

<b>Institution:</b> The Open University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C19 Politics and International Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Promoting dialogue and action on key global challenges through participatory arts		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Agnes Czajka	Senior Lecturer in POLIS	2013 – present
Prof Engin Isin	Professor of Politics and Chair in Citizenship	2007 – 2016
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2013-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>The Open University research on participatory performative methodologies led to two projects, <i>Who Are We?</i> and <i>Picturing Climate</i>. These enabled stakeholders to explore societal issues including migration and climate change leading to impact in two primary areas, namely (1) impact on creativity, culture and society, and (2) impact on understanding, learning and participation. They also had impact in two secondary areas, (3) impact on public services, and (4) impact on social welfare. These impacts were international in reach and significance (in UK, Cuba, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) with beneficiaries that included: the general public; migrant, refugee and BAME communities, including artists; arts and cultural organizations; young people; and educators. This work has opened up prestigious cultural institutions such as Tate Modern to marginalised groups and has enabled communities to confront issues they had not considered before.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p><b>Isin's</b> research extends traditional conceptions of citizenship as formal membership in a polity [O1]. <b>Czajka's</b> research extends traditional conceptions of democracy as grounded in and enacted through mechanisms and institutions of the state [O2, O3]. As <b>Isin</b> and <b>Czajka</b> separately argue, citizenship and democracy can also be conceptualised through the lens of performativity. This understanding of citizenship and democracy as performative – that is, as practices and processes that are differently enacted and contested through a variety of public, political 'performances' – contributed to the conceptualisation of the arts, and particularly, participatory arts, as both a site and a tool through which citizenship and democracy are enacted and contested.</p> <p><b>Isin</b> and <b>Czajka's</b> research conceptualises citizenship and democracy as performative and draws attention to the often unconventional 'performances' of groups and individuals marginalised in mainstream political discourses. This makes visible and places centre-stage the political practices, participation and contribution of groups including migrants, refugees, ethnic and religious minorities, and youth, among others. These innovative approaches to citizenship and democracy underpinned the understanding of participatory arts as a site of citizenship and democracy, providing the impetus for the <i>Who Are We?</i> and <i>Picturing Climate</i> projects as creative and innovative pathways to impact. They were instrumental to the conceptualisation of participatory arts methodologies as open, accessible, and affective modes of engagement on salient contemporary political issues. They also served as a point of departure for conceptualising participatory arts methodologies as an effective method for making visible the contributions of minorities (particularly migrants, refugees and BAME communities, regardless of their formal, legal status) to discourses and practices of citizenship and democracy.</p> <p>The programmes, in turn:</p> <p>(a) promoted learning, understanding, participation and action on two of the most urgent and contested political issues of the day – migration (<i>Who Are We?</i>) and climate change</p>		

- (*Picturing Climate*) – through the media and methodologies of performative and participatory arts;
- (b) made visible the political engagement by non-citizen, migrant, refugee, and other un- or under-represented minority groups on issues of migration, citizenship and democracy (*Who Are We?*).

By foregrounding the work of migrant and refugee artists, and ensuring the involvement and participation of migrant, refugee, BAME and other marginalized communities, *Who Are We?* was itself a critical, participatory performance of citizenship and democracy by groups and individuals often marginalised or ‘othered’ by mainstream political discourses and practices [O4]. Through the deployment of performative methodologies, *Picturing Climate* democratised understanding of and engagement with climate change by bringing it to the forefront of agendas of groups and communities who had not previously perceived it as a priority issue.

### 3. References to the research

- O1. Isin, E.F.** and Saward, M (Eds.), (2013) *Enacting European Citizenship* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This edited collection is a product of European Research Council funded ENACT: Enacting European Citizenship research programme led by Isin (2008-2010). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524025>
- O2. Czajka, A.** (2016) *Democracy and Justice: Reading Derrida in Istanbul*. Routledge. The book develops key ideas on the performative nature of democracy through an original application of the work of Jacques Derrida.
- O3. Czajka, A.** (2020) ‘Rituals of resistance and the struggle over democracy in Turkey’. *Ritual and Democracy: Protests, Publics and Performances*. In S. M. Pike, J. Salomonsen and P. Tremlett (Eds.) Equinox Publishing. The volume is a product of the Norwegian Research Council funded Reassembling Democracy: Ritual as Cultural Resource (REDO) project.
- O4. Isin, E.F., & Nyers, P.** (Eds.), (2014) *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*. London: Routledge. A significant research resource that shapes the field of global citizenship studies, with the introduction setting out a rigorous re-conceptualisation of citizenship. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203102015>

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### 4. Details of the impact

The *Who Are We?* Programme (2017-2019) was hosted by Tate Exchange at Tate Modern, while *Picturing Climate* activities (2019) took place in Cuba, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Jordan, with a final four-day programme at Tate Exchange. These public engagement and knowledge exchange programmes served as pathways to the following significant international impacts.

#### (1) Impact on creativity, culture and society

*Who are We?* was a centrepiece programme by which “Tate Exchange and Tate [Modern] opened its doors to artistic and cultural expression from marginalised and diverse migrant audiences” [C1], enabling migrant, refugee, and BAME artists of 17 nationalities to participate in Tate Exchange [C8]. As noted by Counterpoints Arts, “our partnership with OU academics was paramount to the delivery of the Tate Exchange programme”, because “by bringing together the work of migrant and refugee artists with interdisciplinary academic research, it became feasible to see how citizenship as performance occurs through the prism of public installation” [C8]. Engagement with OU academics “resulted in a shared and publicly beneficial approach at the Tate Exchange [...] reconciling the narratives of performed citizenship through civic engagement

with the arts" [C8]. As attested to by the Head of Tate Exchange, the programme "[...] [laid] the path that culminated in the Tania Bruguera Hyundai Turbine Hall commission and that continues as embedded in the activity at Tate Exchange" [C1]. Collaborations between OU academics and participating artists also led to the co-production of new artistic and cultural artefacts that were displayed both during the programme and online, [C5, C9], attracting the largest audience of any Tate Exchange programme [C2].

*Who Are We?* not only contributed to changes in the professional practice of the aforementioned cultural organizations, Tate Exchange and Counterpoints Arts, but also to changes in the professional practice of individual artists [C7], generating new ways of thinking that continue to influence their practice. Czajka's work with photographer Eva Sajovic on migrants and refugees significantly influenced the artist's individual creative practice, helping Sajovic "to construct a sound theoretical framework" by "clarifying a lens through which [she] considered [her] practice" [C7]. The collaboration also helped Sajovic work through key ethical and political questions that emerged in her work, questions "that were so profound that they had the potential to stall [her] practice" [C7]. By collaborating with Czajka, the photographer was subsequently able to exhibit some of her work at Media Nox Gallery in Slovenia and at The Migration Museum in London. Sajovic further testified that the collaboration with Czajka "challenged some of the established ways of looking at the problem of representation of the displaced" and "shifted the way [participants] viewed the topic" [C7].

*Picturing Climate* likewise impacted the professional practice of international cultural institutions and artists. Samuel Riera, Cuban artist and director of Riera Studio, Havana, said Riera Studio's participation "had a significant impact on our own practice" [C10]. As a "direct result of *Picturing Climate* [...] we went on to develop a series of work titled *Evolving Natura* [...] [which] explore[d] the relationships between the natural and man-made worlds", and which was subsequently exhibited at the Thomas Nickles Project in New York [C10]. Riera Studio had never previously linked environment, climate change, food security and livelihoods with performative and arts methodologies [C10]. As a result of *Picturing Climate*, their work now embeds environmental principles (e.g. sourcing local, eco-friendly materials) and includes more projects and collaborations exploring environmental issues through art [C10]. Riera noted that *Picturing Climate* was a "pioneering project" in Cuba, where climate change is not high on the agenda, and where creative and arts-based methodologies are rarely used to engage publics on social or political issues [C6, C10].

## (2) Impact on understanding, learning and participation

As part of *Who Are We?* Czajka's collaboration with designer Nele Vos resulted in an interactive installation titled, *Citizenship*, which explored the controversial issue of "citizenship by investment". The installation engaged a diverse audience in a dialogue on citizenship, enhancing public understanding of the different paths to the acquisition of citizenship [C2]. Visitors' conceptualisations of citizenship were critically challenged, enabling them to "reimagin[e] the concept", with one commenting: "It was shocking though to see the reality of the double standards" [C2]. Czajka and Vos then co-produced an interactive, open-access educational game, *Uneven Journeys*, which created an immersive, online experience enabling students to learn about and compare the journey an asylum seeker, an economic migrant and an investor might take to the UK [C3]. *Who Are We?* also generated other open-access educational materials on the use of participatory arts in education on social and political issues [C3]. The resources were utilised by 819 unique visitors from across Europe and the UK [C4].

In the first year, *Who Are We?* attracted 4,768 visitors. 18% of these visitors self-identified as BAME and 38% were under the age of 25, as compared with 15% and 27% respectively for the Tate Modern in general, contributing to the diversification of Tate Modern audiences [C8]. The programme also generated significant media interest, and was featured in *Arts Industry*, *The Big Issue*, *Southwark News* and *Frugl*, which, in turn, contributed to generating a more diverse audience for the programme and to widening impact beyond the directly participating audience [C2]. In its second year, *Who Are We?* expanded beyond Tate Modern and London to include

underrepresented artists and communities in the north of England and the nations, “*challeng[ing] the dominance and centrality of the capital in terms of funding and opportunity*”, and making it possible for “*smaller, more locally based arts organisations and migrant artists to contribute to a process of mutual learning*” [C9]. Over its three years, the project also attracted a number of student groups who, according to one teacher, came away from the programme with “*a new energy and interest around language learning which they did not have before*” [C5]. *Picturing Climate* attracted over 2,200 visitors, including a number of diverse student groups and young people, some of whom visited the programme as part of their school curriculum [C6].

### **(3) Impact on public services**

*Picturing Climate*, using performative methodologies to explore the links between the environment and post-conflict societies and economies, was described as novel and innovative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and had a significant impact on the learning of local artists and educators involved [C6]. They had been skeptical about exploring ‘soft’ issues like climate change in the context of a post-conflict society, where much ‘harder’ political issues were at stake. They were surprised to learn how much environmental degradation there was in Bosnia, how closely tied it was to corruption and other political issues in post-conflict environments, and how useful performative and arts methodologies were for exploring these issues with young people [C6].

Climate change is not part of school curricula in either Cuba or Bosnia, and arts methodologies are largely absent, as rote learning is still the norm. *Picturing Climate* generated interest in including both environmental issues and creative methodologies in school curricula [C6, C10]. As noted by Riera Studio, following *Picturing Climate*, teachers and parents in schools in Havana were asking for similar programmes, with Riera Studio taking on a role in their delivery, and in training local teachers on how to deliver them [C6, C10]. Statements from teachers and a local government official in Bosnia suggest that the project has helped them to see how these issues and methodologies could be incorporated into the local curriculum and that changes would be made as a result [C6].

### **(4) Impact on social welfare**

*Who Are We?* opened up access to Tate Modern, enabling refugees and other migrant and minority communities (including artists) to feel more included and better integrated into UK cultural institutions and spaces from which they previously felt excluded [C5, C8]. One artist noted, “*A lot of the women...are quite marginalised and they are quite amazed at how their work has been valued and celebrated [...] and that's very, very, important*” [C5]. This impact has been multiplied by the prestige and reach of Tate Modern as a cultural institution, and the influence the programme had on Tate Exchange “*open[ing] its doors to artistic and cultural expression from marginalised and diverse migrant audiences*” [C1].

Other migrant, refugee and BAME visitors described as “*healing*” and “*empowering*” hearing their languages, stories and experiences reflected at Tate Modern [C5, C8]. As one visitor described, “*to hear my language [...] it makes me feel a lot more connected to everything that is going on*” [C5]. Another said, “*It almost pushes me to cry [...] because for so many years what has been happening to the Kurdish people in Turkey has not had any space in the mainstream media [...]. You can't underestimate the importance of an exhibition like this at the Tate Modern*” [C5].

*Who Are We?* also enhanced public understanding of the experiences of marginalised groups, particularly refugees. Visitor feedback and evaluations indicated an enhanced or changed understanding of the experiences of migrants and refugees and, in at least one case, a visitor was inspired to volunteer at a refugee support organization, having gained a much clearer understanding of the experiences of migrants and refugees [C2, C5].

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- C1. Head of Tate Exchange Testimonial.
- C2. *Who Are We?* Evaluation Report 2017.
- C3. [Uneven Journeys](#) and [Who Are We?](#) on OpenLearn.
- C4. OpenLearn readership figures.
- C5. *Who Are We?* Evaluation Report 2019.
- C6. *Picturing Climate* Evaluation Report.
- C7. Eva Sajovic Testimonial.
- C8. Counterpoints Arts Testimonial.
- C9. *Who Are We?* Evaluation Report 2018.
- C10. Riera Studio Testimonial and Thomas Nickles Project Exhibition Note.