

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Worcester		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> No Woman's Land: increasing knowledge of migratory histories		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b>		
<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>
Ildiko Rippel	Senior Lecturer in Drama and Performance	January 2012 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016-2018		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Rippel's project <i>No Woman's Land</i> (2015-2018) had an impact on public knowledge and cultural life across Europe, raising audience awareness and understanding of women's experiences of war and migration through innovative performance practice, including a 220-mile walk, subsequent performances, blogs and film screenings. Audiences specifically gained increased knowledge of how rape was used as a weapon in the Second World War. Through dramaturgical innovations such as the use of treadmills in performances, and engaging audience members in this performative practice, the research impacted audience understanding through kinesthetic empathy. Younger members of the public were particularly impacted on by this research.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Rippel's research project <i>No Woman's Land</i> (2015-2018) retraced the experiences of her grandmother Lucia as a refugee mother in post-war Europe. In 1945, as the Second World War came to an end, Lucia was expelled from her place of birth in lower Silesia (formerly Germany). The area was liberated by the Soviet Army. The systematic rape of German women was ordered as a retribution for atrocities and war crimes committed by Nazi Germany. After being raped, Lucia was forced to leave her home, walking for three months through the fractured post-war landscape of northern Europe, dragging her two small children and her belongings in a cart. Rippel saw Lucia's story is a micro-narrative opposed to the grand narrative of the Second World War, and her research demonstrated that such micronarratives are a rarely analysed part of the history of the conflict. Rippel used this narrative to interrogate and communicate women's experiences of war and migration more broadly through performance research.</p> <p>In August 2015 Rippel and Rosie Garton (Zoo Indigo theatre company) re-walked the 220-mile journey from Brzeźnica, Poland, to Pulspforde, Germany, carrying their own children in flat-pack form. During the walk, Rippel engaged with local communities, interviewed persons who had had similar experiences as refugees in the aftermath of World War II, visited the archives at the Foundation for Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin, and spoke to Andrea Kamp, an expert on the history of Silesian refugees at the foundation. During the walk Rippel shared her findings and experiences via daily blogs and vlogs and social media and was followed by an international audience online.</p> <p>The key aims of the project were to share research with a wider public during the research project itself ('as it happened'), and to focus audiences on the levels of physical and mental exhaustion that must have been felt by Lucia and other women. Rippel applied a phenomenological methodology in re-walking her Grandmother's journey as a refugee mother, to gain an embodied knowledge of lived experiences and or walking as endurance. Through the</p>		

experience of the walk and the staging of the exhausted maternal body in subsequent performances (by for example utilising treadmills on stage), the performers developed a dramaturgy of authenticity in the performance of migration, and their audiences experienced 'kinesthetic empathy' for migrants and refugees through witnessing endurance.

*No Woman's Land* was developed into an 18-minute documentary film which was screened in the UK and at international festivals, for example, at the Walking Women event 2016 at Somerset House (London), and a full-length theatre performance which toured to small and mid-scale arts centres nationally in the UK, such as Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester, Camden's People Theatre (A Nation's Theatre Festival), London, Mansfield Create Theatre, Derby Theatre and Lincoln Drill Hall.

### 3. References to the research

*No Woman's Land* is being submitted as a multi-component output to REF 2. It includes the following:

1. Rippel, Ildiko and Garton, R. (2016-2018) *No Woman's Land*. [Performance]
2. Rippel, I., Garton, R. and Tom Walsh (2016) *No Woman's Land – Documentary*. [Film, various festivals and conferences, for example: Nottingham Playhouse, NEAT Festival; Derby Theatre, Departure Lounge Festival; Live Art Development Agency, Walking Women Festival] <https://vimeo.com/360282839>
3. Rippel I. and Garton, R. (2019) 'No Woman's Land: Walking as a Dramaturgical Device in Performance of Maternal Migration', *Critical Stages*, online: <http://www.critical-stages.org/20/no-womans-land-walking-as-a-dramaturgical-device-in-performance-of-maternal-migration/>

Funding: Arts Council England, £15,000 for research and development, £32,250 for production, rehearsal and touring of the performance (awarded to Zoo Indigo theatre company)

### 4. Details of the impact

*No Woman's Land* (2015-2018) had an impact on public knowledge and cultural life across Europe, specifically on audience awareness and understanding of women's experiences of war and migration. Impact was achieved through a variety of media and through employing innovative dramaturgical strategies.

Impacts were enabled across the project and beyond through:

- The initial 220-mile walk
- Performances, national and international - *No Woman's Land* was performed in the following venues: Chulalongkorn University Theatre, Thailand 9 February 2016 (audience of 70); Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester, 23 April 2016 (audience of 70); Camden's People Theatre, A Nation's Theatre Festival, London, 10 & 11 May 2016 (audience of 100); Mansfield Create Theatre, College Students, 20 May 2016 (audience of 33); Derby Theatre, 12 November 2016 (audience of 80); Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester, 25 November 2016 (audience of 70); Lincoln Drill Hall, 9 Feb 2017 (audience of 42); Drama Studio, University of Worcester, 27 February 2017 (audience of 98); Arena Theatre Wolverhampton, 9 June 2017 (audience of 47); Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham, 2 March 2018 (audience of 120).
- Film Screenings - The *No Woman's Land* film was screened as follows: Artist as Mother as Artist exhibition, Lace Market Gallery, Nottingham, 22 April – 19 May 2016; Neat Festival, Nottingham Playhouse, 25 and 28 May 2016; Departure Lounge Festival, Derby Theatre, 22 July 2016; Walking Women Event, Somerset House, Screening Room, 17 July 2016; New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, Pulse Festival, 3 June 2017.

- Public engagement with the project blog which had 522 visitors and 1,595 views during the walk), and during screenings of the film.
- Social media - Zoo Indigo's Facebook page currently has 556 followers, and their Twitter account has 892 followers.

First, during the 220-mile walk from Brzeźnica, Poland, to Pulsztorf, Germany, the performers engaged with local communities. These communities had their appreciation and understanding of women's experiences of war and migration enriched by engaging with the itinerant performers. This is evidenced through the documentary film (Reference 2).

Second, through innovative dramaturgical practice demonstrated in subsequent performances based on the walk, audiences gained increased knowledge and understanding of not only the experience of specific women migrants but also of the systematic use of rape as a weapon during the Second World War. As Michaela Butter MBE (Director, Attenborough Arts Centre) (Source A) puts it, 'Talking to audience members, and reading subsequent Tweets and reviews, it was clear that the piece impacted on our audiences thinking and awareness, clearly challenging preconceived ideas around gender and political bias.' Furthermore, the poet Roosa Herranen (Source B) remarks: 'The show made me think again about the plight of refugees in the crisis in Europe at the time, and the ideological debates around Brexit.'

Third, to enable a sense of embodiment and kinesthetic empathy in the performances, the performers walked on treadmills, and audience members, through witnessing the exhaustion of these performers, experienced kinesthetic empathy. This dramaturgical methodology allowed audience members to reflect on and develop a nuanced understanding of the experience of enforced migration. Prof Dr Meyer-Dinkgräfe (Source C) explains that 'Spectators commented on how they empathised with the performers when they were on the treadmill, and even more so with the presumably less well-trained spectators who volunteered to be on the treadmills for a while.' Furthermore, through the physical act of walking, audience members who walked on the treadmills themselves during these performances developed a physical, embodied understanding of the endurance of migrant mothers, as well as the experience Rippel had had of retracing Lucia's footsteps. Ruby Glaskin (Creative Producer for In Good Company) (Source D) remarks: 'To see two women physically walk throughout the performance had a profound impact on me as an audience member which could not have been grasped through text or audio alone.' This dramaturgical strategy not only produced an authentic, embodied engagement with historical events, but also facilitated research impact through the development of new knowledge and understanding. Thus, kinesthetic empathy provided the ontological pathway to impact on new historical and political knowledge. Furthermore, audience members were also impacted upon by being given the enriching opportunity to experience and engage with performance-making practice themselves.

Fourth, viewers of the 18-minute documentary film gained further awareness, knowledge and understanding of the key issues raised by the research project articulated above (see Source E). The research blog was followed worldwide, and comments on the blog and emails and social media messages sent to Rippel demonstrated the new insights online audiences gained about regarding historical knowledge focused on women's experience of war and migration.

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- A) Testimonial from Michaela Butter MBE, Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester.
- B) Testimonial from Roosa Herranen, Finnish poet/singer/performance maker/live artist.
- C) Testimonial from Prof. Dr. Meyer-Dinkgräfe, Piccolo Teatro.
- D) Testimonial from Ruby Glaskin Glaskin, In Good Company, Derby Theatre.
- E) Testimonial from Tracey Kershaw, co-curator, Artist as Mother as Artist exhibition, Lace Market Gallery, Nottingham.

