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How does arts practice engage with narratives of migration from refugees? Lessons from ‘utopia’

ABSTRACT

In this article we draw on data from a co-produced transdisciplinary arts and language practice and research project. In this project, researchers, artists and creative practitioners worked with refugees and people seeking asylum. Together we developed and led arts-based workshops, which aimed to explore what it means to be ‘welcome’, how we ‘welcome’ and how we want to be ‘welcomed’. As researchers we approached the project from different disciplinary spaces: Sam from applied theatre and Jessica from sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography. Through analysis of our co-produced artistic outputs, through ethnographic writing and through our reflections on the processes of collaborating, we consider how arts practices engage with narratives of migration in refugee communities. We take three elements of the project: visual arts products in the form of silk paintings, community voices in the form of vignettes and media documentation in the form of a project film. We suggest how these examples embody the processes and the community developed around the project and the different ways of working across sectors with displaced communities to engage with and enable spaces for voices to be made audible.

KEYWORDS

refugee studies
forced migration
co-production
methodology
visual arts
film
community arts
linguistics

1. <https://yarncommunity.org/stories/321>
2. <https://soundcloud.com/user-575134327/sets/driftwood>
3. Funded by the AHRC under its Translating Cultures theme.

We use 'refugee' throughout this article to refer to people who have been granted asylum, people who are in the process of granting asylum, and people whose asylum claims have been rejected. We choose not to use the phrase 'asylum seekers' due to its often negative connotations in the British press.

INTRODUCTION

This article will first outline the project and its conceptualization as a co-produced endeavour. It will then consider the broad context of arts and refugees in the United Kingdom, looking towards the interventions arts organizations can make in meeting the social needs created by cultural narratives of hostility and exclusionary policy. It will then use three points of analysis from the project to analyse how arts practices engage with narratives of migration from refugees and people seeking asylum. Following this, we draw conclusions and open up opportunities for further questions.

BACKGROUND: A 'UTOPIAN' WELCOME?

This research came out of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded project for the 2016 Connected Communities Festival, 'Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia', which was developed for The Utopias Festival at Somerset House in June of that year. The festival marked 500 years of Thomas More's *Utopia* ([1516] 2016) with participants invited to explore different questions around that central theme through collaborative and co-produced projects. Our project asked what 'welcome' might mean in a utopia. Taking our starting point of 'utopia' as deriving from the Greek 'ou topos', meaning 'no place' or 'no where', we combined language research methodologies, including linguistic ethnography (Copland and Creese 2015; Blommaert and Jie 2010; Rampton et al. 2014) with visual arts and performance.

Researchers from the University of Leeds (UoL) worked in partnership with Wakefield-based arts organization, Faceless Arts (FA), local charities and third sector organizations (including Refugee Education Training Advice Service, Leeds (RETAS) and with undergraduate and postgraduate students. The process led to a series of diverse artistic and research outputs including a project film,¹ silk paintings, a book documenting the process of the work and the outputs, a promenade-based street performance and a musical composition by Maria Jardardottir.² This project built on the 'Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities (TLANG)' project.³ The TLANG project aims to develop 'new understandings of multilingual interaction in cities in the UK' through investigating how people communicate across languages and cultures across sites and in formal and non-formal contexts.

'Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia' brought together individuals and communities from and with a broad variety of disciplines, practices, identities, histories and visions for the work through a process of co-production. Keri Facer and Bryony Enright argue that co-production is a 'discourse' in itself, and suggest it is often used as a 'catch-all' for collaborative research (2016: 87). Co-production derives from the social sciences and policy (Ostrum 1996 in Facer and Enright 2016) and these authors suggest that it is necessary for 'social goods' to be produced with the public, through working collaboratively and across sectors. Co-production is used here to frame the knowledging process within the 'Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia' project, in the spectrum of projects funded under this theme and the Connected Communities-funded research more

generally (cf. Facer and Enright 2016). In a co-produced project of this kind, the outputs can be considered both as creative and artistic products and as research findings, or data. Co-production interrupts these binaries between creative product and data. It also attempts to blur the boundaries between researcher, creative practitioner and participant, as all work together with a shared aim. The shared aim within this project was to produce a series of artistic or creative products.

Helen Graham (2016) describes two broad variants of the term 'co-production', first as focusing on developing cross-sector collaboration and second as emerging from Bruno Latour's scholarship in Science and Technology Studies (1993). For Graham, both interpretations 'are concerned with opening up political potentials by indicating a variety of "cos", a plurality of entities interacting in *variable* ways and with variable, and always political, effects' (2016: 2, original emphasis). As such, within this project, the pluralities of entities and interactions led to the roles of the individuals involved changing and shifting across the course of working together. As researchers and practitioners our roles merged and crossed over. The researchers became practitioners, and the practitioners became researchers. The spaces we occupied and the positions we took evolved and became redefined, along with our conception of the project. It is through and within this merging and evolution of roles and experiences that we consider the ways in which arts practice can engage with refugee narratives of migration. We argue here that building spaces for the blurring of these disciplinary and practice boundaries and borders enables voices to be made more audible.

REFUGEE INTEGRATION

The background for this project is within the broader context of refugee integration. The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (2016: 34), after their five-year monitoring cycle of the United Kingdom, identified that there is no national policy for the integration of non-nationals in the United Kingdom. In England and Northern Ireland, there is no integration strategy for refugees. The absence of a formal strategy is arguably detrimental to the integration and well-being of refugees and people seeking asylum. The report explains that refugees 'often live in situations of poverty and social exclusion' (2016: 35). The closing of The Refugee Integration and Employment Service in 2011, alongside classes in English for speakers of other languages have 'hindered integration processes' (2016: 35). The period during which individuals move from asylum-seeker status to refugee status is one that regularly leaves people in situations of destitution and often homelessness. After four weeks – 28 days – of notification of refugee status, asylum support is removed, and 'refugees have to obtain housing and a means to support themselves through employment or welfare benefits' (2016: 35). In this short time refugees find difficulty obtaining enough money to make a deposit on rented accommodation and so resort to staying with friends, in hostels or sleeping on the streets. Refugees also find that it takes longer than 28 days to receive a National Insurance number which would allow them to work. The report notes findings from the British Red Cross (2014) that it takes longer than this to move onto mainstream benefits, leaving individuals and families at risk of poverty and destitution. This section of the report concludes that 'greater efforts need to be made to assist newly arrived refugees' (ECRI 2016: 35). It recommends that 'a refugee integration strategy is developed in England and Northern Ireland to assist newly arrived refugees, in particular as concerns housing, employment, access to welfare and learning English, and that refugee integration is systematically evaluated' (ECRI 2016: 35).

The report details social needs that have historically been met somehow by arts organizations in the United Kingdom, as outlined in the 2008 report *Arts and Refugees* (Kidd et al. 2008), with continually emerging sites of practice responding to increased need following the refugee crisis in Europe (Bardsley 2015; Brown 2016; Featherstone 2015). The lack of a national infrastructure can make it more difficult for arts organizations to make effective links with participant groups. However, it is advised that ‘a partnership approach ensures that planning is considered from multiple perspectives, acknowledging the needs of refugees as well as how arts practice can best engage people and effect change in their lives’ (Kidd et al. 2008: 52).

Participatory arts processes generally aim to respect the autonomy of refugees, in ways that top-down assistance from governments and states often fail to achieve. Socio-political movements of *welcome* in this setting run counter to national narratives of deterrence. Dominant media voices, such as *The Daily Mail*, work to build cultures of hostility towards refugees (Hansen 2014: 261) as state actors work to deter asylum seekers from making claims in the United Kingdom in the first instance, the boycott of Italian search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean for example (BBC 2014), and exclude refugees who are already arrived (ECRI 2016: 34–35). The Migration Impact Fund, introduced by Gordon Brown, was also cut in 2011 by the Conservative-led government. This has now been replaced with the Controlling Migration Fund, a significantly smaller amount of money that can be used by local authorities to offset short-term pressure on local services and communities and curb illegal immigration. The policy broadly employs negative language surrounding migration, with priorities that police and stigmatize migration (Department for Communities and Local Government 2016). Arts organizations and third sector organizations can work together to provide spaces of protection and *welcome* that work to offset processes of exclusion with processes of inclusion.

This article explores three points of analysis from the ‘Migration and Home’ project, demonstrating that arts organizations are well-placed as intervening agents providing processes of inclusion and welcome. Moreover, we argue that arts organizations are well-placed to meet the needs left by a lack of national infrastructure to welcome, integrate, settle and include refugees, refugees seeking asylum, and newly arrived people. These points of analysis also establish how processes of co-production enhance this, drawing expertise and skills from extensive and far-reaching disciplines, pointing towards models of co-production that are expanding and outward facing, imitating an ecology, as messy and dynamic (Holden 2015). We conclude by bringing together findings from each analysis, asking what the benefits and limits are of working in this way. As a co-authored paper, collaborative in its production and in terms of the aims of ‘Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia’ and the Connected Communities Festival itself, the following analyses draw from a variety of theoretical perspectives, developing a transdisciplinary approach to knowledge production. In writing this we endeavoured to mirror the methodological processes and epistemological frameworks of the project.

‘MIGRATION AND HOME: WELCOME IN UTOPIA’, A TRANSDISCIPLINARY ARTS PROJECT

‘Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia’ began with workshops delivered by FA and the University of Leeds at two third sector organizations who work with refugees seeking asylum. The first, a housing organization for very

recently arrived people, and the second, an education and training organization who assist with settlement, employment, education and English language provision. Together, we asked the following questions: What does it mean to welcome? How do we welcome? How do we want to be welcomed?

Three workshops took place in both settings, each with specialist arts practitioners. The first invited participants to design and create individual silk paintings on the theme of *welcome*. The second invited participants to join together to work on large silk paintings. In the third, a music practitioner explored voice and song to create a soundtrack.

THE SILK PAINTINGS

In the preliminary two workshops, as outlined above, participants created silk paintings, a method that has developed through FA's practice and which their artists use widely with different groups and across different sites. In the first workshop, these were individual pieces the size of an A5 piece of paper. First, the participants, of which there were generally between 20 and 30, outlined designs on paper. Then, these outlines were transferred to silk stretched over thick card using a thick quick-drying black ink. Once the outline of the design was in place, small delicate dabs of water-based coloured paint added colour that spread only to the thick black ink. Over the hour spent working on these, researchers, artists, refugees and asylum seekers shared conversation about what *welcome* might mean in a *utopia*. What does welcome mean to the group? Motifs emerged during conversations about language. Some participants decided to write welcome in their home language(s). Others focused on their lives in the present, drawing images of Leeds, or Welcome in English. Some used cultural symbols that could be associated with welcome, including rainbows or doves.

The workshop participants used the paints and the silks to communicate ideas about welcome. The written text within these paintings, depicts different languages, different pasts or different futures. There are words written in Kurdish on a number of the paintings, for example. In one of these sites we



Figure 1: Individual silk painting example.



Figure 2: Individual silk painting example.

did not ask which languages were spoken, we waited for these languages to be discussed. Many participants were undergoing interviews for their initial asylum applications. Drawing from the work of sociolinguist Jan Blommaert (cf. 2009, 2010, 2012), among others, we recognized language as a point of tension, a marker, and one which can have considerable ramifications for the asylum process, were one to be seen to speak the ‘wrong language’. As Blommaert explains, language becomes imagined, ‘dominated by frames that refer to static and timeless national orders of things’ (2008: 3). Our communicative repertoires, in terms of the languages we speak and the communicative repertoires from which we can draw in any given situation, reflect not only space, but ‘time’ and history (2008: 4). The sociolinguistic profile of a refugee might not fit the expected narrative of the authorities.

After one of the workshops, one of the research team reflected in a project blog post that she had initially approached the work asking fundamental questions about its value:

I knew there would be silk painting and a vocal workshop, but it was quite hard for me to picture the value that might have for people who were on such tough life journeys. How would silk painting and singing really be of benefit to refugees and asylum seekers who must have so many more important things to be dealing with?

(Moore 2016)

She goes on to write that the work brought participants together into a safe place where they were able to connect through art and voice. Mixing colours on silk became a mode of language, a practice of speech and sharing. She also considers how language formed a key part of the workshop, beyond the arts practice and activity:

[h]e was practising writing out the English alphabet and European numeral system on one of the blank cards we had for decorating. I

sat with him for a while and he told me, with the help of a friend who interpreted, that he needed to practise because it was difficult for him, coming from Farsi. I asked if I could take a photo just of the card, and he happily agreed. At the end of the workshop he gave me the card, signed with his name. It is the nicest gift I've been given in a long time.

(Moore 2016)

The silks provided a space for these languages and words to be marked out, and this provided opportunities for metacommentary (cf. Creese et al. 2015; Rymes 2014) on language, on welcome and on utopia. Metacommentary in these contexts was led by the workshop participants. The silks both embodied narratives of migration through this metacommentary, and became a part of that narrative, creating a space in which participants practised languages new to them, and celebrated their additional languages. Drawing again from Blommaert, for the people with whom we were working, language can exist as a marker, a point of tension, with ramifications for the asylum process. Their language(s), or their use of English, can be interpreted by others as 'the wrong language'. In our workshop there was no 'wrong language'. Those points of tension were subverted and became points of celebration, discussion and ultimately art and creativity.

In the second workshop, larger silks were painted in groups. These silks hang in the entrance to one of the workshop sites, and the dining space in the



Figure 3: Large silk painting.

other. As explorations of welcome, they now serve as welcoming pieces of art with languages, words and images recognizable to future refugees using those spaces. They served in their creation as an artistic activity to explore a narrative of migration, welcome and now serve to become a part of narratives of migration for future newly arrived people seeking asylum.

From a literacy studies and translanguaging perspective, the silks are products of the workshop, artefacts and enactments of literacy practices (Barton 2009), combining words, named languages and image (Lee 2015). In more simple terms, we can say that the silks, as processes and as examples of arts practice, were used as stimuli to discuss and communicate ideas of welcome. They prompted conversation about language and allowed the participants to practise language, both refining their skills in English as a new language, and practising additional languages in a context of celebration and affirmation. The silks exist as literary artefacts, as artistic artefacts, as linguistic data and as an output of the project that secures ownership of it to the participants and the centres in which we worked. Considering this small example of arts practice holistically as a cultural text, we can begin to see how arts practices act as socio-political movements, or moments, of welcome and inclusion, running contrary to national and public movements and structures of deterrence and exclusion.

MASTANEH

Mastaneh had recently completed a Master's degree around Iranian communities in West Yorkshire and was one of the project volunteers. She worked with us for the Leeds-based workshops, assisting the artists and creative practitioners and facilitating the artistic and creative outputs. She translated the University's information sheets and consent forms for the participants, conducted a number of interviews and also helped to document the project by taking photos.

It was important for our institutional ethical procedures that we gained informed consent from the participants to take part in the research project. However, working through the information sheets and consent forms took nearly an hour, with some confusion and concern from the groups. We reflected alongside staff from the centres in which we were working that as refugees and people seeking asylum the participants had been potentially overwhelmed with paperwork and forms during processes of arrival, asylum and integration. It was important that we underlined that all individuals would be anonymized, that no photos with faces would be taken without consent and that the signed paperwork would remain secured in the university. Even so, the act of signing a form is a moment of high stakes for an individual who has been through, or is going through, the asylum-seeking process. One of our research team reflects:

[i]n order to take the photo I felt I needed to get informed consent, using the forms that had been approved by the ethics committee and meticulously translated into Farsi, Kurdish, Arabic and Urdu by a volunteer. I gave the form to the man in Farsi, trying to explain it to him with my version in English and his interpreter friend. Another woman also helped out, reading through the four pages. The man then read the form himself from front to back. Once he finished he said something like 'Ok no problem' and got back to practicing the alphabet. I had to interrupt to ask him to sign it, which he did.

(Moore 2016)

Mastaneh spoke some of the languages present in the workshop space. Because of this, she was able to explain carefully and clearly what the research involved and what the forms were for. Although a seemingly simple observation, a focus on Mastaneh's linguistic repertoire and her willingness to contribute to the process begins to demonstrate how her role in the project destabilized binaries and reflected the wider model of co-production employed. During the project, our roles merged and became blurred, as individuals or as organizations. Mastaneh joined the project as a research volunteer, but became a translator. Through this, the ethics forms became less of a point of tension and unease, and more like pedagogical tools, a literacy practice in themselves, '[they] took on a new purpose in generating learning opportunities and conversation' (Moore 2016).

Mastaneh was familiar with similar processes on arrival in the United Kingdom. Her positionality in this space interrupts the binary of facilitator and participant, or researcher and participant. Mastaneh was researcher, translator and facilitator for the project. Her overlapping identities show the instability of reductive binaries that can conceptualize community arts as *empowering*; I empower You/Them. Elisabeth Ellsworth's 1989 article, 'Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy', challenges educators to think about their identities and abilities to speak on behalf of, or enable the speech, of others. She 'regards terms such as "participation", "empowerment", "voice", "dialogue" and "consciousness" as "repressive myths"' (Chinyowa 2015: 14). Her essay argues that these processes can actually prop up oppressive structures and benefit dominant groups (Ellsworth 1989). Whilst community artists might consider the processes they employ as empowering, a real interrogation of power and its enactment in a process is required before that can be true. Mastaneh's positionality does not undermine Ellsworth's notions of participation, which have implications for community arts, but demonstrates how the interruption of binaries allows for her criticisms to be brought to the fore and acknowledged. Her positionality reflects the wider endeavour, informing the conceptualizing of the project as a whole. As a co-produced piece of work, across different organizations, sectors and partnerships, with different identities, experiences and skills, we were able to collectively draw from each individual's, or group of individuals', partial knowledge and potential contribution. This imitates an ecology, with a network of actors coming together to ask questions about welcome, and what that would mean in a utopia. This way of working also interrupts reductive binaries and narratives of migration such as refugee and host community. Mastaneh Azizi-Bobany reflects:

[i]t was a great experience in my study and research history. I am so glad that I had the opportunity of working alongside the research team and to meet people who have shown their willingness to paint and talk about what is the meaning of 'Welcome' to them. I was the witness to an amazing response from participants who have created their colourful silk paintings.

(2016)

Her positionality, embedded in the co-productive methodology, creates an informed practice and informed concepts of welcome. In her reflection she identifies herself as both on the outside, witnessing the work, and on the inside, working alongside researchers and meeting participants. Processes of

co-production enhance community arts work, drawing expertise and skills from extensive and far-reaching disciplines, pointing towards models of co-production that are expanding, blurring the roles inhabited by different actors. Working in this way allows for narratives of migration to be approached as complex and multifaceted, moving away from reductive processes and narratives.

THE FILM

A short film was produced to document the project. It is the product of over four hours of filming using two cameras and of research interviews. It is also the product of working collaboratively with academic colleagues in world cinemas and digital cultures, as the project was conceived and developed as an interdisciplinary one, involving different academic schools in addition to working across sectors. It is layered, made of multiple layers and elements, or threads. The film can be framed as documentation, as a data source, and an example of co-production. It represents a number but not all of the people involved in the project. Behind this film lie rich data around the themes of the project, around welcome, around utopia and around co-production, and this exemplifies further the transdisciplinary affordances of working in this way. For linguists, these data constitute a key part of the project and its analyses. It is both artistic product and linguistic data, challenging again the binaries and boundaries. In this sense, the film has a number of purposes as the processes of producing it can be understood as artistic practice and as research. It emerges from entangled processes. A number of perspectives are shown in the film, including Mastaneh Azizi-Bobany's, which is summarized below:

[t]he feeling I've got about this project started from very first day – it's full of colour, its full of feeling. This people on this room were, were, (they) look like they are in different world, you know – just [...] they're being separate from their asylum-seeker situation, their refugee situation. And I saw [...] happiness of you know, expression, [...] their feeling about welcome.

(2016)

Returning to the question of 'welcome' in utopia and the conceptualization of utopia as 'no place' and 'good place' we can map out some ideas about the film. From Mastaneh's observations, the arts workshops enabled the participants to escape, for an hour or so, for the duration of the workshop, from their 'asylum-seeker situation'. Yet it was because of this aspect of their identity, because of their current status, and because of this current state of liminality – of 'no place' – that they were invited to participate in the workshops and share in the experience. 'No place' became, for the workshop duration, a 'good place'. But the workshops themselves occupied a liminal space. A suspended space which was in many ways 'no place'.

As with the silk paintings, the film represents a document, a co-produced product and a material object, serving different purposes for all those involved. Co-production between artists, researchers, participants, as Walter Benjamin explains in the case of artists in everyday society ([1934] 1970), can be an impossible place. The art historian Hal Foster describes the complexities and the paradoxes of artists (in this article we are extending this within the context of our project to researchers) conducting work that is engaged politically, only for the work to be re-described or 're-coded' as 'social outreach' (1995: 303;

see also Bradley, 2017: 255). There is a risk for projects of this kind to be instrumentalized, as Foster suggests. For this project, however, we paid attention to the particular and distinct aims and objectives of all those involved, translating the processes and products across the different spaces. For the third-sector organization, the painting workshops represented an alternative way of providing English language classes for the participants, and were scheduled to complement their existing programmes of refugee integration and education. For the arts organization, the project offered a way to develop and extend their practice in working with communities and to develop research perspectives around the complexities of hospitality in migration contexts. The film captures snapshots of these different perspectives and provides a space of analysis.

In this sense, the impossible place of producing co-produced research and art across communities and across sectors is highlighted. But the impossible place is also a necessary place and can also be considered within the framework of the project itself – as a ‘utopia’ and through a utopian lens. We are still unravelling and unpacking the questions asked at the outset of the project; what does it mean to be welcome, what does it mean to welcome? How do we welcome? How do we want to welcome? We draw from the author China Miéville, writing about Thomas More’s *Utopia*: ‘we need utopias’ because ‘if an alternative to this world were inconceivable, how could we change it?’ (2016: 24). Still sparking discussion about the original research questions, the film extends the impact and legacy of the project, accessible by all those involved. As a piece of film, however, it also exists as an artistic artefact, an artistic output. As a co-produced artefact, it has multiple effects across multiple arenas.

The film also engages with narratives of migration, with a participant who had come from Syria talking about his journey to the United Kingdom:

[h]e called me, he called me, if you want to go to British, I tell him yes I want to go to British. I tell him I need to go to British because I am too much scared. Scared. And too much Syrian, too much explosion, and too much fighting, and now, I am happy now here.

(Cooke, 2016)

His story is a familiar narrative of migration. What is unfamiliar is its framing in a socio-political activity of welcome, in this case one that centrally engages with notions of welcome. These processes, and the representation of this narrative in this film, run contrary to national movements and structures of deterrence, or policies that police and stigmatize migration and migrants. Arts organizations are well placed as intervening agents, providing these processes of inclusion and welcome, meeting the needs created by national narratives of deterrence and the lack of a formal infrastructure to welcome refugees and people seeking asylum. Co-produced work enhances this even more, as explored in the examples above. The film details the ways in which this project does that, but it also does it itself, as an act of representation. The film is a source of research data, a research output, a creative output, represents narratives of migration and joins the migration narrative in a way that resists dominant negative narratives.

CONCLUSIONS

Dani Snyder-Young, in her 2013 book *Theatre of Good Intentions*, challenges community theatre and arts practitioners to consider at every turn if their good

intentions are enough to meet a specific social need with their skills. She outlines how the work of community artists is bound to institutional requirements and constraints, whether they are internal or external. In the case of the project under discussion, these were multiple, including relating to funding, to cross-sector collaboration and differences in structure, to institutional ethical processes and to time constraints. The relationship of an artist to the need they are addressing can create an uncritical approach if they are too close to it, or one that does not invoke enough experience and knowledge if they are too distant from it. This distance or closeness can also be contained in their identity. Ultimately, whilst good intentions are important, artists must ask if their particular practice, form, experience, skill set and relationship to a problem, creates the intervention this social need or problem requires. Co-produced methodologies speak to many of the questions Snyder-Young asks. In bringing together a variety of expertise, disciplines, identities and practices, co-productive methodologies offer frameworks that disrupt the binary of 'community artist' and 'social need'.

Co-produced work moves away from the 'we do to you' paradigm, often invoked as a criticism of some forms of community arts (Ackroyd 2007), into one where participants become partners of the work, contributing towards artistic output and research output, but also owning aspects of those outputs. All the parties involved in 'Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia' have taken something different from it after the project officially ended. A follow-on project, 'Migration and Settlement: Extending the Welcome', has been funded to explore themes arising from this initial work, to extend and embed the methodologies that were developed and to continue to build research relationships with and across the broader communities involved. The article you are reading at this moment might not be read by some of the artists, or by the refugees and people seeking asylum with whom we were working, in the same way that the art produced in the workshops is owned by the refugees and refugees seeking asylum and not the research communities. The large silk paintings find homes in the centres in which they were produced, now used to welcome new arrivals and participants. This mode of working, across multiple disciplines, practices and identities, looks towards community arts methodologies with reciprocal processes, with authority, ownership and benefits of the work, distributed.

'Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia' entangled the practices of different people, whether researchers, volunteers, artists or participants, as it developed. As a co-produced methodology, working from and to develop a generative framework, it was able to meet the unique needs of the social intervention. It had, and continues to have, a developing and expanding impact across multiple spaces of discipline, practice and community, and provides a model of infrastructure that met research demand, allowed artistic freedom and creativity, and contributed to the welcome and integration of refugees. Of course, this 'impact' develops in a small way in each of these cases, our claim is not to have produced work or ways of working that have completely resolved the social need we addressed. Moreover, through this work we also problematize and critique the discourse of impact, questioning whether, as François Matarasso suggests the word 'impact' does not acknowledge the agency, autonomy and capabilities of the people with whom we are working (2015: 5). However, the ways in which we have gained ground methodologically and epistemologically goes significantly beyond that on larger scales could continue to address the changing needs of the individuals and groups involved and which could challenge current institutional understandings

of co-production, interdisciplinarity and socially engaged arts and research practice. The ontological commitment within the project to this way of working challenges the broader discourse of research ‘impact’ and develops a bottom-up, grassroots-led approach to practice and research with migrant communities.

The 2008 report *Arts and Refugees* we cited in the introduction to this article outlined the importance of working in partnership to ensure that multiple perspectives are considered in the planning and delivery of work that acknowledges the needs of participants and ask how arts practice is best used in this setting. The report from the ECRI (2016) identifies the current lack of a national strategy to welcome or integrate refugees and people seeking asylum, a policy hole that often has disastrous consequences for individuals, families and communities. ‘Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia’ has outlined the importance of partnership, or co-production as we frame and extend it, working to address this social need, and how working across multiple sectors and disciplines can start to overcome the problems invoked by a lack of national strategy, from a local and grass-roots level. As Facer and Enright state, one of the strengths of co-produced, collaborative, cross-sector and interdisciplinary practice and research of this kind is its ability to ‘create the sort of vibrant, agile, responsible landscape for living knowledge production that contemporary challenges so urgently require’ (2016: 153). Through a commitment to and development of ongoing cross-sector relationships and through a willingness to disrupt boundaries and roles, we can create an agility in research that enables us to respond to the vital challenges we currently face in global society.

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