

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Worcester		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Migrations - Open Hearts Open Borders		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2017-2020		
<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>
Tobias Hickey	Senior Lecturer in Illustration	2010-present
Andy Davies	Senior Lecturer in Illustration	2011-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>The Migrations curatorial project encouraged internationally established artists and students to explore 'migration' through illustrated postcards. The project developed impact in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on education - enhancing knowledge and understanding of issues around migration, and providing new opportunities, activities and learning processes, especially for children, nationally and internationally</li> <li>• Impact on artists (including migrants and refugees), enriching their creative practice and knowledge, incorporating them into new artistic communities, and providing them with new cultural opportunities</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>According to the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, the volume of media coverage featuring the terms 'immigration' or 'migration' steadily increased between 2011 and 2015. European news media had stoked fear and prejudice towards migrants and refugees, often employing derogatory terms and phrases when referring to these individuals. The Migrations curatorial research project - being submitted in REF2 - set out to challenge the current interpretation of the words, 'migrant' and 'migration' at the time of the migrant crisis in Europe (2015 to present) through illustration and crowd-sourced exhibitions.</p> <p>The aim of the Migrations project was to facilitate the communication of an alternative to media bias through curated illustration practice. Illustrators would interpret the words 'migrant' and 'migration' and visually communicate these interpretations through a postcard artwork. Postcards were selected as the format for the project because they are inclusive objects - cheap, and easy to obtain and to send (thus maximising participation). A postcard is also highly symbolic of travel and movement, from the stamps that reflect its origins, to the marks, wear and tear picked up during its journey. On the back of the postcard would be the context for its production, which could take the form of a personal account of migration, a meaningful quote, or a positive comment that could challenge negative media discourse around migrants and migration.</p> <p>The project research revealed that in contrast to the numerous negative news media stories of this subject, artists from around the world were responding to this theme by communicating a much more nuanced understanding of issues. Their work especially succeeded in engaging children. Examples are discussed in the paper: Davies, A., and McCannon D. (2019), 'Contemporary Illustrative Responses to the European Migration Crisis', published in the</p>		

conference proceedings of the International Conference on Illustration and Animation (CONFIA), Portugal.

Migrations resulted in exhibitions and intergenerational creative workshops in Europe, Africa and Asia, which received thousands of visitors. When exhibited in galleries, the display of postcards allowed viewers to access both sides of these objects. The tension and suspension of these postcards was interconnected by the installation of a wire network which rippled when a card was examined. This inter-connectedness was designed as a physical embodiment and re-construction of the virtual networks that had brought the works together, while also facilitating an interactive visitor experience. The availability of an iPad loaded with a map in exhibitions showing the origins of the postcards, as well as artist biographical details, further enhanced audience interaction and made the Migrations network available through digital navigation.

A selection of 50 postcards were used to create a book *Migrations - Open Hearts, Open Borders*, published by Otter-Barry Books (2019) in collaboration with Amnesty International. Proceeds from the book are donated to Amnesty International and IBBY (International Board on Books for Young Children). Illustrators featured in the book include Shaun Tan, Neal Layton, Jackie Morris, Christopher Corr, Nicola Davies, Petr Horacek, Axel Scheffler, Jane Ray, Marie Louise Gay and Roger Mello.

### 3. References to the research

Hickey, *Migrations* (multi-component output which is included in the unit's output submission). It includes:

- Book: *Migrations: Open Hearts Open Borders* (Otter-Barry Books, 2019)
- Illustration Workshop, at the Hay Festival (2017)
- Exhibition at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, BIBIANA International House of Art for Children, Bratislava, Slovakia (September 2017); Exhibition at Woordfess, Stellenbosch, South Africa (May 2018); exhibition at Amnesty International Headquarters, London (with panel discussion, June 2019); exhibition at Nami Island, South Korea; exhibition at Hay Festival, Hay-on-Wye (2019)

Davies, A. & McCannon D. (2019) 'Contemporary Illustrative Responses to the European Migration Crisis', Proceedings of the International Conference on Illustration and Animation (CONFIA), Portugal, 477-88. [https://confia.ipca.pt/2019/files/confia\\_2019\\_proceedings.pdf](https://confia.ipca.pt/2019/files/confia_2019_proceedings.pdf) (included in the unit's output submission).

The Migrations project was shortlisted for International Collaboration of the Year at the Times Higher Educational Awards 2019. It was also nominated for the Most Beautiful Book award in the Books Are My Bag Readers Awards (sponsored by National Book Tokens).

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Impact on education

The Migrations research project has had an impact on the knowledge of members of the public (adults, but particularly children) who have attended its exhibitions and associated creative workshops (2017 - 2020), and who have used the *Migrations* book in educational settings. New skills and artistic practices were gained by individuals given opportunities to engage in creative workshops and/or use the book in class. In discussions about the subject of 'migration' fuelled by the research, new knowledge, awareness and empathetic understanding of the issues faced by migrants and refugees was facilitated.

Bibiana, the International House of Art for Children based in Bratislava, Slovakia, became a partner of the project in 2017. Bibiana hosted the premiere presentation of the exhibition as an

accompanying event of the 26<sup>th</sup> Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava. Viera Anoskinova (Source A) notes: 'students of art schools and university were interested in means of integrating the idea, narrative, presentation and show installation. I was happy to see students obtaining new knowledge of issues around migration when engaging in the work.'

Events took place during Hay Festival in 2017, with children able to contribute their work to the collection, providing 'a powerful platform for young people to explore the social and political issues around migration and encouraging them to empathise with the lives of others through creative process and image making.' (Source B)

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), a UK based children's literacy charity working with primary schools, included the *Migrations* book as part of their 'Power of Reading' project (2019-20), placing the book in packs given to all teachers working on this project (Source C). The book publication is now used in 600 schools across the UK to enable children's reading and understanding of issues around migration. The book is also identified as a core resource in Primary English teaching materials provided by another educational charity, the Hamilton Trust (Source D).

The North London Collegiate School (Singapore) has employed the *Migrations* book extensively in teaching, using it as a basis for an ongoing extra-curricular project with two groups of Grade KG2-Grade 3 pupils (ages 4-8 years). Jonathan Guy (Source E) writes: 'The outcomes of the project include greater understandings of the themes of migration; a development of a variety of art techniques using watercolours, collage and printing; and an increasing development of empathy within pupils from a young age.'

Pam Dix, Chair of The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY UK) writes: 'The use of the postcard format has been used by teachers and illustrators as a way of engaging children in this powerful but constrained format – and their own illustrated postcards have been sent to children in other countries, refugee camps and other schools. It has also worked as a training medium, empowering teachers to think of the postcard as a format to be used for other projects. Similar work has been done with creative writing and creative responses to the messages on the reverse of the postcard. The fact that the book has become an integral part of the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education Power of Reading project speaks to the significance of this' (Source F).

The *Migrations* project also provided inspiration for PGCE students at the University of Sussex, who have used its exploration of migration as a jumping off point for the development of their practice as teachers (Source G).

#### Impact on artists

The project had impact on several (often marginalized) artists through significant exposure of their work and recognition of their practice. It enabled 340 international artists to take part in a collaborative exhibition that travelled around the world, and for 50 of them to have their work published in a book sold in the UK and USA, thus impacting upon their practice and providing them with opportunities to share their work. For example, Mohammad Barrangi, an asylum seeker from Iran, had his artistic work included in both the travelling exhibition and in the *Migrations* book. He took part in the panel discussion that accompanied the book launch at Amnesty International in 2019. Barrangi (Source H) testifies, 'Being involved in *Migrations* was very valuable to me as it helped me develop my practice through artistic collaboration, and to think more about how art can tell stories about migration.' Mary Louise Gay, an artist living in Montreal, Canada who produced a postcard for the project, explains that being involved in *Migrations* 'gave me the time to explore thoughts about migration' (Source H).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- A. Testimonial from Viera Anoskinova, Bibiana, the International House of Art for Children, Slovakia
- B. Testimonial from Aine Venables, Education Manager, Hay Festival
- C. Testimonial from Ann Lazim, Literature and Library Development Manager, Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
- D. Hamilton resources for teachers utilising *Migrations Open Hearts Open Borders*, e.g. <https://www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/english/unit/3552-comprehension-and-composition-reading-and-writing-about-animal-migration/>
- E. Testimonial from Jonathan Guy, The North London Collegiate School Singapore
- F. Testimonial from Pam Dix, Chair of The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY UK). See also [Flights of Imagination: the Migrations exhibition](#), article by Dix in *Books for Keeps*
- G. Open Hearts Open Borders: project undertaken by PGCE students, University of Sussex: [Home | Open Hearts Open Borders](#)
- H. Testimonials from artists involved in the exhibition