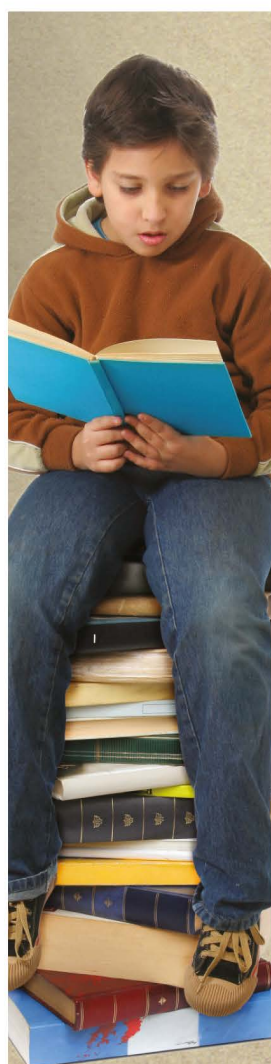


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT
STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES **B**



Agriculture and Rural Development



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Regional Development



Transport and Tourism



**Research for CULT
Committee –
Why cultural work with
refugees**

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

**Research for CULT Committee –
Why cultural work with refugees**

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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LINGUISTIC VERSIONS

Original: EN

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Manuscript completed in November 2017
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Print	ISBN 978-92-846-2037-1	doi:10.2861/878929	QA-04-17-900-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-846-2038-8	doi:10.2861/407895	QA-04-17-900-EN-N

This document is available on the internet at:
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/602004/IPOL_IDA\(2017\)602004_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/602004/IPOL_IDA(2017)602004_EN.pdf)

Please use the following reference to cite this in-depth analysis:

Phipps, A, 2017, Research for CULT Committee – Why cultural work with refugees, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels

Please use the following reference for in-text citations:

Phipps (2017)

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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

**Research for CULT Committee –
Why cultural work with refugees**

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Abstract

Cultural work with refugees has a long history. It is a contentious area. Instrumental approaches to cultural work with refugees raise significant issues. This briefing outlines the contentions, provides a theoretical basis for the work, gives leading examples of cultural work with refugees, including work that promotes intercultural understanding and work that promotes fear. It outlines key findings and recommendations, which have a substantial focus on ethical engagement, aesthetic importance and societal wellbeing.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This briefing provides useful, authoritative and timely information to Members of the CULT Committee on the effectiveness of cultural work with refugees to inform the CULT Committee's deliberation on EU support for cultural work with refugees.

In this document, cultural work with refugees is broadly defined as including all arts activities and creative/cultural expression that is done by or in collaboration with refugees. "Refugees" are understood broadly as those granted status but also those referred to in the popular imagination who may be awaiting decisions, or different migrant status from countries in turmoil, or with humanitarian protection visas. "Culture" has been taken to broadly indicate arts work as well as the production of culture, but not as 'national culture.' Iconic examples of historical records, narratives and artefacts, demonstrate how cultural work with refugees has been a task over millennia. Since the advent of writing, the historical and archaeological record represents artistic or symbolic depictions of those thrown on the mercy of others in war time, revealing much about the concerns of the age in which the interpretation is carried out.

The theoretical basis of this briefing lies in the arts and humanities, especially in creative and performing arts and in social and cultural anthropology, security studies and global mental health, as these are the disciplines where the majority of literature has been published.

Leading examples of cultural work with refugees are drawn from reputable international NGOs, artists, academic literature, as well as with known examples of community arts work with refugees. It is challenging to give a global overview of cultural work with refugees, given the thousands of cases to draw on. Criteria for identifying best practice are not readily available: nuanced differences exist between organisations and projects. Though cases may work with the same community doesn't mean they work in the same way.

The briefing identifies the base tenet of the RISE¹ manifesto for work with refugees and artists as an important ethical foundation for good practice: nothing about us without us. RISE are a refugee-led advocacy group in Australia, engaged in the development of just and ethical responses to cultural work with refugees. Public surveys of attitudinal change as a sole indicator of integration are potentially problematic, and their use in this briefing are heavily qualified. Improved well-being in target groups has been evidenced by evaluations of such creative arts activities, especially for those suffering effects of trauma².

The briefing asks the question as to what cultural work with refugees is to be effective for, and for whom? There is much evidence of effective use of cultural work with refugees, in the form of propaganda, which promotes xenophobia.

It is the recommendation of this briefing that cultural work with refugees prioritises the ethical and aesthetic aspects of any proposed activities for the promotion of effective intercultural and societal wellbeing.

¹ (RISE, 2017).

² (Wilson, 2004).

Key messages

1. Cultural policy to be drafted which works from the basis that “Nothing about us, without us, is for us.” i.e. no cultural work undertaken about refugees, which does not involve refugees throughout its inception, design, creation and production, has their wellbeing at heart and therefore cannot be part of fostering good intercultural relations or integration.
2. Consider referring to refugees as ‘new Europeans’ in some contexts to destigmatise terminology.
3. By making new creative artefacts and productions with new Europeans we build our own capacity to work with all marginalised groups, which already exist in our own societies.
4. The making of cultural work together creates a climate of care for society and has key therapeutic benefits for wellbeing and overcoming mental distress.

Read more on [migration in Europe](#).

1. INTRODUCTION - EFFECTIVENESS OF CULTURAL WORK WITH REFUGEES

KEY FINDINGS

- Cultural work with refugees has different functional purposes. Each purpose seeks transformation of individuals and society, especially social attitudes. The dominant and most effective current usage promotes xenophobia and segregation. Alternative cultural work aims to tackle xenophobia and promote intercultural dialogue and integration.
- Ethical issues are raised by all forms of cultural work with refugees.
- The Committee should consider adopting the policy on labelling from Associated Press in its commissioning and evaluations of cultural work with refugees: The use of the term 'illegal' should no longer be used to describe a person. 'Illegal' should describe only an action, such as living in or immigrating to a country illegally.

Cultural work with refugees in history and practice can be grouped into five areas. Each offers a rationale for cultural work with refugees:

1. Cultural and artistic representations of refugees across all forms of art work. These may promote fear and xenophobia or may aim to change negative perceptions and enable intercultural dialogue.
2. Presentation of work by refugees relating to their experiences as refugees.
3. Discussions of the effects of cultural work on the social rituals and events, which enable both the transformation and the cohesion of society.
4. Therapeutic, transformational task addressing issues of trauma and healing, resilience and well-being.
5. An artistic task for its own sake, which reflects and provides critical appraisal of dominant norms and may or may not focus on the common or stereotypical narratives of refugee experience.

These elements are common to cultural work with any group of human beings, but especially those who are marginalised. It is important to state from the outset that refugee experiences can coalesce into certain key narratives and visual clichés and that these may be traced throughout history. Such over-simplified devices are always partial and contested. They may be created outwith refugee experience by groups with their own particular interests and perspectives. Temporality is important in discerning why cultural work with refugees is largely undertaken by non-refugees in the first instance. It is only with time that refugees may gain access to the means and mainstream cultural forms, which allow their own histories, memories and experiences to be expressed and gain visibility.

In addition it is important to note that motivations underlying policies of cultural work with refugee also take several forms:

1. as communication to a wider society (propaganda and activism).
2. as intercultural education through experience of cultural work undertaken collaboratively.
3. advocacy – raising awareness of plight or politics relating to a desire for change vis a vis refugees.
4. aesthetic/ affective/symbolic – intervening to concentrate and pierce the dominant ways of seeing refugees in society.

Furthermore each of these forms and motivations for cultural work with refugees, as with any work with human subjects, have ethical implications raising questions of property and ownership, cultural appropriation, voyeurism, duties of the artist, and the value of artistic work in culture and society.

1.1. Cultural Work Terminology

The term 'cultural work' in English is ambivalent and can refer to culture as a cover term for the creative and performing arts. It also refers to culture as a way of describing the specific everyday patterns of life of particular groups of people. The former concept is aesthetic in orientation and the latter is anthropological, relating human behaviour. The term is used in both senses in this briefing document with a focus on examples of artistic activity undertaken with refugees, with the idea of the refugee, using refugee experience – contemporary and historical – and with artists who are themselves refugees. 'Work' is understood to refer to the human labour involved in the making of artefacts, ideas and concepts relating to refugees.

The term 'refugee' and 'cultural work with refugees' needs to be used with care and other legal terms and appellations need to be brought in to play, dependent on context. For example, the terms 'undocumented migrant' or 'sans papiers' may be preferred. Associated Press « [...] *no longer sanctions the term 'illegal immigrant' or the use of the term 'illegal' to describe a person. Instead, it tells users that 'illegal' should describe only an action, such as living in or immigrating to a country illegally.*³ » This has important implications for policy formulation in this area. In the Scottish context it is significant to note that the term 'New Scots' is used to refer to refugees, and other migrants in Scotland, in the work undertaken for the Scottish Government's Refugee Integration Strategy⁴.

³ (Press, 2013).

⁴ (*New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities 2014-2017*, 2014).

2. OVERVIEW OF HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF CULTURAL WORK WITH REFUGEES

KEY FINDINGS

- Cultural work with refugees is long established in ancient and religious historical records. The historical representations are not straightforward. Interpretations in the present show the concerns of the present day, not necessarily an accurate history.
- Dominant narratives, discourses and images can be traced back through the historical record, as representations with symbolic meaning. These are enduring and require critical attention and challenge.
- Cultural work with refugees can either confirm and reinforce the dominant depictions, or may work to disrupt these. Consideration needs to be given as to how dominant and enduring depictions from history, interact with and influence cultural policy formulations in the present.
- Oral history is a neglected repository for cultural work with refugees, both as history and practice. Inclusion of oral historical work with refugees, including forms of story-telling, song, dance, is vital for appropriate cultural policy development. It can prioritise forms in which refugees may be more experienced themselves, than host communities.

Since the advent of writing and depictions of war, the historical and archaeological records have represented refugees. Such material artefacts and artistic or symbolic depictions of refugees in wartime are subject to constant reinterpretation. As is the case with historiographical work, each new interpretation of an ancient drama or archaeological artefact reveals much about the concerns of the age in which the interpretation is carried out.

Some of the earliest written representations of refugees occur in the texts of Ancient Greece and Rome, and in the Biblical texts. The founding myth of Rome is one of a city founded on refuge and thus is one of the first records of cultural work with refugees. It finds a parallel in the ancient world with the legal declaration of Cities of Refuge in the Torah for the provision of asylum. The Pentateuch also provides one of the founding texts depicting the exile of the people of Israel and much of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament contains narratives of this experience of successive exiles under the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires.

The Biblical record is, then, an early form of narrative which performs cultural work with representations of refugees. It is an example of how and under stable material conditions the oral stories could be written down and given aesthetic form⁵. This occurred, according to Biblical scholarship⁴ not so much in the times of exile themselves but under the conditions of prosperity which allow for more than bare life⁶, and therefore also time for the writing down of the stories of exile as they had been passed down. Similarly the Biblical record contains examples of what have become founding stereotypes of exile, which repeat across written narratives and offer foundational sources for considerations of exile and the cultural work in exile and of exile by refugees. These epic narratives of war, conflict and the plight of those suffering draw on texts written within contexts of religious practice. Furthermore one interpretation of the founding of Islam is similar to that of the people of

⁵ (Brueggemann, 1997).

⁶ (Agamben, 1995).

Israel in the Biblical narrative, as that of a refugee movement. Similar material conditions are in play in the contemporary situation, with refugees coming to represent their own experiences only once they reach a place of material safety and ease. **Contemporary representations which come to prominence and form the contemporary historical record are undertaken on behalf of refugees, and by powerful actors and organisations, not normally by refugees themselves.** As such refugee agency is severely diminished in cultural work in the mainstream.

In his work on images of refugees White⁷ critically appraises the way in which cultural work with refugees is undertaken in visual media. The ubiquity of the recurrent themes, White argues, means that many of the images could be anywhere in the world and they have been perpetuated for decades⁸. The images used across news media, in NGO communications and in academic publications constantly recycle these images, uncritically. It is in cultural work with refugees, which is undertaken by contemporary, critical photographers in particular that these dominant and stereotypical depictions are challenged and ruptured⁹. For example, dominant presentations include long lines of ragged queues of people at borders or in holding pens; images of tents; images of military or police or aid agency logos; use of dehumanising language e.g. hoards, swarms, floods, swamping.

The use of archaeology and ancient history to bring a focus on cultural work with refugees since the 'reception crisis' and public attention of 2015 is noteworthy. It demonstrates the way critical re-framings of dominant narratives relating to cultural work with refugees have developed. Research currently in press attempts to re-frame the victim-humanitarian stereotype of the refugee and to suggest that cultural work with refugees may also involve and include the resistance and agency of the refugee.¹⁰

The written or archival record is not the only repository for history of cultural work with refugees. It is important to note the significance of oral history and indigenous historical knowledge as a repository for cultural work with refugees, for the histories of displacement, enslavement and exile which are found in song, dance, performing arts story-telling worldwide.

⁷ (White, 2015).

⁸ (Szörényi, 2006; Wright, 2002).

⁹ (Isayev, 2018; Myers, 2016; Nedeljkovic, 2012-2016; Sontag, 2004).

3. THEORETICAL BASIS: DISCIPLINES CONCERNED WITH CULTURAL WORK WITH REFUGEES

KEY FINDINGS

- Evidence of cultural work with refugees is found predominantly in the arts, humanities and social sciences literature.
- The most effective forms of cultural work with refugees to promote xenophobia or 'securitization' use stereotypes and propaganda uncritically. 'Securitization' refers to the way certain subjects are transformed into "security" concerns. An issue has been transformed into an existential problem, which can be mitigated with heightened vigilance and security¹⁰.
- There are strong critiques of stereotypical, expert-led, top down and neo-colonial approaches to cultural work with refugees, especially in work, which is aiming functionally at integration and intercultural dialogue.
- Critical theoretical approaches predominate, with ethical, aesthetic and symbolic cultural work, made in participatory and refugee-led projects, analysed as most ethically effective and enhancing of societal wellbeing.

Cultural work with refugees crosses all disciplines. Literature in the field is largely located in the arts and humanities, and in the social sciences. This briefing document reflects the arts and humanities approach to cultural work with refugees.

The briefing uses phenomenological, anthropological and critical theoretical approaches and also takes a practice-led approach. Where appropriate it draws methodologically on participant observation of creative and performing arts practice together with the critical review and analysis of creative and performing arts related to cultural work with refugees. It also draws on ethnographies of community development and arts education together with literatures in areas of global mental health and art therapy, heritage studies and archaeology.

It takes a critical position vis-à-vis cultural work with refugees based on the academic literature across the fields outlined in the paragraph above. It is critical of securitized approaches to cultural work with refugees and proposes an ethical, aesthetic and symbolic approach as most effective for cultural work with refugees where the goal is greater societal wellbeing for all, within an intercultural framework.

This briefing follows the theoretical approach encapsulated in the proverb: 'Nothing about us without us is for us'¹¹. This phrase is used by RISE, the Australian based Refugee-led advocacy organisation, in their ethical and interventionist approach to cultural work with refugees. This section of the briefing summarises their manifesto and methodologies. RISE consciously seek to disrupt the dominant discourse and narrative presenting refugees, asylum seekers, and ex-detainees as passive victims, as vulnerable recipients, as dependent on charity alone and without agency. Working with members (not clients) they generate positive social change, redress social inequalities, and foster methods which allow refugee and asylum seeker communities to actively participate in wider society, including influencing government and non-governments policies that directly impact on their lives and their new communities.

¹⁰ (Buzan, 1998).

¹¹ The term was used in Eastern Europe and South Africa for developing political traditions.

RISE set out 10 points for artists not of the refugee community to consider, prior to embarking on cultural work with refugees. RISE state that: "Art is not neutral". They acknowledge that the refugee community has been heavily politicised. Any art work done with/by that community is therefore inherently political, and any policy or action will consequently also be political.¹²

These points are equally valid for anyone wishing to engage with the refugee community in any capacity, other than direct humanitarian emergency aid, and even here these are important guiding principles. The statements are purposefully challenging and discomfoting, calling on everyone to examine their own motivations, intentions, bias and privilege. They work in traditions of cultural work, which have roots in, for instance, Brechtian¹³ performance and interventionist arts forms as well as participatory protocols. RISE present refugee communities as made up of individuals with their own intentions and motivations, experiences, knowledge and skills: they are not a homogenous group to be experimented with, even if artistic work is of 'good intention'. Participation, RISE argue, is not always progressive or empowering, it can just as easily be limiting, tokenistic and condescending, or detrimental to good community intercultural relations. Demands that a community share stories and experiences may be easily disempowering if artists or practitioners impose frameworks for participation, where power dynamics are reinforced (e.g. informant vs expert, enunciated vs enunciator).

Following the RISE guidance and literature in the field, it is clear that engagement requires long term grass-roots work, the building of trust and relationships, solidarity and commitment: "safe spaces" in which cultural work can be undertaken are not simply "safe" because artists or experts or academics declare them to be so. "Safe" spaces need to be fostered jointly, and carefully maintained for all involved.

For negative, xenophobic cultural work to be disrupted, RISE argue that a degree of mutual discomfort will be required to enable new forms to emerge which are beneficial to all. The kinds of approaches they suggest are also crucial to cultural work with any marginalised or impoverished group. An example of their use of aesthetic discomfort and direct intervention may be seen in their statement here; "We are not your next interesting arts project. Our community are not sitting waiting for our struggle to be acknowledged by your individual consciousness nor highlighted through your art practice." This punctures the well-meaning or charitable approaches, or the bandwagon interest in undertaking cultural work with refugees, which has followed on from the reception crisis and mainstream recycling of images of refugees as victims alone.

¹² (RISE, 2017).

¹³ (Benjamin, 1966, 1998).

4. EVIDENCE OF LEADING CASES

KEY FINDINGS

- Leading examples fall into a range of categories.
- It is important to consider how leading cases have come to prominence and which interests they may serve.
- The RISE Model of refugee-led guidance for cultural work with refugees provides a leading example of refugee-led action to promote ethical, safe and participatory work. Nothing about us without us is for us.

There are thousands of examples worldwide of cultural work with refugees. Cultural work exists at all levels of society, but is predominantly voluntary, amateur and takes place in towns, in iconic global cities, festivals and events, civic museums and art galleries and in community venues. It is beyond the scope of this review either to provide a comprehensive overview of the work beyond the level of categorisation or to give a meaningful rationale for the selection of leading cases. The European Commission has provided a report including leading examples of how culture and the arts can promote intercultural dialogue in migrant and refugee contexts.¹⁴ The European Expert Network on Culture and Audiovisual also provided a report on *The Role of Culture and Arts in the Integration of Refugees and Migrants*¹⁵. It also includes leading cases.

Leading examples presented in Table 1 should be taken as representative of *types* of cultural work with refugees which happen to have received a profile through research, media or cultural attention. Much work does not reach scholarly attention or even media attention but subsists at community level. The work that does receive high profile coverage and is the subject of research is undertaken largely by leading artists who are often not of refugee background, or is collaborative work with refugee artists. This does not mean the work is not highly significant or effective, simply that the field of research into cultural work with refugees is still in its infancy and that it also has received very little funding to date. Whilst there has been representation of refugee experience since World War II across Europe, North and South America and in Australia and New Zealand, there has been a significant increase in a focus on cultural work with refugees since the beginning of the reception crisis of 2015.

Leading examples of cultural work with refugees in literature and policy making may be categorised as follows:

Table 1: Types of cultural work with refugees

Types of cultural work with refugees and Examples
<p>Work by leading artists about refugees:- Ai Wei Wei: uses refugee artefacts from shipwrecks in Greece during 2016 to create art installations highlighting the plight of arrivals in Europe. Centre for Political Beauty: Political Performance Art focused on refugees and societal interventions</p>
<p>Work by leading artists made collaboratively with refugees <i>New European Song Book</i>, Edinburgh International Festival. Leading artists compose music with refugees and migrants.</p>

¹⁴ (Directorate-General for Education, 2017).

¹⁵ (McGregor, 2016).

Work by leading artists made with verbatim//documentary or artefacts produced and recorded from refugees and refugee experiences, especially journeys of flight.

What they took with them <http://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/> is a filmed example of reader's theatre using celebrities and featured for World Refugee Day 2017, using drama to raise awareness and engage in advocacy under the #withrefugees.

Asylum Monologues: Verbatim theatre by Ice and Fire, using testimony from detention Centres in U.K., performed by professional actors.

Lampadusa Cross by Francesco Tuccio Sculpture created from wood from boat wrecked of Lampadusa on 11th October 2013. 311 Eritrean and Somali refugees drowned. Final acquisition of Neil Macgregor as Director of British Museum, 2015.

Work by refugee artists

Asylum Archive by Vukasin Nedeljkovic critical contemporary photography by refugee photographer from Direct Provision in Ireland.

Queen's of Syria Greek Tragedy told by women refugee artists from Za'tari Refugee Camp.

Work by communities of refugees (numerous examples worldwide)

Share my Table: Live performance and visual art supported by Scottish Refugee Council

Work by Host Communities

Images of Afghan Refugees in New Zealand, Murdoch Stephens.

The Glasgow Girls – Musical by National Theatre of Scotland, Cora Bisset examining advocacy, youth and detention/deportation

Work made collaboratively between refugees and hosts

Nothing is Impossible under the sun by Alice Myers. Contemporary photography of Calais Camp.

Work made by groups of displaced peoples about or with other displaced peoples

Refugee Tales leading writers engage in an annual pilgrimage, modelled on *The Canterbury Tales* to raise awareness of refugees in detention.

Work commissioned by researchers to present research with refugees

Broken World, Broken Word by Noyam Institute for African Dance, Dodowa, Ghana

Work commissioned by leading arts bodies, festivals, museums

Christus ist im Flüchtlingsboot: Cologne Cathedral, installation

Work commissioned by Non Governmental Organisations

Look Beyond Borders: Arts as empathy and affective device for intercultural encounters.

7 examples selected by UNHCR focus on artistic and cultural work with refugees a) as transformational b) as empowering c) as creating a vehicle for artistic expression d) as raising awareness through international exhibitions e) as a tool for advocacy.

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/7-art-initiatives-that-are-transforming-the-lives-of-refugees/>

These leading cases do not represent cultural work which is attempting to increase xenophobia or to close borders or prevent safe passage. In refugee support organisations cultural work aims to promote a culture of peace and tolerance and to build a movement of solidarity and welcome of refugees. It focuses on raising funds and supporters.

This briefing commends the RISE refugee-led and advocacy statement of ethical principles for cultural work from Australia. This offers an ethical, critical and participatory approach to refugee-led cultural work. It focuses on meaningful, collective social action, and of an ethical and aesthetic to be the primary basis and intention of cultural work with refugees.

5. EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CULTURAL WORK WITH REFUGEES

KEY FINDINGS

- Cultural work which perpetuates negative stereotypes using refugees is effective in promoting xenophobia.
- Cultural work with refugees should be able to reflect the spectrum of human conditions and should not additionally be required to serve an agenda of resilience or empowerment, or commodification.
- The outcomes of cultural work should be ethical, joyful, pleasurable and/ or provide sites for memorial, collective reflection and social healing.

Evidencing the transformational effects of artistic work in general is a difficult task and not least when quantitative methodologies are used.¹⁶ Audience, viewer, reader, participant numbers are all initial markers in some context for engagement with cultural work with or by or about refugees.

Arguably the most powerful use of cultural work with refugees at present in Europe is *framed by* right wing propaganda which securitises and creates a climate of fear, largely in the mainstream media and in the rising far right anti-immigration, anti-EU political movements. Here cultural work mobilises images of refugees from dominant tropes to create a climate of fear of the other. This results in a counter balancing of this discourse of threat with a need to present cultural work with refugees as always transformational, resilient and empowering. Such a discourse is often in direct conflict with the ways in which cultural work may promote collective and individual recovery from trauma, through the ways cultural work promotes wellbeing.

The impact of cultural work with refugees can be evaluated in social scientific surveys and opinion polls. The impact of cultural work with refugees can be demonstrated in changing attitudes. In this respect, at present cultural work with refugees which promotes discrimination and intolerance appears to be effective in creating a climate of fear and mitigating against recovery and integration. If a culture of diversity, tolerance and integration is to be promoted in Europe, serious investment of resource and careful programming will be required to mitigate the present trends towards 'fear of the foreigner', as reported in The European Social Survey.¹⁷ Amnesty International's Refugees Welcome Survey¹⁸ (International, 2016) points to the impact of cultural policies of promoting integration and cultural work with refugees aimed at fostering cohesion and connection. These policies have promoted a culture of welcome and integration, including the fostering of relationships at community level between new Europeans and existing hosts. Such differing responses depend on the questions asked and the constituency surveyed.

Cultural work is undertaken for the purposes of advocacy and awareness raising of the plight and suffering of refugees. Much of this work has been evaluated as providing "a victimhood-hope dialectic"¹⁹ in the majority of "theatricalized refugee narratives". Cox argues that the prevailing image of refugees presented to audiences (often white middle class theatre-going audiences) are ones of victims, desperate to escape and yet determined to survive. This work is often received by critics as performing "an uplifting trajectory"

¹⁶ (T. G. Cox, Abigail, 2015).

¹⁷ (Heath, 2016).

¹⁸ (International, 2016).

¹⁹ (E. Cox, 2015).

which in turn allows the horror of these realities to be mediated through individuals. Cox criticises this hope of becoming 'an emotional commodity', as disempowering. Marschall examines the work of the *Centre for Political Beauty* and its political interventions in creating news and shock about refugee situations.²⁰ The Centre for Political Beauty uses shock to demonstrate the consequences of political apathy, for example: "To celebrate the big EU-Turkey deal, we built an arena with four Libyan tigers in the middle of Berlin. We searched for refugees who were willing to be eaten for the successful defense policy of the federal government and for the transport ban for refugees (§ 63 Abs. 3 AufenthG) - a hyperreal Rome on the floor of the strong European Union."

Thompson evaluates performance and participatory arts for an orientation that is 'turned towards beauty, feels the face of the other and is drawn to a radical redistribution of the sensory organisation of our world.' Whilst a difficult formulation in the context of a policy briefing, this is a crucial dimension to considering cultural work with refugees and what this might be for? The elements of propaganda, communication, advocacy, engagement, empowerment, even education are, in Thompson's evaluation, secondary to the role of renewed aesthetics in engaging all the senses and in enabling beauty to be made, together, between new arrivals and established communities.

²⁰ (Marschall, 2017) (Beauty, 2017).

6. KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Key messages

1. Cultural policy to be drafted which works from the basis that “Nothing about us, without us, is for us.” i.e. no cultural work undertaken about refugees, which does not involve refugees throughout its inception, design, creation and production, has their wellbeing at heart and therefore cannot be part of fostering good intercultural relations or integration.
2. Consider referring to refugees as ‘new Europeans’ in some contexts to destigmatise terminology.
3. By making new creative artefacts and productions with new Europeans we build our own capacity to work with all marginalised groups, which already exist in our own societies.
4. The making of cultural work together creates a climate of care for society and has key therapeutic benefits for wellbeing and overcoming mental distress.

Cultural Work with Refugees as Intentional, Inclusive and Innovative Intervention

- Cultural work with refugees needs to be intentional about refugee leadership and inclusion.
- Cultural work with refugees needs to be framed ethically, critically and joyfully with an eye to the wellbeing and inclusion of all.
- Cultural work with refugees needs to operate aesthetically without undue requirements for it to produce for example, ‘empowerment’, ‘transformation’, ‘resilience’, ‘countering of xenophobia’. Cultural work with refugees with subsidiary goals fails the primary societal and human needs for creativity, culture and the arts. It also fails the ethical tests for such work.
- Good cultural work with refugees is cultural work for all: it operates at the level of the human being as an agent of the creation, collectively and individually, of new societies for habitation. The aesthetic, affective and symbolic dimensions of this work are primary.
- The practice of doing participatory cultural work is strengthening of capacities generally. It is important to ensure all feel spaces of participation are safe and inclusive.
- All cultural work will have varied interpretations and be a site of contesting views. Cultural work does not produce consensus. It intervenes.

Cultural Work with Refugees as Critical, Reflective and Conflict Transformational

- At the level of language constant critical attention prevents the shifts towards dehumanisation and stereotyping. With this there is a proven tendency in conflicts to move towards scapegoating or even the ethnic cleansing of whole populations.
- At a social level cultural work with refugees intervenes in several ways in social processes. – it allows for common experiences to build capacities of care; it gives voice to experiences which are not readily understood in contexts of little conflict, and through direct experience; it offers a counter balance to the stereotypical tropes in much mainstream media and mainstream entertainment.
- It is vital to determine what and whom cultural work with refugees is for if it is to be used as a tool for advocacy or awareness raising or for integration.

- A briefing should be commissioned from refugee-arts groups on how they wish to see cultural work with refugees constructed.
- Non-refugee stakeholders should conduct their own ethical audit and statement of intent, and work with this alongside refugee-led statements.

Cultural Work with Refugees as Constituting New European Societies and Intercultural Wellbeing.

- In therapeutic terms the time spent on making something coherent and public with experiences, in supported, carefully supervised environments helps with the understanding, and overcoming of traumatic experiences.
- Social drama allows for the gathering of people in social and civic places for the reverential actions of contemplation and pause, which are necessary for social change and for the acceptance of difficult change. These offer space for difficult feelings and emotions, and for contemplation during change.
- Cultural work, when done well, (as refugee-led, inclusive, ethical, aesthetic and participatory) can be joyful, celebratory, can allow collective and individual grieving, and builds resilience.
- Cultural Work with refugees allows for there to be site of memorial and lamentation.

Resourcing, Funding, Design and Commissioning of Cultural Work with Refugees

- The RISE model is a leading example and should be referred to in formulating future commissioning and considerations for funding cultural work with refugee.
- Cultural work at community level which is aesthetic, inclusive and ethical looks and is experienced in similar ways everywhere in the world. The democratisation of such work is necessary. The committee should consider what else could be done to strengthen this form of engagement. This briefing recommends the use of funds for these purposes over and above large showcase events.
- Schemes need to be extended for existing refugee artists and professionals to use and practice their cultural and artistic skills, from arrival onwards.
- Schemes which reward quality alone are of limited benefit except to elite artists.
- Enabling the support of community-led projects with an ethical, critical and joyful basis in the arts, where cultural work for the sake of cultural work and societal wellbeing should be the basis for future funding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges the contributions and research assistance of Lauren Roberts; Gameli Tordzro; Dr Ben White; Anika Marschall; Catrin Evans, University of Glasgow, Amal Azzudin, Mental Health Foundation, Scotland and Scottish Refugee Council Refugee Ambassador

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ANNEX

Prime sources of critical philosophical treatment of cultural work with refugees in the contemporary literature draw predominantly on the work of Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 1943); Giorgio Agamben (Agamben, 1995); Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 2005) and Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 2007). Decolonial theorists such as Linda Smith (Tuhivai Smith, 2012), Achille Mbembé (Mbembé, 2000) are highly critical of 'western work' which seeks to denigrate, appropriate and marginalise the experiences of the global south, indigenous peoples and refugees. These scholars point critically to the use of cultural work with refugees for security purposes or ethnic purity as shallow and of considerable danger in promoting racial and ethnic prejudice. Calls for the inclusion of refugee resistance, agency participatory arts and representation underscore this decolonial critique of cultural work with refugees. This literature is relevant for cultural work and careful cultural policy formulation with refugees, which aims at the promotion of integration, diversity and tolerance. (Balfour, 2013; Jeffers, 2008, 2011; O'Neill, 2008)

The key theoretical work mobilised in cultural work with refugees, which aims at securitization relates to philosophical arguments for ethnic purity and the clash of civilisations. The work of Roger Scruton (Scruton, 2008) and Samuel Huntington (Huntington, 1993), together with more recent work by Alexander Betts and Paul Collier (Betts, 2017) have been particularly influential on U.S. and U.K. policy making and underlie arguments of 'European Exceptionalism' and 'the west versus the rest'.

For practice-led work using arts as the basis for research and inquiry, particularly for the evaluation of the effectiveness of performing arts, the work *Performance Affects* by James Thompson (Thompson, 2009) provides a theoretical basis. His work is based on examples of practice in contexts of war and disaster and argues that it is a mistake to evaluate such work based on its effectiveness. His focus is on the symbolic, ethical and aesthetic renewal which is offered by the arts. This is vital for understanding the positioning of this briefing, which whilst considering the functional ends of cultural work with refugees, in propaganda, advocacy, activism, as communication and as education, works from a theoretical position which sees aesthetic and cultural work as crucial to individual and social wellbeing. This focus on practice is identifiable in all cultural work with refugees aiming at the transformation of conflicts and the wellbeing of all.

Further theoretical support for this comes from anthropologist Victor Turner (Turner, 1982a, 1982b) who considers performance in public spaces and in communities, the making of new forms of performance, art, ceremony, festival and rituals as forms of social drama of vital importance to collective and educational social rituals of gathering, remembering, reflecting and witnessing to the safety and structuring of societies.

The philosopher Elaine Scarry (Scarry, 2001) in her work, 'On Beauty and Being Just' sees the creation of beauty as carefully connected to the work of the creation of a just society, taking examples from across history and thought. "People seem to wish there to be beauty even when their own self-interest is not served by it; or perhaps more accurately, people seem to intuit that their own self-interest is served by distant peoples' having the benefit of beauty."

Language represents a fluid and vital site of cultural work with refugees. Hamilakis (Hamilakis, 2017) makes an important distinction between the representation of undocumented migration, which has been around since the advent of formal travel documents, after World War I, and the border-crossing which preceded the requirements of documentation and immigration bureaucracies. Hamilakis delineates the ways in which the symbolic uses of terms such as 'refugee' perform 'cultural work' for many contested areas, from denoting negative traits with far-right or xenophobic groups to their use for advocacy and activism in solidarity movements such as 'Refugees Welcome' which has emerged at grassroots level worldwide in recent years

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PHOTO CREDIT: iStock International Inc., Photodisk, Phovoir



ISBN 978-92-846-2037-1 (paper)

ISBN 978-92-846-2038-8 (pdf)

doi:10.2861/878929 (paper)

doi:10.2861/407895 (pdf)