory settings not only defines the terms by which participating individuals will engage or contribute before any creative work has even begun, at the other end of a process it limits the choices an audience has for relating to the work by presenting 'an uncomplicated portrayal of victims and heroes' that can result in a position of voyeuristic burden (Salverson, 1999, p.35). Following this work Edmondson (2005) draws attention to how the creative fascination with injury and trauma, has moved beyond it being staged to activate humanitarian concerns and has escalated into to being a marketable product that NGOs and charities utilise in order to, in the instance she analyses, secure funding. Consequently, Otiende (2019) enquires:

> [t]hink about the power that organisation holds over this victim, and then think about consent. Think about whether that victim, that survivor, would actually be able to give proper consent about telling their stories? (2019)

In challenging the relationship between survivor and NGO Otiende draws attention to the risk of perpetrating a form of narrative exploitation. Jeffers suggests that when associated with arts projects this search for 'the 'right' kind of refugee story' (2012, p.46) is often more about securing resources for a producing organisation (p.46), rather than necessarily the empowerment or agency of those involved.

Thompson contends (2011) that these trends have emerged through the coupling of the applied arts 'with communities that have suffered crisis or violence' and 'the field of trauma studies' (p.9). Thompson problematises this relationship, first by drawing together a critique of the development of trauma studies itself, which was initially developed in the USA with veterans of war and inappropriately universally applied. It has since been understood and applied in *trauma relief* contexts, almost generically regardless of cultural, historical or political context. Subsequently he argues that this framework for understanding trauma has 'led to the prescription of 'telling one's story' as the preferred method and necessary precondition for 'relief', 'liberation' or 'healing'' (p.45). In turn, this has fuelled a fixation from the Global North on speaking as healing and recovery which ultimately disregards other forms and methods of dealing with one's experiences, and so, he argues, the space for silence or other culturally-specific practices of expression have been eliminated or at least treated as suspicious (p.67). What may have started as 'the *imperative within* the survivor' (p.57) in some contexts, has shifted, through the reinforcement of trauma literature, to being 'an *imperative without*' (p.57) in all contexts. And so, what Thompson refers to as an 'imperative to tell' (p.56) manifests with professionals being required to excavate or draw out people's stories whether they might want it or not.

This has led to an 'uncritical acceptance of certain models of practice that are based on theories of trauma and narrative recall' (p.9), dominating the aesthetic

of participatory practice in the Global North 'that claim they are focused on change' (p.5). As well as pointing towards a troubling relationship between applied arts practice and 'the problem of the globalisation of trauma studies approach' (p.64), this reliance on the 'testifier and witness model' (p.62) Thompson contends, limits the scope of artistic potential within these projects by ascribing to a set of artistic hierarchies which foreground testimony and narrative-based stories. In turn forgetting to respond to 'what forms of cultural expression are already in place' (p.72).

In the context of refugee arts, artists, producers and projects could then be accused of creating conditions where individuals feel '*they must* speak' (p.59), with the focus on suffering, on victimhood, and on vulnerability drawing a deep connection to its companion 'poverty porn'. This sees individuals and communities experiencing poverty sensationalised and fetishised, in the name of a so-called concern for 'the plight of poor' (Boo, 2007 in Lemke, 2010, p.101). As Otiende described above, the approach shared within these practices neglect to engage in a critical analysis of power. Instead it serves to compound existing imbalances and processes embedded within the 'commodification of Otherness' (hooks, 1992, p.21), that further objectify the so-called stranger (Ahmed, 2000). The danger being that this approach positions the urge of the (often) white artist as more urgent than the well-being, dignity and agency of the individual or communities' stories being portrayed.

Thompson's response to these practices is to make a call for greater attention to be paid on the aesthetic and affective resources found within participatory arts projects (2011). Whereby the focus is less on developing art for *effect* and more to do with understanding processes and celebrating - advocating for - a greater push for the creation of beautiful experiences (p.11). Furthermore, the expansion of critical discourse surrounding refugee narratives has given rise to a growing number of projects, productions and artworks that are creating work in direct opposition to the trends described above[1]. This turn in attention, is most succinctly articulated by the Australian organisation RISE who published a 10-

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[1] To name but a few: Phosphorus theatre, Psychedelight theatre, Asylum Archives, Borderline Offensive

point document for artists with no lived experience of being a refugee to consider before embarking on work within the field₂. Much of this work is yet to be widely analysed within scholarly research, though scholars are increasingly signposting that there *is* work that has refused to defer to 'the more common strategy of staging the silenced voices of refugees' and are choosing to direct the audiences' attention towards 'the illness and violation of the body politic' (Jeffers, 2012, p.65). Cox (2015) suggests that this in turn dismantles 'the idea that audiences are entitled to be convinced, via theatricalized 'evidence'' (p.228).This is a shift in focus that is steadily re-directing attention towards 'the performativity of political apparatuses and discourses' (Cox & Wake, 2018, 143).

As such, less attention is being paid to the 'what' within an artistic response, and more upon the 'how'; the forms and processes through which 'refugeeness' are presented, re-presented and materialised. This re-directed gaze extends to greater attention being paid to the processes associated with artistic practice: trying to understand how and why artistic engagement within the context of forced displacement is being adopted by participating individuals and groups. What is the arts affording people as they seek refuge - as they 'try to regroup and salvage what is left of their lives' (Conquergood, 1988, p.180)? How can the work that happens away from any audiences be documented and understood? Balfour and Woodrow (2013) engage with Bhabha's theories of a third space, in order to make a case for artistic spaces 'to generate a new, negotiated space':

> where aesthetics and politics meet' and 'where a spatial politics of inclusion rather than exclusion that 'initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation' (Bhabha 1994:1), (Balfour & Woodrow, p.28).

Whilst Jeffers (2012) contends that artistic processes have become sites for exploring the multiplicity of the self, echoing Conquergood that 'refugees and people seeking asylum use the arts and cultural expression to experiment with new identity positions and changed locations' (p.110). Kalmanowitz (2016), expands upon this by suggesting that it is a focus on imaginative faculties that allow individuals to undertake this experimentation with the self in a new location (p.81).

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2 http://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/

The principles operating within the arts practice, as well as within artistic spaces themselves, become integral to the experience of the individuals taking part. Kalmanowitz proposes that 'empathy and acceptance were fundamental' (p.82) to how the space operated, 'this along with an emphasis on personal meaning helped to facilitate a sense of safety, which in turn opened the potential for exploration' (p. 82). This exploration in turn was harnessed and facilitated through a commitment to a range of artistic forms and modalities, as well as to the use of metaphor and symbolism, to allow the distinct needs and personalities of the participating individuals to gain critical distance from their experiences and their emotions (p.81).

This same commitment to a multi-artform approach can also act a means through which to place 'an emphasis on the maker' instead of creating work that is ultimately concerned with its audience: as such focusing on 'participants co-creating work, from their own desires, delights and inspirations' (Thompson, 2011, p.159) without the pressure to represent themselves, or prove their value to anyone. This approach arguably brings practitioners and projects closer to achieving Conquergood's (1988) contention that 'conceived of as barter, a site of exchange' (p.202), performance and the arts more generally is a key to comprehending 'how the deeply different can be deeply known without becoming any less different' (Geertz, 1983, in Conquergood, p.202).

Practitioners and participants, Cummings (2016) argues, must however, recognise the limitation of these spaces, and that the strength of the artistic process is in knowing:

> which tensions to bring into the room and which to leave out, creating a space in which difference is recognized and respected without forcing individuals to confront all the things that may divide them in order to be able to play, to dialogue, to create performance (189).

The interaction between that which occurs inside the room, and that which remains outside, has also become a point of discussion within participatory arts with refugees, in relation to the broader interplay between what might be considered the ethos of the room, versus the politics of outside.

de Smet, De Haene, Rousseau and Stalpaert (2018) interrogate this concern through an analysis of a participatory project in Berlin, which leads them to contend that there are:

> possible unforeseen counterproductive outcomes of participatory theatre projects, as broader socio-political dynamics penetrate the performative shelter and obscure the project's genuine, beneficent intentions for participation (p.242).

Calling upon Van Kerkhoven's notion of micro-dramaturgy (the rehearsal space) and macro-dramaturgy ('the theatre's social function'), the authors argue that 'mobilising refugees' agency, voice and power' (p.243) carries risks. These are risks both to individuals, in terms of the unsolicited exposure or attention it might bring to them, as well as to the way in which work within this field can be appropriated by political or social actors, who are driving 'the ongoing polarisation' across Europe, and 'undermine the audience's willingness to listen and urge it to gravitate towards reactivating hegemonic discourses of power (p.251).

Thompson similarly cautions against practitioners refusing to acknowledge the 'contextual constraints' that surround their work. He argues that to ignore 'how the work is refigured, co-opted or put in the service of diverse public discourses' (p.34) can leave the project, and those individuals involved in danger - both representationally and materially. Whilst both de Smet et al and Thompson discuss their concerns in relation to projects which became both physically and emotionally dangerous for those involved, not all participatory projects will carry such immediate risks. That said, their critical analysis extends out to the way in which arts projects are - without exception - contained by the broader social and political contexts that they are produced within.

With this view, I suggest that integration be considered a key 'social function' of arts projects by, with and for refugees. Though not always referred to specifically within scholarly discourse - instead being alluded to through discussions relating to social and community cohesion - the proliferation of

policy and strategy reports by research institutes, funders, and cultural advocates speaks to the way in which arts projects are being positioned as fundamental players in enabling 'both the transformation and the cohesion of society' (Phipps, 2017, p.7). Arguably this discourse is in fact being determined by policy makers and funders, beckoned in by New Labour's 'community cohesion agenda' (Baylis, Beider & Hardy, 2019, p.12) which saw the adoption of 'the social utility of arts and culture as progressive realms to engage fractured communities, realise progressive values and create a more sustainable economic world' (Mould, 2019).

This is particularly important in light of Bishop's claim that one of the fundamental intentions of participatory arts was to create, express and collaborate as a means to counter the growing trend of individualism in society. Specifically, as a means of establishing 'a critical distance towards the neoliberal new world order' (p.12) and to 'channel art's symbolic capital towards constructive social change' (p.13). This original intention Bishop argues has been adopted and co-opted by those looking to justify the spending of public money on artistic projects, and in doing so has been subsumed into a political landscape fixated on the utility, the value and impact of art.

Bishop builds upon her critique by drawing attention to the paradoxical relationship between participation's focus on collective action, and the social function it has been asked to fulfil within a neoliberal landscape, which is to strengthen individual resilience and independence within the 'capitalized model' (Phillips, 2012, p.154). It has, therefore, become:

> less about repairing the social bond than a mission to enable all members of society to be self-administering, fully functioning consumers who do not rely on the welfare state and who can cope with a deregulated, privatised world (Bishop, 2012, p.14).

At the time of Bishop's publication the Coalition government's 'Big Society' brand had entered the political arena in the UK, and her work ultimately predicted the actions of an increasingly 'laissez-faire model of government' which has asked more and more unpaid workers to subsidise the work of the state (p.14) in all arenas of society. Under the Coalition and subsequent

Conservative Government's arts funding across the UK have gone on to be substantially cut, however the influence of the debate around 'what the arts can do for society' (Matarasso, 1997, p. iv) has persisted. Scholars now argue that this has become *the* justificatory ideology underpinning financial support for participatory arts practice (Thompson, 2011), with others describing its preoccupation with social utility as a demonstration that is has in fact 'entered into a Faustian pact with neoliberalism, gaining power and influence but only by becoming entirely incorporated into market economics, entrepreneurialism, commodification and consumerism' (Pritchard, 2019).

Whilst these broader discourses surrounding participatory arts practice may seem disconnected from the specifics of arts and integration, they are all part of what Hadley and Gray (2017) refer to as the hyperinstrumentalisation of cultural policy. This is 'where outcomes replace inputs, outputs and intentions as the basis upon which policy rests' (p. 96). It is therefore important to recognise that the relationship between art and integration has not necessarily only evolved naturally out of collaborations between artists, organisations and communities, but has been and continues to be encouraged to fulfil a wider policy agenda.

With this in mind, it is no accident then, that policy arguments in support of the arts, and those supporting of models of integration and social cohesion often place the potential economic, as well as social, benefits – rather than their disruptive potential front and centre. An example of Spivak's double bind (2011) it would seem both fields – and those working within them - are 'learning to live with contradictory instructions' (p.3); simultaneously operating within and against the contemporary neoliberal framework, and as such are constantly negotiating this relationship. To this end, it is worth observing the overlaps between the critique directed towards both participatory arts and integration for the possible role they are playing in individualising issues that in fact require major structural analysis and intervention. This overlapping scholarly trajectory has offered me many interesting points of entry for analysis throughout my research. Furthermore, just as scholars and practitioners dissatisfied with integration have sought out alternative conceptual frameworks, so too have

artists and scholars concerned about participatory arts' direction sought to respond to and reinvent participatory arts' role in society. These re-imaginings provide much of the theoretical material found throughout the body of this thesis.

Scotland, Integration and The Arts

In Scotland, immigration regulation remains under UK control, including all decisions about asylum cases. However, in contrast to the UK's approach to immigration - and in particular to asylum and refugee migration - Scotland has sought to determine its own direction. Despite the voracity of the hostile environment, many of the policies that impact an individual's day to day life - like access to healthcare, education, housing (in-part), and even arts-projects are being determined by the policies and political language of the Scottish Government, as well as the attitudes and relationships that emerge at a local level. In recent years this has manifested in its attitude towards integration.

In 2013 the Scottish Government launched the 'New Scots Integration Strategy' based on the aforementioned research by Ager and Strang. The strategy speaks of an ongoing commitment to achieving a vision:

> for a Scotland where refugees are able to build a new life from the day they arrive in Scotland and to realise their full potential with the support of mainstream services and, where they can, become active members of our communities with strong social relationships (Scottish Government, 2013, p.6).

The working principle for this strategy is that 'integration is a two-way process of forming connections between people' (p.2). Now in its second iteration (with the objectives spanning 2018-22), though without Scottish Government money attached to it, the strategy has seen the Government, alongside COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council (as well as a range of national partners and thematic steering groups), make commitments to realising a series of objectives based around what is now a Rights Based a framework that moves on from - though is still influenced by - Ager and Strang's original domains.

While the language has not shifted towards an adoption of a 'multi-directional' understanding of integration, as it has in the Home Office's 2019 report, a fundamental distinction with Scotland's approach is that it includes people who are still in the asylum system, and those whose status is unclear. This contrasts the UK's approach to integration, which has specifically excluded those seeking asylum from any policy initiatives that have been introduced (Mulvey, 2010).

Image 4: New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 – core themes (Scottish Government, 2018)

Scotland's commitment to supporting human intercultural connections and facilitating access to a dignified existence is a distinguishing marker from current UK political register. However, just as with the criticisms directed towards integration in the previous section of this chapter, the image of Scotland being projected through this adoption of integration policy has been thrown into question by a range of critics.

Law (2017) argues that Scotland's adoption of the assimilationist yet progressive concept of integration, alongside its welcome narrative, feeds the construction of Scottish Exceptionalism, which is predicated on civic, rather than ethnic nationalism. He argues that this imagining of the 'charismatic Scottish we-deal' works to conveniently bracket out Scotland's historical and current complicity in

British power politics and imperialist practices. At the same time, suggests Hill (2017), Scottish Exceptionalism excludes the contemporary experiences of non-white Scots, as it both refuses to 'recognise the Other yet reinforces beliefs and structures which continue to seek ways of erasing our experience'. Furthermore, despite the commitment of many, the New Scots strategy cannot prevent individuals from still be detained, deported, made destitute and demoralised by the asylum system itself, as well as being affected by UK-wide governmental interventions like Prevent which faces ongoing criticisms for being disproportionately focused on placing UK Muslims under surveillance.

The place of the arts within the New Scots Integration strategy is minimal, being referenced only obliquely under the Communities, Culture and Social Connections category, which fall within the following objective

> Refugees and asylum seekers engage in cultural, heritage and sports activities and celebrate their own culture, talents and contributions

In turn, there are two specifics aims that respond to this this objective

> Provide opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to programme, produce and participate in Refugee Festival Scotland, as well as other national and local festivals

> Identify and promote existing support to refugee professional artists and cultural leaders. (New Scots Strategy, 2018)

This offers an indication that the arts, as well as culture are very much considered marginal priorities for the organisations and individuals that have been involved with developing this strategy to date. Despite individual advocates of languages and the arts such as Professor Alison Phipps now being Chair of the integration strategy, the overall understanding of what artistic, cultural or creative expression might mean to people in the context of integration is still little articulated within policy contexts.

Furthermore, whilst the latter aim within the strategy may gesture towards valuing refugee professional artists and cultural leaders, throughout my research I was told over and over again that gaining recognition, support and even payment for work is fraught with obstacles, and that only very recently have

artists felt attended to in any meaningful way. Many artists who have been living in Glasgow for many years, either who were already professional, or who have carved out a professional practice since arriving, spoke often about feeling their work was being misused, taken advantage of for the benefit of organisational agendas and at times suffocated by a lack of access defined by white-faces everywhere.

The arts and cultural production - at grassroots as well as more mainstream levels in Glasgow – has, however, been present since the city first became a dispersal city. Though almost entirely undocumented in scholarly discourse - with the majority of literature about refugee arts in the UK focused upon work in England - there have been multiple projects, organisations and community groups engaged in artistic activity. Organisations and groups like Artists in Exile, Ignite Theatre, Ankur Arts, YDance, Streetlevel Photoworks (McAllister, 2015), A Moment's Peace Theatre, Seeds of Thought, conFAB, Barrowland Ballet, Musicians in Exile and the Citizens Theatre tended to put their central focus upon creating the art, performance, dance itself. Whereas organisations like the Scottish Refugee Council, Maryhill Integration Network, Cranhill Development Trust, Refuweegee, as well an increasing number of others are looking to the arts as a means through which to promote integration, participation and awareness raising. Then there are groups like World Spirit Theatre that is refugee-led and who create work explicitly straddling art and activism.

At one time or another, much of the work created through these avenues has found a place to present itself during the Refugee Festival Scotland (previously Refugee Week Scotland), which is organised by the Scottish Refugee Council. The festival is an annual event and takes place across the city (as well as across the rest of the country). Since its inception it has grown from a one-day event to a festival taking place over nearly a month. The festival has had high profile headline acts like Young Fathers, it has been the space to premiere new work like the hard-hitting show Roadkill and the musical Glasgow Girls, as well as having an ongoing focus on creating space for community groups to share cultural and artistic material (Khan, 2014).

Jeffers (2012) asserts that refugee festivals and arts projects can be read as Cultural Performances. At an instrumental level they seek to platform the artistic outputs, and cultures of refugee individuals and communities, and then on a performative level they seek to persuade those who 'remain to be convinced of that refugee performer's right to be there in the national space' (p.116). Darling (2013) expands upon this analysis, suggesting that the performance of persuasion ingrained into Refugee Week festivals too often calls upon 'a logic of contribution' which 'risks reinforcing perceptions of worth and worthiness that make refugee status into an economic commodity'. He goes on to argue that a 'concern with contribution' becomes 'part of government efforts to 'manage migration' for the 'good of the nation', rather than in the interests of those seeking sanctuary and fleeing persecution'.

Whilst there are always distinct themes and ideas circulating around Refugee Festival Scotland, a logic of contribution does play a key role, as can be evidenced in the New Scots objective described previously. What would happen asks Darling if festivals and more broadly, the cultural output produced by, with and refugees was to step away from the rhetoric of contribution and instead turn its collective attention towards 'offering space for the expression of collaborative projects, collaborative politics and collaborative realities' (2013). This thesis is, in part, an attempt to begin contributing towards the scholarly gap in the analysis of refugee arts within Scotland, and it is also an active effort to follow this call for a re-focusing on the potential of 'collaboration and collective engagements' rather than contribution (2013).

Conclusion

In Chapter 2 I have offered an overview of some of the key themes preoccupying scholarly discussions within the field of refugee arts, as they intersect with the Global North. Due to the nature of the practice-based research I undertook, my focus has been predominantly concerned with performance, drawing attention to the complex interplay between creating spaces to be seen and heard, and processes of extraction. I have worked to highlight scholars who share my

interest in practice and process, as well as public-orientated artistic outcomes. Moreover, the literature reflects an increasing awareness in the potential significance of participatory arts work with, by and for refugees, whilst conscious of the ethical complexities that permeate how the work is created. I have drawn attention to the dangers of over-burdening the arts with a social function and drawn attention to calls for a re-focus on aesthetics and beauty.

I concluded the chapter with an overview of the ways in which the arts and integration discourses intersect in contemporary Scotland. I have stressed that whilst there has been and continues to be a wealth of interdisciplinary activity across Glasgow in particular, the literature responding to refugee arts in Scotland is almost non-existent. In light of this, my own research could have manifested in many forms, and carried a wide variety of emphases. There is much grounded knowledge circulating in Glasgow, as well as a network of critical thinkers making and participating in arts-based work. The research direction I chose to travel down has been an attempt to engage with some – though of course not all – of this knowledge. And so, to complete Part One of this thesis I turn now to offering an analysis of the journey my own research has taken.
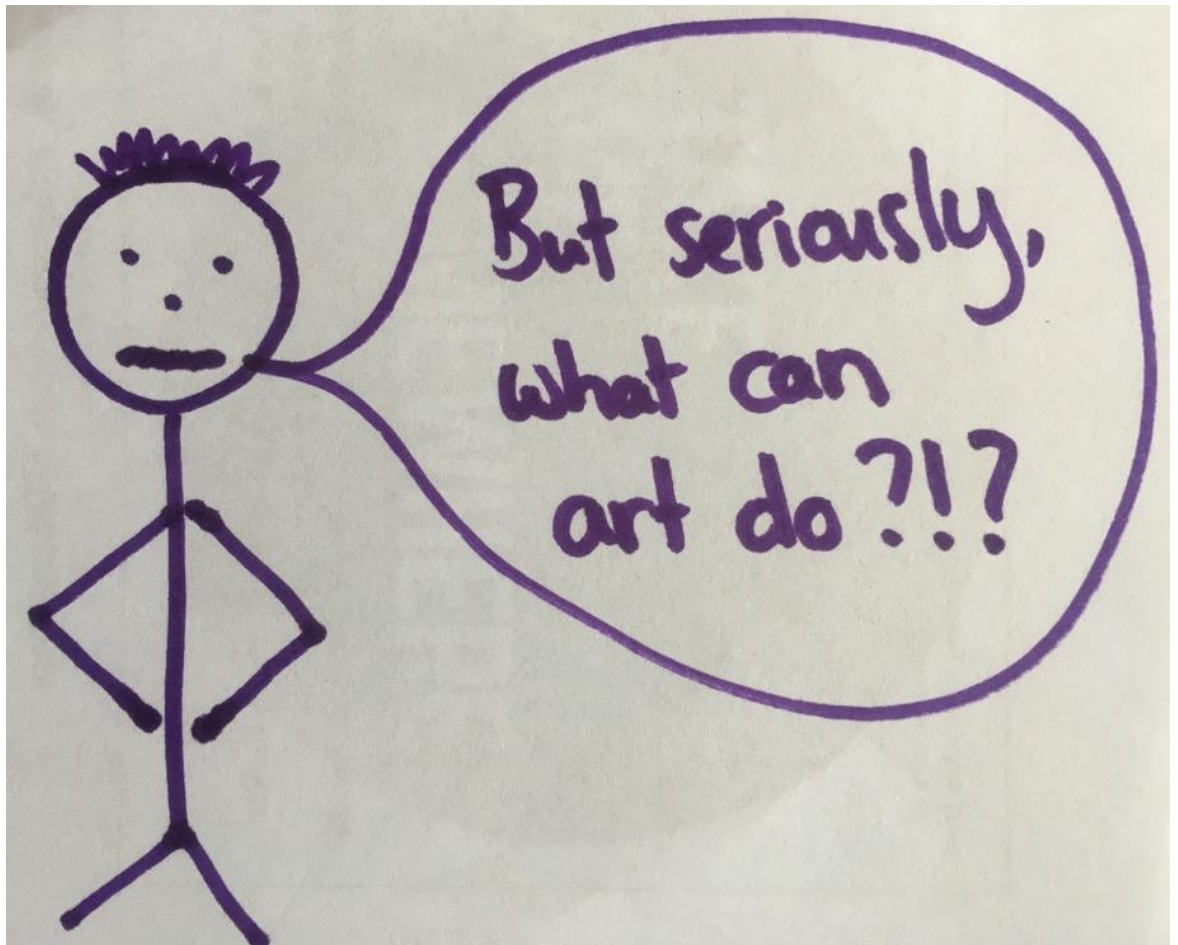
Image 5: Artist-Researcher's impressions upon entering world of Social Science

III   Carving out my methodological path

Epistemic angst

Last night I cried
I cried because my work makes me feel uncomfortable
Uncomfortable because of power
Power I hold, that I want to destroy
But destroying it won't make it go away

I do art because I think it makes the world a better place
A better place often imposed on people by those with white faces
White faces are the presenters, the researchers, the facilitators
The facilitators of empowering work with marginalised others
Marginalised others defined by white faces
White faces are everywhere

People are not subjects
People are not data
People are not for my consumption
Or interpretation
Who am I to say what a sweaty brow in a workshop may mean
Who am I to observe and watch and understand
I could be wrong
I will be wrong

Last night I cried
I cried because of horrific everyday indignities
Indignities inflicted upon those I have come to love

(Author's Poetic Reflections)

Introduction

This doctoral research explores the ways in which the experiences of individuals engaged in the creative and performing arts interact with the concepts and practices of integration experienced by refugees, and those within the asylum system. To do this, I combined my working practices as an applied arts theatre-maker with the arts-based methodologies expanding across the field of refugee studies (O'Neill et al, 2002; O'Neill, 2008; Haaken & O'Neill, 2014; O'Neill, Erel, Kaptani & Reynolds, 2019; Greatrick & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2017; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2017; Lennette, 2019; Foster, 2016; Cox, Durrant,Farrier, Stonebridge, Woolley, 2019).

With a commitment to creative exploration being the source of the emerging knowledge, I resisted fixing research questions for this inquiry. Instead I developed a set of intentions that operated as a reflective and analytical tool throughout the research:

- discover and articulate the unique qualities of arts engagement for individuals negotiating themselves through the asylum and subsequent refugee system;

- examine what opportunities arts projects and creative processes offer those individuals and communities seeking to integrate within Glasgow, that other sources of community engagement or development may not;

- understand how arts engagement ties in with identity, emotional integration and supporting the articulation of social or political voices within new geographical settings;

- identify models of creative practice that are best placed to ensure participants are informing and, where possible, leading the direction of the work; and

- question how arts engagement can open up the potential for refugee and asylum-seeking artists and community members to have a long-term impact upon Glasgow's wider cultural landscape.
  (Evans, 2016).

Whilst I have not been tethered to this list, and at times it has been deliberately

set to one side, these areas of interest have enabled me to refer back, evaluate, and further interrogate my original intentions throughout the inquiry (Trimingam, 2002).

I have come to understand that in grappling with one's identity as researcher, a fundamental tension emerges as one shifts between discourses; especially when negotiating the space of inter- or multi-disciplinary researcher. There were many potential labels that I could adopt, but the one that I am most comfortable with, and the one most flexible in the context of practice-based work, is that of Artist-Researcher. This research identity allows me to take pleasure in the art of borrowing, like a methodological and theoretical magpie (Froden-Cathcart, 2018), from arts-based research methods, from anthropological approaches, and ethnographic processes, rather than grapple intensively over definitions (Trimingham, 2002).

Within this role I was able to adopt Ingold's proposition (2011) that the researcher as 'perceiver-producer' is a 'wayfarer' (p.12) existing in constant processes of becoming, concerned less with reaching a final destination but committed to being '*along* paths' because 'along such paths, lives are lived, skills developed, observations made and understandings grown.' (p.12) This chapter is an attempt to reflect some, if not all, of the paths that I have been along over the last four and a half years, and the becoming that grew from that. I provide an outline and analysis of the methods employed throughout this doctoral research, as well as the epistemological and ethical underpinnings of those methods. Finally, I offer a note on the re-presentation of my findings.

Finding my way

During the preparatory stages of my doctoral research I shared an encounter with an inlay artist from Iran, whom I met whilst taking part in a heritage workshop hosted by the Scottish Refugee Council. Since arriving in Glasgow, he had been unable to create anything because he could not find inlay tools. He was disconnected from his craft. He told me he was at a loss as to how to

express himself, and so felt himself lost. It was my impression that he had come along to the project 'searching for a means through which to reassert his identity as an artist and as a person' (Research Journal).

This encounter came at a time when I was experiencing a sense of isolation that is commonly felt by researchers committed to arts-based research (Leavy, 2015). Located within the College of Social Sciences, I was regularly being confronted by an epistemological viewpoint that applied rationalist and structuralist approaches to research processes; one that 'presumes a stable external social reality that can be recorded by a stable, objective, scientific observer' (Denzin, 1997, p.31). I found myself in difficult conversations with my postgraduate peers who regularly asked me to define my research question, who assumed that I wanted to find out what art could *do* for integration, and referred to the people I was hoping to work with during the process as my data. I found this linguistic habit particularly troubling in light of Smith's contentions that the historical violence inherent in Western forms of knowledge creation mean that:

> people and their culture, the material and the spiritual, the exotic and the fantastic, become not just the stuff of dreams and imagination, or stereotypes and eroticism, but of the first truly global commercial enterprise: *trading the Other* (Smith, 2012, p.93).

Their confused smiles worked their way into my everyday consciousness, as I tried to (in)articulate that my process of learning would be exploratory and collaborative, that the arts practice itself would be the research, and that questions and answers would emerge through the process.

As Eisner (1997) suggests, academic traditions have:

> concretized our view of what it means to know. We prefer our knowledge solid and like our data hard. It makes for a firm foundation, a secure place on which to stand. Knowledge as a process, a temporary state, is scary to many (p.7).

Positivist epistemologies hold a firm grip on research practices, which in turn retains its position as '[t]he dominant way of knowing in the academy' (Conquergood, 2002, p.146). In my hurry to try to belong within an academic setting that felt (and often still does feel) very alien to me, I had started to

falter in my commitment to a practice-based approach. I was capitulating to the mythology that it is 'possible to do research that is uncontaminated by personal and political sympathies' (Becker, 1967, 239).

By contrast, the inlay artist's commitment to his craft reminded me of the interconnection between arts practice, action and identity. Although our circumstances were incomparable, his emotional and professional connection to his tools resonated with me. The importance he placed upon doing, spoke to a fundamental in Leavy's arts-based research:

> [t]hinking artistically applies to both the research process as well as the resulting work. Artists conceive of their work as a 'doing' activity. Art *making* is a verb. As Bochner and Ellis (2003) note, art is 'something made, not something found' (p.507), which implies the resulting artwork is always tied to the process of producing it, including the artists' subjectivity (Leavy, 2015, p.30).

This encounter helped me realise that the dual role of researcher *and* artist might, in fact, allow me an explicit engagement with my own subjectivity; as Leavy suggests, to utilise my creative practice to carve and sculpt the very tools required for that research. Only by engaging with my tools, in such a way that required an 'openness to the spontaneous and unknown' (Leavy, p.20), would I then be able to open up space 'within the research community where passion and rigor boldly intersect *out in the open*' (p.3).

And so, I began to tentatively carve out my research path: one that was engaged and active; one that shifted and changed shape; and one that was enacted, observant, embodied, and on the move. I would embark upon 'being alive to the world' (Ingold, xii), and adopt 'an experiential, participatory epistemology' (Conquergood, 2002, p.149 following Douglass, 1855). Translated into practice, it lay the grounds for gathering, collating and interpreting data that allowed me to synthesise my choice of methods with my epistemological principles; 'principles [that] underscore the personal nature of fieldwork' (Jones, 2002, p.8).

(Re)asserting my epistemological principles

Across my research I have embraced the epistemological supposition that we are embodied intellectuals who carry our experience and knowledge within our bodies, and who have the capacity to observe, listen and interpret with our full selves (Snowber, 2016). I adopted an aesthetic, metaphorical, and imaginative register that gave space for the articulation of rich personal and subjective data 'that slip and slide, or appear and disappear, change shape or don't have much form at all' (Law, 2004, p.2). This register promotes 'conversation that enables us to see more deeply' (Siegsmund & C-Taylor, in Leavy, p.2015). It ignites critical reflection that invites us to understand in new ways (O'Neill, 2002, 79) and look towards 'meaning-making instead of pushing authoritative claims' (Leavy, 2015, p.26).

This approach involves understanding emotion as knowledge and challenging the myth that rational thought is emotionless (Foster, 2016; Ahmed, 2014). It has seen me facilitate opportunities for expression through visuals, text, speech, sound, and embracing the body as an integral research tool (Low, 2015, p.299). It has guided how I listen to and interpret what is being shared and created. I worked from the position that 'the research process itself can be understood as a work of art, an aesthetic experience' (Foster, 2016, p.140). Further, by inviting people's thoughts and feelings to emerge out of the act of crafting, building, drawing, and creating, I embraced the importance of action in enabling a 'more rich set of exchanges' (Bagelman, 2015, p.157).

Forsey (2010) refers to an 'ethnographic imaginary' (p.567) as a practice of engaged listening through a 'democracy of the senses' (p.562, also Back, 2007). This is a way of engaging that remains astute to the multiplicity of ideas and feelings contained within 'the cultural context of lived experience' (Forsey, 2010, p.567). Employing this practice has allowed me to 'reach towards a more sensuous understanding' predicated on empathy that 'incorporates feeling involvement as well as cognitive reflection' (O'Neill, 2008, p.67).

My process has borrowed from O'Neill: her commitment to creative hybridity, multiplicity, and multi-vocality in the development, interpretation, and representation of knowledge accumulated through arts processes. This is where 'alternative re-presentations' (O'Neill et al., 2002, p.82) of social and personal realities have been found and has been key to embracing complexity and contradiction. This way of working has been underpinned by what hooks (2010) refers to as 'radical openness'; an approach to learning and questioning that seeks to encourage those engaged in learning-focused dialogue to strive towards openness and non-judgement, as a way of preventing anyone from becoming too 'attached to and protective of one's viewpoints' (p.10). I sought to work with processes where all voices and bodies had the space to tease out their ideas, challenge those ideas, and enter into collaborative and critical dialogue. All involved were 'wondering, questioning and doubting, in critical reflection with self and others' (Jacobs, 2008, 155), so as eliminate the search for a common homogenous voice. In turn ensuring that heterogeneous voices and bodies were 'hearing one another fruitfully' (Lather, 2007, in Foster, 2016, p.44) whilst opening up 'multiple paths of exploration' (Jacobs, 2008, 155).

'Doing' the Practice

Over eighteen months, across 2017-18, I was involved in three participatory arts projects. The first, a large-scale performance and visual art project produced by the Scottish Refugee Council and Tramway; the second, a dance piece; and third, a sound project – both produced by Maryhill Integration Network, in collaboration with external organisations. Each with their own unique thematic focus, the projects shared an interest in co-production, creative expression and social integration.

The majority of individuals who participated in these projects (referred to throughout the thesis as project members) were either living within the asylum system or had been granted refugee status. A small number were non-refugee migrants, and a minority had been born in the UK. Of the people who had re-located to Glasgow, some were very newly arrived in the city when I first met them. More had been in Scotland or the UK for between two to forty years. The

projects were enriched by the fact that the individuals involved ranged between three years old and over sixty. Due to the parameters of my ethical approval, my research focused on the experiences of those over eighteen only.

The projects exemplified Glasgow as a site containing layers of 'overlapping displacement' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). Therefore, the line between who might be categorised as a 'New Scot' and who might be considered a member of the 'host' community was blurred from the outset. This blurring provided a rich starting point for discussions around understandings of integration, many of which form the basis of theoretical analysis throughout this thesis.

Project One

Description: A multi-artform integration project with a focus on visual art and performance, aimed at bringing together communities to creatively examine and respond to the media coverage surrounding issues of migration.

When: Weekly workshops from February–November 2017.

Who: The lead artists – myself, visual artist *Haree* and project coordinator *Max* – worked with forty-six project members. Twenty-one were male and twenty-five were female.

Examples of practice: Each workshop started with sharing food, followed by exploratory artistic activities that responded – sometimes explicitly, sometimes conceptually – to the theme of media coverage and representation. Across the project, the group created a large scale and interactive map of Glasgow, experimented with print transfer, and undertook sculpture-making with

newspaper. We built pin-holes cameras, took photographs of the city and curated an exhibition out of the pictures. We developed new pieces of creative writing, individually and collectively. We created and performed tableaux. We experimented with visuals and projections on to the body. We devised visual and text-based story boards. We played a lot of games. Every session was framed by reflective exercises that kept the group in continual dialogue with one another and allowed me to capture narrative and sensemaking responses to the work that was being developed.

Project members also went on a number of outings where they were able to engage in cultural events across Scotland. Moreover, there were opportunities throughout the project for participants to access the expertise and support of the staff at the Scottish Refugee Council.

Public Output: Over two nights, forty of the project members presented an exhibition and performance entitled *I Hear The Image Moving* at Tramway. This brought together aspects of the work that had been created and developed over the project's lifetime, which had been sharpened and rehearsed for an audience. The event ended with all audience members invited onstage, to share food and conversation with us. [Please follow this link to view a short-film documenting this final show]

My role: First and foremost, I was in the space as a practitioner. I worked with a team of collaborators, overseen by the producing companies and we had a brief to develop the project collaboratively, with all those involved, and to ensure a high-quality creative experience. My research role ran alongside these commitments as a practitioner.

Impact on research: The comparative length of this project, and the depth of my engagement with it, means that it has provided the largest percentage of data and material. It provides the largest proportion of project members who engaged with the research. This is reflected in the proportion of space I have afforded it within the thesis.

Projects Two and Three

E C H O   &   M A R Y H I L L
I N T E G R A T E D   S O U N D S
PRODUCED BY MARYHILL INTEGRATION NETWORK

Description: *Maryhill Integrated Sounds* was an experimental project exploring the way sound, voice and music shape the stories and narratives we tell. *Echo* sought to fuse contemporary and traditional dance with song and poetry. It explored arrival, loss, finding a home and how these themes echo through our cultural identity. This was an intergenerational project.

When: *Maryhill Integrated Sounds* took place over six weeks in Autumn 2018. *Echo* ran weekly workshops between December 2018 and March 2019.

Who: *Maryhill Integrated Sounds* was delivered by *Sol* and his team of sound artists, all of whom were associated with the city-wide *Radiophrenia* project; and *Echo* was delivered by *Nic* with a team of dance artists from dance company Barrowland Ballet, who regularly collaborate with Maryhill Integration Network. There were twenty-three (adult) project members across the two projects, with sixteen females and seven males. Two project members took part in both.

Examples of practice: Both sets of weekly workshops were exploratory in nature. In *Maryhill Integrated Sounds* we used dictaphones to collect found sound, photographs as a stimulus for exploring the sounds associated with memories, and song to explore identity. Led by dance practitioners, the weekly sessions for *Echo* involved lots of group dance games, paired dancing, and improvised movement which was subsequently choreographed into rehearsed vignettes; project members also spontaneously taught traditional or cultural dances.

The majority of project members regularly engaged with additional activity and support provided by Maryhill Integration Network. There are ongoing additional creative activities, regular trips and events, and ongoing support services, framed by the office's open-door policy.

Public Output: The sound footage from *Maryhill Integrated Sounds* was developed into a 30-minute radio show that was aired in November 2017 through *Radiophrenia*'s temporary radio channel and can be listened to at the following link: https://soundcloud.com/radiophrenia/maryhill-integrated-sounds
Echo project culminated in a showing as part of an annual Community Dance Festival, *Go Dance!* The work was one of ten community dance performances, presented at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow. [No final dance footage available]

My role: As an artistic participant in both projects, I could immerse myself in the experience, affording me a different view of making work in this context. I collaborated with the other project members and responded to creative invitations offered by the practitioners leading the project. I also performed *Echo* alongside twenty other project members.

Impact on research: *Echo* and *Maryhill Integrated Sounds* were part of an ongoing programme provided by Maryhill Integration Network, where community engagement is underpinned by creative and artistic activity. This long-term commitment to project members is recognisable in the data shared in the thesis, while the small-scale nature of the projects I was directly involved in is reflected in the proportion of space they are given within the thesis.

Out of these projects, three methods of research emerged:

1. **The practice**. This involved leading (*Share My Table*) or participating (*Echo* and *Maryhill Integrated Sounds*) in the workshops associated with each project. This part of the inquiry focused on the processes of artmaking within these workshops, the dynamics of each space, the relationships emerging out of the projects, and the artistic journeys experienced by individual project members. It also included a critical interrogation of the aims and objectives of the producing organisations. Where appropriate the processes were documented through photography.

2. **The ethnographic experience**. This included my own field notes (cited as Research Journal when quoted within this thesis) encompassing a wide range of materials: creative planning notes, observations, reflections on the sessions, ongoing thoughts and responses to the work being made, my own creative writing, and visual responses emerging out of the work. This research also included informal and impromptu conversations – during food and tea breaks, going in and out of sessions, via text, phone conversations, at chance meetings on the bus or at events.

3. **The artistic outputs and performance outcomes**. This focused on the collective and individual artwork generated along the way. Some were polished pieces, purposefully developed for an audience; other works were part of the process and only shared with others in the room at the time. Some were made individually and have remained solo pieces, some were made individually but were brought together to make a larger piece, and some were made collectively from the outset. Many of these pieces form the basis for theoretical inquiry throughout the thesis. Where appropriate, photographs and videos were taken of the work. However, many project members were reluctant for their image to be used widely and so documentation is focused on the things made, rather than the performances given.

To further enrich these forms of research I introduced a fourth methodological layer whilst the projects were ongoing. This saw me facilitate a set of two

reflective co-produced sessions with smaller groups of project members. Using arts-based methods, the first session was the only time within the research where I focused directly on individuals' relationship to integration. The second session focused specifically on participants' experiences of each project. Sixty-six people from across all three projects contributed to these sessions. Where permission was given, these sessions were audio-recorded, and subsequently transcribed for thematic analysis. The artwork and visuals that emerged were also photographed and analysed, alongside the transcripts.

Reflective Session 1

The first session was facilitated with up to five project members at a time, either as projects were ongoing or once they had finished. It was split into three exercises, all of which generated visual, verbal, written, and embodied responses:

1. The first used handprints, automatic writing, and informal conversation. It explored self-identification in comparison to the labels or categories that are often externally ascribed on to people within the asylum system and operated as a form of asserting ongoing creative consent.
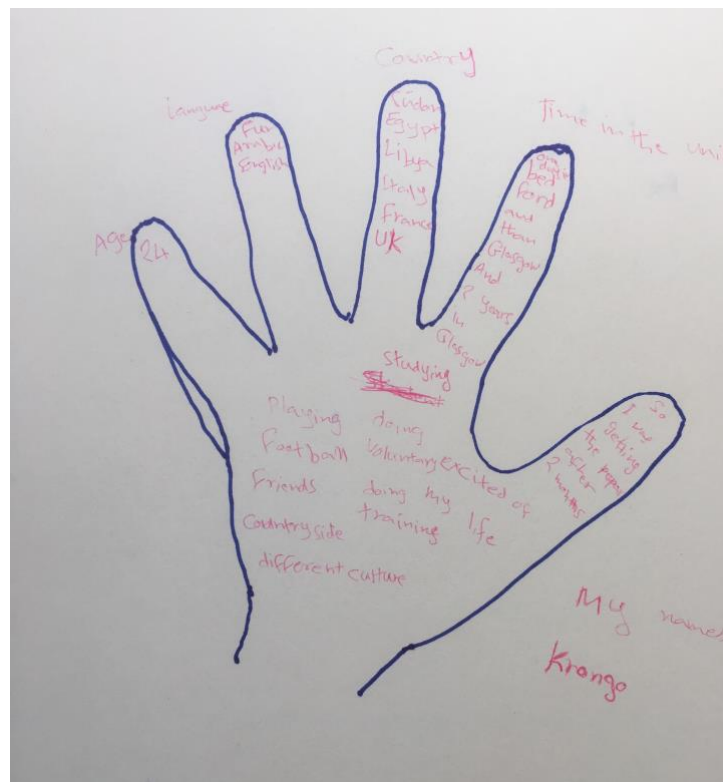
Image 6: Krongo reflects on categories v self-definition

2. The second short exercise saw project members seek to outline what integration meant to them as group.
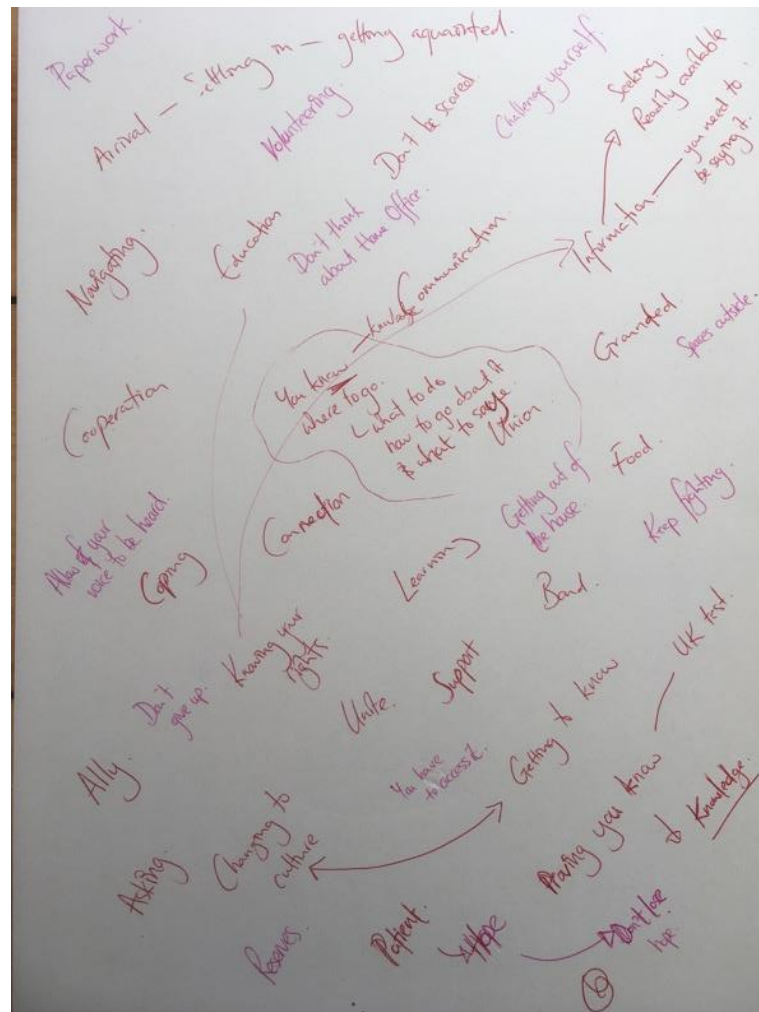
Image 7: Project members attempt to articulate the multi-faceted nature of integration

3. The third exercise tasked individuals with exploring the question 'what does integration look and feel like?'. To do this I presented the project members with the 84 visual images. These images were taken from the Libellud company's board game: **Dixit** (more details of game in Terms of Reference, p.9). I invited each person to select up to ten images that they felt responded to the question. Each person was invited to lay out the cards they had chosen – considering the order, and how the cards related to each other – and to present a narrative or sensemaking response to the cards they had chosen. During each sharing, the entire group were compassionate witnesses to these often very honest and emotional testimonies.

Image 8: Mary shares her visual interpretation of what integration looks and feels like

Reflective Session 2

The second reflective session was also held with small groups from each project, once the projects were complete. It was divided into three activities, all of which generated visual, verbal, written, and embodied responses:

1. Returning to the handprints from the first session, individuals were invited to scribe a written or visual response to the question 'who am I today?'.
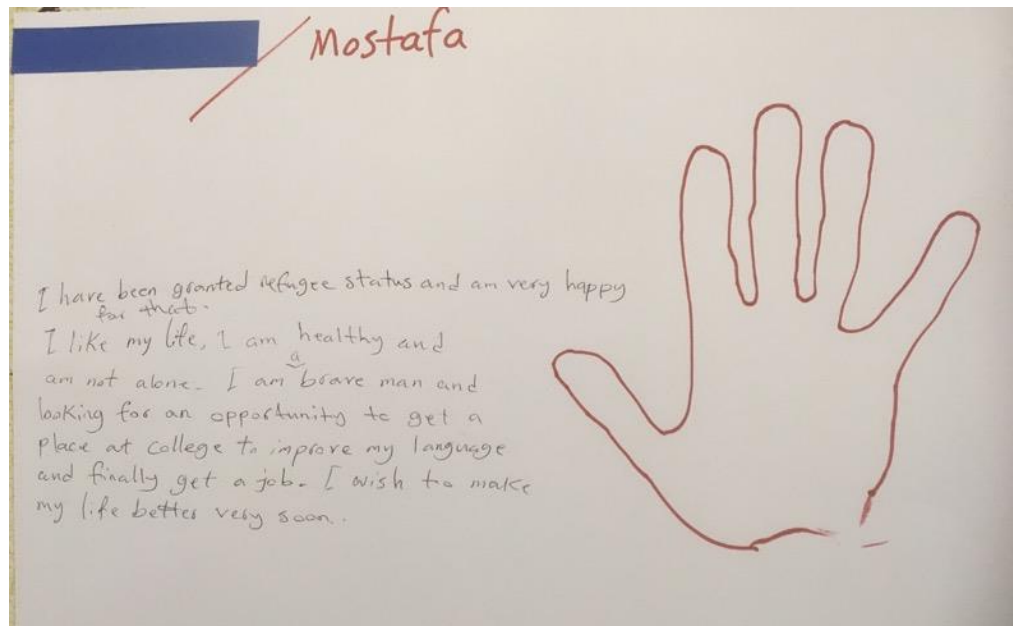
Image 9: Mostafa's response to 'who am I today?'

2. The group were asked to discuss what the projects had meant to them, reflecting upon statements they had made (and I had archived) throughout the duration of the project.
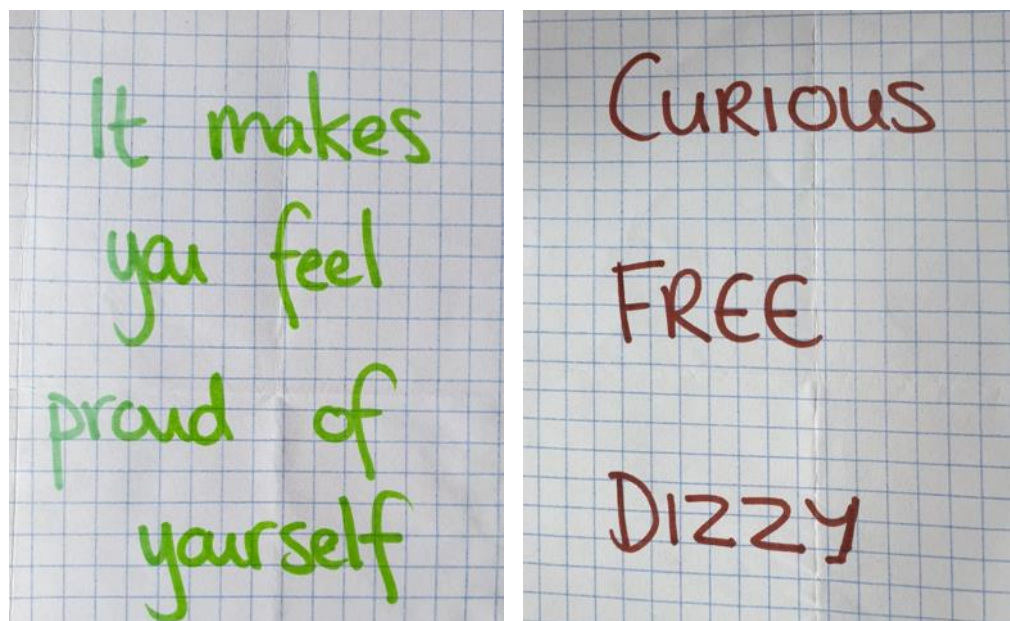
Image 10: Examples of statements project members were asked to explore

3. The final activity was built around a visual and performative mapping exercise. This sought to explore how the creative space had made participants feel – and how this related to what they felt in other spaces.
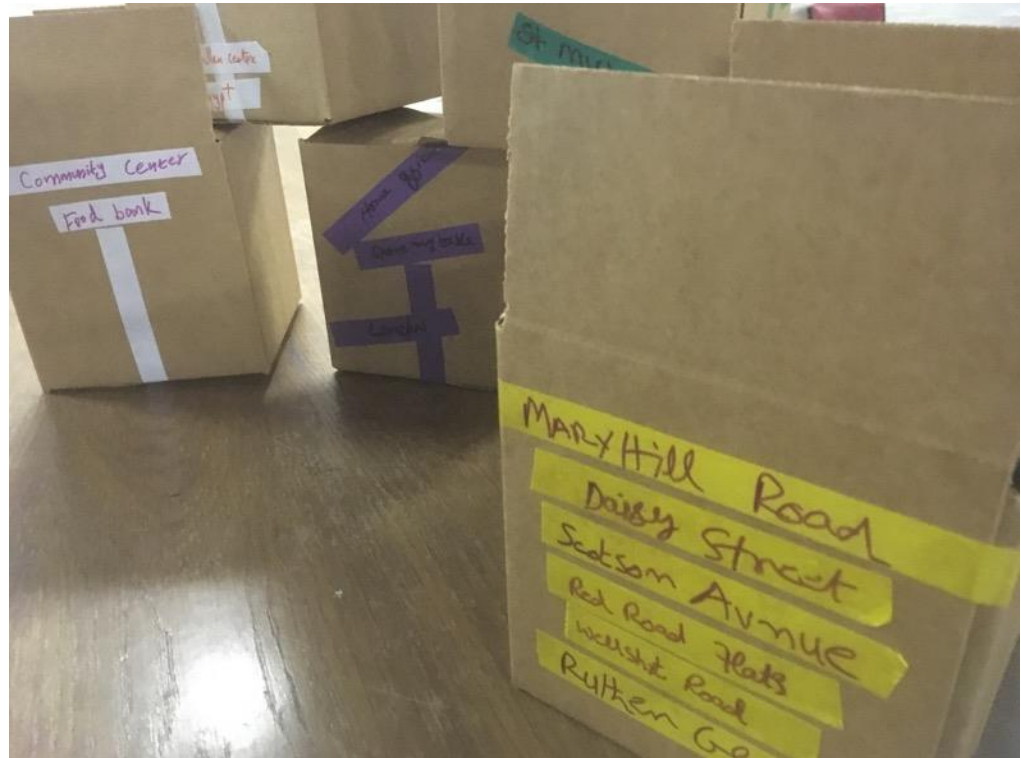
Image 11: Mapping and Archiving – reflections on how the spaces we frequent make us feel

Both of these workshops combined qualitative methods, talk and conversation, with creative exercises that foregrounded metaphorical exploration. By doing so, it allowed 'feelings, impressions and life experiences' (O'Neill, 2002, p.83) to emerge through a 'kaleidoscope of impressions and textures' (Law, 2004, p.6), that 'reflects and refracts a world that in important ways cannot be fully understood as a specific set of determinate processes' (p.6).

Through this range of methods, my research set out to seek perspectives, not truths. Embracing different ways for people to communicate ideas and reflect upon experiences enriched the narratives that surfaced (Denzin, 1997).

Supporting practice with a reflective methodology

In light of the varied and iterative methods used throughout my research, my approach is best understood through Trimingham's (2002) methodological

framework. This centres around artistic research practice being able to 'account for the disorderly creative process and yet demonstrate rigorous planning' (p.55). Trimingham suggests that the:

> paradigm model of progress that allows for this is the 'hermeneutic-interpretive' spiral model where progress is not linear but circular; a spiral which constantly returns to our original point of entry but with renewed understanding (p.56).

An Artist-Researcher's methodology needs to be able to withstand the fact that research learning and outcomes are dependent upon an artistic practice that is continually being created, and that the questions being asked will be directly affected and altered by what is expressed artistically (both as outcome and process). Trimingham's strong visual metaphor, and the 'in-built dynamism of the spiral' (p.56) provided me with a resilient structure to work within.

The feedback loop that emerged between the research and the artmaking, was further enriched by a constant 'participatory dialogue' (Ingold, 2011, p.241) with the project members experiencing the work. By becoming 'immersed in the life worlds of the participants' (O'Neill et al, 2002, p.83) my 'situated inquiry' (Law, 2004, p.3), in fact took the form of Trimingham's 'double hermeneutic' (p.59). This double spiral acknowledges the influence of both researcher and participant and marks out a fundamental principle of my methodology: 'the whole is intimately affected by the parts, and the parts by the whole' (p.59).

Without wilfully evading the issues of power and control that lurk behind much arts-based research (Foster, 2016) the *doing* of the double hermeneutic approach prevented those involved in the research with me from being cast as 'simply objects of study' (Holstein & Minkler 2007, in Foster, 2016, p.52). Instead, as much as possible, project members participated in defining the tone, the direction, the quality of the aesthetic, and the intellectual outcomes of the work. Through 'a co-constructive process' (Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2012, p.505) committed to dialogue and collaboration, and in line with O'Neill's practice of 'critical distancing' (2002, p.80), we carved out a democratic space for ongoing 'interpretation, commentary and criticism' (p.80). As Eisner (2008) anticipated, knowledge creation became a social affair (p.10).

Ingold (2011) refers to the dialectical 'correspondence' (p.241) between these varying forms of research as doing 'our philosophy out of doors' (p.241): 'immersed' with people, 'in an environment of joint activity', in order to 'learn to see things (or hear them, or touch them)' (p.241) in ways that a sole researcher cannot. My commitment to collaborative research practice and multi-dimensional forms of 'correspondence' gave rise to a multiplicity of voices and perspectives, allowing me to strive to '*open up* the world, rather than to seek closure' (p.239).

Working towards situated rather than universal ethics

Throughout this research I engaged with people at a point in their lives where their time, resources and experiences were often being determined by the aggressive actions of the Home Office. They were at the frontline of 'an ethic of neglect which has resulted in a careless society' (Thompson, 2015, p.440), and under constant scrutiny as they strive to 'convince the authorities that they have a clear and credible story' (Jeffers, 2012, p.30).

My research processes worked in opposition to these hostile practices; as Thompson suggests, the 'practices of joyous affective solidarity hint that a society of horrendous and cruel disregard can be countered' (2015, p.440). As such, my ethical approach was marked by an attention to *care* – for those I was working alongside, for the work itself, and for my own journey throughout the work. This is a tenet that forms an important theoretical through-line of this thesis.

Following Askins and Blazek (2017), I accept that:

> [t]here is a risk that uncritical notions of care (as ethics and especially in policy) construct one-way dependent care, essentialise gendered roles of caring and set up struggles for autonomy on behalf of both the carer and the cared (p.1090).

Yet, despite this risk, I continue to recognise the political and moral value of care (Tronto, 1993), as well its potential to support, not undermine, an ethics of justice (Askins & Blazek, 2017). During the research phase, my commitment to care was predicated on reciprocity and the 'interconnected principles of attentiveness, responsibility, competence, responsiveness and trust' (Ward & Gahagan, 2010, p.211). This was imperative to allow for the development of spaces where individuals felt safe, supported and free to articulate their experiences in any way they wished; an approach which focuses on 'the development of the participants and protects their rights and wellbeing' (Lockowandt, 2013, p.17).

Whilst the producing organisations that I worked with undertook their own processes of written consent, as a researcher within these contexts I facilitated methods for generating ongoing consent through informal, and creative practices that were revisited regularly. Where I was the artistic lead within *Share My Table*, I was able to build in a 'check-in' process at the start of each session. This allowed project members to acknowledge their willingness to be in the space and to continue embarking upon the creative and research journey. Similarly, the sessions ended with a 'check-out' which allowed each individual space/time to acknowledge what they had experienced within the session, to raise concerns they may have. At Maryhill Integration Network, where I was not leading the space, I relied upon less ritualised and more informal ways of 'checking-in' within each workshop. This was time-intensive but a necessary part of the practice that enabled me to talk openly and honestly about my research, and for questions to be raised and discussed, across the course of the project.

These approaches amount to 'a situated ethics rather than a universal ethics' (Foster, 2016, p.61); a practice whereby ethical decisions are made in ongoing dialogue with those involved, where participants are foregrounded 'as active, ethically reflexive agents who negotiate the ethical conundrums of everyday life' (Clark, 2013 in Foster, 2016, p.62), and where ethics is viewed 'as a process, rather than as a one-off occasion of "gaining consent"'(Lockowandt, 2013, p.17).

Of course, it is worth noting that whilst a commitment to situated ethics does not dismiss the requirement for established institutional ethical frameworks, increasing doubt is cast over the way ethical processes are becoming more about risk management, and operationalised as a form of control (Power, 2004). On this, Pels (2000) contends that institutional ethics are less about the protection of research participants or scholars and are instead materialising as a form of governmentality: 'being reformed so as to function as an alternative, qualitative form of the assessment of anthropological performance' (p.142). However, as Foster insists, for now, these 'very distinct approaches need to be held in tension with each other' (2016, p.61).

Whilst I acknowledge the validity and necessity of written consent in relation to the university's ethical processes, I have felt the need to 'push back' against 'the prescriptive description' (Harper & Corsin-Jimenez, 2005. p.10) of ethics. My research involved requesting signatures from individuals whose English is limited and/or who have a relationship with form-filling that is steeped in oppressive power dynamics and often connected to inhumane processes associated with their immigration case. Requesting individuals to fill out yet another form that depersonalises them through bureaucratic process does not translate to an ethics of care. Furthermore, an overt focus on the 'technical issues' inherent in form-filling can lead to:

> demeaning relationships with our subjects of research and predetermines the research itself - where, for example, the 'information' involved in informed consent already places, and defines subjects in a proto-proprietorial relationship with researchers (p.10).

In these moments, I perceived a danger of triggering a 'fear that involvement would be linked, and possibly damaging to, asylum applications' (Higgins & O'Donnell, 2008, 167), which in turn would have restricted participation. To mitigate this risk, I developed a creative and interactive exercise that each individual took part in multiple times across the course of the process. This allowed them to enact their consent through continued engagement.

Image 12: Maryhill Integration Network – consenting hands

This exercise also offered each project member the option of establishing a pseudonym of their choice, which invited each person to situate themselves within the research on their own terms. Throughout the thesis I have enjoyed adopting these pseudonyms; some for their playfulness and some for the reasonings and emotions attached to people's choices. All pseudonyms are *italicised* throughout for clarity. I have also chosen to adopt pseudonyms when referencing staff members or other artists associated with any of the projects. I do this to offer parity in how individuals within the text are presented, in the

knowledge that staff and artists have and continue to receive ongoing credit for the work they did on the projects elsewhere in the public domain.

By choosing to take a situated approach I attempted to resist enacting a 'condescending ethics' that tends 'to position participants as 'other' (Foster, 2016, p.62). The exercise instead set out to allow consent to be a creative and discursive element of the work, which in turn prompted questions and fed into the themes of the research itself. My decision to develop consent in this way, speaks to Harper and Corsin-Jimenez (2005) who encourage fellow anthropologists to 'stress the 'ethnographicness' of our ethics' (p. 10).

Negotiating the question of re-presentation

Denzin (1997) argues that 'the worlds we study are created through the texts that we write' (p.33) and that, in the twenty-first century qualitative researchers will have a responsibility to adopt a 'multiperspectival epistemology that thickens and makes more complex the very processes' that they wish to 'capture and represent in the reflective texts' (p.36). In order to avoid an approach that confines the voices of others as being objects spoken for (p.43), researchers will be required to interrogate their own voice and the narratives they create, as part of the forms that their work are presented back in.

Resonant of hooks, who asserts that her own choice of voice and writing style is a political one that challenges the rigidity of white male-privileging academia (hooks, 1994, p.71), Denzin (1997) contends that:

> [w]ritten texts are moral, cultural productions; they enact culture as they pass judgement on it. This means that every speaker-as-writer has an obligation to develop a personal style that brings meaning and morality in discourse. This will be done through intonation, inflection, pacing, and word choice. This style is political and conflictual. It refers to how something is morally expressed. A text should show, not tell. Talk about what something means to the other should be kept to a minimum. A minimalist text is saturated with theoretical understanding, but it does not announce or parade its theory' (p.39-40).

How one chooses to 'show, not tell' is of particular import when considering the

position of arts-based researchers, whose approach – as with mine – claims to prioritise multiplicity, co-production and an attention to fluid subjectivities. This is especially true when 'like more conventional research, the end 'product' of arts-based research is often taken out of the hands of those providing the data' (Foster, 2016, 45).

Whilst I am mindful that this thesis is not the post-modern text that Denzin advocates for and it no doubt contains more *talk about what something means* than he might approve of, I have approached the writing up of this research informed by this thinking. Furthermore, researchers working in the areas of performance ethnography (Jones, 2002), and ethno-mimesis (O'Neill, 2008) - who seek to present 'multivocal, dialogical texts' (O'Neill, 2002, p.71) bound by hybridity and rooted in ethical creative practice - have underpinned my thinking throughout.

This thesis – and the public work that has surrounded it – is in conversation with those involved in the research, as well as the reader and audience, in an attempt to work through a similar commitment to multi-vocality. I acknowledge Denzin's criticism of simply presenting 'photographs, videotapes, transcribed field notes, and interviews' as a manifestation of the truth (p.33). But I chose to utilise these forms, as part of my earlier described 'kaleidoscope of impressions and textures' (Law, 2004, p.6) that make up the experience of exploring the themes contained within the research. Throughout this thesis re-presentations of visual and text-based manifestations of ideas created by those I have worked with are placed alongside and in conversation with descriptions and interpretations of workshops and performance moments arising out of the work. In the spirit of conversation, as a way of consistently reminding the audience of my existence and influence within this research, I include my own creative writing and journal entries that emerged from the explorations.

These multi-vocal forms sit alongside extracts of transcripts of recorded conversations which have deliberately been presented in a denaturalised form

(Bucholtz, 2000, p.1461). The texts are presented without grammar, with repetition and mispronunciation and in a form that looks more like a poem than the conventional prose presentation because lines 'are broken at breath groups' (p.1462) rather than by commas and full-stops. This is not intended to impose an artistic or poetic structure on to people's responses, but instead it is an attempt to resist 'the privileging of written over oral discourse features' (p.1461), and to acknowledge that '[t]ranscription is not a transparent or politically innocent model for conceptualizing or engaging the world' (Conquergood, 2002, p.147). This has contributed to my practicing 'a reflexive discourse analysis' (Bucholtz, 2000, p.1461), that Bucholtz contends is vital in developing the understanding that '[t]ranscription is inevitably a creative, authorial act that has political effects' (p.1461). In making the transcripts visibly constructed I draw attention to my role as interpreter and re-presenter of text. Furthermore, I chose to acknowledge through textual formatting Foster's contention that 'stories cannot be seen as 'the simple unfolding of some inner truth' (Plummer, 1995) but rather something tellers are brought to say in a particular way, at a particular time and place' (Foster, 2016, 36).

At times the transcribed text is accompanied by a **Dixit** card, where the card was the visual trigger for the specific spoken response. The **Dixit** cards are also used as punctuation points throughout the thesis, offering the reader a moment to take a breath.

By striving for this thesis – and the accompanying work – to embrace a hybridity of forms and a multiplicity of styles I hope for it to be defined as a 'messy text' (Marcus, 1984; Denzin, 1997). One that is saturated with theory and yet reluctant to announce itself as so, and one that is conscious of its own narrative apparatuses (Denzin, 1997, p.224). It is a text that deliberately adopts a discursive, yet informal artistic and authorial voice as a political decision motivated by the desire to be inclusive, and to reach as many audiences as possible outside of academic circles (hooks, 1994). I do this, not in response to 'a demand for innovation' (Marcus, 2007, p.1128), and with the knowledge that it is probably what Marcus would now describe as 'baroque, rather than

experimental' (p.1129). I do it in order to find my voice and my writing strategy as a researcher, academic and artist who is committed to making visible the political aspects of my work; who is committed to the transgressive power in alternative academic strategies (Jones, 2010). In doing so, I believe I have the potential to make a contribution to broadening 'the conceptions not only of the tools that can be used to represent the world but even more to redefine and especially to enlarge the conceptual umbrella that defines the meaning of research itself' (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p.2).

Conclusion

To conclude I resist the urge to use more of my own words. Instead I turn to *Golden Lion*, whose reflections at the close of one of the *Share My Table* workshops speaks to the essence of the epistemological and methodological path that I have been on.

Image 13: Golden Lion reflects on one of our Share My Table workshops

Now, to the work.

Image 14: Share My Table project members design giant newspaper sculptures (EMH)

Part Two

Negotiating Representation

Image 15: Photo of final sequence from I Hear the Image Moving performance (NA)

[film of final sequence available to view in digital folder – see p.24 for access]

"Always asking asking
asking
put you in stress
give you a lot to do"

IV   Channelling and challenging the 'imperative to tell'

Introduction

The opening chapter of the analytical and critical body of this thesis focuses on one of the most pressing representational issues within the field of refugee arts and performance work. Drawing upon Thompson's critique of the 'imperative to tell' (2011, p.56), Salverson's concerns around an 'aesthetic of injury' (1999, p.35), as well as Jeffers' theoretical work on 'bureaucratic performance' and the emergence of the 'endearing refugee' (2012, p.44), I offer an analysis of the ways in which the theme of staging suffering emerged within *Share My Table*, *Echo*, and *Maryhill Integrated Sound*.

There is an expectation placed upon arts projects to offer participating individuals an opportunity to tell their story. Framed as an empowering and healing process, often tied in with a social justice agenda, this narrative is supported as much by artists and participants themselves, as it is within funder-facing, impact-driven conversations. It is a compelling narrative, and one that I have subscribed to at different moments throughout my career, especially in light of my experience of arts projects that contribute to a process of personal and community transportation (Nicholson, 2014, p.15).

However, I have also been involved in experiences where the creative enabling of a voice has felt less like an invitation to speak, or 'a self-directed action' (Thompson, 2011, p.45) and more like a gentle but definitive demand to disclose. I have, much to my discomfort, witnessed and been involved with people's stories being extracted and re-contextualised or presented in ways that felt exposing to the individuals. With the desire to 'challenge society and its marginalising, hegemonic discourses' (Foster, 2016. p.89) providing justification for extractive processes, an artist's vision or the strategic agenda of an organisation was seen to take precedence over the participants' right to silence (Foster, 2016). Or to speak on their own terms. The balance between 'the need

to challenge society' and 'protecting people's right to speak or not speak' (Preston, 2013, p.68) had been lost.

Understanding ethical and artistic complexities of provoking an *imperative to tell* or utilising an *aesthetic of injury* for an effective purpose (Thompson, 2011, p.6) becomes heightened when making work with, by, and for individuals navigating the asylum and immigration system. As Salverson stressed, how can the participatory performance world attend to the stories and experiences of those navigating the system without reproducing configurations of power that compound individuals in simplistic terms as the 'injured'? (1999, p.51) How can an 'analysis of the power relationships' (Choules, 2007, p.461) that exist when artists are paid to enter a space with the pre-determined goal to seek out stories from a community be critically acknowledged?

One way is for artists and scholars to reflect on these questions from within their own work. The ethical, artistic, and social implications of staging stories of, or in resistance to, suffering permeated all of the artistic work contained within my doctoral research. Each project grappled with it in distinct ways, some with a focused criticality and some through the work itself. It consistently arose as a knotty, uncomfortable issue. In this chapter I demonstrate how these projects consciously and unconsciously channelled and challenged the *imperative to tell*. I turn to encounters within these projects to demonstrate how nuanced and careful practices can responsibly negotiate, and at times, dismantle this call for injury.

Responding to contextual constraints

At an early planning meeting for *Share My Table*, myself and co-lead artist *Haree* spent considerable time reflecting upon the following outcome prescribed by the project producers:

> Participants are enabled to have a voice and respond to media headlines about refugees with their own stories and experiences (*Share My Table* Project Outcomes).

During discussion it became clear that we had both encountered versions of *aesthetic of injury*. One instance had been described to me by a project participant during initial scoping research for this doctoral thesis:

> *They explained that the film-artist rarely appeared during the process and then suddenly, near the end, was talking about making a film about them. 'They were expecting us to say everything inside us. And then when we saw the film many of us were shocked. The artist had used sections of the interview we had asked them not to, and shown people's young families, which again they had asked not to'. She explained that they hadn't seen the final film until the public showing leaving no space for objections. She also described an event in which a member of the producing organisation (a charity that supports those seeking asylum) – in front of the public audience – rearranged individuals participating in a panel discussion to have 'staff on one side, refugees on another' (Research Journal).*

This example and other similar experiences with stories being exploited and trust broken enabled us to articulate a shared discomfort with the approach applied within the project outcome described above. It prompted us to acknowledge the ethical and artistic limitations and tensions present in these practices.

At the core of our struggle with this Project Outcome was the complicating factor that peoples' stories were being asked to respond directly 'to media headlines about refugees'. Whilst never articulated explicitly in the project's written outcomes it became clear through discussion with the Scottish Refugee Council and Tramway that they hoped these stories would help counter negative headlines dominating the UK media landscape. Or at least support the more sympathetic media work published within Scotland. *Share My Table* was being positioned, on some level, as a myth-busting project that could contribute to more positive messaging around refugees and those seeking asylum.

This instrumentalisation of the arts connects directly to the wider strategic work of the Scottish Refugee Council in particular. I acknowledge the importance of media work that seeks to overtly and directly challenge dishonest, misrepresentative, or misguided coverage of the issues surrounding refugee and forced migration issues. However, I offer a critique of this intention within the

context of *Share My Table* to draw attention to how arts projects are designed and delivered, and by whom; and more broadly about how refugees and individuals seeking asylum are portrayed by organisations who work to support, or work in solidarity with those directly affected.

As discussed in Chapter One, a pervasive feature of the discourse surrounding migration is the focus on labels and categories. Crawley and Skleparis (2017) contend that both the political and media attention on 'refugee' v 'migrant', and even the attempts to develop new definitions for 'those trapped in the space between refugee and migrant' have proved 'largely incapable of adequately explaining the complex experiences and back stories of those' on the move (p.51). Instead more categories have been created, with the notion of 'real refugees' or good refugees having taken hold within social and public consciousness (p.49). In turn, *real* refugees are held up in opposition to those who are 'undeserving of protection' (p.49, also Sales, 2002). Consequentially, the idea of a bad, false, illegal refugee has emerged.

For *Share My Table* to explicitly ask individuals to respond to media headlines with their own stories, *Haree* and I were wary that those involved in the project might be required to fit into performance archetypes of the *endearing refugee* (Jeffers, 2012, p.44), or the good/deserving refugee. If each person's *bureaucratic performance* needed to be *convincing* enough to combat negative representations, or to provide an 'emotional hook' (Otiende, 2019) for the wider work of the organistion, where was the space for complexity within the project? Would this platform allow for transgression, aggression, rebellion, and what would happen (we had to ask ourselves) if a participants' story wasn't considered persuasive enough for an audience? What if, in fact, someone's experience reinforced a narrative that the Scottish Refugee Council was working to contest?

From an aesthetic perspective we also asked what this meant for the forms of artistic expression that could be explored – could symbolism or abstraction or

nuance emerge if a story sets out to be told in order to counter another narrative? To refer back to Thompson's work, where is the space for, or the acceptance of silence, or 'the possibility that silence could be a form of expression, coping, resistance and celebration of living' (Thompson, 2011, p.68), and what space is there to experiment with artistic forms and mediums? This desire for artistic utility makes authentic collaborative processes very difficult. The creativity and play within the space becomes directed, rather than exploratory. If the project outcome had been prescribed as an explicit marketing or PR-focused community project this tension might not exist. In a collaborative participatory arts space, however, where creative practice is about experimenting with self-expression the adoption of the *imperative to tell* was potentially very restrictive. At best limiting the direction of our exploration, and at worst restricting the project members to the role of performative representatives of 'refugeeness'.

As *Haree* and I reflected upon these complexities, we became increasingly committed to finding aesthetic strategies to challenge the *aesthetic of injury*, or the presentation of *the endearing refugee*. And so, like Foster's research with mothers engaging with Sure Start programmes, our process focussed on working to push against binary definitions or portrayals as a way of 'countering hegemonic representations' (Foster, 2012a, p.42) of individuals navigating the asylum and wider immigration system. It is not my intention to suggest that we were wholly successful in achieving this. To do so would disregard Salverson's warning about positioning oneself in the role of 'what Patti Lather calls 'researcher as 'Great Emancipator'' (1999, p.34). Instead, I recognise that the emergence of this intention to resist the 'contextual constraints' surrounding us (Thompson, 2011, p.17) as a key marker in asserting the Share My Table space as a site where agency could be activated.

Testing the thematic water

Our first attempt at moving beyond developing a representational aesthetic in *Share My Table* utilised the Scottish Refugee Council archives to collate a large selection of newspaper footage covering the negative to positive spectrum of

recent coverage around issues of migration. We were committed to introduce the project theme but there was no escaping that some of the media coverage was aggressive or accusatory and even when it was sympathetic the imagery was harrowing. We were apprehensive that individuals 'might feel overly exposed or vulnerable' (Guenette, 2009, p.86), and so to move 'past a scripted telling of painful events and into more reflective engagement' (p.86), we decided to focus upon developing an affective register (Thompson, 2011, p.7) with the group.

Packed around six metres of table, the group were presented with an equally long blank canvas that they were to develop into a collaborative artwork that speaks to media representation. Each person held a stack of photocopied newspaper coverage, a pair of scissors and the materials required to transfer the ink from the coverage on to the material. Working alongside one another each group member was asked to select coverage that resonated with them. We made it clear that no one was going to have to divulge their connection with this coverage – that this was a collective response and that we wanted them to act instinctively, rather than spend time delving too deeply into the content of each newspaper cutting. This was an invitation for people to feel their way through an idea; to gently show that this workshop space would encourage them to tune into and listen to their emotional and bodily responses to an image, word, or idea, as much as it might their cognitive responses.

Before transferring their chosen coverage to the material, there was a key step in the exercise that we hoped would speak to the group on both a symbolic and aesthetic level. We invited everyone to take their scissors and to cut through the coverage in any way inspired them, and to reconfigure the pieces into a new image. We encouraged them to take pleasure in cutting up this coverage, hoping they would enjoy the symbolic act of dismantling hegemonic media narratives that surround their lived experience. And, similarly, in the act of creating a collaged set of new images distanced from its original meaning, to find new meaning or affect through abstraction. *Haree*, the visual artist, explored pictorial composition with the group, encouraging everyone to think less about what their final collated image might 'say' and more about what it might invite

an audience or viewer to see afresh. Once they had spent time composing their image the group were encouraged to transfer their work on to the large canvas, where it would again be re-framed through its relation to the other work created around it. Very simply, and in the words of the 1980s Scottish post-punk band Orange Juice, this exercise was an invitation to 'rip it up and start again'. An attempt to aesthetically reclaim the media narrative.

To complete the exercise, we took the fabric off the table and displayed it to the group. We invited everyone to walk alongside it, taking their time to look deeply at what they saw; to allow themselves to feel their response and reflect upon what they had created together. In this moment, the atmosphere tangibly shifted. After hours of noisy chat and laughter, the room become tinged with something closer to sadness. Gathering into a circle, we asked everyone who felt comfortable to do so, to articulate how this piece of work they had created made them feel about the media and its depiction of migration. The following words were spoken:

> Provoked
> Aware
> Concerned
> Sad
> Hostile
> Gives Information
> Unrealistic
> Depressed
> So difficult
> Exploiting
> Sad
> Unfair
> Distanced

Despite the quietly anarchic intentions behind the exercise, it was clear that the dominant narrative of negativity would not easily be reclaimed. What was shared in these closing moments demonstrated that the group had been affected in ways we had not intended. In reaching for Guennette's *more reflective engagement*, that pushed beyond testimonial disclosure, it seemed we had brought everyone in the space to an overwhelming feeling of negativity. Would any attempt to critically interrogate this difficult and oppressive theme ultimately result in a sense of defeat?

Bishop might accuse our concerns here of falling into an 'insidious' trap of 'over-solicitousness' where 'idiosyncratic or controversial ideas are subdued or normalised' in an attempt to pre-determine 'what people are capable of coping with' (Bishop, 2012, p.26) She may be right. Our fear of upsetting, or re-traumatising individuals underpinned the delivery team's reflective discussions at the end of the session, and throughout the remainder of the project. We were conscious that, although we were inviting project members to engage in a collaborative arts process, it would be 'insidious' to pretend that we were all co-creators, with equal power.

Our concern here was ethical and rooted in a commitment to a 'care-full aesthetic' (Thompson, 2015, p.438) - a critical process I return to in the next section. Were artistic outcomes that left us informed, but dejected, the most stimulating art we could make? How could we take this 'unease, discomfort or frustration' (Bishop, 2012, p.26) and experiment with it, in order to reach 'a more complicated access to social truth' (p.26)? Thompson (2011) argues that 'the actual work of social change is bound up in how we create, who creates and when we create art' (p.11). It was through this early session that we were provoked to critically interrogate how we would ensure that this principle permeated our exploratory practice. We determined that any *effect* that the project might have on challenging perceptions of media representation must be carved out through working methods that enable those who are often categorised as the subject of media narratives to become authors of their own artistic stories. This was less about 'irreproachable sensitivity' (Bishop, 2012, p.26). This was about wanting to find ways to control the narrative, instead of being dictated to by the narratives that were already in place and dominating discussions.

This went on to manifest across the project, in part, through an ongoing exploratory relationship with newspaper itself, whereby it became a tool for our aesthetic inquiry rather than our theme. The texture, sound, and behavioural

properties of the material led to newspaper being manipulated for collages, sculptures, and even for dancing. These interactions shifted the voyeuristic gaze away from 'the refugee' and towards the construction of the image of refugee, raising questions about authorship, interpretation, and power. hooks asserts that critical pedagogy must ask questions of power. Here we followed her into a space of critical creativity as we turned our collective attention towards 'the issue of voice. Who speaks? Who listens? And why?' (hooks, 1994, p.40).

Demanding exploration not representation

Initial conversations with Maryhill Integration Network indicated that they too were interested in exploring the 'how' of the artistic work they embarked upon. This was brought to life within the *Maryhill Integrated Sound* project, through its commitment to artistic experimentation over representational aesthetics. Describing themselves as 'a temporary art radio station' that 'aims to promote radio as an art form, encouraging challenging and radical new approaches to the medium', *Radiophrenia* goes live for two weeks each year, transmitting music and sound that is experimental in style, tone, and spirt. The aim of their project with Maryhill Integration Network was to make an experimental piece of sound for broadcast. This tone was set in the first session, where project members were tasked by lead artists to split into groups and venture into the building to find and generate as much sound as possible. It was an open-ended task, with the invitation to be as abstract in our approach as possible. They did not want us to come back with a list of recorded sounds that were easily identifiable, instead encouraging us to search out aural ambiguity.

I found myself in a group with two young men I had only just met. Over the course of our task we recorded the sound of keys scraping along a radiator, a door creaking, toilets flushing, footsteps climbing stairs, fingers texting on a phone, deep breathing, the hyper screams of young children in a dance class, and even what we later claimed to be the sound of a flower growing in the community garden. Exploring the space around us, we chatted and laughed about the absurdity of what we'd been asked to do but remained committed to experimentation. Upon returning to the group our sounds were combined with

those of birds singing, cars parking, shoes squeaking across the floor, pages of books being turned, and an assortment of melodies from everyday life. Once shared, the sound artists transformed these random individual sounds into a collective soundscape. The room listened with surprise and intent:

> *Eyes down. Everyone listening hard. Smiling as they recognise a sound they collected, looking up and catching the eye of their partner in joint satisfaction. 'I was listening with my heart, not just my ears' someone said when it ended. (Research Journal, Sept 2017)*

Together we had created a piece of music that told the story of our group in the space in that particular moment. A story that project members could take pleasure in recognising themselves in. This lifted us away from the 'beholder bias' (Thompson, 2011, p.159) that often overwhelms arts projects. It placed 'an emphasis on the maker' and our process; on the 'participants co-creating work, from their own desires, delights and inspirations' (p.159). By removing the eyes and ears of any potential audience – despite knowing we were making a radio show for public listeners – the lead artists genuinely invited us to engage and explore as our full selves, rather than to deliver a specific narrative to fulfil an existing vision.

Over the following five sessions our sound tasks continued to focus on experimentation, and we were encouraged by the lead artists to 'listen deeply' (Research Journal) to the sounds attached to certain aspects of our lives. We remembered places we'd been, described people we loved, analysed photographs and images that held significance for us. We performed sounds we enjoyed, all through the language of what could be heard. What emerged was a collage of fragmented discussions and stories, ranging from attending a wedding to giving birth, from skimming stones on a Loch to walking down a busy street and hearing your mother-tongue, from missing the party spirit of your home city to an absurd, heated debate about whether Muslims are allowed to have dogs as pets.

Through a commitment to collating a 'micrology' (O'Neill et al, 2002; O'Neill, 2008) of sounds, the artists engaged us in what O'Neill describes as 'the politics of feeling' (O'Neill, 2010 & 2013). Here, our creative tasks drew our attention to

the way emotionality and feeling 'is embedded in the materiality of social life' (2010, p.101), whilst never expecting any of the group to provide an extensive testimony attached to any of the memories being shared. The collection of sound stories began to 'provide a fuller understanding of lived cultures' (p.101) but avoided the *imperative to tell*. This was an exploratory rather than representational approach to a creative inquiry, and one that served to undermine any notions that an artistic practice could stage *the* story of an individual or a community. This felt closer to what Jones (2002) describes as 'the melding of many authoritative texts, many realities' and 'prodding the participants to create their own truths' (p.1) through their recollection of aural memory. By embracing the multiplicity of experiences contained within these intersecting realities, the project disrupted the lure to stage a singular convincing *bureaucratic performance*.

Embodying multiple truths

Multiple truths, multiple stories, and multiple perspectives became a key feature of *Share My Table*. Triggered by conversations within the group around what it felt like to be represented by somebody else, what it felt like for narratives and attitudes –positive and negative – to be attached to images you are connected to, I spent a series of workshops focusing in on tableaux and how meaning-making is constructed through the physical and spatial storytelling that emerges from bodies in space. As part of this we tasked project members to work in small groups to construct images they felt showed the way the media portrayed the figure of the 'asylum seeker', 'refugee', and 'migrant'. We invited project members to think and discuss, not just what images the media show, but how the media constructs the narratives attached to these images.

The tableaux the groups presented, revealed an overwhelming sense of the pressure caused by binary opinions the group perceived in the media world surrounding them and their stories. Almost every image reflected the striking presence of individuals navigating a world that welcomes you with one hand and pushes you away with the other; revealing the atmosphere the individuals in the group felt they were living within. It was the meeting point between negative

and positive, welcoming and unwelcoming that revealed itself as the pressure point, where the struggle takes place. Reflective discussion at the end of the session revealed that this conflict extended far beyond media representation.

Although quick to say that Scotland and Scottish people were very friendly (a sentiment project members seemed to want to stress throughout my research), the group communicated a shared agreement that conflicting messages surrounded them in their everyday lives. Cited as a significant source of stress, this spoke directly to what Khosravi (2009) refers to as living within 'hostile hospitality':

> partly caring, partly punitive; partly endangering (deportation), partly saving…; partly forced, partly empowering; partly a site of hospitality, partly a site of hostility (p.53).

Khosravi theorises specifically around detention practices, but the description he offers resonates with the complex and stressful conditions enacted within the project members' tableaux. The asylum seeker, often portrayed as 'in need of guidance' (p.53) is simultaneously constructed as the 'adult responsible for his or her deeds and choices' (p.53), with no acknowledgment of the wider economic and social global (as well as local) factors that determine their current circumstances. In the context of Glasgow – and Scotland more broadly – I suggest this experience be referred to as living within a *welcome-unwelcome dialectic*. One prescribed by state structures, media reporting and political rhetoric, and upheld and enacted within everyday, as well as bureaucratic interactions.

This conflicting web of welcome and exclusion was further articulated by the group through a writing exercise done in response to their tableaux. Upon seeing each tableaux every group member was asked to finish the statement 'I see…'. As with previous exercises we encouraged the group to look beyond the literal, and to look deeply, inviting the group to listen with their eyes (Back, 2007, p.100). Often applied to the researcher in the room, and to their observations about 'the unsaid' in an interview context, this term resonates with the way we invited group members to pay 'attention to nuances, silences, embodied feeling, and also making links with wider social justice' (Foster, 2011, p.6). We asked

project members to describe not what they saw, but to try to articulate and interpret the feelings, experiences, and broader narratives they felt were present within each image.

As the session came to a close, we invited project members to share the sentences they had written. As we listened to them read aloud, it became clear that what was emerging was a collective poem:

> I see a family standing in a queue
> I see an administrator
> I see suffering and fear
>
> I see some people are happy
> I see talk of danger
> I see stop
>
> I see someone waiting and the traffic light is green
> I see praying
> I see someone working
>
> I see a family
> I see a student
> I see stop
>
> I see people who are worried
> I see the meaning of risk and fear to get to safety
> I see someone who is angry – she is screaming
> I see excitement
> I see that they are very nervous
>
> I see happiness
> I see fear
>
> I see someone taking a photograph
>
> I see sad people
> I see right people
>
> I see danger
> I see some people who are sad
> I see someone stopping someone else

I see STOP

I have seen joy and happiness
I have seen perseverance
I see happy

(Audio recording of full multi-vocal poem can be accessed through link provided on p.24)

Almost by accident, a new piece of artistic work was created and, by engaging with the research process of *listening to each other with our eyes*, the group had journeyed towards a process of collective knowledge-forming. Leavy (2015) contends that through arts-based research we find connections 'with those similar and dissimilar' (p.xi), that we 'open up new ways of seeing and experiencing and illuminate that which otherwise remains in the dark' (xi). This piece of work shed light on the reality of living within the social conditions of hostile hospitality; of navigating the *welcome-unwelcome dialectic*. A reality punctuated by the violent repetition of STOP, but one that stands in direct contrast to a singular narrative of trauma. For it was a multiplicity of voices that made up this story; different perspectives, generations, nationalities, and languages combined to present a contradictory and complicated vision of emotions and experiences.

Weeks later the group worked with sound artist *Kia* to make their poem into an audio track. Spoken by a chorus of voices, this brought aural form to this commitment to multiplicity. Months later *Precise*, *Ezel*, *Sami*, *Bold Solicitor* and *Mary* performed an edited version of the piece as part of our final performance *I Hear The Image Moving*. A key moment for the team on the second night of our performance was when *Sab* (then newly-appointed Chief Executive of the Scottish Refugee Council) acknowledged to the group that one of the moments he found most moving was in this visual and textual articulation of the pressure and pain that comes from being half welcomed and half pushed away. He too had experienced the feeling of STOP.

This offering of *Sab*'s own experience of *hostile hospitality* resonated with the group. In our workshop session following the performance, it was clear that, not

only had project members felt moved knowing someone else understood their experience - especially someone in a position of power who had lived their experience - it was also a source of pride. By focusing on redistributing whose perspective the world is seen from, we created a nuanced way of acknowledging the intensity of navigating the system, and collectively generated a form of knowledge production that offers insight into what can be learned when the subject, rather than being observed and analysed, becomes their own author.

Carrying the burden

During my time with Maryhill Integration Network, the organisation's Director *Reem* reflected on why she does the work that she does:

> what I have learned from life
> is that
> if you haven't experienced something yourself
> you're never going to believe it

Reem regularly narrates her own story on local and national platforms, sharing the bleakest and most triumphant aspects of her lived experience. Her belief leaves her unflinching when sharing details of her own experiences with these public audiences; dedicated to bringing them as close to believing as possible.

Witnessing *Reem* speak in public I recall the theoretical discourse of Cummings (2016), whose analysis of the field of refugee performance draws attention to the emotional investment required to deliver *bureaucratic performances*, as well as the personal strength needed to carry the burden of representation:

> When scholarship on refugee theatre considers empathy, it tends to focus, not surprisingly, on the audience's empathy or on whether or not the style of the performance encourages that kind of engagement' (p.162).

Cummings suggests that this focus has led to scholars overlooking the empathic requirements of the storyteller (whether that be in a theatre performance, a talk delivered at a charity AGM, or answering questions in a Home Office interview). Cummings demands more attention be paid to the labour of the teller – not just the labour that telling requires – but the labour required to simultaneously interpret an audience's response: 'empathically evaluating the

listener, and assessing the risks and rewards for particular strategies' (p.185). Watching *Reem* as she confronts and shares her experiences, it is apparent that her testimonies are rooted in her agency. In many respects, she embodies Thompson's description of individuals that speak from 'the imperative within' (2011, p.57). However, in light of Cumming's theories *Reem's* efforts can be understood as 'empathic labo[u]r': that which a 'storyteller undertakes in order to imagine her audience and create a performance that will move them (p.162). *Reem's* ability to undertake ongoing *empathic labour* in the form of recalling her own narrative demands explicit recognition, and the work she does with it in order to impact people, arguably is extracted by external factors.

Reem's words might not be mined by an artist or an organisation, but they are compelled out of her by her ongoing commitment to supporting and advocating for individuals within the asylum system, combined with her awareness of the broader social and political injustices that lead to individuals seeking asylum. She shares and labours, labours and shares in order to expand support and political will for those trapped within the system. She is not speaking of her pain 'to permit a form of self-realisation' (Thompson, 2011, 156), instead she focusses on inspiring an 'ethical response' from her audience - it is 'a call to action' made 'not in a cognitive but in an affective register' (p.156). This reading of *Reem's* relationship to the re-telling her own experiences recognises that Thompson's *imperative to tell* operates on a macro-extraction level and is fuelled by the very injustices that the work Maryhill Integration Network creates operates within. *Reem* speaks – consciously carrying the burden of her *bureaucratic performance* – so that others will not have to.

Reem articulated a different stance to the idea of creative projects negotiating with an *aesthetic of injury*, from myself and *Haree* (*Share My Table* lead artists). Leading in the development of *Echo* alongside dancer artist *Nic, Reem* was clear from the outset that, although the majority of the movement work would focus on the joy and strength offered by intercultural exchange, portraying suffering would be an important component of the work. Her insights into how affective and effective this mode of storytelling can be, enabled her to engage its power.

This intention, and the inevitable complexities accompanying it, manifested most poignantly in a dance duet that ultimately became the opening scene of the final performance. The dance saw two project members engage in a duet that responded to Jackie Kay's poem *Glasgow Snow*, written for the Scottish Refugee Council in 2013. The dance interpreted the poem's story of a women, 'found in the snow, in Glasgow' who, lost to the despair of seeking asylum, is aided and supported by the actions of 'a girl' who 'took [her] under her wing'.

Unmentioned in the poem, the performance positioned the 'kindness of that stranger in that winter snow' as a white Scot. During the dance she bore the physical weight of the asylum-seeking woman, who was played by a black South African community dancer. Directing the work, *Reem* was clear it was imperative for the dancer portraying the refugee to be seen as vulnerable. For audiences to be persuaded that they have a moral responsibility towards 'New Scots' arriving in the city and to trigger their action, the dancer was asked to show herself to be in need of saving.

At the initial stages of development I felt uneasy at the meaning being created through this visual narrative. I was concerned that the piece was in danger of fostering what Danewid (2017) perceives as a 'general problematique, endemic to both left-wing activism and academic debate' (p.1675); that of offering up performance signifiers which foster 'a colonial and patronising fantasy of the white man's burden' (p.1675). Before this fantasy could take root, however, project members and the lead dance artists made a case for the dance to be interpreted differently. It was suggested that instead of 'the refugee' being carried, a more equal distribution of burden and power between the two dancers would better reflect reality. It would, they argued, be 'closer to what was happening in the room' (Research Journal) in terms of how 'local' and 'New Scots' developed relationships through Maryhill Integration Network. In turn, other project members intervened, reinforcing Reem's argument that the necessity for a clear victim in need of help, was 'closer to what was happening

in the real world' (Research Journal). From their perspective, the vulnerability of 'the refugee' needed emphasis in order to make the rest of the dance piece, which symbolised communities coming together, more emotionally compelling.

This critical debate was revisited numerous times during the project, and consensus had not been reached by the time of public performance. What had emerged in the room though, was a complex engagement with Cox's 'victimhood-hope dialectic' (2012, p.118). One that understood this performance troupe could be critically engaged with as a tool by which to persuade and activate an audience's response, but one that needed careful management to avoid erasing the fluid exchange that takes place between settled and newly arrived individuals, that the group felt was more authentic. After the project, *Ninilia*, who performed in the dance, articulated to me how she and her dance partner had physically negotiated the tension held within these two positions:

> there was an emphasis that we made
> on trying to make the actual duet itself
> no seeming as though I was relying on her
> because I was meant to present myself as
> you know
> the refugee who couldn't really do things herself
> and both of us were like
> we are not doing that
> so we did kind of play against it
> I was lifting her sometimes
> she was lifting me
> she would pull me
> and I would pull her
> so it was like this relationship building where we were helping each other rather than this literal
> because I know myself
> I would have been uncomfortable
> with that narrative as well

The discomfort *Ninilia* describes, her fear of presenting 'the refugee' stripped of resistant qualities and personal agency (Jeffers, 2012), and the efforts made by the two dancers to offer a more nuanced picture of this encounter in the snow, embody the representational risks involved in choosing to stage suffering. Simultaneously though, the experience demonstrates the rich potential of engaged collaborative practice, where distinct opinions and creative drives

engage in critical dialogue to move towards a performance and aesthetic outcome that sustains complexity.

While *Reem* was clear about her position from the outset, space was made available in the workshops for the dance to evolve and be influenced by the collaborators in the room. In the final performance the language of movement came to signify the importance of, and strength found in, relationships of reciprocity. Whilst, the spoken poem was able to focus the audience's attention on a woman strategically stripped of her agency by the Home Office:

> 'another figure, sum, unseen,
>
> another woman sent home to danger, dumb, afraid' (Kay, 2013).

By holding these two representations in one space simultaneously, the dance managed to contain both a picture of what was possible when meaningful connections are made between people, and what can happen when the full force of the asylum system's biopolitics of failure asserts itself upon individuals. Rather than engaging with 'matters of empathy, generosity and hospitality' (Danewid, 2017, p.1675), as a means of disconnecting from 'questions of responsibility, guilt, restitution, repentance, and structural reform' (p.1675), the dance that was eventually presented to an audience was working to use matters of empathy to direct our gaze towards these structural injustices.

Beyond the final performance, it is important to analyse what can be learnt from the *how* of this creative engagement, and the importance of positionality when engaging in critical discussions around an *aesthetic of injury*. It is fundamental to note that neither dancer involved in telling this story had any experience of seeking asylum. Throughout the project I never witnessed any project member being invited to disclose their experiences as part of the creative exploration. Whilst there were many moments where individuals would speak about their asylum cases, these tended to be in the spaces in between the creative practice, over tea and biscuits. In the workshops there was never an *imperative to tell*, instead the project focused on our physicality; inviting stories, cultures, and personalities to be expressed through movement rather than speech. Project members were never individually expected to deliver their testimonies. The only

pressure to present an *aesthetic* of injury was applied by *Reem* upon two project members whom I believe she felt were – perhaps in an act of artistic solidarity – able to carry that burden.

In the discourse surrounding an *aesthetic of injury*, a key critique is equally concerned with the 'who' constructing the *aesthetic of injury* as with the aesthetic itself. For one artist I spoke to – who referred to the trend as 'tragedy porn' – it was 'insiders' (Cox, 2014, p.22) refusing to reflect upon 'privileged position' (Choules, 2007, p.461), serving careers, organisational agendas, and white saviour causes that were seen to be doing the harm. It was artists and producers, without direct lived experience, creating and staging work without a critical consciousness of the ramifications of this particular aesthetic trend, who were positioned as the danger. What she advocated was an artistic field better represented by makers and organisers with lived experience. Not because they instinctively know the best ethical route to take when making work, but because, to return to Cumming's analysis, it would be they who could best understand how to confront, share, and assess the risks involved in the telling of a story, in whatever artistic form or style was used.

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag (2003) ponders who has a right to view images of extreme suffering. 'Perhaps', she suggests, it is only:

> those who could do something to alleviate it—say, the surgeons at the military hospital where the photograph was taken—or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be (p.34).

A similar sentiment can be applied when considering the re-construction of suffering within arts processes. Should it be only those with the lived experience of the pain of forced migration who should guide how that pain is explored? While *Reem* did not seem to explicitly grapple with the discomfort that myself and *Haree* experienced in our own relationships to staging stories of suffering, I would contend that there is less urgency or need for her to do so. *Reem* has spent the last twenty years of her life not just recalling her own experiences but labouring through the complex empathic work required in sharing one's suffering. She understands, both materially and emotionally, the impact of

placing her story in front of audiences, and so by implication she has an insight into how suffering, as an artistic concept, might be wielded to achieve both an affect, and an effect.

And for Cox's so-called 'insiders', like myself? It is not for me to necessarily submit to the role of bystander, witness or, at worst, voyeur, but to understand that my desire to act requires a more in-depth and challenging interrogation of one's ethical and instinctive register. One must first engage with what Choules (2007) determines is a social justice discourse predicated on an interrogation of privilege and a 'radical refocusing of the issue and explicit analysis of power' (p.463). And, if one decides to proceed, it must be done, not with a sense of entitlement to hear or share somebody else's story, or in fact to 'give a voice to' another person's experience, but upon the principle that one's role is to utilise one's artistic abilities to join in voice with those who chose to artistically express.

There is no simple conclusion, but what I do know is that, whilst searching to go beyond my own discomfort as an 'insider', and engaging myself actively in the implications of my positionality, I was prompted to deeply interrogate the implications of *who* is making the work. This question, combined with how, and what arts processes are being undertaken, resonates and re-emerges throughout this research. There may be no clear conclusion about whether some people should or should not being making work in this context, but I hope that this chapter and what follows makes a valuable contribution to an ongoing, and much required dialogue about the ethics of staging the stories of refugees.

Conclusion

Halfway through the *Share My Table* project, project member *Faith* said to me 'I love that you have never asked me to tell my story'. It was an uninvited comment but one that resonated with me deeply, given the critical thinking I had been engaging in around these ideas, and the fact that the project *was* on

some level asking her to share her story. 'Why?' I asked, and she replied:

> we carry so much with us
> inside our hearts
> and every day we are refugees
> or asylum seekers to someone
> here we are ourselves

Within the reflective sessions at the project's conclusion, a number of people echoed their relief at not being asked to explain themselves, or for their 'story' to be at the centre of the artistic inquiry.

This space for silence, the invitation not to speak that Thompson advocates for, was a source of personal pride within *Share My Table*. This is not to say that people's experiences were not a major part of the work, at points these were very much at the fore, but this chapter has set the tone of the thesis by demonstrating how practices were developed to offer project members 'indirect' (*Bold Solicitor*) routes into creatively exploring themselves, rather than the narratives that are assumed to define them. Throughout this chapter I have drawn attention to how this sentiment was an approach shared by all three projects. I have worked to untangle some of the ethical and representational challenges and aesthetic opportunities that emerge from these practices, whilst also trying to construct performances to be witnessed by an audience. By offering an insight from within, I have asked questions about the 'how' of participatory arts practice and contributed to discussions about 'who'.

I have demonstrated that an *aesthetic of injury* and the *imperative to tell* are recurring and powerful practices that circulate around participatory arts projects with refugees. They are ideas that must be critically engaged with by practitioners directly, not left for theoretical analysis outside of the workshop room. By placing this chapter at the start of this theoretical journey I hope that it sets up a frame through which the rest of the thesis can be read.

Image 16: Final image from Echo dance performance (MIN)

Image 17: Ri moves through Room 1 of I Hear The Image Moving exhibition (NA)

Image 18: Raju reflects on integration

"I was stone

a statue

but little by little

everything is moving

everything is being

socialised"

V   Journeys with *creative self-authorship*

Introduction

To begin this chapter, I recall an interactive warm-up exercise that I facilitated with *Share My Table* project members. Though fleeting (like many of the meaningful encounters I describe throughout this thesis) the way that project members responded to it opened up a theoretical direction to my study. One that has continued to provide me with a deep and reflexive anchor for the practical work and the accompanying research.

Synthesized with the work of Risam (2018), and her analysis of the agency present within 'the refugee selfie', this encounter picks up from the questions raised in the previous chapter and gives way to an examination of the concept which I term *creative self-authorship*. Taking influence from McPherson's theoretical work (2010) on the desire refugees have to 'self-author towards a goal of realising their potential' (p.560) *creative self-authorship* is the process by which individuals involved in participatory arts projects become the creators of their own work, rather than objects of exploration within a project. I explore how these processes manifested within the creative practices across projects, and how this connects to a wider discourse surrounding the representation of refugee subjectivity. I make a case for how arts practice can reject processes which fall into aesthetic or methodological traps that locate project members as the 'epistemic object in construction' (Malkki, 1995, p.497). Rather, I argue that practitioners and collaborators should strive to develop alternative practices and opportunities for individuals to engage themselves in a self-determining process that places an individual's creativity, imaginative capacity, and artistic ideas – not just 'their story' – at the centre of exploration.

The chapter ends with a discussion about how a practice of *creative self-authorship* might comfortably sit alongside – or in fact be the guiding principle – of collaborative participatory practice, which brings together the work,

imaginative potential, and skills of professional and non-professional artists.

Playing with portraits

All *Share My Table* project members were sitting on the floor in pairs, opposite one another; each person with a large piece of card and a pen. The task I gave them was to simultaneously draw a portrait of their partner, encouraging those in the room to look deeply at and within each other. I pressed them to not be satisfied by initial observations and a hurried sketch, but to take their time to see the layers present within one another's faces and to scribe as much detail as possible. Once everyone had drawn a picture of their partner, they were asked to place one word on the page alongside the image. A word that articulated a quality that they had seen in their partner as they drew. The difficulty with this task was that the pen and paper were behind their backs and so, throughout the exercise, they were unable to see anything they were doing.

Tillman describes developing portraits as 'a fundamental artistic act', one that contains 'vulnerability and exposure and embarrassment and honesty' (Tillman in Lemke, 2010). In the exercise I described, Tillman's fundamentals were accompanied by play, talk, and laughter. As people simultaneously posed and created, the reciprocal act gave way to what Connell (2018) describes as the 'space of hospitality' that opens up during the time it takes to draw or paint a portrait. Inspired by Levinas' centralising of the face-to face encounter, Connell suggests that this exchange is 'a space that is dedicated to getting to know the stranger and there is a risk involved in that space' (2018). Amongst all the laughter in the room, this risk could be felt in our workshop. Everyone present was new to the project, and no one quite knew why they were being asked to take on this exercise. In that moment, a shared risk was assumed, and it is for this reason that I chose the task as one of the first things we would do together.

Once all the portraits were up on the wall, we reflected upon what we saw. We discussed what it felt like to see yourself through somebody's else's eyes and particularly what it felt like for someone else to identify a quality they saw in

you. This led on to a discussion about photography and how it felt to be photographed without permission. As a result of this discussion, an agreement was made: 'that no one was to take photographs of people – the artwork yes – but not each other, without explicit permission' (Research Journal). Then, following a side remark from one of the project team about taking photos of themselves, almost everyone in the room started taking selfies with their camera phones. Though I had previously facilitated this exercise many times, the glorious spontaneity of this moment had never occurred before. For a period of about five minutes, thirty-five people were posing and capturing themselves with their portrait, and the space once again became full of noise and laughter. Whilst we had just established a rule about not taking photos of one another, there was, of course, absolutely nothing to stop people from capturing this moment of themselves, for themselves.

Selfies, objects and agency

Risam (2018) argues that 'the refugee selfie' has opened up a new digital space through which individuals can self-represent, and in doing so, enact an agency that they are deprived of through media depictions from the Global North (p.63) Risam contends there is a growing interest in refugees taking selfies (upon arrival in Europe, crossing internal borders, or meeting with high profile personalities). This has, she explains, given rise to a genre of the 'migrant-related selfie', i.e. photographs of refugees taking selfies that are then widely 'circulated as newsworthy novelties' (p.60). These, however, only serve to reinforce the Orientalist practice of presenting the 'refugee as an object' (p.59). Specific images are prescribed as *the* 'migrant experience', whilst 'simultaneously being used to discipline and deny the particularities of experience' (p.65). In the context Risam describes, they could also be viewed as propping up 'the bureaucratic cataloguing of the world' (Sontag, 1973, p.16), a contemporary process that validates experiences by affixing to them 'a photograph-token of the [non] citizen's face' (p.16 – with my bracketed insertion).

In contrast to this, 'refugee selfies' (p.59) – the images that are *not* being

disseminated across mainstream media – are produced, not 'for the gaze of the Global North' but instead 'for the self, for other refugees, and for family members and friends who have stayed behind' (p.68). Consequently the individuals within the image become 'the subject, not the object' (p.67) and Risam theorises these selfies in relation to Spivak's 'Darstellung —"placing there" or a "portrait" (1998, p.108)' (p.67). In circulation through network routes such as Facebook, Instagram, Viber and WhatsApp, these images remain invisible from dominant public gaze, but highly visible within a more personalised digital landscape.

It is through this invisible visibility that:

> refugee selfies lay claim to self-representation, reasserting the subjectivity and humanity of the refugee and constituting a bold reclamation of identity that challenges the subject–object binary created by circulation of the migrant-related selfie (p.59).

Whilst Risam's assertions respond to photographic representation in a global context her analysis resonates with the workshop encounter I described above. The individuals in the room were adamant that being photographed was something they wanted to be in control of, and that being made the 'object' within the space was something they would be uncomfortable with. However, the desire to self-document the self, to enact Spivak's *portrait* in front of their own messy portrait, carried a different energy and provoked a response imbued with the 'possibility of agency' (p.67).

Myers (2016) suggests that in taking a photograph, we seek 'to remind ourselves that we exist', and that this urge to remind oneself becomes more urgent when your legal status is precarious (Myers in Bush, 2016). These selfies spoke to Myers' assertion even more acutely because they were not documents *for* the project. Rather, they were taken by and *for* the individuals themselves; to look at, to share, to delete. In this way, within the context of an arts project framed by pre-determined aims and outcomes, the project members resisted what Risam refers to as the 'commodification and appropriation for political ends'(Risam, 2018, p.68) of documentation. This resistance was achieved by explicitly laying claim to self-representation within the workshop space and

creating documents of the project that would forever remain invisible from the *dominant public gaze* of the project funders, producers and coordinators. Whether knowingly or not, this operated as an act of 'refusal'; pushing back against the increasing need within workshop spaces to document and disseminate experiences in order to legitimise them. Most importantly, the project members seized 'the opportunity to create alternate realities that exist beyond the dominant ones that seek to circumscribe the migrant experience' (69).

Throughout my research this encounter operated as an ongoing reminder for me to resist aesthetic practices that located project members as objects. Furthermore, it led directly to my interest in documenting and analysing processes of *self-authoring* that emerged within the projects. When read alongside Hall's theory on 'identity as a 'production' (1994, p.222), which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (p.222), the portrait-selfie encounter signals the importance of viewing identity as being formed not just *within* representation, but *through* it. In light of this, what can be learned from artistic explorations with self-definition, where individuals construct themselves as *the subject, not the object*? The rest of this chapter examines this question in a bid to make the case that participatory practice *must* support individuals to define the parameters of their own representation, whether that representation be designed for a public gaze or is destined to remain within the workshop space.

Being the photographer

In the weeks that followed the portrait session, the creative activities undertaken within *Share My Table* continued to provoke questions from the group about authorship and representational responsibility, as well as the purpose of photography and whose work is seen and why. There was a general consensus that representations of forced migration were 'oscillating between invisibility and overexposure in the public sphere' (Woolley, p.3). In order to circumnavigate this gaze – and still inspired by the act of self-representation enacted through the selfies – we began to explore what could be discovered

from being the meaning-maker or storyteller behind a camera, rather than the object in front it.

To do this we considered adopting the method of Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997), which has gained increased prominence in participatory research projects. Photovoice is championed as a way for people to critically assess and present back their experiences (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001) because 'images can be a powerful tool to present new perspectives in research' (Lenette, 2019, p.148) and as 'a way to recover subjugated knowledge' (Prins, 2011, p.427). We were interested in the potential for this within our own project, as well as for 'capturing ineffable, hard-to-put-into-words experiences' and 'offering rich metaphorical and symbolic statements to convey complex ideas more effectively' (Lennette, 2019, 148). However, we were conscious of Sontag's (1973) caution that '[n]eeding to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is an aesthetic consumerism to which everyone is now addicted' (p.18). Furthermore, we wanted to respond to conversations that had taken place with the group about the ability for photographs to obscure as well as reveal truths (Haaken and O'Neill, 2014).

Vitally, we wanted to stay true to *Share My Table* being an aesthetic and conceptual exploration, not solely a research project. Sontag (1973) argues that:

> [p]hotography implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from *not* accepting the world as it looks (p.17).

We were interested in inviting project members to *not accept the world as it looks*. And so, inspired by the agency and sense of responsibility inherent in 'The Do It Yourself' approach (Permanent Culture, 2020), we delved deeper into the conceptual landscape that was emerging in our creative workshops, by using matchboxes, camera films and black tape to build pinhole cameras from scratch.

With a focus on 'what does it feel like to be the author of the story, and what

responsibility do you have for your 'subjects'?' (Research Journal), project members were invited to use their self-made cameras to take photographs of the city – 'as they see it' (Research Journal). We knew that the resulting photographs would not be clearly defined because pinholes play with light and dark. What we hoped was that the abstract nature of the work produced would further challenge us to creatively consider the themes of what is seen, what is shown, and what is obscured.

The blurry and fragmented visuals subsequently created by the pinhole cameras spoke of an experience of a city that was on the move. The hazy outlines of flowers, buses, bins, and birds emerged alongside bursts of colour and streaks of darkness. The choices made signalled a distinct focus on public spaces, with few images taken in anyone's homes. Crucially, these photographs were not taken to make sense of life in Glasgow, instead, we were interested in how the art would become symbols that adumbrate (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p.3). The pictures became a layer in a larger creative exploration – developed and displayed for the group to use as stimulus for a series of creative writing exercises. As Sontag (1973) suggests '[p]hotographs, which cannot themselves explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy' (p.19). What images would emerge, what stories would be contained within them, and what truths could be gestured towards?

The photographs and text that were produced from this work went on to form the opening installation experienced by our public audience. We created a space the audience could move through and explore from multiple perspectives, inviting them to search out the images they were drawn to and engage with poetic phrases scattered throughout the space. Combined with the presence of four project members silently and almost invisibly moving through the space, alongside a soundscape made up of an audio collage of media rhetoric about migration, this installation gestured towards the experience of navigating oneself through a new and unknown city.

Embedded within this installation were the remains of a conversation that I had with project member *Tez* during our camera building workshop. To begin with *Tez* was 'utterly unconvinced the cameras were real' (Research Journal). So very alien from the digital aesthetic he seemed accustomed to, he laughed at the idea that these DiY cameras could actually *do* anything. However, once we had convinced him they were real, he quickly made a decision about what he was interested in capturing within his photographs. He wanted to find ways to make visible the city's homelessness problem, as a way of responding to his disbelief that this could happen in the UK: 'there is too much money for this to happen here' (*Tez,* from Research Journal).

Before proceeding, *Tez* was concerned about two things. The first was whether trouble would emerge if he were seen photographing someone, conscious that 'his being black might arouse suspicion' (*Tez*, from journal notes). Secondly, he was worried that as someone seeking asylum it would be risky for him to document homelessness, in such a way that could be perceived as being critical of the UK. To assuage this latter concern *Haree* and I reminded him that none of the photographs taken would be directly attributed to him, nor would they be defined enough to be locatable.

His first concern, however, was not something we were able to alleviate. His apprehensions about being black and being seen, spoke to his racialised experience of Glasgow; one that sees his visibility as potentially dangerous and alludes to his blackness equating to his being 'seen as somehow not quite Scottish' (Nicholson and Virdee, 2018, p.9). This resonates with Cadogan's experiences of walking in New York, where everyday racism occasioned that 'I was the one who would be considered a threat' (Cadogan, 2016). Like photography, walking is becoming an increasingly popular form of participatory research (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2018; O'Neill & Roberts, 2019) and often positioned as enacting a horizontal practice. But these practices can put people at risk, specifically when 'asymmetrical class, racial, and gender relations' are underestimated (Prins, 2011, p. 429).

Haree and I had neglected to fully consider these risks when planning this workshop. Arguably we had subscribed to 'the myth that Scotland does not have a serious racism problem' (Nicholson and Virdee, 2018, p.9), or from the safety of our whiteness, and with an enthusiasm for the potential of the work, we had blinded ourselves to the ongoing danger faced by people of colour in public spaces. This slippage in reflexivity illuminates the potential limitations of participatory photo projects (Prins, 2010; Williams & Lykes, 2003) both within an arts and research context. Risks that are exacerbated, in light of Yancy's (1998) caution that academic institutions operate as spaces where 'white cultural hegemony' is 'sustained and perpetuated' (p.12).

As raised in the previous chapter, the 'who' of who gets to make work or research with communities often categorised as socially excluded is gaining increasing critical traction across a multitude of disciplines. Whilst McGarvey's (2018) illuminations in relation to poverty and class gained mainstream and academic attention, in the Scottish context there is a 'complacency' towards open discussions on race and racism in Scotland (Nicholson and Virdee, 2018, p.12). In light of this, *Tez's* articulations of his racialised experience should not be under-estimated for what they reveal. Furthermore, his concerns about not wanting to be perceived as being critical reinforces existing research that demonstrates a reluctance from those in the asylum system to complain – either specifically, or more generally – about the society or conditions they find themselves in (Mulvey, 2013, p.120).

These concerns suggest a complex intersection between race and asylum status, whereby *Tez's* awareness of his visible blackness in the city, is further complicated by the contingent nature of being a 'quasi-citizen' in the UK, where rights and entitlements are revoked if you find yourself on the wrong side of expectation (Khosravi, 2007, p.332). And so, *Tez* perceives that being invisible and non-critical is an integral factor to staying safe or remaining here at all.

In asking the *Share My Table* group members to become the observers rather

than the objects, to hold the power of creating an image rather than being constructed within it, space was created for the emergence of a challenging question. What is a young black man, whose experience is framed by the expectation of integration, allowed, or not allowed, to ask and challenge of that society? It is clear that *creative self-authorship* is not a straightforward way to access agency or free-expression – and it cannot elude sociocultural dynamics. Nevertheless, when handled with care and an openness to critical conversation, we are able to openly enrich and complicate the of vision of society (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p.3).

Subjects with agency

The first manifestation of *creative self-authorship* during *Echo* came in the shape of an exercise led by Maryhill Integration Network's volunteer *Souso*. During our first workshop *Souso* invited each project member to consider what we wanted the final dance performance to communicate to our future audience. Rather than taking part in the exercise she asked the lead artists to listen to the conversation as it unfolded. In doing so, *Souso* immediately troubled the power dynamic that exists between artist and participant, casting the artist in the role of listener, not leader. Furthermore, it was not *to the story* of each individual in the group they were to listen to, but to their opinions and desires for the project, which in turn positioned the artists as being accountable to the project members.

The following statements were written by individual project members:

> I want to be free
> I want to learn English
> I am happy in Glasgow
> The world should be the same for everyone
> Respect Anger Sadness
> I left so I could support my children
> Everyone has a reason to be here
> People should love and respect one another
> Glasgow is/will be a better place because of the refugees who have come here
> Everyone left their country for a serious reason
> How awful detention is and the UK must stop this practice
> I would like to tell the audience that we should love each other

> I'm happy to come to this community
> The world is for everyone
> Give me my life back
> Missing what you left behind

Upon first hearing these statements I was struck by how many people imbued theirs with a persuasive quality, by which I mean that the statements were framed around a justification for their existence. As ever, I was prompted to recall Jeffers' (2008) insights into the performative nature of existing within the asylum system, where people fear they will be unable to persuade 'the authorities of their authenticity' and 'unable to perform to the required standard' (p.217). The reality of having your asylum claim refused is that you ultimately 'stand accused of being unconvincing in the bureaucratic performance of those stories' (p. 217). Here, as Jeffers suggests is often the case, the pressure of *bureaucratic performance* ingratiated itself into the fabric of our participatory performance work within this project (2008).

The project members seemed primed to place themselves 'at the mercy of a silent audience' (p.219) who, within the forthcoming theatrical frame, are imagined as having 'the power to decide whether to grant asylum or not' (p.219), or at the very least 'as having the authority to "give" personhood' (Cummings, 2016, p.161). As such, the audience themselves were being cast in perhaps the most important role – that of border guard. This process mirrors, troublingly, the way in which border guarding practices are increasingly entering the realms of everyday life – whether it be in hospitals, schools, or workplaces (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss & Cassidy, 2017). And serves to reinforce, as was discussed in the last chapter, an *imperative to tell* whenever, and to whomever asks. Like Jeffers (2008), I wanted to ask:

> [h]ow are applied theatre practitioners to honour the experiences of the participants in projects and to challenge prejudice against those participants without resorting to demonstrations of victimhood? (p.219).

This is especially pertinent when the work strives to position the individuals involved as active art makers, in the way that I believe *Souso's* exercise was attempting to do. By inviting us to engage with what we wanted to communicate with the work, she was asking us to consider ourselves as co-creators of the work from the outset.

I would argue that *Souso* was attempting exactly what Jeffers promotes: for artists (and participants) to search out 'other possibilities for a more effective practice' (p.218). In this instance, a practice that rooted the project – and the working relationship between artist and project members – in collaboration and dialogue; and one that did not want to rely upon the notion of victimhood, or passivity. However, where the focus is on people appealing for their right to have rights, our initial reflections as a group reinforced Cox's (2016) suggestion that 'it becomes exceedingly difficult in the theatre to circumvent the underlying objective of constructing refugee characters as individuals worthy of protection' (p.215). As such, the performative paradigm of *endearing refugee* and sympathetic border guard audience is not easy to escape.

We negotiated this performative trap across the weeks that followed – in the dance practice that placed project members' artistic agency at the centre of the workshops. Each week different project members were invited to teach traditional dances to the artistic team and the rest of the group. Whilst the room was dominated by a sense of chaos due to the intergenerational make-up of the group, *Phoenix* described how in these moments she felt as if 'you become a teacher / and not a student', which implies a shifting of power dynamics throughout the process – a seed that was planted by *Souso* in the earlier encounter.

Shree expanded upon this idea further when describing the process of *Echo* using a **Dixit** card:

> Everybody have the key of their own brain
> and their own life as well
> like
> we did African dancing
> Indian dancing
> Kosovan
> there's a real mix of
> Scottish dance
> Ceilidh
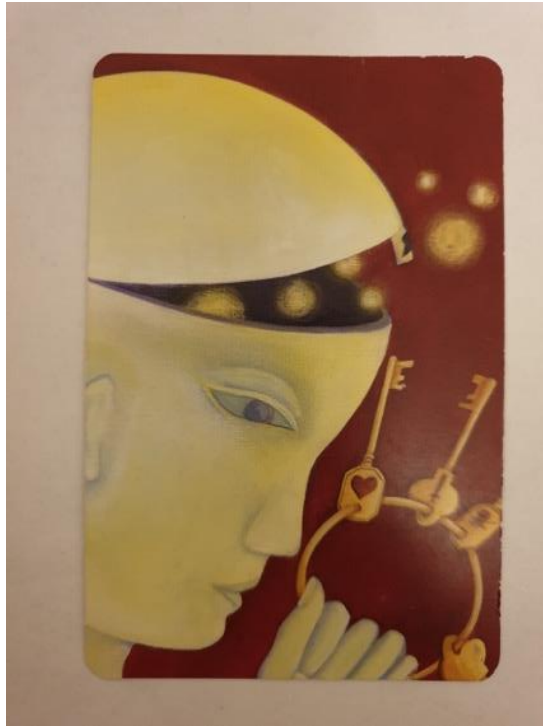
Image 19: Shree reflects on integration

everything
so everybody had a brain
kind of steaming out
and I can use my key to success that

Shree reinforces how each individual was relied upon to bring the final dances together, by asserting that each brain was not only *steaming* out ideas and creative energy, but also held the keys required to unlock the aesthetic of the work produced. Though the lead artists were seen to 'sort of put it all together' *(Jasmine)* there was a shared agreement amongst all project members that the artists' ability to change and adapt to the ideas and suggestions within the room was fundamental to the enjoyment and value that they individually and collectively placed on the experience of making the work.

Furthermore, by foregrounding dance improvisation as the other core form of expression throughout the process, the lead artists encouraged project members to move away from literal communication. Instead we transformed our intended messages for the audience into abstracted and emotional bodily movements. In doing so the project resisted 'compelling forced migrants to act as Spivak's 'native informants' (1999, p.113)' (Woolley, 2014, p.19), and instead moved the cultural conversation beyond 'testimony' or 'truth' into a space of interpretation. In turn, this allowed the project to shift the focus away from

individuals carrying 'the burden of representation' (Risam, 2018, p.65). And so, in the space, with their bodies not being 'enshrined' (p.65) with the weight of presenting *the* 'migrant experience' (p.65), project members were able to hold the role of 'subjects with agency' (McPherson, 2010, p.555) making aesthetic *self-authored* choices.

Intervention as authorship

I now turn my attention towards a short performance piece created as part of *I Hear The Image Moving*, which brought together two artistic interventions instigated by *Share My Table* project member *Ezel*. The first moment surfaced out of one his chosen **Dixit** cards, when asked to contemplate what his personal experience of integrating into Glasgow looked and felt like. *Ezel* identified the following card and explained:

Image 20: Ezel reflects on integration

> *This is what having no English was like; letters floating around him in the sky, unreachable, sometimes recognisable but out of his control. Fading in and out. Jumping around. He'd try and reach them, but they'd disappear. He talked about going to the library most days and finding books in English that he recognised. He said he studied philosophy back home, and so he searched out philosophical books that he knew well. And he read them in English. At first, they were just floating symbols but slowly he said he was*

> *able to catch the letters and eventually he was able to put them in an order he could understand. (Research Journal)*

The dramatic strength of this visual metaphor stayed with me for months afterwards, and so sure of its theatrical potential I was prompted to ask *Ezel* if he would develop this image into a performance through the use of projection.

As we began working on the performance piece, I recalled an earlier *Share My Table* workshop where project members had played with written projection on their bodies. We had utilised extracts of short poetic pieces written by project members, to explore the aesthetic of holding narratives on our bodies. During the session *Ezel* had been dissatisfied by the text we had available and instead went over to my computer and wrote something new. He wrote the word 'Invincible' and then walked in front of the projector. This was another one of those fleeting moments I refer to throughout this thesis; an act of impulsive creativity and expression that catches the breath of everyone in the room:

> *He stands in front of us. Just him and that word. Invincible. Right there for us all to see. On his body. Of his body. He looks straight out at us, then he looks down at the word. This happens a few times. He is smiling. He's pleased with himself? Or is he embarrassed perhaps? No, I don't think so. I think he said exactly what he wanted to say. He laughs and walks off stage. Leaving the word, and us, hanging there for a moment. (Research Journal)*

What he did in that moment was to take control of letters and words. The very thing he felt he was unable to do upon first arrival in Glasgow.

Woolley suggests that representations of forced migration and displacement 'cloud as much as they clarify' (p.3). Yet there are some occasions where the insight held within an image illuminates with no ambiguity. The word 'invincible' is not a description one hears being used when referring to refugees, certainly not in mainstream discourse. We hear the word 'vulnerable' a lot, we hear 'resilient', we hear 'human', we hear 'in need'. But we very rarely hear a word that evokes such a sense of power, a sense of strength, and a sense of defiance. I agree that fiction can provide a space for the exploration of statelessness (p.19) and recognise the value in scholars such as Woolley focusing on artists who

fictionally respond to 'the crisis' rather than artists who self-represent. However, *Ezel* standing in front of the rest of the group with the word 'Invincible' hovering over his body reinforced my belief that it is in making space for forms of *creative self-authorship*, that aesthetically bold and revelatory artistic interventions will be found. It was a beautiful and challenging moment and one that I felt compelled to help develop in order for an audience to witness.

With the support of an animator, and a choreographer, and in conversation with myself and *Haree*, *Ezel* went on to bring these two artistic interventions together. Honouring *Ezel's* desire for digital anonymity, I cannot make the full scene available (though there is an extract in the digital folder - follow link on p.24) and so I offer a short description of the final performance:

Image 21: Ezel performs 'I am invincible' in front of the Tramway audience (NA)

Ezel turns away from the audience and faces the projection screen at the back of the stage. Letters begin appearing on the screen, as they did earlier. Tumbling across the space and then disappearing. We see Ezel following them, at first with his eyes and then he begins to try and catch them before they tumble out of sight. He struggles but slowly begins to control them, at first spelling out 'I am' before finally commanding all the letters. He spins them and eventually they begin to take shape into a word. The audience reads: 'I am invincible'. He turns to the audience and reveals his t-shirt, which until this moment has been hidden underneath his hoody. Lit up in

bold on his t-shirt is that word INVINCIBLE. After a moment looking down at his body, Ezel looks at the audience. Satisfied, he exits.

Woolley (2014) suggests that the 'the violently marked body of the asylum claimant' (p.135) is often regarded by the Home Office as an indicator of authentic suffering. Whilst there are exceptions, the reliance upon the marked body as a symbol of credibility is often replicated rather than deconstructed within theatrical performance. Conversely, *Ezel's* performance pushed back against this fetishisation within the asylum process, rejecting the notion of his body being required to be a 'document' (p.134) of his suffering. Instead he commanded the inscription placed on his body, taking ownership of what his body can say and do, as well as how it is viewed by an outside eye.

Moreover, *Ezel's* performance offered a counterpoint to the very theatrical troupes that Woolley identifies, through a moment of misdirection. Just as the words were swirling in front of the audience there was a moment where it looked like the sentence would read 'I am invisible'. This misdirection was noted by many audience members as the catalyst that shook them from what they thought was expected of them, to extend their sympathy; a theatrical transaction that audiences engaged in refugee performance are perhaps most accustomed to. A declaration of invisibility would have equated to an admittance of vulnerability or victimhood. It would have reinforced the need for audience validation; for the audience to *see* him. But *Ezel* was not interested in being seen or validated in that way. Discarding the *endearing refugee* and refusing the creative imagery that pathologises the binarised figure of 'the refugee', *Ezel* enacted what Bhimji (2016) refers to as a 'performative resistance' (2016, p.84). Pushing against the 'invisibility, isolation, and disconnectedness' (p.84) imposed by states and institutional processes, as well as the very narrative forms being imagined by others seeking to represent him.

Abram (1997) argues that:

> [a] story that makes sense is one that stirs the senses from their slumber, one that opens the eyes and the ears to their real surroundings, tuning the tongue to the actual tastes in the air and sending chills of recognition along the surface of the skin (p.256).

In light of this, *Ezel's* performance can be viewed as *making sense* to those that

witnessed it. For instance, when he first performed it for the project members in rehearsals there was a lot of empathetic nodding and laughter, with many people vocalising their recognition of the experience *Ezel* was giving voice to. As he reached for the letters, we were experiencing the 'affective register of participatory arts' (Thompson, 2011, p.116), which sees shared moments of creation lead to an understanding between those present in the room. As such this offers an insight into language learning that goes beyond being able to communicate in day to day life; to access spaces of education and work; or being able to navigate bureaucratic processes. In his story about language, *Ezel* spoke of being able to take the *floating symbols* and make sense of them. In this respect, language can provide oneself with the tools for self-definition by which to publicly present oneself on one's own terms – whether that be on stage, or in spaces of everyday interaction.

Some months after *I Hear The Image Moving* was performed I had the opportunity to witness how the sensemaking of this performance had become an embodied piece of learning for one of our audience members. As I crossed the road in central Glasgow a young woman with her own experience of the asylum process, shouted at me as she crossed the other way 'I am Invincible'. I looked up at her to hear 'I tell everyone about that moment' she said. 'I am invincible too, that's what I thought when I saw it. I really needed that word'. We were going in opposite directions and the traffic lights were changing so that is where our conversation ended, but her reaction has stayed with me. She brought to life Abrams' contention that:

> [t]o *make sense* is to release the body from the constraints imposed by outworn ways of speaking, and hence to renew and rejuvenate one's felt awareness of the world (p.256).

Through *Ezel's* declaration of *creative self-authorship* on stage, the young woman had found at least one of the words that she was needed to allow her to enact her own performative resistance in everyday life. And in that lies creativity's potential. It can create new words, new knowledge, and new ways of understanding to help us position ourselves within the world.

Creative self-authorship as a collaborative endeavour

With a commitment to enacting the double-hermeneutic spiral within my methodology, before I sat down to write about _Ezel_'s scene I met with him to discuss his insights into what he had created. At first, he laughed that I was going to write about it. Then, when I explained why I believed the scene had such power and potency, _Ezel_ spoke in Tigrinya to articulate how he viewed my interpretation:

> _Catrin, we have a saying for people like you. We say you are like a fly that goes to shit and from it you seek to find gold (Research Journal)._

Aside from the idea of my being a fly, and _Ezel's_ ideas presumably being the shit in his simile, my first instinct was to be disappointed by the idea of my being seen to be 'seeking' anything from those that I worked with. A major part of my artistic practice is to push back against extractionist forms of theatre-making, and so this re-presentation of what _Ezel_ thinks that I do was unsettling. But as a practitioner I am also dedicated to critical dialogue and so I was compelled to ask him to expand upon his statement. He explained that he felt I had discovered unintentional meaning in his creative choices. He said that when he had written 'Invincible' on himself, the word had just popped into his head. Furthermore, he had not been aware of the theatrical tropes or academic discourses that his choices were circulating within. He said he had really enjoyed being invited to make the performance and felt very proud of it. He had latterly begun to understand why we were presenting it, especially in relation to sharing a theatrical representation of language learning, but he asserted that it had been me, not him, that had seen the potential in it. To return to his imagery: I had found the gold from his shit.

In listening to _Ezel_ I began to realise that what we were interrogating was how creative processes operate. More specifically, we were reflecting upon what happens within collaborative processes. _Ezel's_ observations, whilst initially unnerving, served to open up an opportunity for me to genuinely untangle and reflect on what I believed my role had been in the development of his performance and the wider project. I responded to his reflections by sharing that intentionality was not where I felt artistic potential lived; rather, it was in

the creative openings that emerged out of ideas, images, and words, which came about when 'working together as a team to facilitate expression' (O'Neill, 2008, p.61).

I found myself reflecting that recognising and developing *potential gold* had in fact been my job as the artist. That carrying some of the theatrical and academic references was another part of what made me accountable to project members (Jones, 2002) as *Share My Table* developed. My experience and my knowledge of artmaking is what I bring to arts space, affording project members the freedom to respond or create in whichever way they felt comfortable – without holding the pressure of how it would be interpreted later down the line. I stressed to him, that I would never have thought of the word 'invincible'; that the word, and the feeling it evokes is inside him; and, consciously or not, he was the one who chose to place that on his body that day. My job had been to recognise that it might resonate with others.

In some respects, my conversation with *Ezel* could be read as destabilising the stance I have taken in this chapter with regards to the importance of authorship and its connection to agency. However, in many ways, it sheds additional light upon the complicated territory that participatory arts practice treads when striving to make artistic work that centres on the creative voices of those making it. It prompted me to interrogate further what is required of 'the professional artists' within the processes I had been part of, ensuring that I did not – in striving to communicate the power of *creative self-authorship* within these projects – underplay the contribution that artists make. For *Share My Table* it would be disingenuous for me to try and absent myself or *Haree* from the process retrospectively, or to infer that as lead artists we did not put forward ideas or drive certain aesthetic moments.

As is clear from *Ezel's* comments, I was not just facilitator as an empty vessel. No, I contributed, and this has led me to consider the way in which *creative self-authorship* is in fact deeply connected to collaborative practice. Rather

than understanding *creative self-authorship* as the realisation of multiple acts of individuality, it is in fact the emergence of individual voices underpinned by 'an ongoing recognition that everyone influences… that everyone contributes' (hooks, 1994, p.8). This is particularly important to underline in relation to Bishop's (2012) critique of participatory practice, as being in danger of promoting a philosophy of individualism. Moreover, it offers an opportunity to look for parallels that exist within processes of integration, which I return to later in the thesis. Lastly, it invites further analysis about the spaces that contain arts projects themselves. How does collaboration as a practice inform the politics of a space? This question is where I turn my attention in the following section of the thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter exists in part because – or in recognition – of the selfie-portrait encounter. What began as a short exercise, soon became a metaphorical model for how arts work might and can operate. As such, throughout this chapter I have critically analysed creative practices that were committed to going beyond placing individuals in front of a lens. In making a case for the importance of *creative self-authorship*, I have drawn attention to rich aesthetic and research potential of processes that ensure individuals are holding the metaphorical and/or literal camera. In doing so I have asserted that in activating the *possibility of agency*, truly challenging collaborative work can be made.

Risam (2018) positions refugee selfies as networked objects which facilitate connections and offer access to a networked identity, through which 'migrants are able to claim their experience' (p.68). This chapter makes a case for interpreting creative experiences in a comparable way: positioning the arts as an access point to a networked (albeit mostly analogue) identity, and as a means through which individuals can resist dominant and misrepresentative narratives that risk 'devalu[ing] their existence' (p.68).

To finish I return to where I began with this chapter, to Connell who suggests

that rather than the portraits he creates being the most important part of his work, it might in fact be the relationships that are born out of them. 'Maybe', he asks:

> Maybe the relationship is the portrait. Maybe the drawing was just the door to open up into that great big invisible portrait. Maybe this is the invisible work of art (2018).

This chapter has sought to try and make some of this invisible work visible.
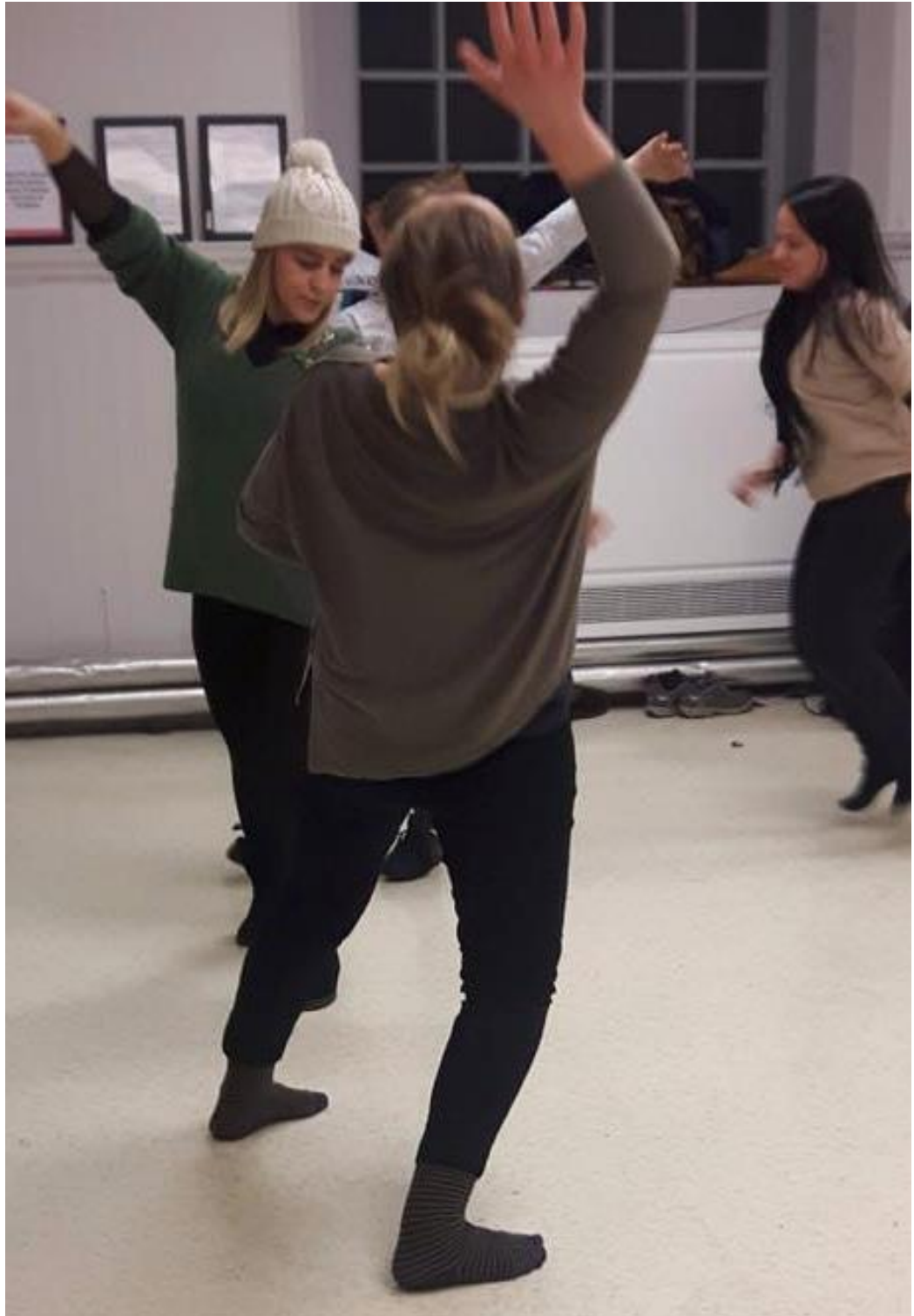
Image 22: Echo project members improvise dance duets (MIN)

Image 23: Nicola reflects on integration

"the first day in the UK"

Part Three[3]

The practice of solidarity
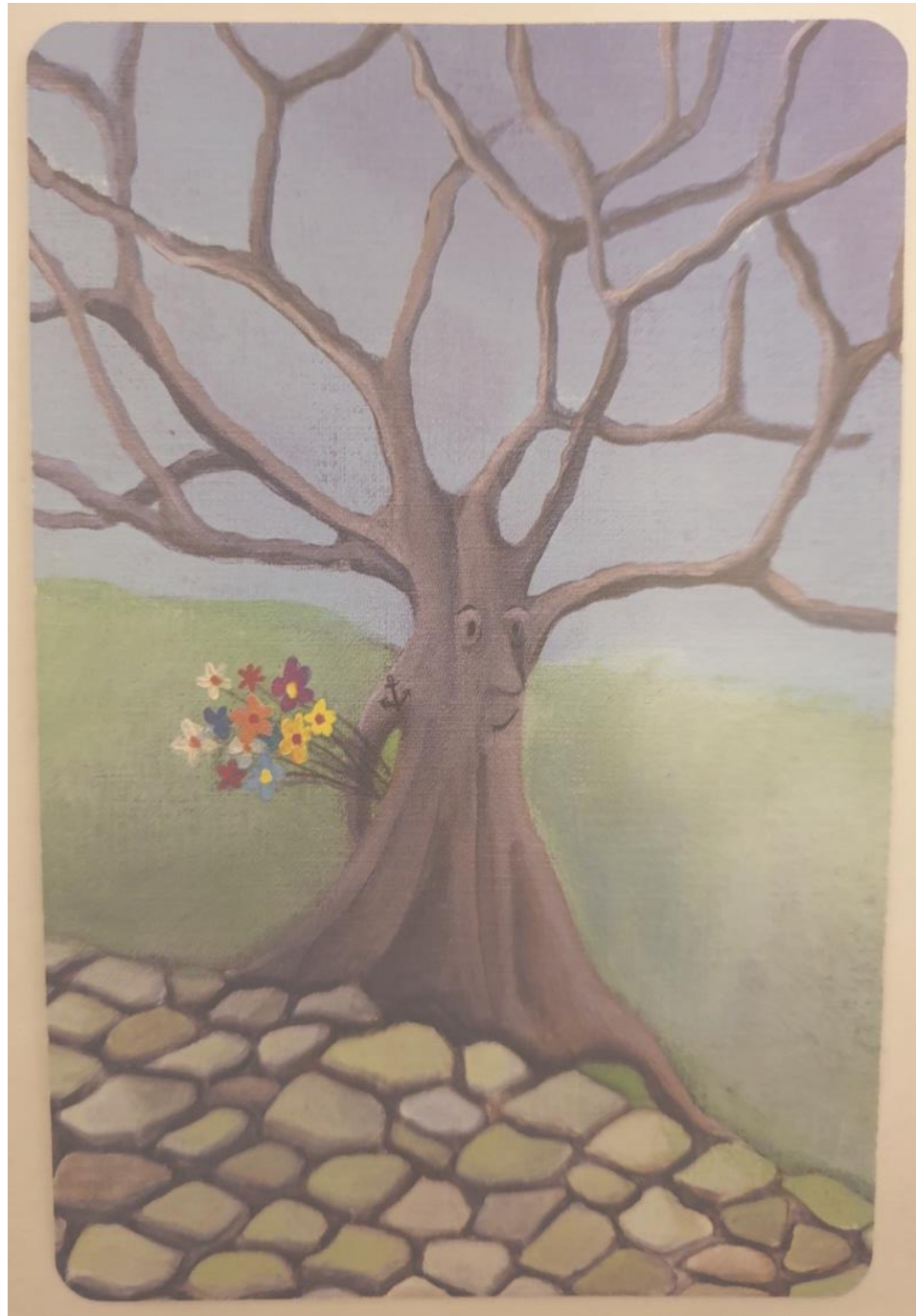
Image 24: Artist-Researcher reflects upon Maryhill Integration Network

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[3] Extracts (or versions of extracts) from both chapters contained within Part Three, have been utilised within a peer-reviewed publication for Scottish Journal of Performance (Evans, 2019). The article can be found in the thesis Reference List, but I insert this footnote to minimise having to cite myself repeatedly throughout, and to draw attention to the fact that my research is already circulating in the public/scholarly domain.

I see a tree

I see a tree
on arid land
rooted in a life that does feel
quite challenging at the moment
whether you are in the asylum
system or
whether you are just trying to cope
with the world
of austerity or the world of just
being in hard times
and
I guess these little
cheeky flowers
just hidden behind that tree
feel
like that's the sort of invitation
that Maryhill Integration Network
make to people
and it is not necessarily just
about escaping the arid world
but sort of finding a different way
of being
or finding a different way
of being in a space
it's about life

*(Transcript of my narrative response to **Dixit** card*
when asked by Echo project member about Maryhill
Integration Network)

VI   Engaged spaces, co-created hospitality and quiet relationality

Introduction

In Section Three I turn my attention towards the working practices and artistic processes that emerged during my involvement with *Share My Table* and Maryhill Integration Network. I discuss them in relation to bell hooks' work on the practices of freedom and engaged pedagogy (1994). In dialogue with the insights from project members I apply hooks' theory of education to the *how* of the artistic practice that I instigated and participated in. Like theory, the arts 'is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary' (hooks, 1994, p.61), and so in order for artistic practice to fulfil any of these functions, we must 'ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end' (p.61). Through this directed theorising, I question what it might mean for many project members to describe their experiences 'as though I am in my family home' (*Flower*), or that they were 'not in this world alone' (*Joe*), as a way of interrogating what the potential *politics* of arts and integration might be within the context of the Hostile Environment being created by the UK Immigration system. I suggest that these spaces, and what happens within them, can be read in relation to community, solidarity and resistance.

In this chapter I undertake the inquiry by engaging in a journey around the theme of spatial dynamics, with a focus on how the spaces hosting the creative practice were set-up to symbolically advocate for freedom of movement and elicit alternative ways of being together. Relationality underpins this inquiry, focusing on how inter-relations can give way to developing sites where there are imaginative ways to resist aspects of biopolitical control.

With a keen interest in reciprocity I go on to critically engage with the place of hospitality and nourishment within *Share My Table*, drawing upon Askins (2015) work on 'the quiet politics of belonging', as well as Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's

(2018) interpretations on a 'feminist ethics of care'. Through an analysis of hospitality as a co-created creative act, I make a case for the importance of troubling host/guest binaries and for striving to better understand the 'refugee-refugee relationality' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016) that the project's food sharing practices illuminated. Finally, I set the scene for the next chapter by proposing that it was the presence of an affective register mediated through arts practice that underpinned how these ways of 'being with' (Nancy, 2000) one another materialised.

Experiencing the politics of space in action

Share My Table's weekly workshops were held in the Studio space of Tramway in the Southside of Glasgow. From the outset of the process *Haree* and I wanted to ensure that project members would feel comfortable and included as soon as they arrived. With large white walls, a high ceiling full of bright windows and a dancefloor at its centre, the room felt quite different from the many community spaces or charity offices that arts projects are often squeezed into. In fact, before the first session *Haree* and I were concerned that the Studio might be a rather intimidating space to walk into. Its scale and openness made you visible to all others, with no obvious shadowy corners for those less sure about their involvement to tuck themselves into. In many ways this was a gift, but we wondered whether it might put project members off. To counter this, one of the earliest decisions made was to ensure that the space always felt active by creating a physical and symbolic structure to the room.

The artistic team divided up the Studio by using chairs and soft benches, into four different areas:
- a working/focused space
- an active observer space
- a break-out/food space
- and outside of the room

We quickly learned that not only did these sub-spaces allow the room to feel busier to the eye on first arrival, it also helped establish a set of spatial parameters that allowed project members to access the artistic work at their

own pace, with the assurance that they were always part of the working dynamic of the whole Studio. Even though each session started with a shared meal, some individuals would be keen to be active in the working space from the moment they arrived, while others would choose to watch from the periphery for almost the entire session. To borrow from Howells' artistic philosophy, delineating the space enabled us to gently suggest that 'it's all allowed' (Heddon and Johnson, 2016, p.14); an ethos that played out in a multitude of ways as the project developed.

Rather than creating rules for the room that felt restrictive, these spatial dynamics created a structured flexibility that invited people to move through the space with ease. Testing out the artistic activities and defining the terms of their own engagement. hooks argues that '"[e]ngaged" is a great way to talk about liberatory classroom practice' because '[i]t invites us to be in the present' (p.158), and to resist cultivating a static environment that is predicated on sameness. 'When the classroom is truly engaged, it's dynamic. It's fluid. It's *always* changing' (p.158). For *Share My Table* this fluidity manifested spatially, and it was through this that the Studio became a site for enacting one of the central tenets of hooks' theories on practices of freedom: that each individual in the room 'assume responsibility for their choices' (hooks, 1994, p.19).

My journal notes reveal that this spatial structure did not always feel conducive to enabling artistic expression. At times, with up to forty people in workshops, I felt some sessions had descended into chaos:

> *As is always the case what feels very structured and calm when we are planning it, was not as smooth and so the informality crept back into the space. It's so hard to hold on to the moments of focus, solidarity, they slip past with every small change in the space (Research Journal, March 2017).*

However, despite the anarchic atmosphere that often permeated our four sub-spaces, we committed to this set-up. We began to understand that the dynamics of the space were developing into what I believe were more profound counter-hegemonic processes that gestured towards a politics of *freedom of movement* in the room.

Many project members articulated that the space felt unique in comparison to other community spaces they spent time in. When invited to interrogate this, *Alee* identified how a sense of engaged autonomy encouraged her to come to *Share My Table*:

> in community centres there are lots of activities there
> like classes
> women's groups
> choir
> and lot of things
> but we are not
> we have children so we never go every week
> or every week
> and also very informative meetings
> and so we try to go there and get more information
> but this is
> different
> you can come
> for me I said
> interesting and peaceful
> you can come and you know
> you are doing something
> you are not coming to listen to someone
> or for any information or anything
> you are doing something
> you are participating in some work
> and it's very peaceful
> nobody
> interrupt you
> nobody point at you
> nobody ask you questions
> nobody deal with you like you are school children
> like
> sit down
> here

For *Alee* the project was distinct because of the act of 'doing something', of the sense of peace and purpose that is born out of the creative 'work'; a subject I return to in more depth the following chapter. What I want to draw out of *Alee's* observation here is the importance she places on the absence of feeling like a passive observer being controlled or instructed. The examples she gives of her

experiences within other community spaces, as well as her repetition of 'nobody / interrupt you / nobody point at you / nobody ask you questions / nobody deal with you like you are school children' infers that being spoken to or related to in that way is closer to her everyday experience.

Yuval-Davis describes Foucault's concept of 'disciplinary society' as one in which:

> power increasingly operates through impersonal mechanisms of bodily discipline and a governmentality that escapes the consciousness and will of individual and collective social agents (p.367).

On the surface *Alee* is perhaps describing the behavioural consequences of support services that are under-resourced and over-subscribed. Yet, in light of Yuval-Davis' description, *Alee* is pointing to the way in which supportive social agents are embodying impersonal mechanisms. And, in doing so they are participating in practices of bodily discipline which impede *Alee* from feeling that she can move or act freely. In contrast to this, with her final emphasis on nobody saying 'sit / down / here' *Alee* suggests that the Studio space was asserting its own performative function. It was working as a symbolic and material counterpoint, not just to the physically restrictive and oppressive strategies associated with the asylum system, which many members – echoing Cassidy's (2018) research on 'everyday carceralities' - described as like a prison, or like 'big detention' where 'you can move around but you can't leave' *(Moon)*. It also speaks to the controlling atmosphere that *Alee* says she experiences, even within many of the spaces and projects that seek to support those within that very system.

These controlling techniques emerged time and time again throughout the project. There were multiple occasions where project members could not attend due to being called to sign-in at the Home Office, having to wait for a call from their solicitors, or - in the most extreme case – being told by the housing office that they had to remain at home all of the following day for a flat inspection at an unidentified time. This last example, which happened to *Leavo,* meant that *he* was unable to attend the dress rehearsal and first performance of *I Hear The*

Image Moving. Leavo tried to explain to his housing provider that he was invested in this project, but there was no willingness to be flexible and therefore no opportunity for *Leavo* to assert any autonomy over where he could be and when.

In a later discussion, *Echo* project members *Red&Green, Agnesa* and *Gisa* expanded upon this theme by connecting up the spaces they are and are not allowed to access, with the symbolic act of being labelled. In communicating their frustration at being excluded from attending university, or being prevented from travelling abroad, *Red&Green* compared it to the process of being publicly othered:

> we are not normal here
> cause
> of the label that we have
> its like they put something
> (she takes a piece of paper and pretends to pin it to herself)
> oh yeah
> you are asylum seekers
> and you're not to do this this this this this
> oh you are British and you're allowed to do
> see all of this
> all your world is there

For *Red&Green,* her very experience of ongoing categorisation alludes to what Foucault refers to as the power dynamics that 'ignore who we are' (Foucault, 1982, p.212). But, more uniquely, she identifies the way in which their spatial presence is directed within everyday life in such a way that their label moves with them, and in doing so compounds the 'administrative inquisition which determines who one is' (p.212).

Whilst this was identified as being the case *out there*, the interaction that many *Echo* and *Radiophrenia* project members had with Maryhill Integration Network was alluded to as a contrasting experience. Like *Alee, Chocolate* described her interaction with Maryhill Integration Network as a site she felt able to access freely:

> when one day

> there are no meetings
> I come anyway
> no one today
> no meetings today
> no programme
> but its okay
> sit down
> tea coffee

The importance of being able to step over the threshold of a space without an appointment, or a specific reason, held much weight for *Chocolate*, as she spoke often of what it meant to turn up unannounced. This resonated with *Alee's* experience of *Share My Table* as a space threatening the 'institutionalized practices of domination' (hooks, 1994, p.158), which seek to contain, control and homogenise individuals. There may not be a government or NGO agent explicitly telling someone that they can or cannot participate in an arts project, but the autonomous choice to enter these creative realms and move as oneself within them offers an imaginative opportunity to resist aspects of biopolitical control. In their own unspoken ways, the spatial dynamics of Maryhill Integration Network and *Share My Table*'s Studio contributed to a counter-hegemonic resistance (hooks, 1994, p.2) against the everyday oppressive strategies imposed by the British state. Strategies that dictate the terms of where you are allowed to go, and when you are allowed to participate.

When expanding further on her comments around accessing the space, *Chocolate* described Maryhill Integration Network as more like a home:

> I am coming here
> this house
> like family
> all mum

Not only is this statement representative of the kinds of deep personal connections that project members - from all projects - spoke about developing throughout their participation, the metaphor of the house, gifted by *Chocolate*, prevents this theoretical thread from fetishising 'the space' as an almost ethereal container of creativity. Instead it encourages the analysis to concentrate on what builds this house: the relationships and forms of human interaction contained within them. Forms that often ran counter to what project

members were encountering in other aspects of their lives.

When conceptualised as a 'house', we can begin to understand these spaces as sites containing a feminist form of engagement that is underpinned – knowingly or not – by an 'ethics of care' (Held, 2006). There were many references – especially from *Share My Table* project members – to seemingly simple relational habits that are often lost within bureaucratic and NGO spaces. Hugs, the knowing of names and the way that creative exercises stimulated a genuine interest in each other's wellbeing, were offered as examples of ways in which meaningful relationships were fostered. Habits that perhaps evoke early theories on an ethics of care that rely on the mother-child model; a model that has subsequently been accused of neglecting to question 'who cares for whom and what are the emotional and the power relations which are involved in this interaction' (Yuval-Davis, 2016, p.372). However, it is *Chocolate's* focus on *all being mum*, that leads me towards understanding these project spaces through a more contemporary reading of a 'feminist ethic of care, embedded in interconnection and relationality' (Askins, 2015, p.273). One that saw care being distributed and re-distributed by many, in many directions. An approach that *Bold Solicitor* and I came to agree on was underpinned by the practice of 'attentiveness' towards both individuals and the group.

While '[t]his is not to say that positions/relations are equal' (p.273) both Maryhill Integration Network and *Share My Table* were modelling an alternative way of interacting with one another in their respective spaces. Approaches underpinned by equality and respect (Held, 2006) that attempted, at least, to circumnavigate the dehumanising or distancing practices utilised, not just, within the hostile environment, but upheld by 'organised people' in 'offices' that 'support you' (*Alee*).

The importance of practising equality was articulated most explicitly by *Precise*:

It was kind of
Direct conversation
Organisers and participants

That everyone was just seen as one
No boss
You know
Everyone was just carrying on with their activities
And you kind of
See that people want to come
Because if they are not welcome
If they are not well treated
They will not come again
I have been to so many places
And I have never been back there
Because of
The way things are being organised
And done

The direct contact identified here, as well as the horizontal approach of working together, embodies what Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2018) contend is a way of reconfiguring discourse that 'examines the nature and potentialities of encounters between hosts and strangers, the self and the other, through the optic of a feminist ethics of care' (p.4).

I acknowledge that reading these spaces through an ethics of care runs the risk of enabling, rather than impeding 'the smooth working of globalized neo liberalism which depends on local and global chains of care (Yuval-Davis, 2016, p.373). However, I would suggest that the strength in this reading lies in the way that it positions *Share My Table* (for the time we were meeting) and the permanent site of Maryhill Integration Network as 'location[s] of possibility' (hooks, 1994, p.207). hooks determines that:

> [i]n that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress (p.207).

It is in the relationships built through that labour, and the interactions inspired by *an openness of mind and heart* where I have come to best understand the practices embedded within these projects. And it is where I turn my attention to in the second half of this chapter. Focusing in on the presence of food in *Share My Table* and how the interactions that were born out of this weekly practice of sharing were themselves attempts to *collectively imagine ways to move beyond*.

Co-creating hospitality through nourishment

Food was of central importance within *Share My Table*, with the sessions beginning with a breakfast or brunch traditional to a different country each week. Combined with the provision of bus fare for all project members, childcare facilities and (where required) translators, food became 'the magnet' (*Presenter*) which 'will help us / to make us be able to commit / each week' (*Bentley*). It was a material way of enacting an ethics of care, and as *Bentley's* statement suggests, it enabled those in the space to engage their full selves in the creative activity.

Drawing on the work of Thich Nhat Hanh, hooks (1994) argues that at the heart of engaged pedagogy are spaces where people regard 'one another as "whole" human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how we live in the world' (p.15). In regarding each other in this way, a concern for wellbeing becomes central to the relationships built within a space. By ensuring the project members – including staff and volunteers – were well fed each session, and with food that reflected the culinary diversity present in the room, the project enacted a performative statement: 'Your wellbeing matters to us, we care about you, we want you to be nourished' (Research Journal).

In making this statement, the project demonstrated an understanding of individuals as a 'a union of mind, body, and spirit' (hooks, 1994, p.15); an idea gestured to by *Lawyer*:

> with the food
> when we share the food
> and I saw the people eat
> this makes me happy
> I can eat
> I can put something in my mouth
> because when I am on my own
> I can't eat on my own
> but when I saw the people
> it made me feel happy
> that I have to join them

> in our country back home
> we used to eat all together
> we used to live like this all together

The importance *Lawyer* places on being in the company of others in order to give himself permission to eat, draws attention to the holistic relationship between his mind, body and spirit. Food becomes not just physiologically nourishing, but a way of engaging with his cultural sense of self. In turn, this ignites a happiness that permits him to sustain that self. The cyclical nature of this physical, emotional and cultural response to the practice of sharing food, speaks to a complexity associated with wholeness and wellbeing. One that reaffirms hooks' earlier contention that an engaged pedagogy opens up ways to strive for *knowledge about how to live in the world*.

As one of the most basic and immediate forms of support and welcome shown to newly arrived refugees, often by other refugees (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019), food - as well as the social codes and rituals that are enacted when sharing it - plays a significant role in critical readings of hospitality. Increasingly hospitality - and its counterpoint hostility - are providing roots of inquiry for the discourses and practices relating to displacement, both within the Global North (Oberprantacher, 2013; Phipps, 2014a; Cockburn-Wootten, McIntosh & Phipps, 2014; Murdoch and Shannon, 2014) and within research taking place within the Global South (Bulley, 2015; Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018). As was identified in Chapter 4 when defining the *welcome-unwelcome dialectic*, the two concepts are acknowledged as being experienced simultaneously, not as two independent oppositional points of experience. They are relational or held in a 'constitutive duality' (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2018, p.2), that Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh contend is what led Derrida to develop the concept of *hostipitality* (p.2).

For Derrida (2000) *hostipitality* communicates how hospitality consistently contains the potential for hostility. He draws attention to the way in which power imbalances are upheld through the language of hospitality itself being defined and imposed 'by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc' (Derrida, 2000, p.15). In fact, it is Derrida's critique that most succinctly captures the paradoxical way in

which the concept has been adopted on the European political stage. Where mainstream narratives of hospitality focus in on the need for empathy towards bodily vulnerability of 'the other', whilst often rejecting its own historical and contemporary accountability based on Europe's relationship to empire and racial violence (Danewid, 2017).

Aware of the complex intersections circulating around this discourse, I have chosen to follow Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2018) call to 'to trace and examine alternative modes of thought and action that transcend and resist the fatalistic invocations of hostipitality' (p.3). Still framed by hooks' location of possibility (1994), I seek to draw attention to some of the nuances and critical opportunities that emerged when I began to read *Share My Table* as a space where hospitality was being embodied as a co-created creative act, and in turn how these developed into a consideration of hospitality, care and justice.

Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2018) contend that:

> As soon as we start thinking about hospitality and hostility as embodied and enacted practices grounded in particular spatio-temporal contexts, a series of further questions arises: Who has or assumes the right to act as host, in what contexts, and on what social grounds? Who is recognized as guest, and who is turned away, by whom, and on what grounds?' (p.3).

These same questions circulated around *Share My Table's* relationship with food. From the first planning meetings *Haree*, *Max* and I were conscious that we would not be able to do away with the power dynamics that exist within any space where one set of people have invited another set of people into it. Yet, we were interested in trying to move beyond a host-guest model, that in and of itself did not feel truthful to our situation. Although my colleagues and I could have been cast in the role of 'host', none of us were born and raised in Glasgow. Furthermore, we were ourselves 'guests' on the project which had been initiated by personnel within the two partner organisations, and each week everyone involved, including us, would be 'guests' 'hosted' by Tramway.

Though minor differentials, when compared to the much more pressing matters

of citizen vs. non-citizen, European vs. non-European, staff vs. volunteer, the slippage between our categories worked to conceptually open up enough space for us to acknowledge the 'unstable, unsettled', or 'slipperiness' of the host-guest binary (Bell, 2011, p.146). It made tangible for us Bell's call to view these roles relationally, and to experiment with his concept and the practices of 'hostguesting' (p.146). Could an environment be created where we could all be hosts and guests simultaneously? And what might encourage people to feel they could choose a role for themselves, or to move smoothly between these roles during our time together if they wished to?

Our efforts to move beyond this binary and to test these ideas, began with our first gathering, where we operated on the principle that everyone was responsible for the space. Consequently, *Haree* and I, along with project manager *Max*, had to work to minimise our 'performance' as host. As people arrived, they were greeted warmly and after some unavoidable administrative tasks, each individual was encouraged to engage actively in the space. We invited people to serve themselves food, to serve someone else, to explore the space, and most importantly to introduce themselves to someone they did not know. Our approach was to make it clear that we were all new to the space and that this was daunting for everyone. We asked each person if they could take it upon themselves to help someone else feel less nervous and more involved. We wanted this journey to be one we would go on together.

This operated not only as an experiment with *hostguesting*, but also sought to minimise re-inscribing the historic requirement for refugees to perform gratitude in order to sustain a warm reception (Taylor, 2016, p.133). Very quickly the room became animated and noisy, with lots of small groups in conversation, translating between languages for one another and making sure each other were eating. As many project members later reflected these breakfast encounters allowed for the group to learn about the flavours, culinary habits and cultural connections infused within the dishes being served. Whilst *Hani* proposed that the food acted as a conduit for exchanging parts of themselves:

> the point I want to make

share my table
it's not just for the food
it's really about the ideas
it's a table of ideas
cultures
language

Viewed through the lens of what Askins (2015) terms 'a transformative politics of encounter' (p.473), the weekly brunches, where food, ideas and selves were shared, became moments of reciprocity able to 'incorporate[s] a radical openness to the simultaneity of difference and similarity' (p.473).

One particular aspect of our first session, where the *hostguest* concept was particularly embodied, was when four individuals who had been involved in the previous Scottish Refugee Council project *Lest We Forget* arrived in the space. Each of them, with their own experiences of being new to the city and new to a project, accepted our invitation for everyone being responsible in the room. Each person taking it upon themselves to seek out individuals who had come on their own. Or anyone who seemed nervous at the prospect of engaging with people they didn't know: 'We want to make sure they come back next week, and the next' *Glee* said to me. Himself, a figure who *could* be theorised into the role of 'the guest', instead occupied the position of host or Bell's *hostguest,* immediately igniting a sense of shared ownership over the project and how the space would be experienced by those entering it. And these dual concepts of *hostguesting* with shared ownership, which produced intercultural exchanges that, at times, transgressed gender, race, culture and age, continued to circulate around one another, through the exchange of food, across the life of project.

One manifestation of this equitable reciprocity came after the first term of work, when we moved from using external chefs, to having individual project members provide the food each week for the group. This was instigated by the group themselves, who wanted to showcase national and cultural dishes each week. It also enabled us to creatively work around the hostile law that prohibits those in the asylum system from working and earning money. No laws were

broken, no one was employed, but group members were supported to cover the costs of providing food for forty people. This desire to cater – and to host – wasn't about employment, it was about creating strategies whereby individuals could experience the dignity of providing a high-quality service and experience for each other within a public setting. This was an experience many of the group felt excluded from because they are barred from the workforce, and because in their ascribed role as 'asylum seeker' or 'refugee' they are so often cast in the role of 'service user' and therefore placed in a position of perpetual and systematic receipt.

These food sharing practices enacted an alternative mode of working through the concept of hospitality. It also made visible what Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016 & 2019) suggests is a starkly under-recognised practice within spaces where 'overlapping displacement' occurs, which is that of 'refugee-refugee relationality'. Whilst Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's work takes place within and around refugee camps in the Global South, the questions raised by her insights about how *overlapping displacement* gives way to overlapping hospitality can be applied to cities of the Global North too. In doing so it can help shine a critical lens on the limitations of adopting the concept of integration as a two-way model. Albeit recognised as part of its progressive character, and a fundamental part of the welcome narrative that underpins Scottish Integration discourse, a more substantial recognition of the 'hosting' that occurs within, and between, spaces of *overlapping displacement* would help better reflect the realities of contemporary living, at least within Glasgow.

There is undoubtedly an increased acknowledgment within the most recent New Scots Strategy that Scotland is made up of multiple host communities. Research from scholars such as Piacentini (2015 & 2018), has shed light on the significance of 'grassroots mobilisation' within asylum seeking and refugee communities as they work 'to 'settle in' on their own terms' (2018, p.178), and drawn attention to the ways in which refugee-led organisations and associations provide a 'critical space to mobilise and challenge structural factors affecting them' (p.184). However, there is still relatively little written about what this means in

practice. For example, whilst the food sharing practices within *Share My Table* went some way to illuminating *refugee-refugee relationality*, throughout my research I also heard stories of individuals hosting their destitute friends; parents caring for each other's children in order to make travelling across the city more straightforward; individuals cooking together; families sharing resources; and friends accompanying each other to difficult or stressful appointments. These acts of everyday solidarity and care were written up – pertinently – at the edges of my own Research Journal, and these stories remain largely obscured within public discourse.

Disproportionate mainstream focus remains on popular narratives like that of 'sympathetic white host' and '(un)grateful asylum seeker' guest (Guardian, 2017, 2018, 2019; Times 2017). To call upon Adichie (2009), whilst there may be some truth in that particular story, it offers an 'incomplete' vision of what is taking place. The danger of this remaining the dominant story is that it can give way to a 'default position' predicated on 'patronizing, well-meaning pity', rather than solidarity predicated on understanding each other's agency. With a more complicated overlapping set of stories at the forefront, I suggest a richer picture of an integrating society would emerge, one that is far more multi-directional than the two-way concept allows us to visualise. This expansion of how this concept is lived, is particularly pertinent as Glasgow enters its twentieth year as a dispersal city.

Additionally, this analysis raises some challenging questions of what is meant by, and who is categorised as a 'New Scot' and in turn when and whether a person can ever transition from being a New Scot, into a Scot? If so, when, how does this intersect with other competing categories of identity (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) and is this transition a matter of self-identification? If not, what are the implications particularly to do with race and culture, when it comes to determining who can claim to be Scottish and who is perceived to be eternally new to their Scottishness? These questions surface in many forms throughout this thesis.

Of course, striving to co-create hospitality throughout *Share My Table* was not necessarily an easy process, nor should my preceding discussion conjure up an idyllic image of co-operative existence. Throughout the project some individuals felt others were taking larger portions than they should. Others that certain foods or nationalities were being disproportionately represented, or that their own contribution was not being equally acknowledged. So, whilst food operated as a source of nourishment, it also became a source of friction. At these moments, conversations were facilitated to attempt to diffuse arising tension, and actions were taken to re-establish a sense of equilibrium. This usually allowed us to work through each issue without any lasting damage to relationships.

These encounters also served as an ongoing reminder that, of course:

> [t]he diversity of values, cultures and beliefs found in community environments mean that community life often harbours dispute, tension and conflict as well as cooperation and collaboration and often at the same time. In short, community comprises sets of contested spaces (Day & Farendon, 2008, p.69).

Community practice should not be striving to flatten out people's experience in search of a 'cohesive and tight' (Guerin & Guerin, 2008, p.265) image of community, but should instead accept and seek to acknowledge disparity and complexity as it arises. In doing so perhaps a 'more complex refugee subjectivity' (Haaken & O'Neill, 2014, p.87) is allowed to emerge. Despite our desire to ease tension within the space, we perhaps also found ourselves seeking a coherence that was both unrealistic and undesirable.

In addition, what these moments of tension did was to bring the power dynamics in the room back into sharp focus. *Haree*, *Max* and I were very much re-cast as 'the organisers', called upon to fix an emerging problem. Ultimately it was our decisions that would determine how we were all to proceed. This demonstrates the contradictions and the messiness that sit at the heart of participatory practice that striving to be collaborative, as well as for community-based research working across horizontal principles. The spaces being created do not

operate outside of Thompson's contextual constraints (2011, p.99). Within these are the realities of what brings each member of the team into the room, and what their responsibilities are when 'problems' arise. de Smet, De Haene, Rousseau and Stalpaert (2018) would identify these moments as the inevitable 'micro-points of power' (p.249), that often emerge with creative spaces, arguing that '[t]hese micro-points of power might render a redistribution of power impossible' and can themselves become 'fragile sites' (p.249).

At first these *fragile sites* served as source of discomfort for me – I would be struck by a feeling of hypocrisy, or naivety, at my presumption that pre-existing power dynamics could be dismantled, even if temporarily. However, I returned, as I often do, to hooks. She asserts that transgression can be about intention, not always intention fulfilled. She celebrates practitioners who have the 'will and desire' (1994, p.13) to operate outside of normative hierarchical processes. Because 'even if the situation does not allow for the full emergence of a relationship based on mutual recognition', within the act of transgressing boundaries 'the possibility of such recognition is always present' (p.13). In light of this, even when it could give way to frustration or fragility, working to establish alternative food sharing practices that had the intention of disturbing the role of 'guest' or 'service user', carried an emotive and political significance.

Nowhere did this become more apparent than when *Precise* shared 'an awful difficult memory in my life' during a reflective session. Describing her encounter in a Glasgow food bank, *Precise* was visibly upset as she detailed what her expectation of her visit had been:

> a place where you are supposed to be
> you know welcomed
> where you are supposed to be helped
> where you are supposed to be encouraged
> and where you are supposed to be treated like
> a human being
> not a number

Instead of this she felt she had been looked at as though 'oh they coming here to

take our food', before having this negativity compounded by her interaction with the staff:

> the way she is addressing me
> she addressed me as a black asylum seeker
> a black er
> how did she put it
> a black woman asylum seeker
> I don't want to remember
> even the home office
> yes fine
> that is the process
> but not her
> the food does not belong to her
> good
> well-meaning people donated that food
> for people like us
> so it's not her food
> so why is she being like that
> 'no you're not having that'
> 'not having that'

In a space where *Precise* had sought out hospitality, she had been met with derision and racism, in turn transforming the space into a 'site of exclusion' (Hughes, 2016, p.428). This exclusion had had lasting consequences as *Precise* disclosed that 'even I when really need' she had never returned to any foodbank.

In reaction to hearing this experience, fellow project members promptly stepped in to support *Precise*, by offering up alternative food banks that she might feel comfortable visiting. Naming centres they had positive experiences with, as well as places where they felt they had not been judged. It was clear there was a shared concern for *Precise*. By feeling excluded from these spaces, her suffering was increasing. I observed the group as they sought to alleviate that suffering by sharing their extensive collective knowledge of which food banks across the city would provide her with a less hostile experience.

Nancy (2000) rejects the concept of compassion being underpinned by 'a pity that feels sorry for itself and feeds on itself' (xiii). Instead, he argues that:

> [c]om-passion is the contagion, the contact of being with one another in this turmoil. Compassion is not altruism, nor is it identification; it is the disturbance of violent relatedness (xiii).

By not just witnessing and listening to *Precise's* story, the project members embodied the compassion Nancy articulates: intervening in order to disturb the continuation of exclusionary violence. Furthermore, the project members embody why sustaining co-created hospitality held such weight throughout *Share My Table*, and reinforce Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's call (2018) for Nancy's concept of 'being with' to be 'a more productive theoretical lens' through which to unpack 'the very categories of host and guest' (p.4). This example operates as a key example of *refugee-refugee relationality*, where care and solidarity convene in a discrete manner that works in stark contrast to the hyper visibility of the humanitarian sector (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019a). This is a practice of discretion defined as the 'poetics of undisclosed care' (2019b) and is a form of reciprocal support that I witnessed over and over again throughout the project. To provide and be provided for by one another, shifted the dynamics of the project away from it being another *site of exclusion*, moving us into a space defined by a shared commitment to nourish one another.

All of this, however, would not have been possible without the artmaking. In fact, according to *Odoien*'s reflections, the relationships built - and solidarity found – in these spaces had only been achieved because of the creative practices that had been developed throughout the project:

> if you imagine it is only the people that used to come
> have a chat
> eating
> different food
> but end it without activities
> we would not have managed to let our talents coming up
> we will forget each other
> but the activities are more valuable
> they keep everyone connected with the other
> through what we did
> what we made

And so, the second half of Section Three digs deeper into the creative processes present within the three projects. Exploring how the affective resonances found within them, opened up space for enacting alternative forms of solidarity.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have bought together an analysis of spatial dynamics, co-created hospitality and an ethics of care to understand how the arts projects developed and sustained an ongoing mutual concern for one another's wellbeing (hooks, 1994, p.15). Framed by hooks' theoretical thinking on engagement, nourishment and location[s] of possibility, the encounters described across this chapter present an approach to care predicated on 'a felt responsibility for the other and concomitant commitment to aid that other' (Thompson, 2015, p.434). This, Thompson argues, is where care can be seen to translate into a concern for justice, one that draws 'attention to interdependent human relations' (p.434).

With a focus on 'the space', I have been careful not to mythologise it; instead I have positioned creative spaces as containers for *com-passionate* interactions. These, in turn, can form the basis of a resistance to the hostile biopolitical practices that lurk just outside of them. In drawing attention to some of these practices I have also sought to increase visibility of the aspects of care found within *refugee-refugee relationality* that are underdiscussed within discourses of hospitality and integration concerned with displaced people, in particular within Glasgow. Finally, ahead of the next chapter, I drew attention to the fundamental aspects that underpinned the processes examined within this chapter: creative practice, affect and aesthetic experience.

Image 25: Hani rehearses for I Hear the Image Moving – the newspaper dance (NA)

Energetic

Ready

to

learn

Image 26: A project member's answer to, 'how does Share My Table make you feel'?

VII   Locating possibility through an affective register

Introduction

This chapter responds to Thompson's (2011) call for participatory practice to 'recognise affect – bodily responses, sensations and aesthetic pleasures' (p.7) as 'a place from which a particular politics of practice can be developed' (p.7). With a focus on the affect of purpose, and the importance of visibility, multiplicity and multilingualism, I position arts practice as a unique form of 'emotional citizenry' (Askins, 2016).

Continuing to call upon hooks' theories of engagement, I describe and analyse encounters, interactions and workshop dynamics, or what Thompson (2011) refers to as 'largely ignored' (p.115) moments that happen within a workshop space, which 'fit less comfortably into a regime of action and analysis that insists on a particular effect' (p.115). I shed light on the practical, ethical and social tensions present within the work, as well as drawing upon the reflection of project members to try and better understand what a 'care-full aesthetic' (Thompson, 2015, p.438) might be. I also examine how easily a pedagogy of creative engagement built upon principles of equality and deep listening can be swiftly interrupted.

I suggest that through an attentiveness to the aesthetic processes in the room, these projects activated, even if temporarily, a space of meaningful care and affective solidarity. One that invoked a feeling of being 'really free' (*Maham*), not in addition to the creative practice, but through the practice itself. It is in this sense of freedom where I argue that arts projects like the ones I took part in transcend their reputations as being a place of distraction for marginalised communities, and become sites where strategies for creative resistance are embodied and practiced.

The affect of creative purpose and an aesthetic of care

With each weekly session of *Share My Table*, *Haree* and I were eager for project members to walk into a space that would feel different from other community spaces; for it to *feel* like an artistic space. The creative debris and evidence of previous arts workshops splattered on the walls helped set the scene. We complimented this within each session by ensuring that something was always already *happening* as people arrived. Whether adding to our large collective map, helping organise materials for the session, or feeding into the day's discussion topics, we aimed for there to be a palpable sense of *doing* that individuals could engage with from the outset of each workshop.

Our approach speaks directly to hooks' contention that a teacher or facilitator in a space needs to enact an engaged practice – not simply to try and generate it. By embracing 'the performative aspect' of our creative role and performing our busy-ness, we were 'compelled to engage "audiences," to consider issues of reciprocity' (hooks, 1994, p.11) that challenged us. As the artistic leads we had to embody the ways of working we wanted to inspire within the room. *Sami* recalled that:

> as soon as I arrived in this place
> when I open the door
> everything changed to me
> all my world will be this building
> you know
> and that was fantastic

The image of *Sami* being pulled in speaks to how our approach engendered a sense of purpose across the space. A purposefulness that was infectious, permeating into how the workshop itself played out. It served 'as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants' (p.11) in the creation of the work, as well as the working practices of the space itself.

This same sense of purpose was present throughout the workshops for *Echo*. Each week the dance artists would call upon the project members to create a new piece of the dance. First by leading us through a series of warm-up

exercises, and then inviting us to improvise movement vignettes in pairs, or small groups. Throughout the process we engaged in dance duets using just our feet, we travelled across the room carrying each other's bodyweight, we pushed and pulled each other, we twisted and we turned and on a couple of occasions we danced alone across a circle of people. My notes remind me that I 'found it nerve-wracking', but these nerves were accompanied most often with a sense of commitment, purpose and always laughter.

Phoenix described these opportunities to improvise within *Echo* as 'the most important thing' for her within the project's creative practice. She professed that to be taught something 'it's easy':

> but the thing
> is to
> you know
> express
> because you had to create it
> no-one created that for you

Like *Alee* in the previous chapter, *Phoenix* focused in on the importance of creating things through an autonomous process. Furthermore, it was the invitation to embrace unstructured expression and experimentation that felt most powerful:

> when you shouldn't be
> using your brain at all
> you should be just using
> your emotion and intuition really
> just however you feel
> I'm not going to think about it
> I'm just going to do it
> and see how it works

Phoenix's commitment to *not think about it*, resonates with Thompson's advocations for participatory arts practice to more fully submerge itself in the 'terrain of sensation' (p.119) or more precisely for individuals to be encouraged to build up a capacity to listen to 'emotional, often automatic, embodied responses' (p.119). This, Thompson claims, is the 'real work' (p.118) of participatory arts working for social justice; one that centralises 'aesthetic concerns for beauty, joy, pleasure, awe and astonishment' (p.118).

It is in this terrain; this affective realm, and in light of Hughes work on improvised music-making within Immigration Removal Centres (2016), that the improvisation taking place within *Echo* can be understood as being an (un)intended resistant form of expression (p.429). Though *Echo* was not taking place within an institution of incarceration, the dances were developed within the wider confinement of the Hostile Environment. The invitation, therefore, for project members to engage in a form of movement with no pre-set rhythms (p.433), 'denoted by a period of continual surprise, a constant reinvention of a future that cannot be anticipated' (p.434) can be read as an interruption that resists. This is an interruption to the everyday practices of control that the immigration system extends across public and private spaces. By engaging in 'an always becoming, never-to-be-completed (dis)unity' (p.434) the very act of being 'in your body' *(Phoenix)* invites individuals to temporarily operate out with – and potentially trouble - the normative conditions and rhythms of life.

Hardt (2007) determines that paying attention to the body and emotion illuminates 'both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, along with the relationship between these two powers' (p. ix). The body and emotional expression were ever-present in all three projects I worked on, and it is within the discourse of affect that I have been encouraged to search for ways to articulate their significance. In turn, the connection between affect and the aesthetic landscapes discovered across the creative processes I was in, have offered me a way in to thinking about individual and collective agency and how that relates to enactment of the location of possibility. To consider this further, I return to the significance many *Share My Table* project members placed on the sense of purpose within our activities. Emphasising time and again that active engagement was a key reason they kept returning each week. *Lawyer* talked about a specific workshop where he had felt this most keenly; entering the space to see and feel a hive of activity that, like the quote from Sami earlier, pulled him in. He reflected on the experience as one that had made him feel 'fully alive' – something he had not felt very often since leaving his home country.

The workshop *Lawyer* referred to had focused on creating large newspaper sculptures throughout the Tramway building; sculptures that deliberately interrupted or disrupted the space. It was one that had also left an emotional impression upon me. To prepare everyone for this activity, *Haree* and I started the session with a collective task of creating a giant newspaper sculpture that spanned the diagonal length of the Studio. We hoped that this would invite the group to engage in an affective experience. My notes reflect the way the group responded:

> *There was a moment of pause before everyone jumped in – no questions, no resistance, just action with everyone selecting paper and beginning to build. I thought we might just all end up working on our own sections – and for a while this was the case, but very soon groups of activity had emerged – working to best prop up a structure or solving how to connect two seemingly disconnected sections. There was folding, rolling, crunching, scrunching, laughter and the sound of sellotape being pulled and ripped, and as we worked more people arrived and they became absorbed into the activity, no questions asked they just got to work, keen to be part of this shared piece of work... My favourite moment was re-entering the space after having left for a moment, because I hadn't quite realised how many folk had arrived. The room was full, with people making – one person up on a chair hanging something, others gathered around one of the structures working out how best to keep it upright, others deep in construction mode. There was conversation but nothing was distracting from this moment, everyone was making this happen. It was beautiful. (Research Journal)*

The spirit of activity that gripped people as they entered the space operated as an embodiment of collective endeavour and speaks to Ahmed's (2010) contention that affect is about the 'messiness of the experiential' and about 'how we are touched by what we are near' (p.30).

I was touched - moved - by the beauty that I saw and felt. A beauty found not in 'a field of particular communicative content' (Thompson, 2011, p.119) but in relation to the intensity found in 'a capacity for action and to a sense of aliveness, where it is that vitality that prompt's a person's desire to connect and engage (perhaps with others or ideas)' (p.119). While the colonial ramifications

around definitions of beauty are extensive,[4] I emphasise my encounter with beauty, and *Lawyer's* encounter with aliveness, in order to demonstrate that participatory arts practice 'cannot be distilled to messages, story content or words, but must be opened up to the sustenance of sensation' (p.125). Sensation that is relational. For it was the inter-relation between person and person, between people and their materials, and the care that was being taken to make the artwork *together* that affected me. Here, beauty was embedded within what Thompson calls 'the aesthetics of care' (2015, p.436). A 'sensory and affective' (p.436) process that is dependent upon the knowledge that 'together we complete something' (*Mary*). An artistic practice that is underpinned by the forging of 'inter-human relationships' (p. 438) between project members: 'it's through the work through doing the activities that's what connects us' (*Odoien*).

An aesthetics of care 'relies on building mutual activities of sharing, support, co-working and relational solidarity within a framework of artistry or creative endeavour' (p.438). The sentiment of which was captured by *Ninilia*, when talking about her experience of co-creating the dances within *Echo*:

> It is about that kind of community feeling of support
> I think even when you weren't a hundred percent sure
> what was going on
> you knew
> that either someone else did know
> or they weren't just going to let you fall on your ass
> do you know what I mean
> at some point
> if I don't know what's going on
> I need to trust that someone else will be able to assist
> and I think that did happen a lot
> I was very clear that even in the little breaks we had
> once in a while
> people would be in a little group
> showing each other what to do and how to do it

For *Ninilia*, the reciprocal investment of time and energy that project members put in to ensuring one another did not *fall of their ass*, was a manifestation of

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4 I would recommend Sarah Nuttall's introduction, as well as the individual essays within *Beautiful Ugly: African and Diaspora Aesthetics* (2007). This offers an extensive insight into, and resists the Eurocentric definition of aesthetics and beauty defined by colonial, hierarchical 'unexamined whiteness'.

how trust was being 'continually negotiated and re-negotiated in action, as a performative act' (Nicholson, 2002, p.81). More specifically within this context of creative activity, it was a performative act achieved 'through successfully negotiating the circularity of risk and action', which in turn gave way to project members becoming 'active participants in new learning experiences' (p.85). Furthermore, Ninilia's experience reiterates Thompson's assertion that 'aesthetic value is located in-between people in moments of collaborative creation, conjoined effort and intimate exchange' (p.438).

The enactment of trust, and the 'humanity' (*Bentley*) found through these affective encounters are a form of community building, that offers a unique lens through which it is possible to interpret Askins' concept of emotional citizenry (2016), which sees 'emotional and embodied encounters' develop though the intermingling of 'practical activity, conversation and emotional bonding' (p.522). This 'diverse and intersectional politics of recognition' (p.523) Askins argues, is the basis for developing new forms of solidarities (p.523); solidarities which in this instance emerge out of the very practice of making dance or performance or sculptures together. The shared responsibility required to create together necessitates a 'beautiful attentiveness' (Thompson, 2011, p.119) both to the idea itself and to those that are bringing the idea to life with you. This approach is fundamental to creating hopeful ways of being together, and it is through these aesthetic processes that it becomes possible 'to make visible a better world' (p.2).

Indeed, these reflections prompt me to stress, following Thompson (2011), that participatory workshop spaces should not to be considered rehearsals for real-life or 'pre-political' (p.174), but recognised as real-life sites in and of themselves, where ideas are realised and ways of being with one another are co-constructed. Thus, I return to location[s] of possibility and argue that through the purposeful acts of creative construction, *Share My Table* and *Echo* worked to counter normative or even aggressive hegemonic tendencies by developing alternative ways of relating to one another, by 'stimulat[ing] affective solidarity between people' (Thompson, 2015, p.437) through the process of artmaking.

Valuing Visibility, Multiplicity and Multilingualism

At the beginning of every session of *Echo* the team of artists would begin with a series of warm up exercises. Going around in a circle, in turn each project member would say their name and offer up an improvised movement to go with it. After each name and action, the rest of the room would repeat them – like the project title itself, we briefly and playfully became echoes of one another. We would then often continue to work in a circle, with exercises that encouraged us to find physical connections between our bodies. The next step would be to develop this into improvised movement, sometimes asking us to occupy the centre of the circle one by one. After one session I reflected upon my experience:

> *Very soon we move into dancing – they ask us to move in one by one. I immediately feel nervous. It's funny to be nervous about something I ask people to do all the time. It's a valuable reminder of the fact that people are constantly being moved out of their comfort zones in these spaces. Overcoming, in order to be seen. There is a moment of presenting oneself. Dancing to be seen is key to this practice, being seen and being comfortable in your body. (Research Journal)*

Overcoming nervousness in order to be seen takes place in many aspects of everyday life, however, what my reflections prompt me to consider is what Foster (2016) argues (following Shapiro) is the 'oppositional' potential of the performed body, specifically when marginalised individuals dance.

Foster's contends that dance opposes:

> the dominant ideology for women, because dancing is about taking up space, defying stasis, being strong and bending the "normal" images and relationships of what "gendered" human beings can be and do (2016, p.85).

Although *Echo* was not focused solely on the movement of women (though it was a predominantly female space) the ongoing invitation to dance – both freely and formally – resonates with the idea of dance operating in opposition to controlling forces, whether these be ideological or representational. By inviting each individual in the circle – and across the course of the project – to dance, to take

up space, to be seen and heard, and to present oneself rather than be presented, *Echo* defied the norm of hyper-constructed narratives of refugee and asylum experiences.

These warm-up exercises might not immediately assert themselves as acts of resistance, but if we return to Hughes (2016), she suggests that resistance has a 'messy, complex and ambiguous nature' (p.428). Hughes challenges the assertion that all resistance must be intentional or strategic. Instead she calls for it to be 'understood as plural and distributed, operating without or beyond intent' (p.429). Through this frame, these moments of dance located at the centre of the group circle, like the improvised music that Hughes' article analyses, become about commanding attention. Therefore, they can with their *oppositional* embodied qualities be perceived as 'productive and affirmative power that promotes alternative imaginaries' (Strunk & Leitner, 2013, 62 in Hughes 2016, p. 429) against the rigid and controlling biopolitical forces of the immigration system.

There is an argument that this reading of resistance stretches the concept too far, or in fact dilutes it. But I would follow Phillips (2014) in arguing that resistance and solidarity manifest in many shapes, and in the current political and socio-economic climate the arts sector has a responsibility to seek out forms through which these concepts can be explored and expressed. For '[n]eo-liberal culture is so hard. People's bodies need to find places to take care of themselves and their communities in this hard culture; arts centres should be these places' (Phillips, 2014 in Cruz, 2016, p.9) They are, of course, not the *only* places, but this analysis offers a way for arts practitioners and producers to critically consider how they position their work.

In *Share My Table* a similar focus on being seen and heard manifested through the ritual use of a 'check-in' to officially mark the beginning of each session. This saw the group gather in a circle and one by one share how they were feeling that day, or how they had been since we had last been in a space together.

Individuals were encouraged to experiment with their methods of communication – using English, using another language they were comfortable in, or using their bodies. Although often light-hearted, at times the circle carried a profundity as people shared news of family reunification, loss of life and asylum process stress.

These check-ins were supported by gentle warm-up exercises that included work with the breath, physical movement and group interaction. All the exercises were focused on developing the idea of 'see me, hear me. I am here' (Research Journal). By creating space and time for each person to speak, even if all they wanted to say was hello, worked to 'genuinely *value* everyone's presence' (hooks, 1994, p.8). This ethos was communicated to the group explicitly and often met with nervous laughter. However, across the project the practice became embedded into the culture of the room and shaped how people expected to be involved. As *Precise* articulated:

> whether you can speak English
> whether you cannot speak English
> you want everybody to do something
> that was very very good
> there are other places you go to
> they don't want to know
> even if you sit there 24 hours
> watching
> everything going on
> no one will come to you and say
> what is your opinion
> how do you see this
> or what do you think we should do
> I think
> its a kind of like
> segregation
> like
> fine
> your presence is welcome
> but
> we don't care about your opinion
> and things like that
> share my table wasn't like that at all
> everybody had something to do

everybody was involved

What *Precise* describes is, in many ways, an attempt to practice a radical pedagogy rooted in 'an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes' (hooks, 1994, p.8). In turn, it nurtured an environment where each individual's contributions were viewed as resources that could constructively enhance the capacity of the creative space we were building together (p.8).

Building on this commitment to valuing visibility for each person in the room, *Haree* and I built in time for creative sharings and moments of performance within each workshop. In her discussion on being part of a transformative pedagogy in multicultural spaces, hooks joins Freire in foregrounding the importance of building community, 'in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigour' (hooks, 1994, p.40). One way to do this 'is to recognize the value of each individual voice' (p.40) by sharing work with one another. It is the act of hearing a multiplicity of voices and listening deeply to one another – an act hooks terms as an 'exercise in recognition' – that each individual in the room is invited to 'make their presence known' (p.41).

Share My Table embraced this approach and expanded upon this theory to consider not just the voice but the body – as it was in *Echo* – as a source for making one's presence known:

> *We had a moment of all bodies moving together, of interweaving and negotiating themselves through the space. Then we asked them to do it one at a time – to keep the space alive – and to focus on each other. We managed to do this in silence, we started by all breathing together and then one by one they moved… There was a sense of risk taking – moving through any space can be difficult but being actively witnessed is even harder. I felt I was watching F actually physically grow as she crossed the space – slowly taking pleasure in being witnessed. The group were holding the space for one another, they worked together, and an atmosphere of mutual respect was palpable. It finished with an applause. (Journal notes)*

Whether we were reading or showing a piece of writing, exhibiting an artwork in one of our pop-up exhibitions, or expressing our emotional or intellectual ideas

through tableaux, these intimate and fleeting sharings took on a multiplicity of meanings. They became a practice in and of themselves of *inviting visibility* – of normalising the process of being seen and heard as one's self. This process ran counter to the constant practices of categorisation (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017) that many of our project members were experiencing in everyday life. To return once again to *Faith's* statement from Chapter Four, 'every day we are refugees or asylum seekers to someone. Here we are ourselves'.

What emerged from these sharings was a growing consideration for the responsibility of the viewer or the listener, and their role in creating a space where each other was comfortable being seen and heard. By presenting these moments 'as a space to learn' not just about one another, but *from* one another, we embarked upon acts of 'collective listening' that affirmed 'the value and uniqueness of each voice'. Consequently, in listening we developed 'a communal awareness of the diversity of our experience and provid[ed] a limited sense of the experiences that may inform how we think and what we say' (hooks, 1994, p.84). *Moon* described how her experience was underpinned by a sense of learning about oneself through another:

> we keep a lot inside us
> and sometimes
> its good to be invited to feel and to speak
> I like to meet
> and talk and listen to other people
> on different subjects
> I like to see each person
> how they deal with
> different subject
> this has helped me understand the personality of each person
> this
> it has given me
> confidence in myself
> and I can find out the person I want to deal with
> if I can be close to him or her or not
> from all around the world

These sharings then, became a way for us to gain a better understanding of one another, as well as to deepen our understanding of how we inter-related with one another. A way of 'being with' (Nancy, 2000) one another that resonates with

an understanding of relationality that is predicated on 'viewing (multiple) relationships as forging individuals' (White, 2017, p.129) as opposed to 'seeing individuals as forging relationships (p.129). As such, I call again upon the lens of 'emotional citizenry' (Askins, 2016), to argue that these creative sharings can be translated as 'intercultural encounters' (p.516) that are moving beyond what Askins refers to as the 'only-difference' lens that frames 'both negative and affirmative politics of recognition' (p.518). *Moon* was not concerned necessarily with identifying commonality with those around her, but instead she speaks of the emergence of a more reflexive process of belonging 'in which people recognise one another' – and themselves – 'as nuanced individuals embedded in complex, *liveable*, lives' (p.523). The invitation 'to feel and to speak' then becomes a means through which commonality and solidarity is perhaps solidified through a creative attention to multiplicity.

At the heart of the potential for the new solidarities that Askins describes, is the existence of 'concurrent difference-and-similarity instead of oppositional and reductive dualisms' (p.518). In light of this, I want to highlight the importance of the *Share My Table* workshops as a space where multiple languages, including the languages of expressive arts themselves such as movement, performance and sculpting, were spoken and utilised to share the creativity and ideas being developed. While translation played a key role in enabling people to feel comfortable and able to access the space, the project, as much as possible, tried to encourage a multilingual approach to artmaking, as a means through which to enact a form of 'intersectional diversity' (p.516). Though many project members expressed their desire to use the workshops to improve their English and to communicate their ideas in English, 'there is freedom to speak' (*Bentley*) in one's first, second or even fifth language. Individuals were always encouraged and welcomed whenever anyone felt this was how they wanted or needed to speak. Phipps (2012) argues that:

> when asylum seekers use language, it is from places of extreme experience where language is subject to extraordinary pressure: pressure of legal narrative, pressure of traumatic recollection; pressure of pain and desperation, pressure in another language that is not their mother tongue; pressure to speak through tears (p.587).

Our approach was to work to alleviate the burden of language from our creative

space, allowing us to actively move away from the hegemony of an imposed monolingual culture.

Furthermore, *Bentley* described how the linguistic freedom found in being able to move between languages became a source of confidence for him. Something he was not able to feel in the more formal language learning spaces that he spent time in, where speaking languages was – if not prohibited – very much disapproved of.   Project members also noted that the artistic team and fellow project members had always been quick to support each other to find the right word, phrase or meaning they were searching for in order to be understood or needed to hear in order to understand. Generating another example of co-constructed processes of sensemaking.

These reflections resonate with Smith's (2016) work on how reflexive artistic process can become important sites for language acquisition. Smith argues that:

> play and creativity generate safe spaces in which one can be uninhibited. In play, there is no right or wrong. All participants are equal, regardless of language competence. Play dismantles the usual social hierarchy (p.11/12).

The underpinning of play and creativity within the space then, perhaps allowed for an atmosphere to develop where project members knew they didn't have to get it right. Where they could embark instead in the energetic and life-giving process of '*languaging*' (Phipps, 2007, p.1): in 'having a go, trying to make sense and getting somewhere against all the odds (p.1). This is a process that shifts the focus away from linguistic competence and instead highlights the 'social and intercultural dimensions of language' (p.2), and allows us to see the linguistic play occurring within *Share My Table* as a quietly radical way to engage, learn, and speak 'to and with each other' (p.3).

Of course, with up to ten languages in the space at any one time, this intercultural exchange didn't always mean that communication was easy. There were moments where we had to work through miscommunication, or where clashes of personalities and cultures required careful interventions. As a

monolingual myself I often felt embarrassed at not being able to remember words and phrases that were taught to me from week to week. Nonetheless, multilingual conversing offered us all the 'experience of hearing non-English words' (hooks, 1994, p.172) and the opportunity to celebrate the richness of a diversity of phrases and sounds. It functioned in opposition to 'a multicultural world that remains white supremacist' (p.172). One that uses formal and bureaucratic English to disorientate and dehumanise as well 'as a weapon to silence and censor' (p.172). This is a process that, on arrival in the UK, had left *Souso* thinking:

> they are laughing at you
> they are taking from you
> right in front of your
> you know your eyes
> you can't do anything because
> you can't express yourself
> can't speak
> you can't
> sometimes you know
> I used to cry
> just cry
> 'why I didn't'
> you know
> but I don't know how to explain
> don't know how to negotiate
> or just
> fight for my right

In light of this, advocating for visibility, multilingualism and multiplicity within our space became an act of resistance against the hostile linguistic environment outside.

An Interruption to the pedagogy

About two months into our time together, *Share My Table* was invited to contribute to a piece of live performance that was being created for Tramway by a collective of international artists. They were re-imagining a piece of existing work to respond to the perceived 'refugee crisis' and wanted to engage with people with lived experience. We approached this offer informed by RISE's 10 Things You Need To Consider document. In particular their demand that artists

'critically interrogate your intention' (2015), which had operated as a guiding principle for mine and *Haree*'s own involvement. We sought reassurance that they were not looking to extract stories from the project members in order to serve their artistic motivation. After a series of constructive conversations with one of the artists involved, we proposed to the group that we offer the international artists the audio version of our 'I See…' poem to respond to. In exchange for the group's creative product the artists would deliver a workshop for us, as a way of widening the group's exposure to different arts practices. Despite *Share My Table* being made up of 'community participants' and the Tramway project being made up of 'international artists' we wanted to position this as a horizontal creative exchange; one that contested a professional to community hierarchy.

As the 'gatekeepers' for this exchange, *Haree* and I felt a strong sense of responsibility, and when it came to the day of bringing together the two teams I was prompted to recall RISE's words: 'It is not a safe-space just because you say it is' (2015). The exchange was warm and friendly, but it was also framed by a number of clumsy interactions. This included one of the artists repeatedly referring directly to project members as 'the refugees', and another which saw the artists describe the project as about 'death and the sea'. This was a description that had not been shared with us in advance and one that would have made us more wary about being involved. We were also faced with the fact that the workshop was far less structured than we had hoped for. While there were moments of creativity and beauty within it, 'there was, unfortunately, a feeling from our team - that the group were approached 'as refugees' whose words the project needed, rather than individuals you were interested in representing' (Research Journal).

Many of these moments were later put down to the international artistic team being under immense pressure to deliver their work within tight parameters. In particular, they reflected that committing to facilitate a workshop during this time had been over ambitious. All of which are understandable factors. However, one encounter - though fleeting in many ways - had a lasting impact upon me. In

part because it served as a direct interruption or schism to the pedagogy I have been working to describe throughout the rest of this chapter, and because I was frustrated by my own immediate response to it.

A number of the international artists had been invited to join us at the beginning of our session, ahead of our tour through their performance space. This included, as it always did, our check-in. We made our way round the circle, with the project members embracing their opportunity to *invite visibility*. Then, speaking over one of our group members, one of the artists – a tall, white man probably in his forties – turned to me across the circle and loudly stated 'I don't have time for this'. Disarmed, and unprepared for this interruption to a process of contact (Askins, 2016, p.516) that all in our group understood the importance of, I looked at him in shock. Eventually, I said something akin to 'I'm sorry this is a part of what we do every week. It's a chance for everyone to say how they are, and it won't take long.' As I finished, he turned and left the room. There was a moment of quiet discomfort, but the group resumed the check-in and carried on with the day as planned.

This artist's behaviour – his lack of care for and about those people whose voices he claimed he wanted to platform – is emblematic of what the artists 'as saviour' narrative discussed in Chapter Four, and speaks to a considerable lack of critical and ethical reflection on his part. His interest in being perceived as an artist with an interest in the 'refugee crisis' took priority over actually engaging with individuals. RISE's words circled in my mind: '[o]ur struggle is not an opportunity, or our bodies' a currency, by which to build your career' (2015). In *Teaching to Trangress,* hooks (1994) criticises normative forms of teaching, where teachers are celebrated for being 'smart in book knowledge but who might be otherwise unfit for social interaction' (p.16). Underpinned by a 'dualistic separation of public and private' (p.16) this approach, she argues, encourages individuals to 'see no connection between life practices, habits of being, and the roles of professors' and instead promotes the idea that 'being smart meant that one was inherently emotional unstable' (p.16). She contends that this makes space for students and colleagues to consistently make and find

excuses for problematic behaviour or 'pedagogical practices [that] were mired in structures of domination' (p.18).

Whatever prompted the artist above to feel he was too busy to listen to the very people who had been generous enough to gift their work to him, and in turn to openly communicate that, remains unknown to me. Although I debriefed in some detail with members of their team about our concerns after the session had finished, I did not bring up the one artist's behaviour specifically. I regret this, I wish I had challenged his actions explicitly – either in the moment, or retrospectively. Because what we witnessed in that moment was the manifestation of an arts practice built upon the very same normative forms that hooks describes about teaching. There was a stark separation between art-making and the creative process, and one that reflected a process of extraction modelled upon forms of colonial and 'coercive hierarchies' (p.18). To return once again to Thompson, 'the actual work of social change is bound up in how we create, who creates and when we create art' (p.11).

This interruption, though of course not the only moment of tension within the artistic spaces I researched, was the most explicit example of how not to create. I have chosen to end the chapter with this incident in focus, because it was my experience on that day and my reflections upon it since that have, in part, pushed me to focus a core part of my thesis on the importance of process within arts practice, and the processes of contact that emerge between people. The discomfort that emerged within this specific 'contact zone' (Askins, & Pain, 2011) brought to the surface 'questions about difference, power and privilege' (p.806), and in turn, has helped me to better understand what a search for a 'care-full aesthetic' (Thompson, 2015, p.438) is within an artistic process. It also prompts me to recognise that the projects I had been involved in, though not without fault and friction, all shared a common commitment within their spaces to enacting a process that connected deeply to the formation of an arts politic rooted in embodied and localised solidarity.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have worked to focus in on how the arts practice within *Share My Table* and the Maryhill Integration Network projects can be read as affective spaces where we can 'labor for freedom' (hooks, 1994, p.207). I have cautioned against the possible limitations of arts practice, whilst addressing how to create spaces that offer us alternative ways of being; artistic spaces that push against the hegemonic and hostile strategies *that those* navigating the asylum and immigration system face on a daily basis. This has simply been an attempt to try to understand what these spaces and projects meant to people as they participated in them, and how in a 'culture of domination' (p.27), they could be understood to be creating processes that offer alternative narratives and ways of being, even if temporarily.

Thompson (2011) suggests that often the arts, or creative expression within a political context, are viewed as a respite or a distraction from the struggles facing individuals and communities. He argues that this is, however, only part of the narrative. He contends that forms of aesthetic expression have the potential to do 'something more radical':

> [t]hey are also integral and necessary parts of change itself. In a world of inequality, social injustice and endemic violence, they could be acts of resistance *and* redistribution, made in intimate and sensory keys (p.11).

I propose that in foregrounding 'a politics of the intimate' (p.34), and by choosing to interpret aesthetics and beauty as process-orientated; 'as participants co-creating work, from their own desires, delights or inspiration' (p.159), and by underpinning this analysis with the liberational theory of hooks, this chapter – alongside the preceding chapter - has sought to identify how these acts of *resistance and redistribution* can materialise, and how, in doing so they develop a resistant politics of engagement that energises those in the room. For '[t]his is not dance as opiate, but as a source of nourishment' (p.2).

Finally, in bringing Section Three to a close I would like to suggest that, with a

focus on the aesthetics of processes that were 'productive rather than dependent, collaborative rather than charitable' (Darling, 2013), I have begun to open up space for a complicated and messy understanding of community and society that is rooted in notions of interdependence, rather than reliant upon integration. A subject that comes to the fore in the next, and final section of this thesis.
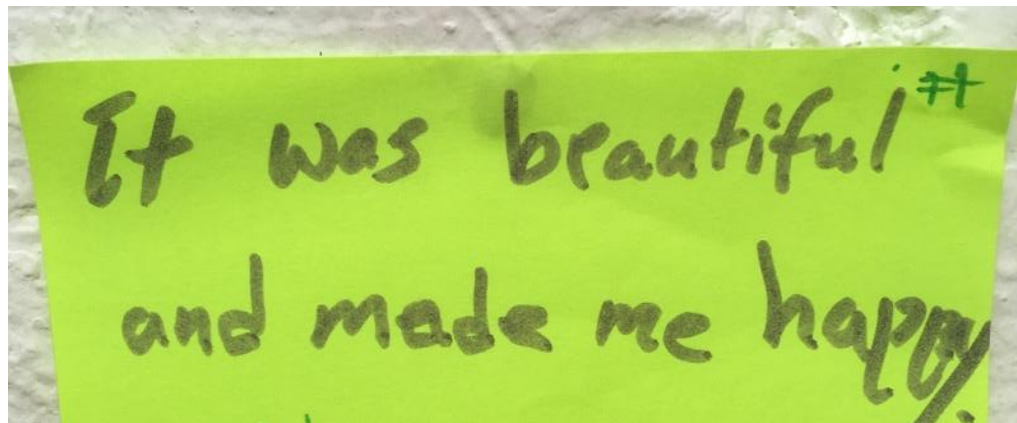
Image 27: Response to Share My Table workshop where we built newspaper sculptures

"when I was in my
country
I had to give mask
you know
always wear a mask
it was not myself
never
I had to follow the rules
unwillingly
I had to do something
unwillingly

they were not me

they were my mask

and when I arrived in this

country

I said to myself

that is

over

I need to show out the

masks

and live

with myself

and for myself"

Part Four

The integrating self

Image 28: Share My Table project member portrait (EMH)

VIII   Striving for a self-authored life

Introduction

This chapter builds on themes presented in Chapter Five, where I called upon McPherson's (2014) concept of *self-authorship* to explore the importance of generating artistic processes that position individuals as the subject, not the object. Here, I develop McPherson's analysis, widening the scope of the discussion to my own resea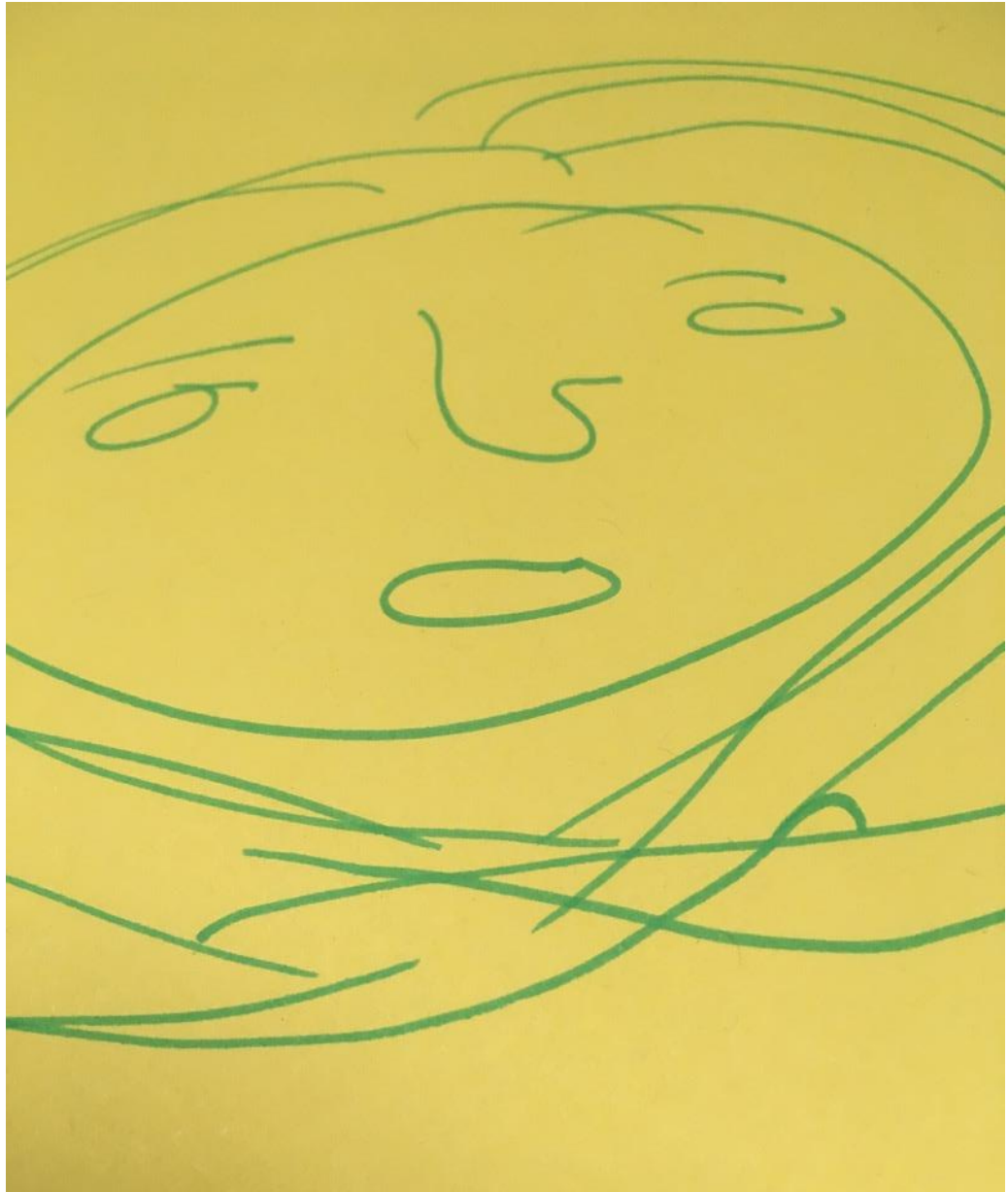rch, to explore how the creative work within the project spaces intersect with the individual desire to live a *self-authored life*.

To do so this I utilise the notion of (re)construction to frame the discussion and engage throughout with Hall's (1994 & 1997) work on cultural identity. I journey through themes of memory, time, and play in an attempt to understand the importance of creative moments in relation to the emergence of new identities (Hall, 1997). I present this alongside my proposition that a structured process of forgetting, is a marker, or in fact a specific mechanism of the dehumanising asylum process. I then shift the focus to examine how the desire to live a *self-authored life* grew outside of the creative spaces we worked within and make an argument for the potential resistant impact of engaging this form of agency within everyday spaces.

The chapter then moves into an examination of project members' reflections on shared memory in relation to Gilroy's 'diaspora-consciousness' (1994). While much existing literature on memory and forced migration is focused on how connections to a common past can operate as a root to retaining and producing national/ethnic/cultural group identities (Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013, p.685), I turn my attention to the significance of generating *new* memories. In doing so, I consider whether arts projects can act as new forms of remembrance, which in turn operate as shared sites for the identity formation of an emerging diasporic community. To close the chapter, I reflect upon how this thematic exploration might widen perceptions of how integration is lived.

To begin this exploration, I rewind to the selfie-portrait encounter I started with

in Chapter 5, to re-engage with Risam's (2018) theoretical analysis, and to introduce an insight from project member *Glee*, which operated as the catalyst for this chapter's theoretical exploration.

(Re)construction and the individual as a work of art

In the moments that followed the selfie-portrait encounter described in Chapter Five, *Glee* approached me, and directed my attention towards the portraits pinned on the wall. He said:

> *What we are doing here is making memories. New memories. I know how it will be, in a year they'll look back and remember this moment. That's why I wanted to take a photograph (Research Journal).*

Glee was emphatic; he wanted me to understand how this insight shaped what he was doing in the creative space.

Within this statement *Glee* reveals a complex relationship with time that seems to acknowledge how this event, in the present, will be valued by him, in the future, as part of a construction of his then past. This speaks to what Dabiri refers to as the 'cyclical' concepts of time associated with traditional Yoruba knowledge – one that believes 'the 'past' is not necessarily dispensed with, but is in fact 'in dialogue with the future.' (Dabiri, 2019, p.3). Moreover, it echoes Hall's assertion that coming to terms with one's cultural identity is about understanding that we are all in a constant state of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' (Hall, 1994, p.225), and that our sense of who we are 'belongs to the future as much as to the past' (p.225).

With a deep awareness of how the project would resonate for him long-term, *Glee*'s perception speaks to what Mulvey (2013) observes as an integral part of integration, which is the process of' establishing who you are' (p.125), both privately (for himself) and publicly (a means through which he could present himself). Further, it resonates with Risam's (2018) arguments about how to best understand refugee selfies: as 'networked objects that facilitate a range of possible connections' (p.68) to those far-away, as well as to those within new

environments. Selfies, Risam argues, are acts of self-representation that enable individuals to 'locate themselves in social life, which is mediated through visual culture, aesthetics, and new media platforms' (p.68). In recasting himself as the 'subject' (p.68) *Glee*'s relationship to the selfie-portrait encounter can be seen to operate as an access point to a new sense of self, or the self in (re)construction. Positioning him as a mediated citizen (Khan, 2012), with a 'networked identity' (Risam, 2018, p.68), this quiet act of (re)construction is underpinned by new experiences, and the connections and memories borne out of them. And perhaps, as Risam's work suggests, the sense of oneself is strengthened by the documentation of those shared memories with other people.

McPherson (2010) argues that rather than being focused on integration – as per policy definitions – the individuals she researched with, were more concerned with the 'development of the self' (p.559), both in relation to personal growth and community-building. Calling upon feminist readings of Foucault's articulations around the Care of the Self 'as evidence of the ways in which agency can operate in the subject' (p.559), McPherson makes a case for understanding the self as a piece of art: 'an ethical project that requires attention, reflection, and cultivation' (p.559). She argues that this is part of the ongoing process of 'coming to know the self' (Foucault 2000b, p.228 in McPherson, p.560) within a new environment. Integral to this ongoing 'cultivation' of the self, specifically in the context of those with experience of forced displacement, is the freedom for individuals to access 'tools to develop themselves: to self-author towards a goal of realising their potential' (p.560). In sync with what was discussed in Chapter Five, *self-authoring* one's own life is not simply about being present and allowed to participate in certain aspects of social life, it is about being able to determine how one's presence is perceived and the direction that participation takes.

The theoretical resonances embedded within *Glee's* practice of (re)construction and a growing interest in processes of *self-authorship* provide the impetus for making space in the thesis for theorizing the importance that project members

placed upon their involvement in these arts projects. Both in terms of how it affected them within the workshops themselves, and as they navigated their sense of self and their identity within the context of living in a new(ish) city. Finally, reflecting on *Phoenix's* description of *Echo* as 'like the pearl' that 'stayed inside of each person who participated in this project', this chapter has become an exploration of how the creative workshops intersected with individual efforts to reignite, re-imagine, or (re)construct what might best be described as – for the sake of maintaining the artistic metaphor – their own self-portrait. Where this analysis begins, is where *Glee* also began. With the centrality of memory.

Time and memory as a site of (re)construction

Across the reflective sessions I facilitated, personal memory and relationships to time emerged over and over again. In one conversation, *Student* and *Bentley* shared how their involvement in the performance of *I Hear The Image Moving* had activated long-since forgotten memories of theatrical encounters they had both experienced as young people in their respective home countries. Of course, it is valuable to be reminded of forgotten 'good memories', but more significantly, both *Student* and *Bentley* agreed that engaging in creative practice during *Share My Table* had allowed them to reconnect with a past that they felt had become lost to them. And in doing so they had been able to take strength from that younger version of themselves; the person who was yet to experience the events that were to come.

For *Student* it was almost as though she could seek advice from her past self:

we remember those days
we remember those times
and we have to remember that still we can do it
and we don't have to give up
still if the situation
if like
we are in trouble
or stress
we don't have to give up

and for *Bentley*, reengaging with his younger self was about drawing upon his past energy as a foundation for 'rebuilding or refreshing'. This description, in particular, echoes the importance of (re)construction identified within *Glee's* statement, further reinforcing the role that memory can serve in providing the building blocks for a process of individual (re)construction in the present.

In contrast to this, *Sami* articulated that his relationship with the past was an active process of 'sort of letting go'. He felt restricted by who he had been previously, and was committed instead to making:

> space in my brain
> to welcome you know
> to
> embrace
> you know
> new things

Sami's engagement in *Share My Table* was a demonstration of this commitment, whereby creative activity within the present, opened up possibilities in his mind for his future self. He saw the activities we undertook in *Share My Table* as stimuli for ideas that he could imagine his future self, carrying forward. *Hani* went further in her analysis, to reflect upon how being engaged in creative practice led to her 'feeling alive' – a feeling that, like *Lawyer* in Chapter Seven – was unfamiliar to her. *Hani* admitted that her day-to-day feelings were often:

> I am a useless person
> I can't do anything
> I am not alive

but through her work on the *Share My Table* project, a sense of hope for the future emerged. Whilst *Student* and *Bentley* had drawn courage from past selves – and significantly a past self prior to that of seeking asylum – *Hani's* experience had projected her forward. In looking towards a future self beyond the asylum system, she was able to ignite a feeling of having 'life inside' her in the present.

These reflections speak to how the past, present, and future intersect – in synergy or in tension – within these creative moments to inform a process of reimagining or rediscovering oneself that is cyclical and dialogic in nature. It is a

process that reinforces ideas embedded within what Dessinguè (2011) identifies as the 'phenomenology of time' (p.174). An understanding of temporal relations to the self – or to the selves of different times - that suggests 'our conscious life is in a perpetual oscillation between the dynamics of retention and protention' (p.172). As such, our understanding of the present (and ourselves within that present) are viewed as much through an anticipation of the future, as it is through meanings from the past.

The dialogical nature of time also emerged during the *Radiophrenia* project where memory, and its relationship to present and future experiences, became an integral part of the sonic explorations that were facilitated throughout the process, and that offered individuals the space to present themselves on their own terms. In many sessions, the concepts of time and memory became concretised, and one creative exercise in particular gave way to an embodiment of time as a phenomenological experience. Each project member had been invited to bring in a sound that had personal significance and we were subsequently invited to share the stories associated with these sounds. Amongst these sharings – many of which involved a process of recollection – was *Mooss*:

> *Mooss stands in front of the microphone. A very quiet and seemingly serious man. He looks tense. I wonder whether he is enjoying himself. Everyone is waiting for him to speak. Sol asks if he'd like to speak in his own language, and he relaxes a little. He begins to describe in Arabic, telling us about the sound that he has brought in to share with the group. My expectation – naively – is that he will be sharing traditional songs connected to his Palestinian heritage. Then, amongst the words that I don't understand, I hear the '1980s' 'Engalisia' and I realise this is not where it is heading. 'Is this music that you listened to in Lebanon?' Sol asks – clearly surprised too. 'Yes – this is what he loves' clarifies the translator. And then Mooss takes his phone and holding it up to the microphone he begins to play Foreigner's 'Waiting for a Girl Like You.' The room goes quiet. His eyes are closed as he hums along. He smiles. The tinny sound of his phone, amplified through the microphone, plays out like a memory emerging from within him. And so, we watch him, listening. I start humming too, and so do a few others in the room. Others look bemused but are captivated by this moment. When the song ends, the group erupts into applause and laughter. Mooss laughs too. Later on, in the session he tells me that these songs remind him of running around with his brother when he was a child, and I*

> *wonder if that is what he was seeing when his eyes were closed (Research Journal).*

In this moment, I felt the room to be watching *Mooss* in the present, whilst simultaneously participating in a performative act that transported him into his own recollections. While he had given us a little context with regards to his love of the genre, he – unlike others - did not offer up a narrative explanation. Instead, the mise-en-scène of this moment was in the simplicity of the synergy Mooss' (almost) silent presence, and the multiple possible stories that were emerging through the sound he presented us with. This was another quiet act of supportive creative solidarity that simply allowed *Mooss* to be seen and heard on his terms, and in turn embodying Hall's (1994) assertion that:

> [th]e past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth (p.226).

By framing memory in this way, *Mooss* was supported by his audience in imaginatively navigating 'the break', to access parts of his past that he felt still formed an integral part of his present identity. And so, within this frame, these creative moments take on the role of reclaiming, not just recalling.

(Re)construction as a process of opening and playing

Red&Green identified that the arts activities she undertook within Maryhill Integration Network provided her with an emotional space that allowed her to 'to be open'. This was an openness that afforded her space to express her Albanian heritage, 'like the traditional dances / or traditional songs', and also the freedom to experiment in artistic practices she had not considered before. In turn it allowed her to begin discovering aspects of herself that she felt were going to determine her future:

> like a base
> building slowly slowly

It was an openness therefore that centred around the cultivation of the self for oneself, as opposed to an openness that resides in the literary tradition where 'the *native informant* is present as either rhetorical invention or positive object of knowledge' (Woolley, 2014, p.19) for an audience to consume. It is worth

pausing to reiterate that, in examining the self, I am not proposing that there was one true essentialised self that any project member claimed to be seeking or rediscovering, or that 'participants will (or should) be performing in an 'authentic' way and 'revealing' their 'true self' during workshops' (Greatrick & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2017). Instead I am positioning this work as a site where the self – in all its temporal multiplicity – had an opportunity to find expression.

The importance of openness and emotional expression emerged over and over again in my reflective conversations. Project members from across the research, regularly alluded to the significance of being invited 'to feel and to speak', especially when 'we keep a lot inside us' (*Moon*). *Hani* specifically identified that, in creating something new each week within the *Share My Table* workshops, she was able to express ideas or feelings that were otherwise being supressed or hidden from view. In turn, this became an invitation to engage herself, and engage with herself, in ways that she did not seem to have access to in other aspects of her life. *Sun* teased this idea out further when reflecting upon her experience of making the newspaper sculptures:

> I loved it
> at the beginning I didn't feel
> the newspaper
> could give the right meaning
> about what we feel from inside
> but after
> when I do it
> and put all my story in the newspaper
> shapes
> and statues
> this much much beautiful work
> as it gave all the meaning
> of what we hide in our heart

Sun's journey through her creative process suggests that the strength of 'work with imagination' is in its capacity to take individuals on surprising personal journeys, ones that 'allow[s] for the expression of the individual in their totality and can open up new avenues' (Kalmanowitz, 2016, p.77). Moreover, what these reflections draw attention to is a conflict these project members were managing within themselves: an ongoing process of internal containment, whereby feelings, thoughts and experiences - perhaps even a sense of self – is being kept

inside or hidden within hearts.

The work of keeping things hidden was not unique to *Hani, Moon and Sun*. Many project members spoke of hiding their true feelings about situations they found themselves in (a subject I return to in my final chapter). *Mr Bin* shared that in most social contexts, including college classes, he felt unable to be himself due to his fear of being judged were his classmates to discover his legal status as an 'asylum seeker'. The shame he attached to his situation meant he avoided talking in any depth with anyone in his class, only participated in discussions where it was a class requirement and did not socialise with people outside of the class. Khosravri (2007) argues that the 'importance and centrality of shame in the experience of migration' (p.332) remains under explored within contemporary discourse. This position is reinforced by the fact that many people in my research found it difficult to access spaces where they felt they could honestly be themselves, despite accessing the services available to them.

In contrast *Mr Bin* felt able to open himself up to the people he met within *Share My Table,* acknowledging it as a space where feelings and emotions were able to circulate freely:

> we are almost all in the same situation
> so we understand each other's feeling
> that is very important

The ease that *Mr Bin* felt was in part to do with an overlap in circumstances with the people in the room. However, the creative exercises moderated *Mr Bin's* shame by acting as a catalyst for a deep and expressive exploration of the self that was ordinarily kept invisible from view. *Sami*, too, spoke of the project being open to ensuring everyone got to 'to reflect our own ideas'. He explained that, even in the event of responding creatively to difficult topics, this open approach 'made me actually / feel more relaxed'; it allowed him to explicitly acknowledge his circumstances – 'to be realistic' about the world around him.

Leovo explained that he too had found a 'good feeling' in what could have been

difficult topics. In particular, when working on our large-scale map of Glasgow, *Leovo* found himself exploring the feelings involved in 'being lost'. But rather than this becoming a source of pain for him, he felt the workshops provided him with time and space to 'really think about it / to be thoughtful'. He stressed that this thoughtfulness was born out of the project having a balance between:

> the side of fun
> and playing and things like that
> but the rest of it felt quite serious
> and artistic
> where we could learn something

This insight resonates with the principles that I consider to be embedded within my own practice, ones that place 'equal value on the serious and the silly' (Research Journal), which in turn have been influenced by practitioners like Thompson (2011) who urges participatory practitioners 'to maintain their commitment to working with groups and communities in dynamic and joyful performance' (p.11).

These reflections suggest that 'opening up' emotionally through playful processes can contribute to an exploration of the self. One that encourages people to 'resist the expectations inherent within the scripts' (Greatrick & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2017) associated with 'refugeeness', as well as transcend – albeit imaginatively or temporarily - the circumstances that confine them. In turn, these processes go some way towards relocating aspects of an individual that have been pushed to the margins of the self. What is important to stress here is that for project members, this opening up and self-discovery was not interpreted as a process of excavation whereby their suffering and trauma were being mined. Instead, individuals felt that these processes worked to build up, not to uncover, and to reveal, not to expose:

> *Lawyer says that this space has never asked anything of him – other than to come in and do. Don't explain yourself, don't tell us your story, just get involved. 'Other people' they said, 'they want to help you, and they do, but they always have to know, or make you feel that they have to know your story, and that just makes it worse – it adds to your stress, it doesn't take it away. But here – you – you never ask, you take my stress and you make it disappear. My anger it gets released here, it comes out into the room and its okay. And*

the fact that you never ask means I know I can speak to you – and I did – that day, I knew you would help me. I knew you would listen because you didn't want to know.' This felt very moving and important for what this work is doing for Lawyer and Joe, what this work has the potential to do for people. By not being obsessed by helping tell their story, they feel free to be. (Research Journal)

In light of this, the creative processes were most affective because the arts practice was not asking. It was, in fact, because we had 'started with our imaginations / our feelings' (*Faith*), and 'with the teamwork / with the kindness' (*Bold Solicitor*) that the space had become one where individuals felt emotionally and creatively free.

(Re)constructing in the shadow of forgetting

The political and personal significance of reclaiming and creating new memories, within these creative contexts, as well as having the imaginative space to emotionally engage with oneself, can be most keenly understood when comparing these processes to the way in which project members describe their experience of being within the UK asylum system. Whilst Woolley (2014) argues that a 'constitutive element of the asylum adjudication system' is that 'refugees must narrate themselves into existence as legitimate beings' (p.19), many individuals I worked with described their lives within the asylum system as a process of forgetting: forgetting skills, forgetting aspects of one's personality and forgetting what it is to feel capable.

Alee described how her ongoing five-year encounter with the Home Office had left her unable to recognise the highly skilled and qualified person she had been. Instead she saw herself most often as 'dull'. *Hani*, who had been a science teacher explained 'I forget everything what I was'. *Patience* felt he had been deprived of his life source, and had been left as a dried-up tree, with dry bark. *Maham* stated that her experience of being within the asylum process had left her feeling like 'a confused person', 'and I feel embarrassed'. She felt she had been stripped of her sense of self:

some things of you remain
in your memory yes

      because you want to be what you are actually
      but you can't
      you can't

What *Maham* portrays here feels crueller than the act of forgetting. Her voice, when expressing 'you can't / you can't', exposed the effort involved in trying to reach the part of herself she used to know so well; a part that was once 'very calm and very patient', but now feels so far away. It is as if *Maham* is being haunted by her former self, who is present somewhere in memory but just out of her reach.

In all of these reflections what is apparent is Scarry's (2001) contention that 'as the self disintegrates, so that which would express and project the self is robbed of its source and its subject' (p.131). What they were describing are not simply acts of forgetting, or the effects of people changing over time, but of being held within a system that is actively looking to de-construct them. It was the constant not knowing what would come next, being prohibited from working, having their skills and qualifications dismissed, as well as the deprivation of a secure imagined future that left people unable to access a version of themselves that they could find confidence in. All the time this ongoing erasure operates alongside the legislative pressure for people to provide absolute certainty within their asylum story, in order for 'the self' as a 'refugee' to be considered credible (Good, 2011).

It is within this tension where the feelings and responses provoked in people by *Share My Table* begin to show their impact. In contrast to the deconstructive process of the asylum system, *Maham* identified *Share My Table* as somewhere she felt the 'learning never ends'. *Hani* too suggested it became a place where she and others went in order to discover the artistic or creative side they had inside of them, whether they had known it was there or not. Furthermore, *Alee* spoke repeatedly about the turning point in *Share My Table* being when it became clear that everyone involved knew her name:

      sometimes I feel I am nervous
      I can't speak the paragraph properly
      but when someone calls me over

> Alee
> where is Alee
> this makes me proud of myself

When compared to her experience within the asylum system, the use of her name, which could be perceived as a simple act of familiarity, had a powerful impact. In particular, in describing her experiences of living in Serco-provided housing, *Alee* relayed an incident where her housing officer had threatened to report her to the Home Office. Throughout her story she kept reiterating that the housing officer kept addressing her as 'mum, mum, mum'. The tone she used to say it each time – as well as how upset *Alee* was whilst relaying the incident – made it clear to us that she found this way of being spoken to both dismissive and cruel. Furthermore, if we understand the asylum process as one of deconstruction and enforced forgetting, having her name erased during a conversation predicated on an existing power imbalance, further strips her of an identity that she is struggling to hold on to.

Consequently, *Alee's* experience of being in a space where 'everyone know me', not only allowed her to feel valued, it signified to her that she was important. This feeling was, in turn, accompanied by pride and happiness. Many *Share My Table* members made reference to how feelings of being needed, triggered for them by the project's creative exercises, had a continuing positive impact on their sense of wellbeing. Similarly, the sense of pride that had been ignited within people – firstly through the generation of artistic content, and latterly by presenting work in front of one another and a public audience – was a recurring theme for many. In light of Hall's (1994) critique that dominant regimes - like the asylum system - have the power to 'to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'' (p.225), the opportunities to form new memories, to creatively and emotionally re-engage with and (re)construct who you were, who you are, and who you are becoming, takes on a unique profundity.

What can be drawn out of all these reflections, is that *Share My Table*, as well as the projects I participated in at Maryhill Integration Network, prioritised a thoughtful, yet playful, practice that led to a sustained unveiling of the self, to the self, that in turn made space for the (re)construction of other aspects of the

self. In turn, this offers an insight into what arts projects in a refugee context might 'do' for people, beyond the more normative conventions – like improving language acquisition (Smith), fostering therapeutic reflection (Kalmanowitz, 2016), or awareness raising (Khan, 2012) that are most often ascribed to participatory arts practices.

The (re)constructing self reaching out beyond the room

In his article on the politics of intention, Balfour (2009) suggests that applied arts practice discourse be mindful of the 'the scale of the claims for change that are made about the practice' (p.355). He encourages the reader to resist what Neelands refers to as 'hero narratives' (2004) that often inflate the social impact an arts project has had on individuals and communities. In this section of the chapter I wish to honour Balfour's suggestion, whilst remaining true to the value individuals placed upon their involvement in the projects. To do so, I continue to frame this discussion around the theoretical concept of (re)construction, as a lens through which to understand how this work intersected with project members' experiences outside of the space.

Here I call upon *Leavo*, who arrived at his first *Share My Table* workshop alone, speaking no English, having only been in Scotland for a few months. He shook *Haree*'s hand and then handed her over a scrap paper. Written on it were the words 'I am lonely. I am here for friendship'. Through a translator we welcomed him warmly, and as with everyone else, we encouraged him to throw himself into the creative activity we were doing. Week after week he would come and get more and more involved. Though he did not share his reflections with me until sometime later, the personal impact of *Share My Table* had been quite instant for him. *Leavo* carries a deep love of singing – and has a magnificent singing voice – but he had previously been prohibited from expressing himself through his artform. And so, his participation in *Share My Table* changed his perception of what might be possible for him artistically:

> I could see myself
> free
> you know

> I could see I do have a choice
> I can choose now
> no-one is a barrier for me

Across the duration of the project we supported him to develop and share his voice, culminating in his performing solo as part of *I Hear The Image Moving* (an audio version of which can be found in the digital file accessed via p.24). He had joined the project unsure of where or how to place himself, but across the course of *Share My Table*, *Leovo* undertook a journey of personal discovery that was anchored by a sense of creative freedom found within the space. A journey exemplified by a story he shared after the project was over, that culminated with him staging an impromptu performance in a pub full of strangers. An action rooted in a desire to connect and to be heard on his own terms. The scale of this change might be microscopic to an outside eye, but for *Leavo* this shift was a lifeline: 'art can give us hope / at a time when you are hopeless'.

While *Leavo's* experiences were rooted very specifically, in his (re)construction as an artist both within and out with *Share My Table*, his strong sense of 'I could see I do have a choice' resonated with many people's experiences and reverberated into everyday life in distinct ways. *Tree* spoke of her experience of *Share My Table* as one of reaching out, explaining that her participation had helped her 'be in control of the outside', because it provided her with access point to a social network that resulted in her taking on a volunteering role. *Precise* expanded upon this idea and explained 'what I am saying is that it is part of my CV / as I speak'. She perceived these experiences, not just as acts of self-construction, but a means through which she could construct herself, and the narrative that surrounds her, for others to view. *Flower* too articulated a direct correlation between her experiences within the creative space, and the confidence, strength and pride required to attend face-to-face interviews. *Share My Table* became 'leverage' (*Precise*) in ongoing professional performance.

These statements connect to Mulvey's (2013) research on integration, which argues that the aspirations of many 'New Scots' could be defined by 'a real desire to be seen as normal' (pg.143). This can be understood here as a determination to enter the workforce, whether as volunteers or employees.

Similarly, many of the parents of young people who took part in *Echo* talked about how Maryhill Integration Network allowed them to access creative and leisure activities – like football and dance – that they would otherwise be excluded from due to cost. *Elda's* assertion that it allows you to feel like 'you have a choice to do something' demonstrates her aspiration for her family to live a normal life, with access to experiences that she considers to be 'everyday', or 'normal' for young people.

But these examples reveal more than a search for normality. They speak to the way in which these individuals want, not just to fit in, but to *shape* what they view as their normality and how they are defined within it. This can be seen in *Elda's* desire to have access to choice, interpreted through *Flower* being prompted to seek out face-to-face contact, in *Precious'* awareness of how she can use her experience of being in *Share My Table* to support her longer-term goals, and vitally for *Tree*, to be 'in control'. This moves beyond the desire for a normal life and speaks again to McPherson's contention of living a *self-authored life*, one that is not just about cultivating one's *self*, but about having agency to determine how one constructs or presents oneself in private and public settings.

These descriptions are very much in keeping with Balfour's call for scholarly thought to turns its attention to a 'theatre of little changes' (2009, p.356), in so much as I am not making grand statements about personal transformations *caused* by the arts projects. I am, however, suggesting that the experiences detailed in this section carry weight and meaning. Moreover, their significance is crystallised if we return to Chapter Five, and allow this discussion to be framed by *Ezel*, standing in front of us, with 'Invincible' projected on to his body and all the silent and defiant power that conjures up. Because, when operating within a structurally dysfunctional system, these moments are, in their own ways, acts of 'performative resistance' (2016a, p.84); acts which circumnavigate labels and contribute to the self-authoring of a (re)constructed self, which at times allows for a resistance – however gentle – against what is expected.

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This pushing back, was summed up by *Alee* when I asked her whether it mattered to her that the certificates they had received as part of the *Share My Table* project were symbolic rather than being institutionally or educationally accredited. Her response was to defend the process by saying:

> the certificate is in our hearts
> if someone says this is not
> you know
> well
> we know
> we know what we did

Here we see *Alee* resisting what might be expected of her as an integrating 'New Scot', and instead opting to define for herself what has value within her life.

Shared memory as a starting point for collective identity

So far, this chapter has focused on individuals and their desire for individual change or development. I now extend my lens to explore how a *self-authored life* might also connect with the way in which individuals have strengthened and staked ownership over the relationships and communities that have emerged out of the arts projects.

Gilroy (1994) argues that diaspora is a 'relational network, characteristically produced by forced dispersal and reluctant scattering' (p.207). In spite of this, Woolley (2014) suggests that individuals currently seeking asylum in the Global North are often excluded from identifying with the concept. In part, she argues, this is due to the focus within diasporic discourse on multi-locality, or of being both here (in new home) and there (in old home). Woolley suggests that this emphasis implies admitting 'ties to a home nation' that many people seeking asylum would not feel safe communicating, in case it were to undermine their application (p.17). The other reason for this exclusion is, she argues, the importance placed upon 'the social dynamics of remembrance and commemoration' in supporting the formation of (in particular Gilroy's) 'diaspora consciousness' (p.17). A lack of access to political and cultural self-representation, as well as to the everyday social interactions required for

diasporic connections to be fostered means, Woolley contends, that refugees and those within the asylum system often exist outside of this contemporary multicultural identity (p.18).

This experience of having limited access to everyday social interactions and wider diasporic ties was acutely felt by many project members. There was a sadness in not having any friends to visit or to host (*Joe*), with *Maham* articulating this as feeling:

> we are lost
> we are
> moving around
> we are eating
> we are doing everything
> but we are still lost

Woolley explains that this exclusion from a networking diasporic identity is the reason fictionalised narratives of forced migration are so vital, as they can generate shared points of reference and understanding. Comparably, I suggest here that the observations made by project members, point to how 'real-life' creative spaces can provide a means through which to build up alternative forms of remembrance, that in turn trigger a new sense of diasporic belonging.

In the reflective sessions that took place after the project had ended, multiple project members referred to encounters they had shared with each other beyond the boundaries of the creative space. These encounters were underpinned by *Alee's* 'we know' that suggests the creative work undertaken in *Share My Table* generated a set of shared memories that defy certification and definition. Vitally, they are memories held by, and that continue to circulate between people:

> as I was coming in
> I saw a lady
> that was part of this group
> you see how we greeted
> proud
> before share my table
> I don't think I would have shaken her hand
> you know

but I knew her from here
you know
you see how we greeted
embrace each other
talk
and you know
that is part of it
(Precise)

we become family and friend
close friend
close family
very nice for us
anywhere you meet someone
who we had been with here together
just hi
start to talk
talk about life
talk about everything
that is very good for us
(Nicola)

its true
our group here
it is a part of our family
and it has been extended outside
which is when we see
for example
if I saw anyone from my group
from share my table
I can't ignore or
even if I am far away
I am running to say hi
and have a chat
after all these sessions
this has been built up with us
we miss each other
we want to see each other
(Bold Solicitor)

These statements speak to the way in which collective experiences have taken on the form of 'common identity narratives' (Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, p.685) that work to consolidate a sense of shared identity. One that is centred around a 'we know' understanding of what they have achieved together. In turn

these memories – as they recirculate between project members – come to inscribe 'the group in a historical and spatial trajectory' (p.685). As such the shared memories operate almost as micro-commemorations and remembrances – ones that move away from *diaspora-consciousness* as a shared past back there (in old home), but about *new memories*, that are formed here (in new home). While these commemorations might not be on the national or political scale that Gilroy anticipates, reading these memories through the lens of *diasporia-consciousness* invites us to recognise how fundamental they might be in aiding new(ish) communities to begin *self-authoring* and (re)constructing their own shared identities.

Uniquely, the shared knowledge accumulated by these experiences is one that goes beyond that of relationships rooted in territorial or cultural familiarity, to manifest in simple acts of solidarity between connected individuals. As *Phoenix* described 'you've got a shared memory' that builds trust, which, in turn, can result in being able to ask for help:

> I mean just a simple help
> like can you hold my baby
> you know
> I can
> because I experienced these
> eight weeks with you
> so it's just nice

Meeting on buses, running up for a hug in public, and holding somebody else's baby might appear too ordinary to hold much weight. However, these moments of togetherness demonstrate how the projects made space for a diasporic recognition that overlaps with another of Gilroy's key concepts: conviviality within multicultural urban landscapes (2005). This is a way of interacting and community action that Shire defines as 'carry[ing] a vision of the future in the present time' (2008, p.17).

What is most significant here, in relation to the formation of diasporic identities and conviviality, is that these multicultural interactions are not centred around nationalised boundaries. Instead, they rest on a radical and complex ability to

be at ease in the presence of diversity but *without* restaging communitarian conceptions of the selfsame ethnic and racial difference (Valluvan, 2016, p.205). To elucidate on the importance of this, *Ezel* talked of how he entered the space with certain preconceptions of other races, cultures, and nationalities. These preconceptions went on to be dismantled through the creative processes that enabled him to see other people from 'the inside'. *Ezel* spoke of the way in which his own sense of self, and his approach towards difference, became intricately connected to what was reflected back to him from other people. But importantly, viewed through a convivial lens, *Ezel* did not feel the need to claim that he viewed people as the *selfsame*. Instead, in coming to understand what he perceived to be his own prejudice, he recognised the potential complexity of others, and gained a better insight into his own complexity.

Furthermore, *Maham's* experience asserts that recognising difference operates not only as a means through which one's self is formed. For her, it operated as a form of reassurance in relation to her own identity:

> I feel roots in this country
> but then I go around and I think
> no
> I'm still like
> pakistani
> or I'm still from my country
> because of my appearance
> because of my
> erm
> everything everything
> make you
> like
> Precise said
> it makes you segregated
> and you feel
> you can feel people are looking at you
> and
> its in their eyes
> but when you start share my table
> we meet
> other people
> from other countries
> so we know

that some people
or more people are living in this country
like us
so maybe we become friends
maybe we become family in future
who knows
but its very good
its very good

What we see in this extract, is someone navigating the manifestation of everyday racism that is predicated on a belief in fixed identities, and a perception that whiteness defines Scottishness. So, what becomes imperative for *Maham's* own sense of self is the very knowledge, not of a shared national existence, but of a shared multicultural existence, which was reflected back at her within the creative experiences she undertook.

Sillavan asserts that 'an indifference to difference', as coined by Amin, is a constitutive feature of convivial multiculture (p.205-6). In Chapter Six I made a case for practices of solidarity being predicated upon 'a radical openness to the simultaneity of difference and similarity' (Askins, 2015, p.473). Here, however, I argue that it is important to recognise that, when it comes to difference in relation to a (re)constructive process of the self, really *seeing* difference was what was required to challenge racist assumptions about who belongs, and to bring individuals closer to feeling part of an emerging diasporic community. To return to the metaphor that inspired this chapter – if individuals are themselves a piece of art, or as Ingold (2011) proposes, 'a singular nexus of creative growth', then this growth is only possible 'within a continually unfolding field of relationships' (xii).

These unfolding relationships speak to Werbner and Yuval Davis' (1999) proposition that citizenship needs to be considered as being more than just 'the relationship between the individual and the state' and much more as a 'more total relationship, inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging' (Werbner and Yuval Davis, 1999 in Brettell, 2016, p.51). In turn, this has prompted me, when trying to re-imagine how integration might be discussed, to take influence from Ingold's

(2011) work on life as habitation, where he contends that:

> wayfaring is the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth. Every such being has, accordingly, to be imagined as the line of its own movement or – more realistically – as a bundle of lines (p.12/13).

I have come to think about integration as a journey, tracing and creating a series of ever transforming multi-channelled lines that intersect, grow, deviate and wrap around one another. Sometimes people travel alone, but often these processes are communal. There is no straight exchange of ideas or cultures, there is a mess of sharing and interactions, and what must be recognised is that there is an interdependence reminiscent of White's theories on relational wellbeing (2017) that sees people co-existing, in harmony, in tension, and in indifference.

Integration is not something that can be achieved, it is something that requires constant enactment in multiple directions. Whilst this chapter has focused almost wholly on individual experiences, what I want to stress is my belief that any (re)constructive process that was taking place for individuals within this research, is – if society allows – part of a wider (re)construction of local and national communities. My final chapter picks up on this idea, not by proposing that this multi-channelled enactment is a smooth and harmonious one, but by trying to make visible the sheer volume of work that individuals on the receiving end of integration policy are putting in. Not just so that they can integrate, but in order to navigate the expectation of living an integrated life whilst existing within what I have come to refer to as Scotland's welcome-unwelcome dialectic.

Conclusion

What has emerged in this chapter is an exploration of creative and personal journeys that are centred around the act of constructing and defining oneself. Through this analysis I have sought to respond to Balfour's call to re-orientate applied arts away from 'change rhetoric, impact assessments and the strain for verifiable measurements' (p.356) and instead have sought to place 'an emphasis on the need for 'theory generating' research' in order to better understand 'how theatre actually works' (Hughes and Wilson 2004, in Balfour, p.357).

Whilst identity production and memory formation are not unique to individuals navigating the asylum system, what I have argued in this chapter is that these experiences take on gravity within this context, as they are set against a backdrop of systemic deconstruction and erasure. In addition, though new memories can be created and formed in many environments and circumstances, what is unique within an arts context is that whilst forming these memories people are simultaneously expanding their languages and forms of self-expression, and are therefore (re)discovering aspects of themselves, and (re)developing the tools through which to act upon a desire to live a *self-authored life*.

Throughout the chapter I have been careful not to make generalisations out of individual experience. I recognise that each project member trod their 'own individual path' and that 'this varies according to context, purpose, personality, previous experiences, society and culture' (Kalmonowitz, p.82). However, through these individual reflections and experiences, I hope to have shed some light on the space that these creative projects occupied in people's lives, both for the duration of the project and beyond; shedding further light on what Khan refers to as 'alternative forms of identity-building through proactive social actions' (2014, p.285). In doing so, this chapter has made a contribution to what Mulvey observes to be an integral and yet underdeveloped aspect of integration, which is 'the process of establishing who you are' or 'psychological integration' (2013, p.125).

Image 29: Krongo reflects on what integration looks and feels like

"when I came to UK

I was walking

trying to do something

what can I do

to get paper in United

Kingdom"

Image 30: I Hear The Image Moving exhibition piece (NA)

IX   Labouring through the spaces in between

Introduction

This final chapter concentrates less on the nuances of creative processes, or the relationships that the artistic practice had to other aspects of project members' lives. Instead it focuses in on the learning that has emerged through a practice-based approach and the use of arts methods, to try and make sense of what is being spoken about when talking of integration.

The chapter begins by re-visiting my methodological approach to exploring the concept, before turning to a *Share My Table* workshop encounter to ask questions about upon whom the burden of expectation lies with integration processes. This encounter leads into an exploration of the performative aspects of integration by re-engaging with Cummings work on *empathic labour*, before embarking upon an exploration of the messier spaces that emerge out of citizenship-forming in and around the formal and normative definitions of integration. To explore these aspects I concentrate on what I term (following O'Neill) the *micrology of integration practice*, paying particular attention to the unique tensions emerging for 'New Scot' parents and propose that in doing so, the research offers a rich insight into the ongoing experiences of living within Scotland's *welcome-unwelcome dialectic* that has been identified throughout this thesis.

I finish the chapter by defining the work taking place within these messy spaces as a form of emotional labour. This exists as a constant companion to the more visible (though possibly still under-recognised) practical labour of integrating as a 'New Scot', which involves attending home office sign-ins, solicitors appointments, meetings, classes, housing inspections, social worker visits, volunteering. Foster argues that 'employed in the research process, the arts enable an examination of the everyday in imaginative ways that draw attention to the cruelties and contradictions inherent in neoliberal society' (Foster, 2016,

p.2). This chapter demonstrates that the use of metaphor, and an aesthetic engagement with lived experience also enables us to gain new insight into the way in which people negotiate, live within, and resist these cruelties and contradictions. In presenting these insights I expand upon scholarly and lived understandings of integration discourse and contribute to raising the visibility of aspects of integration that remain under acknowledged, and undervalued.

Approaching integration

To examine people's lived experience of integration my investigation went beyond the categories (Bakewell, 2008; MacPherson, 2010; Crawley & Skleparis, 2017) contained within policy definitions of integration. I sought to engage 'the critical imagination' (Denzin, 2003, p.226) through creative practice, so as to manoeuvre between insights that reveal the personal and those that are structural (p.226). This is in light of Foster's contention that engaging with critical imagination is 'not something that is opposed to reality' (Foster, 2016, p.10), but an attempt to expand the perspectives (p.10) from which issues are interpreted from. Within this research this has gone some way exposing invisible aspects of reality.

My approach involved using multiple artistic forms – on multiple occasions – as a way of inviting project members to reflect critically and creatively around ideas emerging from the concept, and only rarely did 'integration' specifically become the subject of discussion. In inviting project members to engage in this way, I was mindful of Anthias' (2002) warning to researchers focused on identity:

> To ask a question about identity asks both too much and too little. It asks that a subject has a ready-made story to tell about who they are and where they feel they 'belong' and that the migrant or minority subject, in particular, should answer it in terms of a well understood genre about ethnicity as a possessive property (p. 494).

In applying this analysis to the concept of integration, I did not want my approach to presume that the categories of integration outlined in policy were knowingly or consistently embodied by people, or that they were 'static and essentialized' (p.495). To do so would have been to neglect to recognise that

integration is an ongoing journey that is bound up within the complex web that comprises an individual's 'location and positionally' (p. 495) at any one time.

In the one group workshop where integration was the specific topic of exploration, I introduced a visual and metaphorical register through the presence of 84 **Dixit** cards (described in Chapter 3, pg.88). These cards provided us with a starting point for looking beyond what integration is, or what is needed in order to integrate, and instead encouraged project members to narrativise - through image, speech or movement - what integration looks and feels like. By working in this way, I moved us beyond referencing the 'normative' categories and domains that underpin policy discussions on integration and entered a field of 'aesthetic knowing'; an expressive and exploratory means through which 'to disrupt the ordinary' (Leavy, 2015, p.20). This allowed textures of experience to emerge through these hybrid texts, and in doing so space was created for conflicting, overlapping and unique experiences. The process invited imaginative engagement to collectively reach a 'better understanding of the broader picture' (O'Neill et al, 2002, p.78). As *Bold Solicitor* reflected after our session working with the **Dixit** cards:

> sometimes
> what is inside the person
> by words
> we can't find the right word
> to tell you about it
> but through photos
> or drawings
> everything comes up and out easily

Eisner and Baroner (2012) argue that what marks arts-based research out as unique is its ability to embrace forms of representation with 'no precise specification':

> in the arts, symbols adumbrate; they do not denote. When they adumbrate something important happens – people begin to notice. What they notice can become, and often becomes, a source of debate and deliberation' (p.3).

What emerged out of my approach to this aspect of the research were profoundly strong moments of adumbration - where images, ideas, bodies and

spoken interpretations, gave space for discussions around friendship, self-worth, parental responsibility, gendered experiences of belonging, fear, aspiration and a search for autonomy. They also brought to the fore the importance of knowledge - both formal and informal, people's relationship to the spaces they spent time in, as well as their broader relationship to the city and the fact that people's current legal status was a key influencing factor in determining how they responded to this enquiry. What these forms allowed us to do, was to *notice* details of what it is to be a 'New Scot' in Glasgow.

'Just call me Mohammed'

I continue this analysis by sharing an encounter with *Bentley* that occurred early on in *Share My Table*. It emerged during a name-game exercise when project members were in a large circle. When we came to *Bentley,* he introduced himself, saying 'I am Bentley. But you can call me Mohammed'. Mindful that I did not want him to feel like he was being challenged I gently asked, 'can I ask why?' He paused, it did not seem like nervousness, it was like he was taking a moment to try and choose his words wisely. 'There's another Bentley in the group already'. This was strange as there were definitely at least three other Mohammed's involved in the session. 'I'm sure we can all handle two people having the same name in the space. Don't worry about that. What would you *like* to be called in the space, rather than what do you think will be easier for everyone else?' Another pause. 'I would like to be called Bentley but...' another pause 'not the way you pronounce it'.

The way he delivered this last bit of the sentence was as though he was working as hard as possible to be as polite as possible. I could feel the work he was putting in not to offend me. And so, my response was an attempt to hold responsibility for this moment. 'What am I saying and how should I be saying it?' 'It's not you, it's your accent' he said, before going on to explain that he quite often just asks people to call him Mohammed. He found the mispronunciation by (monolingual) British tongues of his own name to be too harsh to hear. A number of people in the room smiled, or giggled, like he was sharing a secret they were familiar with. 'The sound should be like a gentle breath out' but instead in my

mouth – and many others – it sounds 'more like a rip or a tear'. A sound that brought him such discomfort he felt he might as well be called something else. Reminiscent of the shock Sithole felt at 'hearing people mispronounce their own name' (2015), *Bentley* had realised that people in Scotland seemed to struggle less with pronouncing Mohammed. So, he settled on this as a go-to name for public situations, as it enabled him to maintain some of the cultural resonances of his name, without having to endure the constant sound of *ripping* in his ears.

Though anecdotal at first, this exchange took on new meaning when I was introduced to Khosravi's (2012) inquiry into the causes, expectations and experiences of Muslim immigrants who change their surname. Amongst the multiple motivations for name-changing, most prevalent were mispronunciation, disassociating from Islam (at least externally), mitigating offence and combating discrimination. Reasons not unlike the reasons given by Jewish people in the first half of the twentieth century, who hoped to 'shed the ethnic markers that disadvantaged them in American society' (Fermaglich, 2015, p.34, Arendt, 1943). Underpinning these experiences is the clear effort involved in fitting in, and the steps required in order to cope and manage in a society rife with stigmatisation and discrimination.

Bentley of course did not articulate that he felt discriminated against (though the circumstances of this conversation did not necessarily invite that observation), nor did he feel he needed to adopt a name that was less associated with Islam, in order to 'cover' or 'pass' (Khosravi, 2012, p.66). Khosravi's analysis sheds light on this moment though, in that it brings into focus the concept of 'strategies' (p.66) for survival set against, what I refer to here as the potentially passive-aggressive tendencies of integration.

There is of course an array of shortcuts utilised in everyday life to circumnavigate not being able to remember, or confidently pronounce somebody's name. Formal to informal modes, like 'maam, 'sir', 'pal', 'mate', 'pet' operate to allow daily interactions to continue. However, the passive aggressiveness that I am keen to identify, becomes visible when I consider the

numerous occasions where I have observed someone say 'shall I just call you [nickname] instead' or 'we call him...' or 'I just can't get your name right'. Often these words come from charity workers, from arts practitioners, volunteers, all well-intentioned people, and the statements are not intentionally or explicitly discriminatory – and often proposed as friendly. But, when considered in context of the politics of name-changing, they can be read as being about making life easier for 'the host', who gets to negate responsibility and avoid the hard work of listening hard, and getting it right, in order that a person can quite simply, be called by their name. Whilst Bentley's intervention may not point directly to a 'deeply embedded anti-Muslim prejudice' (Khosravi, 2012, p.66), and arguably his re-naming is self-ascribed rather than prescribed, it did expose a 'deeply embedded' assumption that *Bentley* has consciously or subconsciously observed. One about who should be willing to put the work in, who is making the compromises and who is expected to make changes when it comes to integration (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, 2014).

The nervous laughs and knowing looks that accompanied the initial exchange in our circle, as well as the subsequent encounters where other project members articulated they use multiple names 'for ease', prompts me to argue that this phenomenon speaks to a broader issue. This is about integration as performance, which in turn speaks to the labour involved in integrating. The willingness to perform one's adaptability, feeds into what Khosravi (2012) describes as the belief and hope that adjusting themselves will 'increase their assimilation potential to integrate into the mainstream' (p.78). And so, if 'names express, as well as constitute, social relations...'(66) then what happened in this moment, both expresses and constitutes the assimilatory undertones present within the daily interactions of integration.

Performing integration

If there is a performative game being played whilst one integrates, *Ezel* and *Ri* made it apparent that the rules of this game are anything but clear:

> *Ezel was adamant that eye-contact was integral to demonstrating his openness to being in this society. He said he always makes an*

effort when walking down the street to make contact with people, to smile, to seem obviously friendly. He felt this was the best way to make friends and importantly to stay safe; for people not to see him as threat. He was adamant that he hadn't come across any racism and that his friendliness had been matched by the people of Glasgow. Ri, however ardently disagreed with Ezel. He found eye-contact dangerous and he shared that he would avoid eye-contact with anyone in the street, especially late at night. He said he had found this only led to trouble for him, though he didn't go on to say what kind of trouble. He showed us the way he would move through a street - body made small to take up less space, and head down. For a few minutes there was a relative stand-off between them. With Ezel really trying to persuade Ri that fundamental to being happy and safe in Glasgow was engaging directly, and Ri trying to persuade Ezel to change his ways in order to avoid future harm. (Research Journal)

The negotiation between *Ezel* and *Ri* resonates back to the analysis offered in Chapter Five about the struggle that exists within a *welcome-unwelcome dialectic*; one that is explicitly aware that each interaction requires adaptation based upon the perceptions and assumptions being made by the person or people one is interacting with. Whilst *Ri* and *Ezel* disagree with each other's approach, what they share is an awareness that their performance on the street matters. They are scrutinising themselves through the eyes of those they feel are scrutinising them, and they are choosing to act in such a way that they believe pacifies or even pleases that viewer.

Here it becomes helpful to return to Cummings (2016), who highlights the way in which refugees and those seeking asylum are under constant pressure to adapt and adjust the way they present their story (both on and off-stage) 'as part of the process of interpreting and negotiating the worldview of the majority' (p.162). She expands upon this argument, suggesting that:

> empathizing with majority culture is not an act of privilege, but may rather be one of survival, while eliciting the empathy of that culture means making oneself legible to those in power (p.162).

The effort, or *empathic labour* required, is not solely about performance, it is about the work that goes into ensuring that one's performance is, in and of itself, suitable to the tastes of its audience. Considered alongside Khosravi's work, we can see how making ones name easier to pronounce, smiling in the

street or shying away - are all performative strategies requiring *empathic labour*, which are about *making oneself legible* to the public audience who have the perceived power to judge one's efforts at integrating, or more threateningly whether someone belongs.

The power of one's audience in everyday life emerged as a theme throughout my research. Many project members acknowledged that their encounters, with bureaucratic bodies as well as those in more everyday contexts, involve managing their own behaviour in relation to how they believe they are being perceived. One example came from *Souso* who explained to me the acute frustration she felt during an encounter in her home when, in answering a survey being conducted by her housing officer. She described that she had been running a woman's group as a volunteer for ten years, as well as studying first English and then community development. In response to this the housing officer said 'I don't really know how to describe that in this form, so I'll just put down housewife'. The dismissal of *Souso's* professional, as well as her educational status and accomplishments, is I would suggest a name-changing of sorts. While the categorisation of people into a set of tick-boxes that suit the listener (or in this case, the authority the listener represents) is not unique to the asylum system, in light of the previous chapter's focus, these dismissive moments born out of bureaucratic restrictions contribute to a more extensive stripping of identity that is taking place for individuals intersecting with the Home Office.

As well as having ten years of her hard work made invisible through this interaction, *Souso* detailed that it was particularly the housing officer's choice of 'housewife' that she found troubling. As a Muslim woman, who constantly contends with having misinformed cultural stereotypes placed upon her, being categorised as a housewife in official documentation felt uncomfortably close to reinforcing ill-conceived perceptions of gender responsibilities within the Islamic community. *Souso* described how at first she tried to gently encourage the housing officer to find a way to relay on the form what she had said, but the resistance - or perhaps the indifference that *Souso* was met with - forced her to 'let it go' and reconcile with the fact that she had been misrepresented. But she

expressed that this misnaming stayed with her: 'it stuck right inside of me'. To such a degree that when her voluntary role eventually transferred into paid employment, she went to the housing office to ask that her label be changed.

Souso's encounter gestures to the way in which, even within one's own home *empathic laboring* under performative pressure is an anticipated part of everyday reality. This is visible too in *Alee's* experiences with housing. She outlined how there had been multiple times where she and her husband had been faced by housing standards, they felt were unsafe for their children. Examples include sticky floors, bugs in carpets, a broken freezer, blocked toilets where she was told she and her young family would have to use as buckets an alternative. But they didn't speak up, they tolerated it. They 'said ok', in the hope that being *seen* to be compliant - that performing passivity - would lead to issues being fixed more quickly. However, in her most recent encounter with her housing officer *Alee* had not been able to do this and the following encounter demonstrates the way in which *Alee* is not just navigating her own emotions within this exchange but also trying to navigate round those of her housing officer:

> she start shouting at me
> 'mum'
> 'you are a mum'
> 'you need to clean this'
> and she go upstair and there is
> a small freezer of mine
> she said 'take it down'
> 'take it down'
> my husband is not home at this time
> and my son is crying and
> she is shouting at me
> 'why this is here'
> and 'why this is here'
> and I am like
> *(she shows us she is trying to hold her nerve)*
> and I start crying
> I said
> said
> 'why are you talking to me like this'
> 'you are not supposed to

talk to me like this'
and she's like
when I start crying
(she shows us that the housing officer is panicking)

C: she panicked?

yeah
she think 'she is crying
she could be complaining'
so she turned and said
'no you need to move
outside there are
two prams'
one for my son and one for my daughter
because my husband has just started college
and when he come back my son was sleeping
he's two and a half
he left him in the pram
she said
'take your prams from outside'
I said 'where do I put my prams'
so
'afterwards
you must fold'
I said 'okay'
I said it crying
(she is now crying as she speaks)
and when she goes down she is in her car
and she write a warning letter for me
I never said anything to her
I start crying
I said why you always talk to me like this

C: a warning letter for you
from the housing office?

A: yeah
'your prams are out
and your mattress is not clean
you have not cleaned your mattress
and we will deliver a new mattress
but this is your warning letter'
and I said 'why'
why has she said me the warning letter

> if she warn me
> one or two times
> then she could send me warning letter
> I understand that
> but first time she say outside your pram
> next time you come and see if the prams outside
> then you give me warning letter
> everyone puts prams outside
> and now Tuesday
> whole day I was crying
> because the way she talked to me
> sometimes
> you feel helpless

It is the act of *Alee's* tears (which she works hard to not show) and her questioning of the way she is being spoken to, which *Alee* believes is the trigger for her subsequent warning letter. The prams and the mattress (which Alee explains earlier in the conversation are actually the thing *she* initially complained to Serco about) are framed as the reason to issue her with a formal warning. However, it was the moment where *Alee* stopped making herself 'legible to those in power' - by showing her emotions and no longer performing her passivity - that her audience, the housing officer, made the decision to go beyond treating her disrespectfully and instead acted punitively towards her.

When read through the lens of performativity, *Alee's* unwelcome performance had material consequences for her: a warning letter that comes with the threat of a negative story being spun about her for the Home Office. And as *Mary* was quick to point out, the idea that her performance could have transgressed even further, into anger, is almost unthinkable:

> what makes me feel sorry
> I put myself in her situation
> she is not weak
> to start crying in front of her
> because she can't shout back
> because the complaint they will throw at her
> its not weak to cry because she can't shout
> if somebody do that to me I would lose my temper

This equates to a form of oppression that Scott argues denies people 'the ordinary luxury of negative reciprocity: trading a slap for a slap, an insult for an

insult' (Scott, 1990, xii), and was an ongoing situation that was clearly having a deeply negative impact upon *Alee* and her sense of wellbeing. The *empathic labour* expended, firstly in pacifying herself within her face-to-face negotiations, and then in carrying the ongoing fear that a slip up in her performance will have a lasting impact on their lives - in terms of their asylum application - is an embodiment of the invisible work that is being undertaken by individuals within the asylum system.

In response to *Alee's* story, *Joe* and *Mary* shared their own recent housing experience which also involved the house they were moved to being dirty on arrival, a fridge freezer not working (and therefore leading to valuable frozen halal food being wasted) and a lack of electricity. Upon being told by their housing provider that nothing could be done until the next day *Joe* indicates undertaking a similar performance of passivity to *Alee*. She explained how in an attempt to keep the food cold she had been unable to activate the heating and so she and her children had spent the night cold and worried about activating her asthma. But *Joe* maintained an 'uncomplaining response' (Jackson, 2018, p.117), a strategy for mitigating against discrimination that Jackson argues is a prevalent part of Scottish migrant history. 'I just keep silent' *Joe* said. When we began to discuss why it is that they felt they had to control their feelings or say as little as possible *Mary* responded with:

> what I'm scared of
> what my mum always says
> that we don't to complain
> to
> so that they think we are not grateful
> or that we are complaining a lot
> causing problems
> causing struggles

During this statement *Mary* gestured beyond herself and her mother, and instead on 'we' was indicating everyone in the room. And so here we can begin to see that the *empathic labour* taken on by those seeking, or being 'asked' to integrate, are not just necessarily conscious of the tangible consequences that might come from transgressing what is expected of them. People also carry a representational burden, aware that their individual actions impact on perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees more widely. This awareness, in

turn, risks an exclusion from the 'luxury of transparency, the presumptive norm of clear and direct communication' (Conquergood 2002, p.146).

The simultaneous reading of oneself, as well as how one is being read by an outside eye, reveals a perspective that is reminiscent of Du Bois' theory of double-consciousness. This 'endows African Americans with the ability both to see themselves as themselves and to see themselves as White dominant culture sees them' (Risam, 2018, p.69). It is a space of both 'inclusion and exclusion' (p.69), and a state of being that has come to light throughout this thesis. Whilst, I recognise that this double-consciousness is by no means exacting of that of African American experience, it does here help to understand the double-bind which *Alee*, *Joe* and *Mary* find themselves in. That of reacting as one believes white dominant culture expects you to react for fear of misrepresenting the community you have been categorised within, and in turn that resulting in the voices of dominant culture controlling the conditions and processes through 'the epistemologies, stories, and cultures' (p.69) and those within the system. And so in turn, this double consciousness results in the exercising of individual *empathic labor* which moves beyond the notion of a personal performance with personal consequences and reaches out to trying to manage wider public perceptions and narratives, that are being constructed through the dominant lens of white European culture.

These instances lead me to return to a question I asked in Chapter Four, about whether there is space within normative understandings of integration for individuals to push back against the parameters that have been established for them. How much space is there within the domains or established themes of integration to talk about quality of these experiences? And who decides when, or if a domain has successfully been achieved? On paper, *Alee* has access to one of the key domains within Ager and Strang's integration framework - she has housing; her young family have somewhere to sleep each night, regardless of the quality of the mattresses and the ground-in dirtiness of the carpets. In policy terms, or at least in how policy intentions are reported upon, has this domain been fulfilled, despite *Alee's* clear sense of that 'I don't feel it is my home'?

There is recognition within integration discourse, and most specifically within the latest version of the New Scots strategy (2018-21), that any form of integration must be underpinned by the capacity for individuals to exercise their rights. However, what I hope this analysis is beginning to point towards is less about whether or not someone does complain or stand up for themselves or not. It is in fact about acknowledging that a considerable amount of *work* is occurring before a word of complaint is even uttered, or before a choice is made to remain silent. The negotiation of one's own, as well as other people emotions, assumptions and perceptions means that choices are being framed firstly by a fear of being seen to be 'demonstrating their ingratitude' (Healey, 2014, p.616).

More urgently - especially when individuals' asylum applications are still outstanding – they are framed by the fear that their actions will impact their ability to gain leave to remain and potential citizenship. In this research, behaving, toeing the line, not making a fuss emerged as a recurring theme, especially for women and more specifically women with families. Again, I am prompted to recall the image of Khosravi's 'quasi-citizen': 'positioned on the threshold of *in* and *out'* (2007, p.332*)* and contend that part of the under-recognised work of integration is in the decision-making work required to speak or not speak, in the hope that the end result will see them further in than out.

Moving through integration

The decision to speak is a delicate process and fraught with unpredictable responses from public audiences. *Moon* spoke at length about her sustained attempts to 'improve my communication', by attending the free drop-in English language community classes offered in the afternoons by her college, as well her allotted formal ESOL lessons in the morning. But she had been shocked by the dismissive reaction she got from teaching staff, and that her commitment to learning was somehow being interpreted as a slight on what had been made available for her. She felt she was being perceived as expecting too much. Whilst the motivations behind her teachers' responses may well be based on a concern for ensuring that individuals who do not have access to formal classes are able to

access the informal community support, this was not communicated to *Moon*. In theory *Moon* was enacting one of the core aspects of the New Scots' Integration strategy, to pursue her ambitions 'though education, employment, culture and leisure activities. (2018, p.6). However, framed by Healey's work her presence at both the morning and afternoon sessions was somehow being interpreted as her performing an *ingratitude*.

This returns me to a critique I raised in my contextual review, which asked whether integration discourse and the policies that emerge, are in danger of developing the idea of a *model integrator* - who like Jeffers' *endearing refugee* - must always demonstrate gratitude for the support offered to them, no matter what. This image of a *model integrator* was probed further when *Presenter* shared her experience as a professional translator working in a range of Scotland's local authorities as part of the support being provided for recently settled Syrians through the Vulnerable Person's Scheme. She described that in one local authority English lessons have been made compulsory and that individuals had been given one on one support to open bank accounts, attend the job centre and hospital, as well as being accompanied to leisure activities on a regular basis. While *Presenter* positioned this as an example of exemplary practice, there is critique to be directed towards this approach. From a community development perspective there could be a concern about the danger of stripping people of their agency and rendering individuals 'dependent' upon support services. However, what I want to draw attention to in this analysis is another potential form of agency stripping which connects to the fact that from *Presenter's* description, opting out of these activities was not a viable course of action. This prompted *Bentley* to ask whether this could best be described as integration 'by force'?

The image of a process of integration implemented 'by force' resonates back to Vasta's (2010) concerns about the fundamental aim of integration being to control difference, and it further solidifies the danger of a *model integrator* archetype emerging out of policy work. In a similar vein to *Moon's* perceived greediness, at the opposite end of the spectrum, where in this model is the

space to say, thank you but no thank you? As with Healey's contention that 'the expectation that refugees *should* contribute is not explored' (p.615), within this model of integration, the idea that refugees might not want to integrate seems to have been conceptually written off. *Bentley's* intervention in *Presenter's* story of integration practice serves to draw attention to possible limitations with how current conceptions of integration are understood and implemented.

What the experiences outlined so far have begun to point towards, are additional tracks for thinking about integration: ways of thinking which require scholars, policy makers and residents of the city to also attend to how people are moving through the gaps in between these domains, rather than fixing their focus on destination points. It is in these gaps, in the 'betwixt and between' (Turner, 1967) of normative definitions of integration, that individuals, families, and communities are doing so much of the work. It is here, in these messy spaces, where they are navigating themselves *through* the systems of support, negotiating and battling against practices of exclusion that arise in everyday life, as well as managing the relationships, responsibilities and aspirations of the people they love and care for – whether that be family or friends, present or absent.
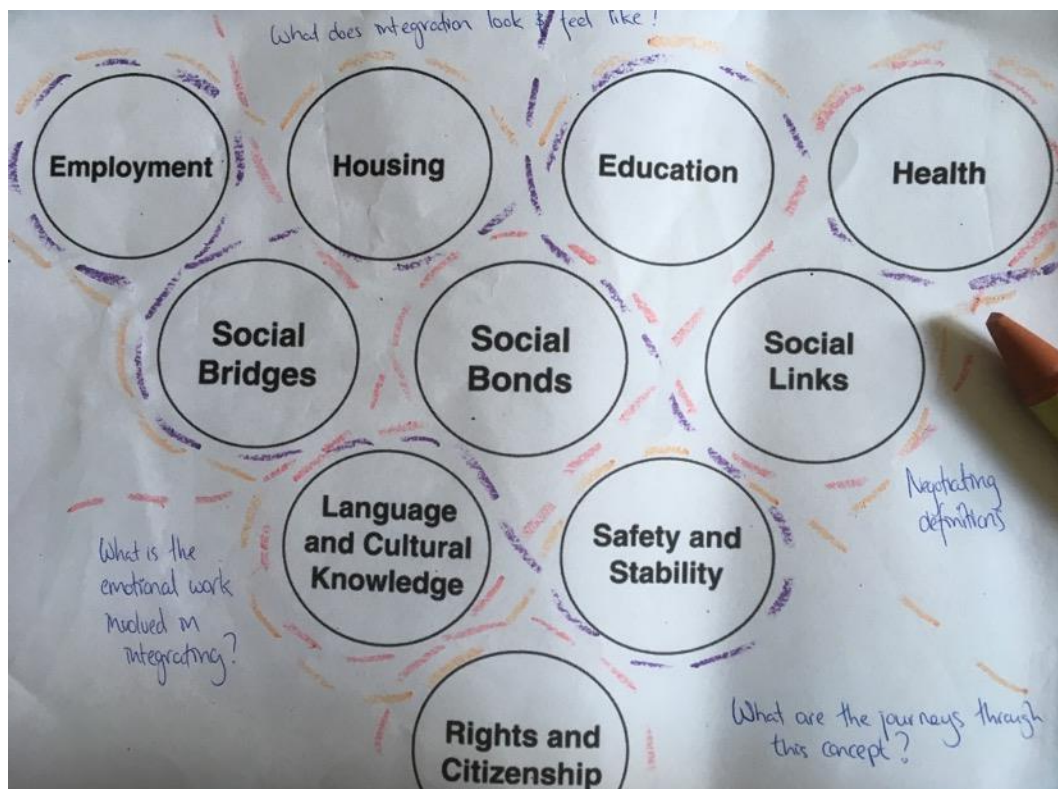

Image 31: Artist-Researcher reflecting on the spaces in between

If integration is indeed a series of ever transforming multi-channelled lines, as I laid out in the previous chapter, then it is along these lines – as they move through these gaps - that people get on buses, attend community groups, seek out food banks, build friendships, practice joy, attend volunteering and job interviews, take their children to school, get asked to share their experiences, experience something new, and get stared at. This is where emotional journeys occur, where racism manifests and where integration can be suddenly interrupted. It is where the *micrology of integration practice* takes place, a term I coin following the work of O'Neill (O'Neill et al, 2002 & O'Neill, 2008). By seeking out alternative forms through which we consider integration in the everyday, or as O'Neill refers to it, by accessing 'the sedimented stuff of society' - that which is 'normally unseen/hidden/overlooked' (O'Neill et al, 2002, p.78), there is the opportunity for some of the messiness of to become more visible.

Tracing the parental line

One aspect of the *micrology of integration practice* that emerged through these alternative forms was the pressures and challenges that came from parenting whilst in the precarious position of either seeking asylum or establishing oneself with refugee status. In particular, the responsibility parents felt to ensure their children retained a relationship to the cultures and practices that they had been forced to leave behind, whilst working to ensure that they felt included in cultural practices associated with Scotland and the UK more widely. *Bold Solicitor* talked about this struggle as:

> like a line
> a very fine line
> and this line you need to walk on it
> but you need to be careful
> not to fall down on any side

Student agreed and they both talked of the need to be 'flexible', particularly when it came to events like Halloween and Easter, or figures like Santa Claus. They stressed that whilst it was imperative for them as adults to 'not to lose your country culture / from inside' they had to acknowledge that for their children this sense of loss would not be as profound long-term. They were most

concerned, however about the work involved in retaining the languages associated with their home countries, a concern that was echoed by many other project members. *Faith* described how she had implemented a strict policy of 'home Arabic and outside English', and *Moon* had become so concerned that her young children were forgetting Arabic that she made the price for her children speaking English at home: the 'one pound from their pocket'.

Creator felt that he had passed a point of no return with his children. He felt he could not keep up with the way in which his children had adapted to Scottish society. He described his frustration at how, since they now spent the majority of their time in school and had developed Scottish accents, 'sometimes I just don't understand them'. His frustration was an acute source of tension for *Creator*, repeating this point over and over again throughout one of our reflective sessions, and emphasising that it was not because he did not want them to integrate, but that he was he was 'struggling' with the distance and tension this had given rise to at home.

Souso too identified a major difference between her own experience and that of her children, who came with her to Scotland as young children but are now both young adults. She described how this had become most clear to her when they recently returned to Algeria when her mother became ill, and her daughter spent much of her time there homesick for Glasgow. This realisation was something that *Souso* at first could not understand, 'I was surprised', but she relayed that it forced her to realise that for her daughter home was Glasgow. While *Souso* seemed comfortable with this difference between them day to day, her realisation had materialised as a quiet lingering concern about what would happen when *Souso* approached the end of her life. She, like many project members, remarked that she had always imagined returning to her home country in old age; that 'I can't imagine myself dying here'. But in reality, she knew that her own longing to return home - even in death - would be compromised because she would want to be buried near her children and 'I know my kids are living here'.

At the opposite end of this spectrum *Odoien* identified his negotiation as that of having to deal with his young daughter's expectations about returning to her home:

> my daughter
> all the time
> she wants to travel back to our country
> so when she sees any luggage
> she say to them
> okay when will we take our luggage back to Algeria
> in her mind
> the problem is always with luggage
> if there is no luggage she can't travel
> so she keeps asking me
> what about the luggage
> we need the luggage to go home

Whilst *Odoien* relayed this story he laughed, which made us all laugh too, but my notes reveal the presence of a tension surrounding him as he told us: 'he was wringing his hands and his eyes seemed wet with tears. I felt like he was laughing because otherwise he might have cried'. It was clear to see that the emotional burden of repeatedly having to explain to his daughter that she could not go home, and then managing her disappointment had become a very particular source of personal struggle for *Odoien*. One that contained global injustice within it and one that he was finding emotional strategies - like laughter - to cope with.

These experiences are indicative of the existence of what I conceive of here as *a spectrum of generational adaptiveness* that is taking place for families of 'New Scots'. It is upon this spectrum where parents and their children are working through complex processes of integrating or establishing themselves in new homes at very different paces. Whilst there is increased research interest in intergenerational relations and contact within immigrant families within the Global North (Baykara-Krumme, 2008; Glick, 2010; Gruijters, 2017; Kalmijn, 2019; Fernández-Reino & Gonazález-Ferrer, 2019) the emotional repercussions of these orientations are less explored. Moreover, there is still little research where forced migration and the injustices embedded within those particular

experiences, are acknowledged as a factor in understanding paces of adaptation. In particular, this is an aspect of 'New Scots' integration that is underexplored.

One key feature of how families exist upon this spectrum was the stress identified by project members when the lives of their children were interrupted by the restraints of the asylum system. I borrow the term 'interruption' from a conference participant at the UNESCO RILA Spring School in 2018, who in a group discussion described how she felt her own so-called integration had often been aggressively interrupted by external forces. I was struck by the force she associated with these interruptions, noting down how she said it 'could send her right back to the start'. This is the sentiment echoed by *Maham* back in Chapter Seven when she shared how her sense of rootedness to Scotland could quickly be overshadowed by a feeling of being 'segregated' because 'you can feel people are looking at you'.

For *Lion* and *Rose* these interruptions for their children manifested within a school setting. For *Lion* this was most apparent through the bullying that her children had to endure:

> they used to hear
> too many bad word from school
> like
> bullying them with
> 'you are asylum seekers'

However, for both women these interruptions also came in the form of their children being prevented from taking up opportunities that all other children in Scotland have access too. *Rose* described how when her oldest son was a teenager he had been identified as particularly talented at football, and that he had been selected to go and play in France but couldn't because they were seeking asylum. Managing her son's disappointment, as well as coping with the injustice that she felt on his behalf had become a source of stress for her, and it was an injustice that was brought into sharper focus when some years later her younger son was also selected. At this time, because the family now had their refugee status, it was suddenly 'easy for him to go'. The freedom and opportunity that their refugee status afforded her 'wee one' just reinforced to

her the fact the 'oldest one, he couldn't' because his own development as a young boy, with the pressure to integrate, had been interrupted.

Similarly, *Lion* shared that she felt a 'pressure build up inside' when faced with the unknown of the asylum system (she and her family waited for nine years before they were offered humanitarian protection). This pressure left her 'under stress' and unable to sleep particularly at times when she felt her children were being blocked from living their fullest lives. She spoke about an incident with her oldest daughter, who had been selected to go on a trip to Spain. Like *Rose's* son she was unable to go, because 'she doesn't have her documents'. What made this incident more stressful was that her daughter had chosen to stay silent at school about still being within the asylum system:

> her head teacher
> she came to visit us at home
> why you don't let your daughter go with us on this trip
> if there is no money
> I can support her financially
> and we say to her
> we don't have any problem
> financial problem
> or any
> bad attitude about going on a trip with the group
> no we love to
> but at the time we are asylum seekers
> we don't have passport for her
> then the headteacher
> she put her hand on her front
> oh I didn't think about that

Not only does this encounter reveal the very material barriers and interruptions that are facing the children of parents seeking asylum, it speaks to the stress individuals are placed under in having to make sense of the system for other people. The home visit from the headteacher implies a concern from the school that the parents were preventing *Lion's* daughter from taking part in the trip. One which they decided required an intervention. Whilst it was framed by the headteacher as an intervention based around a possible concern about money, *Lion's* need to clarify that they did not hold 'any bad attitude' suggests she feared her family were suspected of blocking her daughter's experiences based

upon a misconception of their cultural practices or beliefs.

Once again, we return to the *empathic labour* required to carry out the dual function of explaining one's situation, whilst simultaneously reassuring one's audience (Cummings, 2016). A labour that was exacerbated in this instance, by the fact that in order to navigate through this incident, *Lion's* was essentially forced to re-inscribe her daughter with the label of 'asylum seeker', despite her wishes that no one at school know she was still seeking asylum. *Lion* went on to argue that the right for their children to live as all other children in Scotland do, was the most important change that needed to take place for families seeking asylum. This was echoed by many parents throughout this research: a need for change fuelled by a desire for their children to rightfully access opportunities, but also based upon the concern's parents had about the emotional impact these limitations – and moments of exposure - were having upon their children.

The reluctance that *Lion's* daughter showed to being labelled an asylum seeker was a feeling shared by many project members, and one that resonates with the desire to live a *self-authored life* explored in the previous chapter. *Creator* shared that, in wanting to retain their own identity, he and his wife had chosen not to tell their daughters of their seeking asylum. This choice was the source of much misunderstanding between him and his children, especially as they had now been trapped within the system for ten years. He talked of how his children were always asking for money that he did not have, and how they did not understand why he would not buy a car when all their school friends parents' have cars, and why they could not go abroad on holiday. The lack of agency he had in being able to offer his children what he would like to was palpable, as was the effort involved in trying to hide them from finding out about the system they had been born into. Especially when his attempts to circumnavigate the restrictions of this position were accompanied by further difficulties:

> I try to save some money
> but if you save some money
> the home office asks
> how you
> where have you got this money

and how did you manage that

What we see here is one form of pressure merging into another, and then ricocheting back and forth as *Creator* works to provide what he can for his daughters without arousing the suspicions of the bureaucratic institution that defines what it is that he - and by proxy they - can and cannot do.

Seeing the labour of integration

What is taking place for many people within the asylum system – evidenced in this chapter – is the enactment of a revised form of Hochschild's 'emotional labour' (1983), which was originally described as:

> a public display of and use of emotion in the service of work which requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others . . . This kind of labour calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality (p. 7).

Conceptualised in order to better understand the emotion work required by people within certain paid jobs like teachers, flight attendants and care workers, the concept has more recently been re-imagined from a range of perspectives, both within and out with scholarly disciplines (Grandey, Diefendorff, Rupp, 2013). Most specifically for this research, *emotional labour* is being attributed to the historical and under-recognised work exerted by people of colour (particularly women) as they negotiate, confront or avoid micro aggressions predicated on racist practices, across a range of social and professional fields (Acker, 2006; Evans & Moore, 2015; Ballinas, 2017; Alderman etc al, 2019; Ray & Purifoy, 2019). This is a form of labour intricately captured by Angelou's poem The Mask (1987), which – calling upon Paul Laurence Dunbar's 1896 poem - honours the forms of 'survival apparatus' undertaken by African Americans across history. While not mirroring the very specific contextual landscape underpinning the narratives portrayed by Angelou, the masks, performance and *emotional labour* so hauntingly conjured up within her poem, are also playing an integral part in the everyday practices of living as a 'New Scot' in Glasgow.

Whilst not articulated specifically as 'labour' within people's descriptions - though *Souso* referred to it as 'courage' - I have heard repeatedly about the emotionally conflicted work involved in the process of integrating. Where individuals manage and produce a feeling (Hochschild, 1983) whilst navigating the unwritten rules, reading the perceptions of others, and dealing with the obstacles that have to be overcome in order to survive, as well in the everyday interactions required to access even basic levels of everyday living. As *Hani* described it, 'you have to fight and fight and fight'.

An extreme example of this can be found in *Precise's* response to a story told to us by *Dozer*. He spoke of his friend who had considered taking their own life because they could no longer cope with the pressure of the unknown and the fear of return. For *Precise*, the most dangerous element in this action was not necessarily the loss of life itself, but the risk that should they survive it could be interpreted as a bad performance: 'they will consider you a threat'.

What should not be lost from this analysis is the distorted irony in applying the concept of *emotional labour* to a system where the 'workers' are prohibited from being part of the paid labour force. Hoschild has been explicit that *emotional labour* should not be associated with encounters that occur outside of paid labour contexts (Beck & Hoschild, 2018). However, what I have identified within this chapter is a very specific form of exploitative *emotional labour*, where the labour is also a form of payment predicated on Healey's (2014) argument that for many refugees, asylum or the mere hope of being granted asylum, 'is a debt which can rarely be fully repaid' (p.217). These emotional invisible labours have become their own form of unspoken debt that those within the asylum system endure and pay off in order to access the most basic and minimal levels of dignified living.

Finally, this reading of *emotional labour* within the practice of integrating, becomes further complicated when read alongside the *emotional labour* being

undertaken by workers, volunteers and allies, as they work to support individuals through the asylum process (Beesley, 2017, p.188). The 'burnout' culture (p.206), 'compassion fatigue' (p.211) and 'emotional detachment' (p.211) identified by Beesley across all levels within Glasgow refugee sector, points to an ongoing mutually distressing performance between those within and those without the asylum system. While sometimes productive, sometimes combative, and almost always invisible, the emotional work being undertaken within the *welcome-unwelcome dialectic* that New Scots - and those around them - exist within, cannot and should not be underestimated.

Hope as a form of labouring resistance

At the start of this chapter I argued that as well as revealing the cruelties and contradictions inherent within the neoliberal system, the *micrology of integration practice* also offered insight into how these were resisted. I do so by here conceptualising hope as a form of labouring resistance: expanding Beesley's suggestion that 'having hope is integral in order to cope with the asylum process for both applicants and others' (p.248). I do this by paying particular attention to the visuals and narratives that emerged from the **Dixit** cards I utilised as part of my research. Having placed the cards – and the narrative insights they gave way to – carefully and strategically through the rest of thesis, here I believe there is a clarity of thought that comes from seeing and hearing them grouped together.

When invited to explore what integration looks and feels like, the cards led the conversations in many directions. What they displayed almost unfailingly, was a relationship to and reliance upon hope. Much of the research on hope within the lives of refugees and those seeking asylum, focuses on how it operates in the experiences of child refugees (Yohani and Larsen, 2009; Wrench, Soong, Paige & Garret, 2017; Veronese, Cavazzoni & Antenucci, 2018). When it has focused on adults it has tended towards how vital the 'dynamicity of hope' can be 'in designing interventions aimed at nurturing refugees' (Umer & Elliot, 2018, p.5). The dominant focus is in exploring tools for improving people's mental health, or looking at how hope can be activated and/or how differing levels of it connect

to how well individuals are transitioning, adapting and engaging in life (p.5).

There has been less focus on the way in which hope is laboured for by individuals themselves. Rather than hope being a tool that can be activated or deactivated by external sources, the cards chosen by project members within my research spoke more specifically to an internal relationship to hope, one that was being produced as a source of self-preservation.

why I take this card is for
how you say
the light is on
so
any problem
my problems
I think
when the light light like this
any problem I say you will burn it
this is my future
(Janet)

Image 32: Hope 1

you have a hope
like
you never lose your hope
even if just a tiny tiny hope
but
even if you are deep in the sea
and you want to do all the worse things
you still have a hope
(Red&Green)

Image 33: Hope 2

I have a road ahead
but I don't know where I am going
just going
and there is nothing clear
but eventually
I have hope
it helps me actually
eventually I will get there
somewhere
that is my life
(Mr Bin)

Image 34: Hope 3

The three cards above, which were chosen most regularly, see hope manifest in the metaphor of light. Accompanied by the spoken narratives that project members created, the visuals gesture towards what Rogers refers to as 'directional tendency' (Rogers, 1995, p.118). This tendency is what sees people who are struggling 'striving to become' even 'under the most adverse circumstances' (p.118). Read in such a way this tendency towards finding and moving towards the light is one that is pro-active and underpinned by personal agency and a desire for self-actualisation that perhaps other readings of hope have not given sufficient recognition to. Whilst Umer and Elliot do discuss agency in their application of Snyder's Hope Framework with research involving sixteen asylum seeking individuals in Glasgow, their analysis lies in 'developing a hopeful disposition' (p.1) in order to channel it as a 'protective factor' (p.2).

For practitioners of therapy I can see that their research makes a vital contribution to the kind of clinical approaches that might be developed. However, my interest lies - especially in light of my analyses of (re)constructing the self in the previous chapter - in how hope is an active response to injustice and struggle, rather than a protective layer against it. The work involved in this active response is gestured to here by *Mary:*

this candle
it shows like erm
a bit of light in a very dark room
and I think

I'm thinking
I'm wondering
when this candle is finished
where the light will be
it will be dark

Her concern about how her hope can be maintained long-term, and the implied fear of being left in the dark, points towards, not just the precarity of hope but the fact that there is not necessarily an infinite innate supply available to her. Hope is something that she will have to labour to keep ignited.

Without wanting to stretch this metaphor too far I suggest that the labouring of hope can be directly connected to the desire for *self-authorship*, a theme that has run as a strand throughout this thesis. Where this becomes most clear, is in relation to another popular card chosen by project members in connection to hope.

Image 35: Hope 4

For many project members the symbol of the dove provoked, as might be expected, the hope that 'all the world stays in peace' (*Peace & Justice*). But in four of these responses this hope for peace was also articulated at a much more personal level: this is me / this is my future (*Mary*). For *Dozer*, the important detail in the image was that no-one was gifting peace to the figure at the top of the ladder, it was vital that 'he is creating it'. An observation that echoes Qasmiyeh's poetic response to his experiences in Baddawi refugee camp: 'They have all come to re-originate the beginning with their own hands and feet' (2016).

Veronese et al (2018) assert that when combined, hope and agency provide a powerful and 'renewed self-perceived sense of control over the constraints that mark' the lives of displaced people. In light of this, what becomes important to acknowledge here, is the way in which project members saw themselves as active agents in building hope in the above image. In doing so they were acknowledging the work being done by individuals to imagine themselves moving towards a hope-filled destination. As *Mary* articulated in her description, a peaceful future would be drawn by her own hands - and not by those of others:

> I think this is me
> this is my future
> and I'm trying
> to draw my future in peace
> this is my future
> I am trying to draw it
> its not easy
> to have a very brilliant future as your dream
> but you can try as much as possible

Conclusion

Foster (2016) argues that a key contribution 'of feminist and anti-racist methodology is in its consternation of the opposition between rational thought and emotion' (p.63). In this chapter I attest to that statement, by drawing critical attention to the emotional and embodied work involved in searching out, accessing and relating to the normative and rational domains of integration. I

have done this by offering an analysis of the way in which individuals compromise, negotiate, perform and adapt themselves not just for the sake of their 'audience' but under a pressure to ensure their own dignity and survival, both as individuals and in maintaining a form of representational burden.

In bearing witness to *emotional labour* I have worked to draw out the pressures and tensions that exist between generations of those expected to integrate, as a way of gaining an insight into notions of interruptions to integration. And I have re-framed hope as form of labour, in order to position it as an emotion that is actively worked at and produced by individuals within the asylum system, rather than something that individuals need to be facilitated to feel.

In Scott's (1990) work on identifying the way in which individuals and communities develop 'reactions and patterns of resistance' (xi) he declares that:

> I can claim absolutely no originality for these observations about power relations and discourse. They are part and parcel of the daily folk wisdom of millions who spend most of their waking hours in power-laden situations in which a misplaced gesture or a misspoken word can have terrible consequences (p.x).

Similarly, I lay no claim to this chapter unveiling unknown aspects of the asylum process. For anyone within the system may recognise and know this labour far better than I will ever be able to fully describe. As Conquergood (2002) argues, all 'subjected knowledges' are held as 'active bodies of meaning, outside of books', and as such they are 'masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context' (p.146). In presenting *emotional labour* in the thesis I am not attempting to render these forms of subjugated knowledge 'legible, and thereby legitimate' (p.146) in accordance with 'Western regimes of knowledge' (p.146). I am, however, highlighting this work that it might be more *visible*, and so as to advocate for alternatives mechanisms to be found, to ensure this labour is not everlasting.

The ongoing labour taking place must not get erased by the positive discourse surrounding integration in Scotland, or by the actions of a welcome movement

that is doing such important work in directing Scotland towards a convivial multiculturalism. These encounters, these interactions, these 'power-laden situations' all matter and what they show us about the still fraught and bumpy landscape of contemporary Scotland needs to be recognised. This is so that the conviviality that is produced is one that is authentic, anti-racist and committed to a distribution of power. I hope this chapter – alongside the rest of this thesis - goes some way towards doing this.

"The dawn breaks and lights up the window. Lights still illuminate the room as sunlight silently creeps through the curtain-less glass Although it has been a long night there is a feeling of hope and freshness that comes with the new dawn"
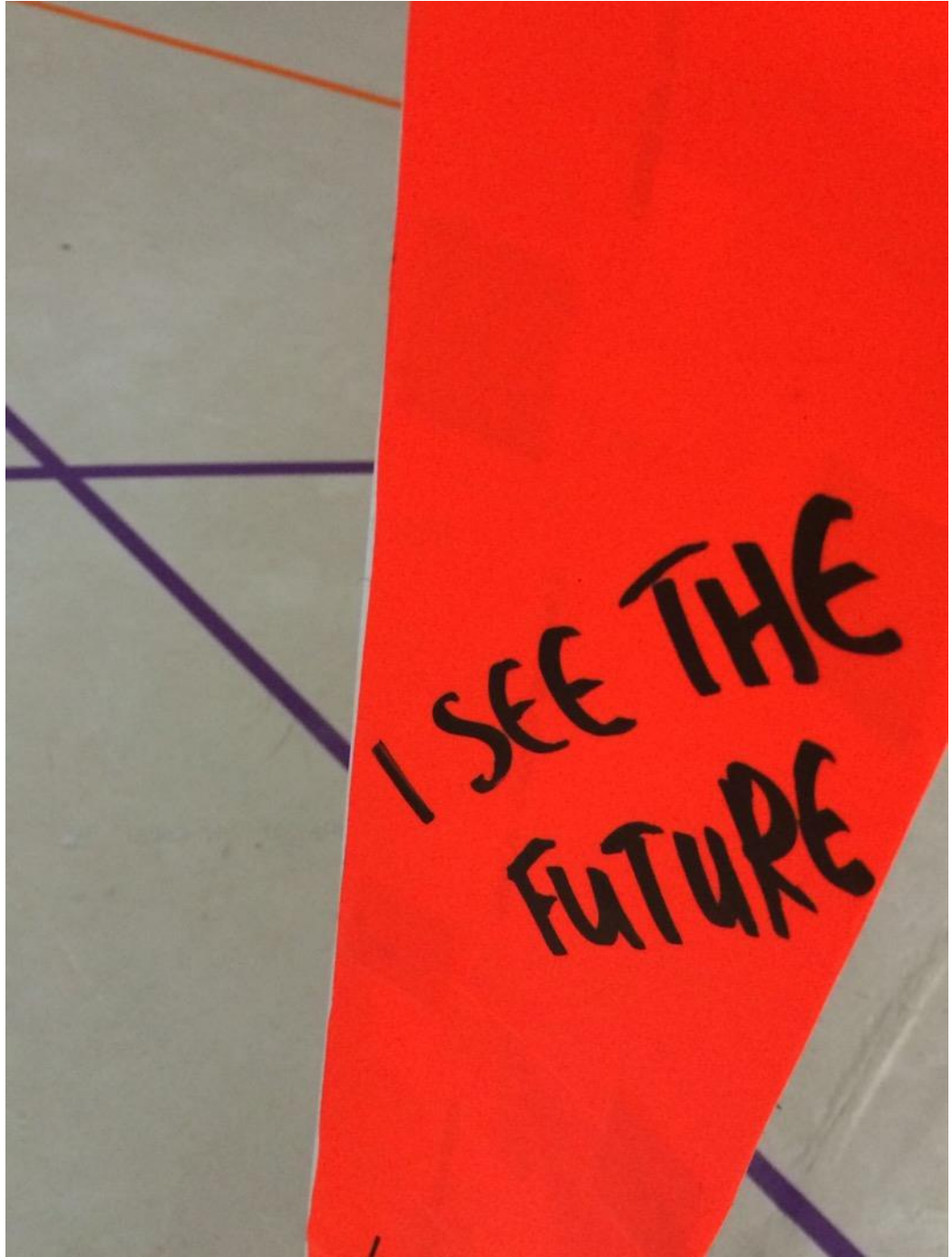
Image 36: Exhibition from I Hear The Image Moving

Conclusion

Introduction

Emerging throughout this thesis is a concern and an attentiveness towards themes of (re)construction. A desire to (re)build oneself in a new environment, a longing to (re)create the person you once were, and a drive to (re)imagine the future with a hopefulness that life as it is will change or improve; they all co-exist and have circulated around in this exploration of how participatory arts practice intersects with the experience of individuals navigating the immigration system in Glasgow.

The ubiquity of these themes was in constant evidence during my time researching. This stemmed from the individuals I worked with, many of whom were determined agents in their own lives seeking to be seen and understood on their terms. It was also due to the nature of the inquiry, where issues of representation, authorship and the telling of one's stories were being interrogated through the practice of making performance and artwork. This aspect of the research sheds light on both artistic practice within the field of refugee arts, and on many of the less visible practices contained within the concept of integration as it is lived in everyday life.

Here I reflect back on the knowledge that has emerged and been produced throughout my research. I pull out key themes and observations, as well as reiterating any new conceptual terms that I have contributed along the way. I divide my closing analysis into two main areas of interest, firstly offering concluding thoughts on arts practice, before providing concluding ideas around integration. Where appropriate I draw ideas together in order to construct an overarching interpretation.

As part of this conclusion I also draw attention to areas of emerging interest that

could form the basis of further study and/or a practice-based exploration. Moreover, where appropriate I make space to acknowledge issues that arose but could not be made sense of within the parameters of this thesis. To bring the journey of this thesis to a close my final contribution is a Coda entitled '**Hidden Transcripts'**.

The Arts

A significant area of exploration throughout this thesis has been examining the ethical tensions and illuminating the potential of multi-artform storytelling. Initially framed by the critiques of Salverson, Thompson and Jeffers, I scrutinised the existence within each project of an ongoing negotiation with the compulsion to stage suffering. This analysis operated as a frame through which the key ideas and issues emerged, which I went on to explore throughout the rest of the thesis.

The work carried out across these projects is indicative of a shift taking place in some groups within the arts sector; one that is concerned with work being made with, by and for refugees needing to be rooted in a critical dialogue about where the power within (and circulating around) a creative space lies. It is imperative for arts practitioners and organisations seeking to develop artistic work with individuals with experience of the asylum system to have a thorough awareness of the unique pressures that surround them in relation to storytelling. This awareness should include a grounded and/or scholarly knowledge of *bureaucratic performance*, the *endearing refugee* archetype, an *aesthetic of injury*, and the *empathic labour* required to recount personal narratives. Without an awareness of these concepts, the artistic work risks falling into traps that reinforce essentialised narratives of 'the refugee' and could place an unjust burden upon individuals and communities to represent 'refugeeness'; a burden that – as demonstrated throughout the thesis – is already carried within everyday life.

Against a backdrop of increased bordering practices, whereby teachers, doctors

and housing providers (for example) are being asked to perform the role of border guards, one of the most radical approaches arts projects could take, might be in **not** asking people to tell their story as a starting point. The space to *not* speak, and the freedom to *not* be categorised by one's experience of asylum was articulated time and again as reason why project members felt so drawn to the projects within this research. At a time when everyone is 'always asking asking' (*Joe*) perhaps the most creative approach for arts practice is to take an 'indirect' route to exploring narratives – both personal, political and imaginative – with the body, through aesthetic experimentation, and via play, abstraction and metaphor. Furthermore, I have made a case for prioritising explorations that seek out the aesthetic and poetic potential of storytelling that celebrates multiplicity. The examples found in the 'I See…' poem, and *Radiophrenia*'s multi-voiced soundscapes draw attention to the ways in which stories can be told, in such a way that makes space for an exploration of our full selves, rather than in response to specific existing narratives.

A key practice that emerged during this research was that of *creative self-authorship*. Taking inspiration from the process of creating portraits, alongside Risam's work on the agentic potential of selfies, I describe *creative self-authorship* as the process by which individuals involved in participatory arts projects become the creators of their own work, rather than objects of exploration within a project. In particular Chapter Five provides examples where *self-authorship* was brought to the fore. It was in my analysis of the performance created by *Ezel* that I came to advocate for *creative self-authorship* being the route to finding aesthetically bold and revelatory artistic interventions, that defy the categories imposed upon those with within the asylum system, and resist theatrical tropes like that of the *endearing refugee*. I go on to make a case for an interpretation of *creative self-authorship* that is deeply connected to collaborative practice. With my attention directed towards artists working in the participatory field, I advocate for artistic processes to use the skills and expertise of the professional practitioners to carry the burden of meaning-making, so as to create spaces where creative freedom can flourish, and where new ideas, words and images can be discovered and carved out.

Across the thesis I go on to position the arts as a means through which to explore and (re)construct individual and collective identity. I argue that arts spaces, and creative practice itself – when non-judgemental and free of categories and labels - can operate as a site for emotional opening and free expression, and in doing so can contribute to how individuals make sense of themselves in the past, present and imagined future. I hope that this area of the research has contributed in some small way to the questions being asked by Greatrick and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2017) about what self-expression, within the context of forced displacement might 'even 'look' like – or sound or read like?' As part of this I argue that through a commitment to co-creating artistic work, relationships are built, and in turn a form of *diaspora-consciousness* is triggered through the construction of new shared memories.

Fundamentally, this thesis positions arts projects within the frame of hooks' *location of possibility*, i.e. spaces where individuals can work together to develop a resistant politics of engagement that energises those in the room. In placing an emphasis throughout my analysis on reciprocity, I have made a case for attention to be paid to nourishment, an ethic of care and a focus on building affective and expressive experiences that value visibility; enabling people to be seen and heard in ways that are multivocal and multilingual. In doing so I positioned arts practice within the frame of emotional citizenry, where the work pushes past seeking out similarity, and instead become spaces where difference underpins the commonality and solidarity that emerges out of artistic endeavour.

Viewing arts practice in this way leans on Danewid's argument that global ethics and solidarity need to be rethought so that connections are forged from 'the shared intertwined histories that arise out of the colonial past, and the neo-colonial present' rather than through the 'oneness and interconnectedness of humanity' (2017, p.1683). Furthermore, it adopts Vasta's (2010) contention that societies' need to be working towards a form of social solidarity, that 'further our practices of reciprocity' whilst developing a more enduring notion of responsibility for the other' (p.510). In light of these statements I conclude that participatory arts become most political when practitioners and project

members move away from the work of solely humanising or provoking empathy - be it between ourselves within a workshop or for audiences at a performance, and instead focuses on building artistic spaces and experiences where inter-relations and shared moments of creation and responsibility can form the basis for localised solidarity.

For some time, I had the intention of writing a chapter in this thesis entitled 'negotiating the 'white-walled labyrinth'' (people's knowledge collective, 2016, p.4). Its focus would have been on the experiences of 'New Scot' professional artists and the journeys they have undertaken whilst establishing themselves. The key emphasis would have been on trying to make visible the structural barriers impeding their progress, and how this filters down into everyday interactions with funders, producers, organisations and other artists. This was a theme that re-emerged throughout my research, and in my capacity as a freelance arts practitioner I regularly engage in conversations with artists who are striving to form their artistic identities within the cultural and arts sector in Scotland – or who are navigating an established career. They too spoke of the *emotional labour* involved in navigating what is still a predominantly white-Scottish sector, and many spoke with concern about the rise in the arts sector's 'interest' in refugees, for many of the reasons discussed throughout this work. However, as my research developed, it was clear that this thesis would be unable to afford the theme significant enough space and that in many ways, this was a subject requiring a study of its own. There are questions to be asked about how much Scotland's cultural sector is actually willing to be changed by 'New Scots', what routes need to be put in place to ensure professional arts practice is a viable goal for individuals, and to trouble the notion that refugees and those within the asylum system perpetually exist in either the role of 'participant' or 'refugee artist'. There is much to learned from this potential study and I would support this as future venture for anyone interested in Glasgow and Scotland's changing cultural sector.

Integration

Throughout my research I identified the existence of what I termed the

welcome-unwelcome dialectic. This term was an attempt to capture the experience of living and trying to (re)construct oneself within a social and political atmosphere that welcomes you with one hand and pushes you away with the other. While the term resonates with Khosravi's *hostile hospitality* and shares a similarity with Derrida's concept of *hostipitality,* the *welcome-unwelcome dialectic* sheds a unique light on integration within Scotland.

It does so by recognising that the experience of being a 'New Scot' is framed by two opposing narratives of nationhood. As outlined in the contextual section of this thesis both the UK and Scotland are currently engaged in using migration as an issue around which to nation-build. Whilst the UK pushes a discourse of hardening borders, Scotland is pursuing a narrative of welcome. Whilst neither of these narratives are in and of themselves 'the truth', these narratives inform policy and, vice versa, policy is informed by these narratives. Consequently, what one faces as a 'New Scot' is an existence contained by one system that seeks to exclude you, and another system that claims not to. How these narratives impact on an individual's sense of identity was not the focus of exploration within this thesis, but there was an acute awareness from many project members that they were traversing these two narratives and systems. There is ground to be covered with regards to how the two national responses to migration manifest within people's sense of self, and whether these narratives are forming lived realities for 'New Scots' or in fact obfuscating their experience.

What this thesis does do is illuminate the *welcome-unwelcome dialectic* at a more local level, where experiences described by project members throughout the thesis revealed the unwelcome contained within the welcome. For instance, *Precise's* experience at the food bank, *Alee*, *Joe* and *Mary's* interactions with their housing providers, and *Mr Bin's* desire to hide his shame of being an asylum seeker are all indicative of day-to-day lived realities where individuals feel less than welcome.

This was brought to the fore within the research during *Tez's* interaction with the pinhole camera in *Share My Table*. His response reinforced Davidson and Virdee's assertion that '[e]veryday racism remains a deeply structuring force distorting the lives of those we know as the 'black and brown Scots''(2018, p.10). In doing so it acts as a reminder to look beyond the welcome narrative articulated 'by elite politicians in Scotland about migration and the 'new Scots'' and recognise it continues to be 'crucial to remain alive to the disjuncture between elite discourse on migration and the lived reality of racialised minorities in Scotland' (10).

Tez's resistance to being critical of the homelessness he saw around him also expands upon Mulvey's concern about what normality – the primary goal identified within his comprehensive study of integration (2013) – means both materially and conceptually. Is the implicit expectation that 'New Scots', in their drive to be normal, should accept and fit into existing and structural inequalities (whether they are directly affected by them or not)? Or is a welcoming society that advocates a two-way integration process willing to be influenced by the insights and disbelief articulated by those like *Tez* who making their home here. Is there space for 'New Scots' to have the power to shape a new normal?

The recent change in Scottish law (as of February 2020) that now allows individuals with refugee status to vote in local and national elections, demonstrates that there is a political will for change. However, the persistent examples of individuals reluctant to complain, or being met with hostility or indifference when they speak up, reveals that there is still a disjunct between the narrative of welcome and everyday experiences of those seeking to integrate. Furthermore, the normative definitions that underpin policies of integration have continued to point to the risk of establishing the image of the *model integrator* who, like Jeffers' *endearing refugee*, will presumably display just the right balance of assigned characteristics required to integrate successfully: ask for too much and you are perceived as ungrateful. Whereas on the opposite end of the spectrum, where is the freedom to reject the normative

model of integration laid out for people, without being rejected as a 'New Scot'?

One way for integration policy to avoid essentialising the integrator is to expand how integration itself is understood. It is in this area of the discourse where my thesis makes its major contribution.

In Chapter Eight I drew attention to the importance individuals placed on living a *self-authored life*, one that is importantly not just about cultivating oneself, but having agency to determine how one constructs or presents oneself in private and public settings. I went on to make the case that *self-authorship* be considered a deeply relational act, one that is determined by daily interactions and depends upon the building of relationships. In doing so I make a case for integration discourse to pay more attention to the growing scholarly interest in relational wellbeing, which positions relationships as fundamentally underpinning the social fabric of multi-cultural and multi-dimensional societies, rather than relationships – or in integration terms social bonds and bridges – being seen as a vehicle for other forms of belonging. This moves integration discourse beyond two-way, or even multi-directional interpretations, and shifts the focus towards conversations about mutual interdependence.

A key shift in this conversation needs to be the attention paid to *refugee-refugee relationality*. As Glasgow, in particular, enters its twentieth year of becoming home to individuals dispersed by the asylum system, it becomes imperative to recognise that 'the welcome' is not owned or upheld by white Scotland. *Overlapping displacement* is giving way to layers of invisible reciprocity, which manifest across the city as the 'poetics of undisclosed care' and ensuring this has more visibility would contribute to a more complex understanding of these processes. I propose that there is space to undertake an exploration into mapping the welcome economies that exist within Scotland, and with a core focus on troubling who plays the role of the 'host', this would lead to a richer and thicker set of narratives of welcome already in circulation.

By working 'beyond categories' throughout my inquiry and focusing on finding a multiplicity of forms through which to explore what integration looks and feels like, my research has been able to identify and make visible the spaces between the domains of integration. I contend that within these spaces the *micrology of integration practice* takes place and I ended the main body of the thesis with a chapter dedicated to recognising just some of the micrology described by the project members I worked with.

One aspect that I want to draw particular attention towards in this conclusion were the negotiations taking place between parent and child, as well as between child and parent and the outside world that were discussed in Chapter Nine. These experiences see parents and their children work through complex processes of integrating or establishing themselves in new homes at very different paces. To acknowledge it, I refer to it as a *spectrum of generational adaptiveness*. This area of enquiry requires more focused attention on what I believe to very complex practical and emotional realities faced by families every day. I contend that this is an urgently needed area of future inter-generational research within Scotland, and one that would lend itself to a practice-led enquiry. In doing so the richness of material generated could illuminate on the shifting migrant experiences within society as well as identifying the opportunities, tensions and barriers - and changes required - that emerge from these specific family scenarios.

Finally, I return to a theme identified at the beginning of this conclusion. The role of *bureaucratic performance* and *empathic labour* I have revealed throughout this thesis as a key ingredient in an integrating life. I refer to this often as the work, or the labour involved in integration practice, and in my final chapter I name these practices as a form of ongoing *emotional labour*. I assert that this labour is invisible in current integration discourses. Combined with the practical labour of integrating (attending home office sign-ins, solicitors appointments, meetings, classes, housing inspections, social worker visits, volunteering), the pressure to perform appropriate emotions requires constant nimbleness, constant resilience, alertness to the way a situation you are in is

being read and interpreted by those you are with, and even how your actions may be read in the future. I hypothesise that although this work is unseen, it is deeply felt by those undertaking it. Some months ago, I shared with *Souso* that one of my thesis chapters was going to focus on the *emotional labour* being undertaking by 'New Scots' she said: 'Most people don't see the significance of these interactions. You must have really listened'.

Conclusion

My final contributions through this research are methodological. Firstly, through my commitment to embedding artistic practice into every aspect of my study this thesis contributes to a growing body of knowledge in the discourse of arts practice as research, and more specifically in the field of arts-based research with refugees. Secondly, I have opened up for myself, and others, the potential of engaging with boardgames as a form of research. My interest in using **Dixit** came from my belief that the visual and metaphorical world it presented would invite people to embark upon surprising and illuminating narratives routes. I believe this played itself out, and I look forward to further research whether I can expand the potential of how these **Dixit** cards can be used to explore the experiential within social reality. Furthermore, I am interested in how games more generally – both material and digital – might provide us with rich sites through which research can be undertaken, and where *real listening* can continue to take place. This time around I do not have a gameography at the end of my work, but I look forward to working on a piece of research that might.

It is in the act of *listening deeply* and *listening with our eyes* where I draw this thesis to a close. Some of what I have contributed in this thesis is perhaps not tangible or quantifiable enough to make its way into policy discussions, however, my research does draw attention to aspects of arts practice, and aspects of integration practice that are not usually noticed at first glance, or first listen. I have given shape to aspects of artistic practice and of integration practice that try to defy definition, in part because they are such embodied and felt parts of the experience, and also because much of what is seen or heard when we

interrogate further can be uncomfortable. In taking the research to this place I have carved out new ground for how we may talk about these two overlapping fields of thought and life.

Coda: 'Hidden Transcripts'

A consistent concern as I developed the analysis within this thesis was whether, as a researcher concerned with social justice, I was directing my gaze in the most productive direction. I ask myself this question, in light of the provocations raised by Solomos (1990) in his response to the Macpherson Report's inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. In his article Solomos argued that the 'relative absence of rigorous and informed research insights' (1990) within the Report were not wholly surprising given the 'paucity of substantial research' into major perpetrators of contemporary racism, namely 'political institutions, the police, the criminal justice system' (1990). The problem he argues is that in the main, scholarly research has turned its gaze away from institutions, and turned more towards 'theoretical abstraction and textual and cultural analysis' (1990). The implication of this focus is that research on racism had often become focused on the individuals and communities for whom institutional racial injustice was being perpetrated against - rather than on those enacting it. What emerges is cultural analysis into the behaviours, responses, and impacts upon communities. Whilst hugely important work on racism has come from the study of and with communities and individuals, the implication of Solomos' concerns are that the institutions, the perpetrators themselves slip out of focus.

I have no doubt that if Solomos were writing that article today he would list the Home Office as one of the institutions responsible for enacting racist violence. And so, as I described the invisible labour of those navigating themselves through and living within the aftermath of having been in the asylum system, I could not help but wonder whether I myself was doing exactly what Solomos was concerned about. Was I turning the lens away from the Home Office? I stand by the importance of the cultural analysis, especially that which involved documenting and bearing witness to the ongoing *emotional labour* identified in

chapter nine, a labour that I understand to be endured as well as enacted. However, I could not escape from the feeling that perhaps the Home Office and its Hostile Environment was disappearing off the page. In such a way, that it begins to normalise this labour into something fixed and unchangeable rather than presenting it as something created by structural inequality and racist practices. I did not embark upon a project examining the practices of the Home Office, however its constant presence in people's lives was apparent at every turn. I wanted to capture this explicitly in order to complete this thesis.

As I mined back over all the creative work the project members had engaged with and produced throughout the projects, as well as the more focused research sessions, it became apparent to me that individuals themselves had in fact already done this very thing. Once again, I found myself struck by the rich visual narratives that had emerged from the **Dixit** Cards, and recognised that the Home Office, or the asylum system had manifested as a ubiquitous presence. Also ubiquitous was the way in which it was portrayed: as a predator; as a monster; as an invisible puppet master; a tornado. The imagery that people chose exposed the violence that is inherent in the way in which the Home Office - the institution enacting that violence - conducts itself. I realised what had emerged was what Scott refers to a 'hidden transcript' - a response created by those being subordinated, 'that represents a critique of power behind the back of the dominant'(xi). In doing so the project members collectively positioned the research space - albeit temporarily - as 'a social space in which offstage dissent to the official transcript of power relations may be voiced' (xi).

As a coda to the thesis then I present a selection of images, and the narrative descriptions accompanying them. They are the images project members chose to depict the Home Office. I present them without analysis because I wish for the hidden transcripts to speak for themselves. In doing so I re-direct my gaze as a researcher toward the perpetrator. To insist, that whilst this research has been about very personal and emotional experiences at a very local level, what has also emerged is perhaps a way of finding new visual ways to depict the 'the processes that created the conditions' (Solomos, 1990) for such experiences.

"it's about erm

about how the

home office play with us

they do what they want

they do what they feel"

"the home office is like the big
dragon
and she is fighting with them
because they don't believe anything
that you are saying
like you are a liar
they say to you
so she is fighting about that
so that one
they give you papers
too many papers
and they say
find your way and nothing"

"you can see nice place but like prison
we were in Scotland
but we were in prison
we didn't have most of right
for many years
and not civil life
and just upset
depressed
before
you know
when you are in asylum system
you are just prison
you can't do anything"
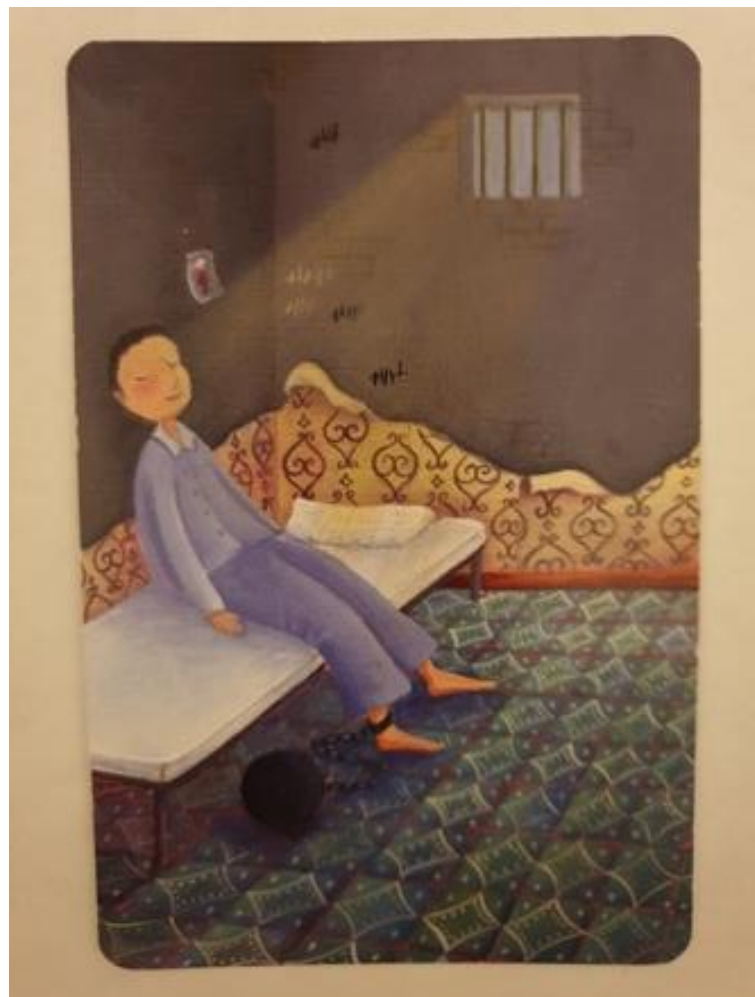
"This is the beginning of the

journey

the process

the door has been locked

behind you

and you're being chased"

"I am still horrified by the home office er
it's just
that's the home office
it's just horrifying me
I just want to grow
I just want to be here
I want to absorb myself in this
culture
in this country
luckily or unluckily I am here
I don't know
but er
it's just all the time
it is on my mind"

"the first card

is the image of me under

stress before I have been

granted"

"this is my hope in that time
I am screaming
shouting
for help for support
give me my status now"

"this is the fire that is in

my heart
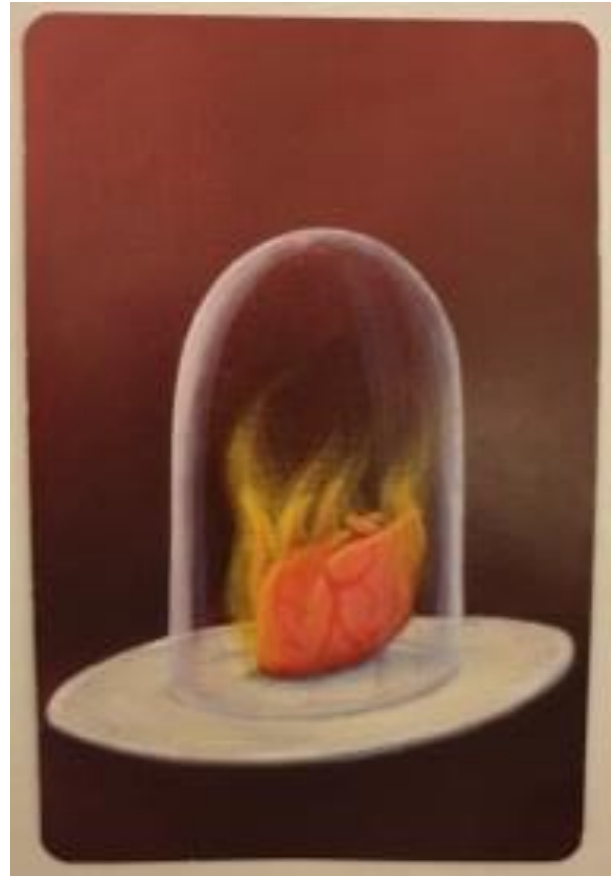
during the waiting
and the refuse
during all these stages of
asylum"

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VISUAL APPENDIX

See following pages...

VISUAL APPENDIX:
SHARE MY TABLE

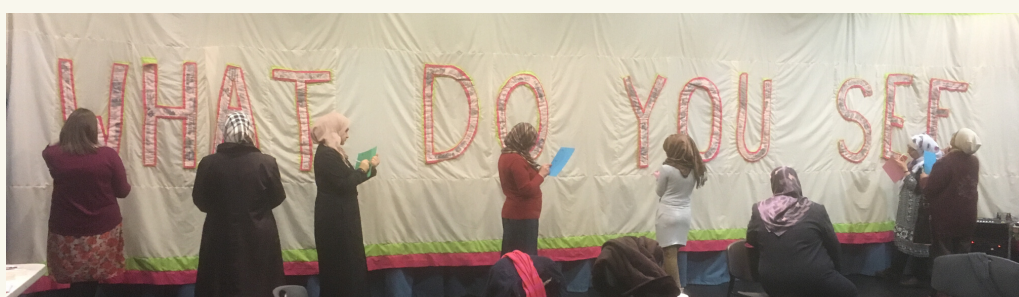To be viewed alongside doctoral thesis:

The Arts of Integration:

Scottish policies of refugee integration and the role of the creative and performing arts

CATRIN EVANS

Submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

March 2020

SHARE MY TABLE: THE PROCESS

TERM 1

- Portraits
- Print and Collage work around media representation
- Collective Mapping
- Conversations about the role of photography
- Exploring media perceptions of migration through tableux
- Introduction of recurring practice of documenting our work through 'I See...'
- Building cameras, taking photos and responding with creative writing
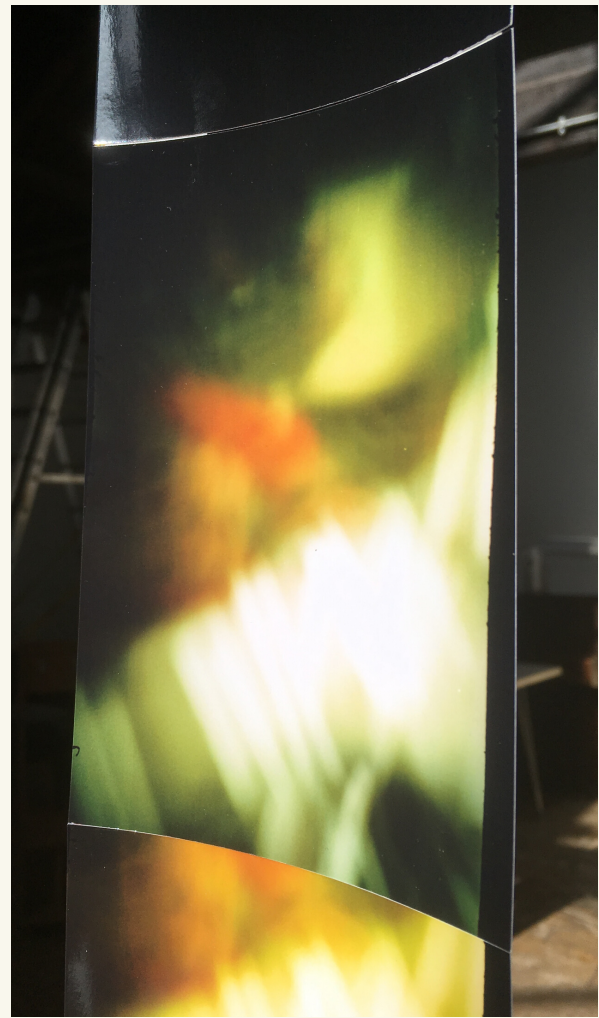
The story is...

حياة جميلة ...
... اليومية

pe of Life Despite Diffic

e usually handle Life with H

usually Feel more relaxed whe

t flowers & Roses.

Experience today / ending the session

enjoyment
nice
creative
exciting
light
crafty
lovely
astonig
experimental
lovey
relaxed
discovery

perfect
nice
fantastic
thankyou
thankyou
excellent
fantastic
astonishing.

to Share with family & future generations

I see danger.
I see an investigation
...fering and fear.
I see happiness and anger
...ope and confusion
I see too much bureaucracy
I see them stopping people
I see someone trying
I see a family
I have seen perseverance
I am seeing someone is praying.

Do you think Photographs tell the truth?

The Story is...
'A kind of life I will like to live. An ideal residencial area full of flowers, nature, freshness, Goodness, laughter, good People.
A Place to wake up in the morning, look out of the window and feel happy, fulfilled.
My ideal place for a wedding reception.
Above all, the story is a reminder of my child first birthday in a Park
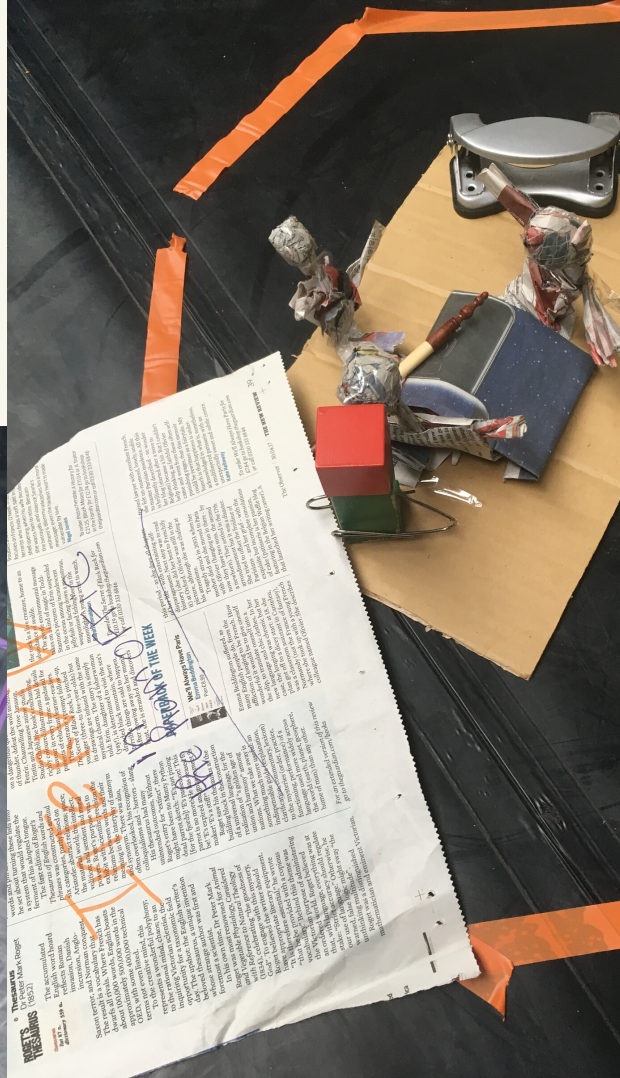
I LIKE
happy
UNFAIR
Hostile
So difficult
Dennistoun walk
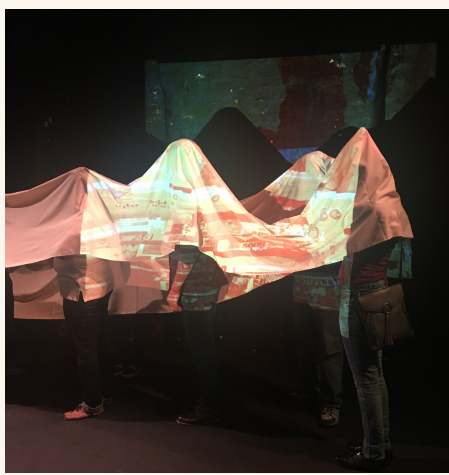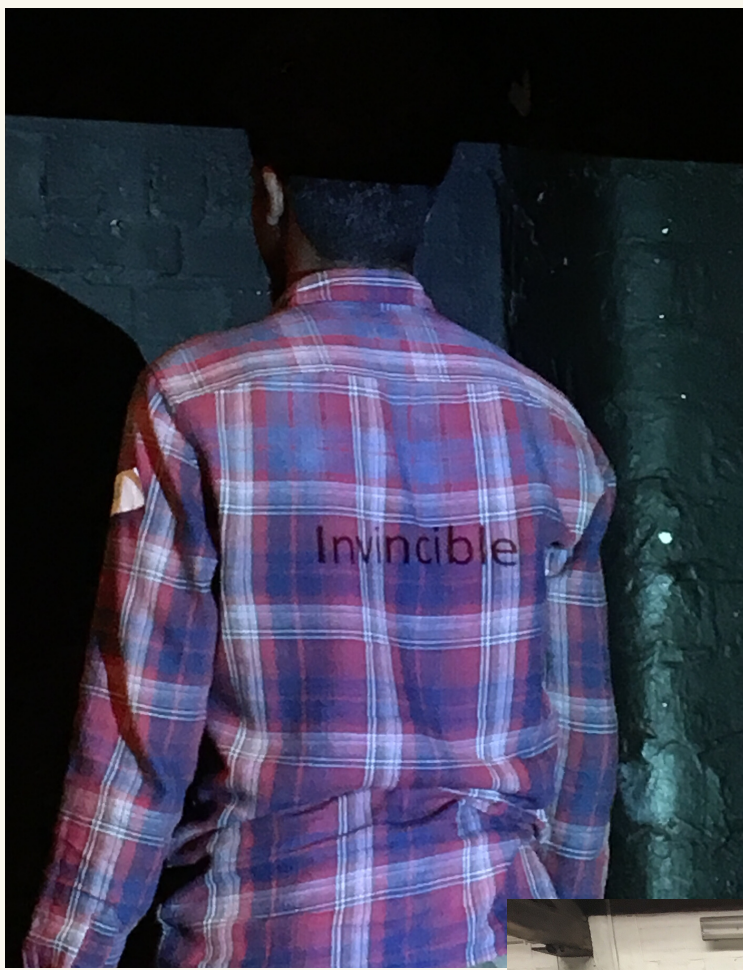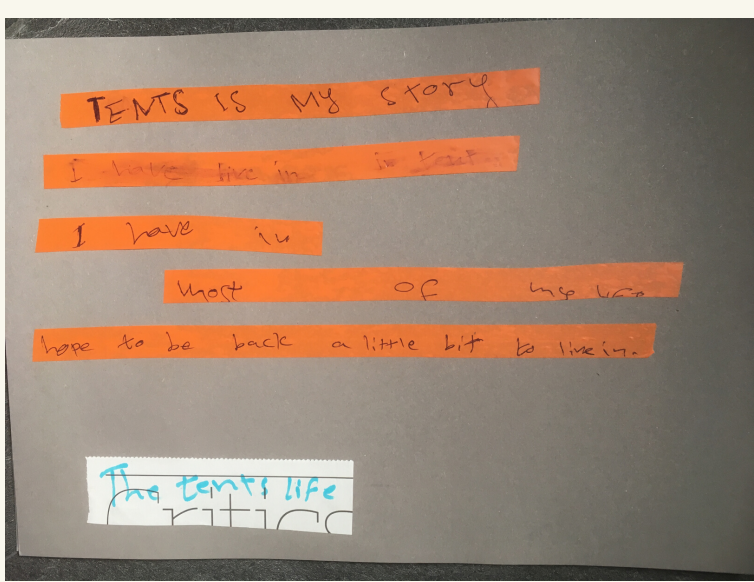Scottish Refugee Council

SHARE MY TABLE: THE PROCESS

TERM 2

- Personal newspaper sculptures responding to theme of migration
- Large-scale co-produced newspaper sculptures
- Project/group logo design
- Projection exploration
- Developing shadow walk vignette
- Creative writing

I'm happy!

It cheered
me up.

كانت النشوة كلشتا
حلو و جميل و ممتع
كانت مصعد جدا ؟
رشكل ثير ننشكر ؟

It looks like
Life UP and
Down.

كل شيء
Everything

So much interesting
and peaceful.
Jalal Karimi

AMAZING.

to defend her

INTERVIEW
THE OFFICE

SHARE
M!

TENTS IS MY STORY
I have live in in
I have in
most of my life
hope to be back a little bit to live in.

The tents life

SHARE MY TABLE: THE PROCESS

TERM3

- Re-visiting and developing work made over Term 1 & 2
- Building structure for our public performance
- Building final artworks
- Rehearsing vignettes
- Creating newspaper dance
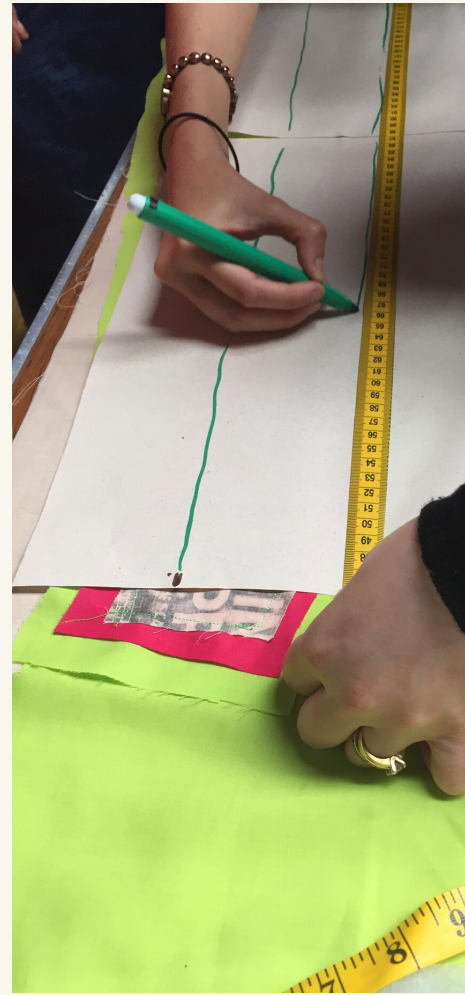
SHARE MY TABLE: THE PRODUCTION

I HEAR THE IMAGE MOVING: EXHIBITION AND PERFORMANCE

- Combining sculpture, live performance, photography and more, this event sought to diversify the voices that construct the image of migration.
- The event took place in multiple spaces within the Tramway, lasted about two hours, and was presented by the Share My Table project members to an audience of about 80 per performance.
- There were three main sections to the event – an audio and visual art installation, a theatrical performance and a sharing of food and conversation.
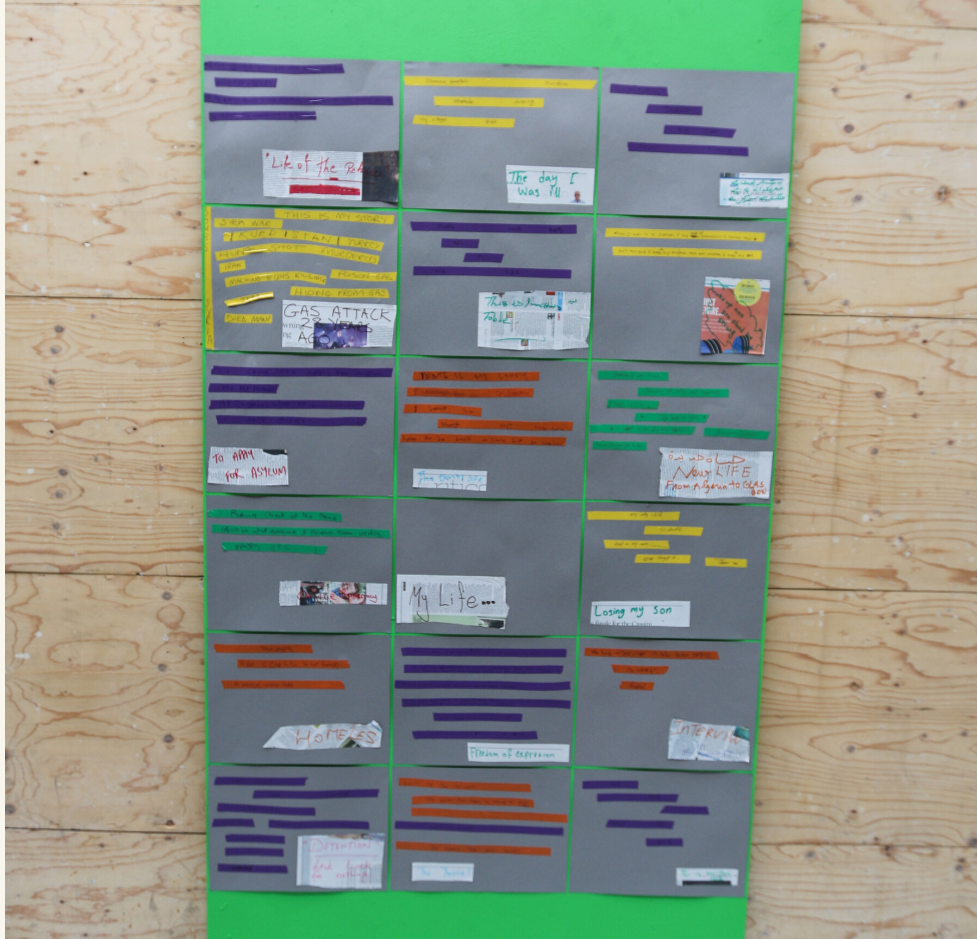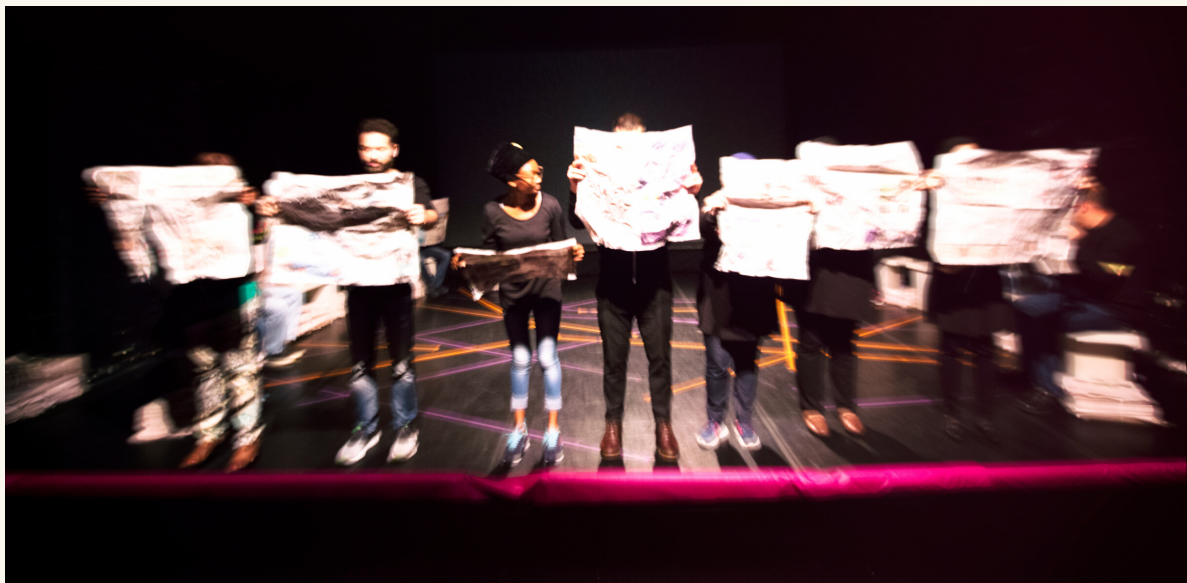
THE END

Where any images were not taken by the author (Catrin Evans), they were taken by the photographers listed below, indicated by colour code.

Tinofara: Green line
Elena-Mary Harris: Red line
Najma Abukar: Purple line