Tate Exchange '*Who Are We*?' – Open University REF Impact Study

Findings report
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Executive Summary

From the 21st to the 26th May 2019, The Open University, Counterpoints Arts and the Tate Exchange organised and hosted the annual week of research, experimental arts and collective action around issues of citizenship and migration, called *Who Are We.* During this week, an ethnographic rapid impact study was conducted to (1) understand the impact of this collaboration on society and visitors' perceptions; (2) understand its impact on artists' practice; and (3) understand its influence on the curatorial practices of Counterpoints Arts and the Tate Exchange.

The overlap in the views and themes identified across visitors, artists and the institutions is perhaps one of the most significant findings. These views across stakeholders reinforce each other, thus giving strength to the findings and the value and impact of the *Who Are We*.

> *"What I found with my relationship with people from the OU is that there is this kind of focus on real impact and real lives. (…) We would have missed so much if it wasn't for this strong academic relationship".*
> Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

Firstly, the study found that *Who Are We* had an impact on visitors professionally, personally and across the personal, professional and political at the same time. There are clear examples of learning both in terms of methods and skills as well as learning about one's positioning in society in relation to discussions and issues around citizenship, migration and belonging. Visitors explained they felt provoked to think in new ways; became more aware of prejudice; and felt inspired to do something. At least one example was found of a visitor who decided to volunteer at a refugee organisation after visiting *Who Are We*.

> "[So, it made you think about the topic?] *Oh yes, so much. (...) I am [now] involved with volunteering with refugees. That exhibition gave me so much stimulus, hints and ideas. So, then, I did something else after the exhibition (...).I wanted to do something and I think having much more clues about what refugees are experiencing obviously pushed me to take the decision to volunteer, to be much more involved".* Visitor (interview)

The study finds that the partnership between academia and the arts has been a central catalyst to this by enabling a space of interactive and meaningful conversation, better and more nuanced understanding of issues, empathy and affect towards a diversity of experiences, and empowerment of visitors among other themes.

Secondly, in relation to impact on artists, the research finds that artists have also valued the influence of academia in their practice. It has allowed them to think about issues in new ways, by providing a layered depth of knowledge to issues and risky conversations they are willing to have with the public, and by the greater access and impact to people's lives enabled through participatory approaches.

"Oh, massively! I think enormously, I think to break down that research and to expose it and to have a conversation with people is hugely important; to have artists who are able to think creatively in ways that others aren't, it is amazing; but really kind of exposing and having a dialogue around academia and research is massive" Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

There has been some feedback on the challenges that come when bringing very different frameworks and infrastructures together (ie. academic and artistic) but the findings largely show a view that these challenges are productive tensions that bring about new nuanced ways of thinking to both parts, as well as genuine social impact.

Artists also spoke about the value of the synergies that are created by combining arts and academia. Some of their explanations of the value of *Who Are We* suggest it is seen as a healing space of solidarity for them and for visitors. Artists also thought that academics learn from working with artists too, something that academics interviewed also recognise.

With regards to curators, their views largely overlap. There is an overwhelming value of the social impact of this partnership through public learning as well as an appreciation of the importance of the long term nature of the partnership for this impact to develop and evolve.

"We value the colleagues that we have developed relationships with at The Open University. The way that they talk about migration, the kind of research in this area, the way that Umut [Dr. Umut Erel, OU], the projects that she's done with migrant women, we respect so much, it is an amazing project. Agnes [Dr. Agnes Czajka, OU] and Áine [Áine O'Brien, Counterpoints Arts] are writing a book together (...) we developed this relationship and it works, it just works. Sometimes within academic institutions there is a kind of a short sort of term-ness, I need that for this (...) but it hasn't been so with this." Dijana Rakovic, Productions (Counterpoints Arts)

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Since 2017, The Open University has been working with Counterpoints Arts and a number or artists and organisations to produce an annual week of research, experimental arts and collective action around issues of citizenship and migration at the Tate Exchange space (Tate Modern, London).

This impact study has been designed to provide evidence that the OU academics' research has had impact on:

- Visitors' understanding of issues like migration citizenship and engagement with the arts on these issues.
- Artists practice and ways of thinking about migration, citizenship and participatory approaches.
- Curators' practices and ways of thinking about migration, citizenship and participatory approaches (Counterpoints Arts and Tate Exchange)

This evidence will feed into the Research Excellence Framework (REF) case study for C20 on Research on Migration impacting participatory arts engagement.

1.2. Research questions

1- How has the work of academics at The Open University changed perceptions and understandings around issues of citizenship and migration among visitors to the Tate Exchange '*Who Are We*'?

   a. How have the arts helped to change these understandings?
   b. What high quality engagement, such as time spent or dialogue with artists can be observed?

2- How has the work of academics at The Open University changed the ways in which the arts practice of artists engages with issues of migration and citizenship?

   a. What has been the role of participatory approaches to research in facilitating this change?

3- How has the work of academics at The Open University changed the curatorial practice of staff at the Tate Exchange and Counterpoints Arts?

1.3. Methodology

This study has employed an ethnographic approach to collect stories of change related to the impact of the partnership between academics at The Open University and individual artists and collectives. The study relies on a combination of observations by the researcher

and interviews with artists, visitors, and Counterpoints Arts and Tate staff where they are available on the floor during the exhibition. This includes a multi-method approach.

Methods

- **Semi-structured interviews with artists/curators.** The researcher designed and conducted interviews aimed at exploring journeys of change in arts and curatorial practice resulting from the collaboration with the Open University. These interviews were conducted:

    - with artists
    - with curators at Counterpoints Arts
    - with Tate Exchange curators

- **Semi-structured interviews with visitors.** The researcher designed and conducted interviews aimed at exploring any change in perceptions, particularly on issues related to citizenship and migration, resulting from the visit.

- **Observations.** The researcher used both a fieldwork diary and photography to capture questions, comments and *post-it* boards, among other evidence, related to issues on citizenship and migration among visitors.

- **Feedback cards.** These are forms provided by The Open university team to document people's views and feedback on the event. The researcher ensured they are being picked up, filled in and returned by visitors. The researcher also used their content to inform this impact study.

- **Social media engagement.** The researcher compiled engagement metrics from the main social media platforms, accounts and hashtags used during the week, such as @WhoAreWe_TEX @CounterArts and relevant hashtags like #whoareweproject in Twitter and Instagram.

Participants

In total, the study comprised of 26 interviews. These were interviews with visitors, including a Tate Neighbour[1] (8); artists (10); partner organisations (3); Tate Exchange staff (1); Counterpoints Arts staff (1); and academics (3), although two of those counted as artists were also in academia.

As observed by the research consultant, the age of visitors was very varied, including students from secondary schools, to families with children, all the way up to the oldest participant interviewed, an 87 year old visitor who is also a Tate Neighbour.

[1] Tate Neighbours is a group of over 20 people from the communities neighbouring the Tate Modern in the SE1 postcode actively engaged in shaping discussions through art. Its mission is to support the viability of Tate Modern as a 'civic institution' and has been facilitated by artist Tania Bruguera in collaboration with the Tate Modern/Tate Exchange.

In addition, a total of 26 feedback cards were collected from visitors. The card asked two questions:

1-What was the most interesting thing you heard today?
2-In what way is it relevant to your professional practice or personal life?

Social media analysis has not been possible due to lack of access to the accounts' analytics but a total of 259 posts have been identified under the hashtag #whoareweproject in Instagram (Figure 1). In addition the following hashtags have been identified as being the most connected and used alongside #whoareproject in Twitter (Figure 2). These show that the conversation that has been taking place in social media is very much around the issues of migration, citizenship and identity.

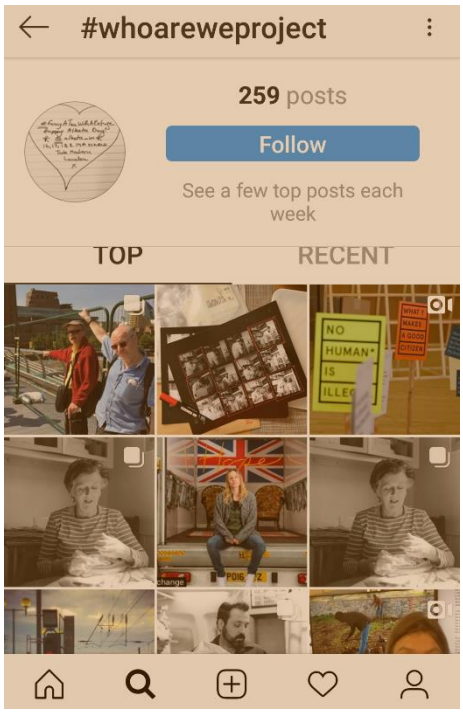

Figure 1. Instagram posts under the #whoareweproject hashtag

Figure 2. Twitter hashtags connected to #whoareweproject. Diagram created by ritetag.com

2. Impact on visitors: changing perceptions and understandings

Research question 1

How has the work of academics at The Open University changed perceptions and understandings around issues of citizenship and migration among visitors to the Tate Exchange '*Who Are We*'?

a. How have the arts helped to change these understandings?

b. What high quality engagement, such as time spent or dialogue with artists can be observed?

There was a wide range of reasons why visitors came to the "*Who Are We*" programme at the Tate Exchange. The following categories were identified both by the consultant's observations and interactions as well as through the interviews with both visitors and artists:

1. Visitors who came after seeing the programme of activities through the Tate Modern website. These included visitors who had seen the programme directly or had received it from a friend and who decided to visit out of interest in the topics.

2. Academics and artists who had seen the symposium programmes organised by the Open University and came to learn new skills, explore collaborations and meet some of the speakers.

3. Visitors who were coming to the Tate Modern and visited the *Who Are We* by chance after entering the Tate Exchange floor.

4. Visitors involved or interested in denouncing the repression by the Turkish state against the Kurds and against Turkish artists and journalists, drawn to the "*Who Are We*" week by the exhibition of Kurdish artist Zehra Doğan.

5. Students from secondary schools and undergraduate courses brought with the rest of the class by the school or institution. These included, for example, groups who were studying a foreign language and came specifically to see the installations and workshop related to languages; or undergraduate students of degrees such as "Performance and creative entreprise" who came to study the space as an example of socially engaged arts.

6. Acquaintances or family members of the different artists and partner organisation members involved in the "*Who Are We*" programme.

This diversity, partly enabled by having the installations and talks at the Tate Exchange, in a known institution like the Tate Modern, was not only noticed by artists but was seen by them as one of the factors that made the *Who Are We* programme different and very

valuable. The analysis indicates that this diversity enables a public space of open and meaningful discussion, with a sense of 'community', that on one side works to reinforce and deepen knowledge, solidarity and call to action among visitors already engaged in activism, and, on the other side, enables the involvement of visitors who might not have come across these conversations, allowing them to experience other people's challenges and lived experiences and provoking them to reflect and think in new ways.

> *"That was the first time that work was presented at an institution that is this big and one of the things we encountered that we don't normally encounter is tourists" (…)* [And although the topics were very local (ie. Brexit)] *"that is a level of openness that I never encountered before (...). And then, on the other side of that"* [you saw people that] *"you would not usually see them in the Tate Modern. They were kind of drawn by I think knowing the artists, knowing the organisations, and these are demographics, including my own, who don't* [otherwise] *come because they feel excluded".* Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

2.1. Perceptions and understandings around issues of citizenship and migration

The data collected through interviews with and feedback cards from visitors shows that the "*Who Are We*" programme has an impact on people's perceptions on issues related to citizenship, migration and belonging. This impact takes place in three broad arenas: (1) the professional self (2); the personal self; and (3) across the professional, personal and political.

(1) The professional self

A number of visitors were drawn to the programme as either artists, academics or students who were seeking to learn more around issues related to migration and citizenship, to **learn skills that they could apply** to their work (such as artists seeking to learn about methods for socially engaged arts and for research practice), and to find inspiration for **collaborations**.

Visitors referred to the importance of learning concepts and dialogues to inform their work, such as:

> *"Tendayi Bloom's conceptualisation of non-citizenism"* Visitor (feedback form)

> *"As a practising artist in performance it has been really constructive in understanding these important dialogues within critical practice."* Visitor (feedback form)

> *"All talks were interesting - Perhaps the most relevant to my practice was the one about 'Home on the move' as I am particularly interested in how languages contribute to shape identity."* Visitor (feedback form)

Visitors also valued learning about practical skills and methods to their practice:

> *"I am a visual methods researcher, interesting to discuss use of and possibilities of what the visual can unearth."* Visitor (feedback form)

“Umut Erel's video research as no recourse to public funding” Visitor (feedback form)

"I was brought here with my class to learn about production in terms of engaging (…), especially socially engaged events" Visitor (interview)

"I work with refugees in Calais and London, and I'm an artist and art therapist and always trying to find better ways to communicate and collaborate" Visitor (feedback form)

Finally, visitors also valued learning about the benefits of collaboration for or as part of their work. As will be covered further below, access as well as the dialogical and interactive nature of the programme was important in allowing for this sense of collaboration:

"It has been really valuable to me actually because I was speaking with the first speaker, Agnes [Dr. Agnes Czajka], and I really wanted to know more about her practice and [discuss] collaboration” Visitor (interview)

"This has inspired me, definitely, especially in the collaborative sense because here this is art collaborating with the public and I am just really inspired into how one can take the meaning of collaboration, look at it in very different ways and just really apply it because it is so applicable to the rests of our lives as well". Visitor (interview)

"I am inspired by the collaborative aspect" Visitor (interview)

(2) The personal self

The analysis of the data shows that the “*Who Are We*” programme has an impact on **the way visitors reflect as individuals in relation to their communities, their country and globally.** This is the case for both visitors who attended the programme as professionals as well as for casual visitors who came either by chance or out of interest in the activities and issues.

Some visitors were already interested in the topics and came to gain deeper knowledge, often through what many described as a more affective and interactive experience from a diversity of voices. Others considered themselves socially engaged (ie. in environmental activism) but learnt about issues they felt less knowledgeable about, such as some of the challenges faced by migrants and the linkages between the two.

Real-life learning, hope, provoking visitors to think in new ways, awareness of prejudice, reinforcement of knowledge, connectedness to different realities and to others working towards similar goals, and feeling inspired to learn new languages are some of the main themes identified as impact on the personal. These impact areas are described in more detail below.

The impact on the personal self is encapsulated well by the visitor who described their experience as **“real life learning”** for their kids:

"In future, I will look out for other events in the Exchange. I think it's a great physical space to bring my kids for real life learning.” Visitor (feedback form)

Figure 3. Drawing at the back of one of the Feedback Forms distributed during the week.

Hope is another theme identified in the data. Coupled with anger and disappointment at the harsh issues facing many people in the UK and the rest of the world, visitors found hope in the experiences and voices from the programme of activities.

"...very interesting for me personally because it makes me more hopeful that resistance is possible and of course necessary, even under very dangerous and harsh conditions." Visitor (feedback form)

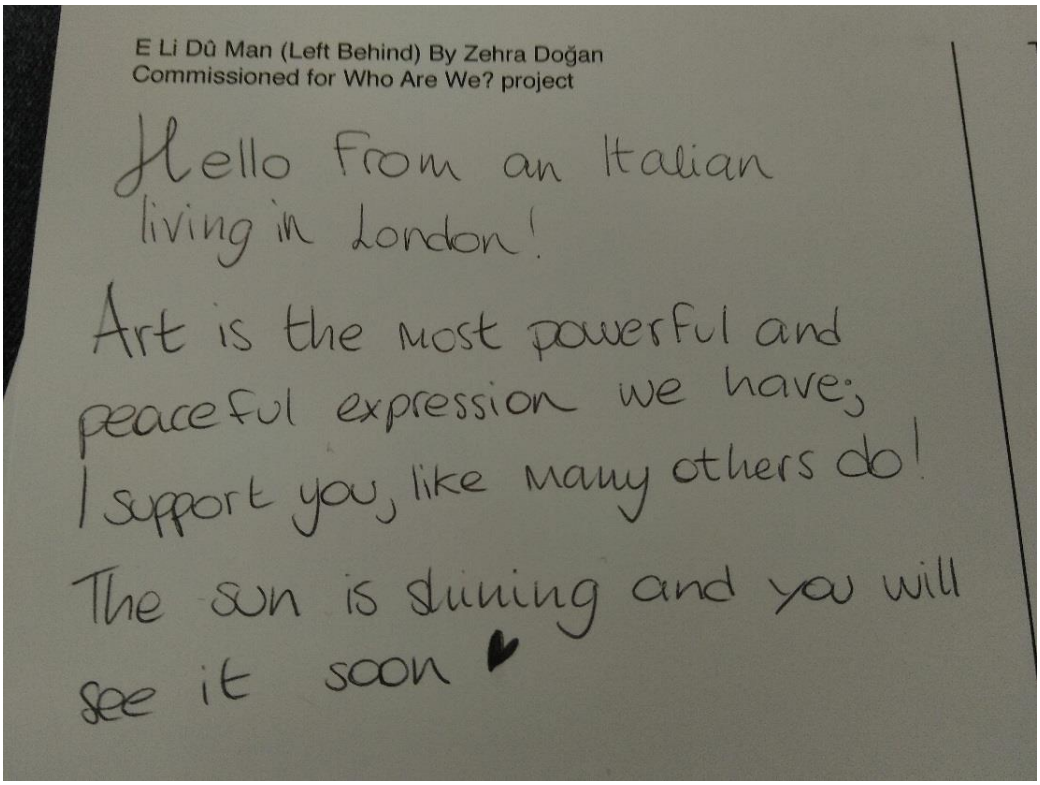

Figure 4. Postcard written by visitor to one of Turkey's political prisoners

Another theme identified in the data relates to the programme **provoking visitors to think in new ways.**

"Provoking me to think in new ways" Visitor (feedback form)

"I really love this, the whole thing about forms of domination that exist, and also how people imagine a different society with no border and no passports and this universal income and that stuff" Visitor (interview)

"Very thought provoking regarding the relation between bureaucratic systems and human experience" Visitor (feedback form)

"Two years ago is quite far but I remember I was positively impressed by the participation and the activities we could do and the sort of stimulus we got" (...) "What I learnt at the time was more about maybe the topics of refugees, like what it feels to be a refugee" (...) Visitor (interview)

"This [Tate Exchange floor] is where the life is" (...) "When people start talking about institutions, corporations and artists it can encourage us to forget it's all about human beings, human bodies and more importantly brains (…) I believe we have now reached a point as a species where our challenge is to think, to realise that we have got to change our traditional ways of perceiving things and thinking about things (...). Tate Neighbour visitor (interview)

Provoking visitors to think in different ways is also the intention of artists and facilitators of some of the workshops. Artist Laila Sumpton, for example, explained in an interview how the intention of the art is *"creating provocations for people".*

Artist Farhad Berhman also referred to the importance of the *Who Are We* week to enable conversations about migration and belonging:

"Who Are We mainly works about migration, identity (...). Topic-wise, that makes a difference [compared to other spaces]*"* Farhad Berhman, artist (interview)

Other visitors valued the **reinforcement of knowledge, especially knowing that others think and work together towards similar social change goals**:

"Yes definitely (...). It is always good to reinforce and to see other people sharing the same thoughts of you, plus there is some proper learning as well, definitely... or even knowing that there are groups that work together (...) also the talk about identity." Visitor (interview)

Some artists referred to this as **a "space of solidarity"** where this sharing of experiences and knowledge was enabled by people already interested in these topics but also for those who would have otherwise not entered this conversation.

"We ran a workshop two days ago with an LSE project that I am involved with (...) it was an experimental workshop to basically workshop the website. (...) Not only did we have two of the refugee families that we worked with that had come into the space, but also we had a group of 17 people. (...) And it was people that, some would have come to the Tate anyways but some just came because they were interested in the issue of migration and how you communicate about it. (...) So, I think it was a really unique space to be in." Marcia Chandra, artist (interview)

"This is a place of solidarity of people who are already campaigning on refugee rights or things like that. But of course because it is the Tate and it is free you do get people, the unintended visitors to this space, so that's exciting." Laila Sumpton, artist (interview)

At the personal level, the *Who Are We* programme of activities also helped visitors to be **more aware of their prejudice**, and taking this into account in their thinking and actions, including in their professional lives. This was identified especially in visitors commenting on the installation on languages.

"[The most interesting thing I have heard today is] *How to respond to the sounds of different languages. Even if unfamiliar ones, they can be pleasant sounds. "Unpleasant" sounding ones can result in unintended prejudice (…) Communication with people who speak "English" with the sounds and intonations of their own language can be difficult to communicate with. Often they will encounter impatience from the person they are speaking to. I try hard to listen carefully!"* Visitor (feedback form)

“The importance of one's gut reaction to the sound of a language (whether familiar or unfamiliar) in determining our responses to the person speaking it. (…) [It is] relevant because in working in an area in which one has contact with the public, fairness is predicated upon the absence of preconceptions, linguistic or otherwise.” Visitor (feedback form)

Others referred to the detachment from what other people experience and how the *Who Are We* programme helps them to be more aware and **connected towards these different realities**:

"It made me realise what struggles people go through in other parts of the world that I have never encountered and how we sort of live detached from this here." Visitor (interview)

"The value of such a thing is that the value of it all is to be able to feel bridged to those cultures, places, identities, that are otherwise distant". Visitor (interview)

Finally, a number of visitors talked about **feeling inspired to learn more languages** after attending the workshop “Polyglots, Language Teachers and Learners”, a collaboration between The Open University researcher Tita Beaven, poet Laila Sumpton and live artist Natasha Davis.

"Inspired and motivated me to learn more languages (…) Immerse myself in new cultures and traditions" Visitor (feedback form)

“It pushes me to pursue other languages as I was shown the value being a polyglot brings” Visitor (feedback form)

“I would love to travel and learn different languages to at least a conversational level.” Visitor (feedback form)

"The teachers said the students were really inspired, had a new energy and interest around language learning which they did not have before so… Similarly, the teachers and language academics equally saw everything in a new light. It was just creating the space to listen and learn from each other". Laila Sumpton, artist (interview)

(3) The professional-personal-political self

The impact of *Who Are We* programme often cuts across the personal and professional arenas involving also a sense of activism or political involvement.

One of the visitors had come to the *Who Are We* programme in its first year in 2017 after seeing it advertised and out of interest in the programme. She was at the exhibition again in 2019, although this time she found herself here by chance during a visit to the Tate Modern. She explained that, after her visit in the first year, she had decided to **join a refugee organisation in South London as a volunteer**.

> *"So, it made you think about the topic? Oh yes, so much. (...) I am [now] involved with volunteering with refugees. That exhibition gave me so much stimulus, hints and ideas. So, then, I did something else after the exhibition (...).I wanted to do something and I think having much more clues about what refugees are experiencing obviously pushed me to take the decision to volunteer, to be much more involved".* Visitor (interview)

Other visitors explain how the *Who Are We* activities made them think about their social and political engagement:

"It has inspired me to consider what outcomes I want to make as an artist" Visitor (interview)

"The theme of the symposium fits in my academic interest - without events like today I would miss on connecting with essential people, project and concept that enrich my intellectual, personal and political eye. Thank you!" Visitor (feedback form)

"I will take materials to work with me and spread the message - 'We are all human treat us as such'" (Visitor, feedback form)

The **importance of call to action** offered by the *Who Are We* programme was also mentioned by Kurdish artist Zehra Doğan (quote from translation by interpreter):

"It is its interaction and call for action, it is the power of the call for action that it has the most value for us because she [Zehra Doğan] defines herself as being an artist that has activism in her core so that's why interacting with people here, engaging with people here and calling for an action is what she is looking for. That's why it is really valuable and she thinks this whole format of the exhibition actually meets the way she does her art."

2.2. The role of the arts in facilitating this change of perceptions

The impact and changes observed as described in the previous section was facilitated according to interviews and feedback from visitors through (1) emotional affect; (2) dialogical interaction, including access, meaningful conversation and involvement; (3)

diversity of experiences and voices, including seeing other people's opinion: (4) empathy; (5) community and (6) freedom to explore. The analysis finds that artists' point of view overwhelmingly reinforces these points. In addition, artists also highlighted the role of the collaborative nature between arts and academia of the *Who Are We* programme in facilitating social change through (7) empowerment; as well as, and related to the previous points, the (8) healing nature of such space.

1- Emotional affect

Visitors found the activities "moving", and felt "impressed" or "touched" by the talks, installations and conversations.

"The long discussion about 'risk' in the conference room, very, very moving and impressive talks about how artists like Tania Bruguera from Cuba or Zehra Dôgan risk their lives in order to protest against an extremely authoritarian government." Visitor (feedback form)

"It almost pushes me to cry when you ask this question because for so many years what has been happening to the Kurdish people in Turkey has not had any space in the mainstream media. This installation is talking about 2 or 3 or major populated towns and cities that were almost razed to the ground just three years ago. (...) You can't underestimate the importance of an exhibition like this at the Tate Modern. It's incredibly significant. (…) Almost every conversation I have with somebody sparks them to talk about their experiences"(...) "It brings up a lot of memories and trauma" (...) Visitor (interview)

"Drawing on my hand + arm - very affecting" Visitor (feedback form)

The installation "As far as isolation goes" by musician and street artist, Basel Zaraa, and live artist, Tania El Khoury, which included artists drawing on visitors' arms,was particularly effective at achieving this emotional impact.

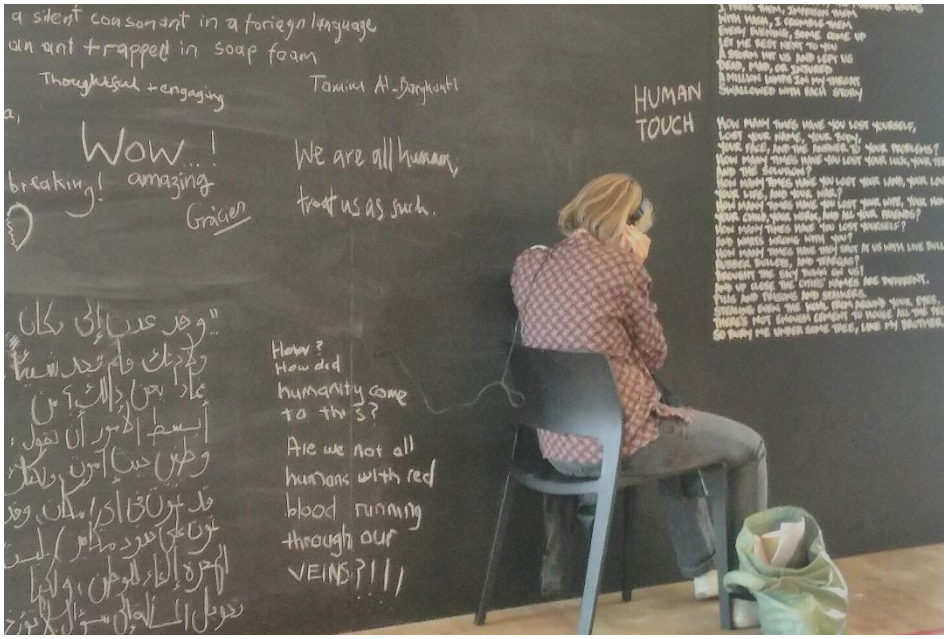

Figure 5. As far as isolation goes - Installation at the Who Are We programme

The installation invites visitors to sit by a black board, put the headphones on and their arm inside a hole in the board, where it finds the touch of the artist, who draws on the arm of the visitor while sounds are played to bring the audience closer to the issues related to detention centres, their inhumane conditions, and the health system that dismisses political and emotional needs in its mental health care.

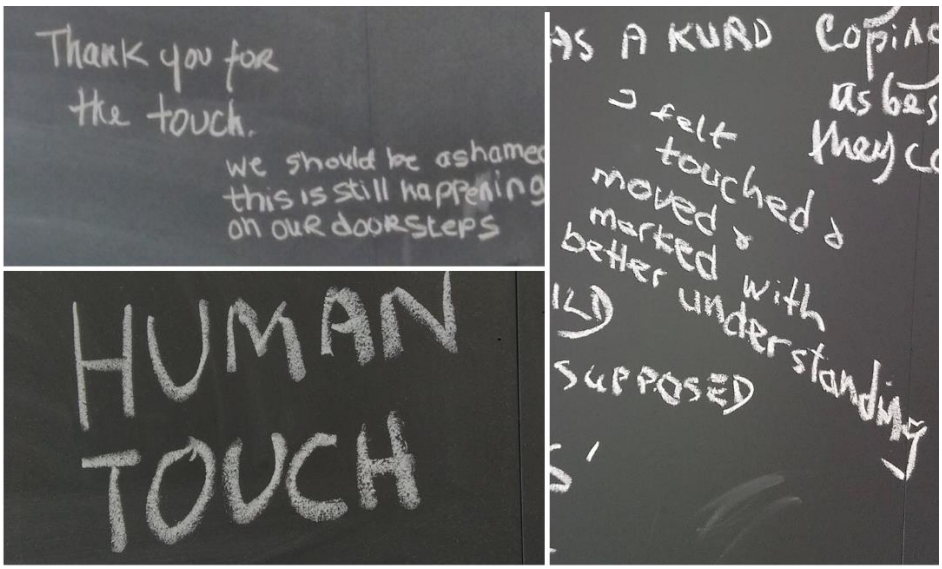

Figure 6. Messages written by visitors after experiencing the "As Far as Isolation Goes" installation

The power of affect and emotion was also raised by artists.

"And I watched the soundshapes video (...) I found very moving where there was somebody who was embroidering last year, I wasn't aware of the conversation that was going on but there is a film of her embroidering and it is lovely to see her hands working

and she has actually written a quote and it is actually quite a sad quote, and hearing her explain it and watching her sewing it was quite moving I found" Sonia Tuttiett, Artist (interview)

2- Dialogical interaction (access, meaningful conversation and involvement)

Another key affordance of the programme of activities and set-up was its dialogical interaction. Visitors talked about the value of being able to access the artists and the context of the installations and to genuinely enter into a meaningful conversation. This allowed them to feel more involved and connected.

"Instead of standing opposite something here, it feels more involved. It is so much more involving and I just felt so much more invited to understand where these pieces of art are coming from (…). Here I felt more part of it" (Visitor, interview)

"I have seen most of the exhibitions here at Tate (...) [This one] is interactive! I don't think I have ever been to such an interactive exhibition where people just contribute to everything and also the artists themselves are here, which I haven't seen before." Visitor (interview)

"The difference between this place and art galleries is access (…) something I have not really seen other art galleries doing in the same way (…) Having an ongoing conversation outside of the space about whatever it is" Visitor (interview)

This space for interaction, connection and conversation was also brought up by some of the partners of the installations, such as PEN International, co-organiser of installation by Kurdish artist Zehra Doğan.

"Being able to be surrounded with all these other narratives allows you to have a broader conversation [on similar issues]" Mike Halmshaw (PEN International)

Arts spaces can feel unwelcoming, especially to audiences who are not used to claiming these spaces for themselves. In this context, the importance of artists' and academics' interactive and participatory approach for making visitors feel welcome and encouraging interaction and dialogue cannot be overstated. Although this was mentioned only in one interview, it is worth noting that some of the ways in which artists were sitting at a table made one of the visitors feel left out at first. However, this changed, they said, as soon as a conversation started. Nonetheless, this impression on initial access is important to take into account. It is also worth noting that, despite this, that same visitor did really value the learning of the overall programme.

"I know it is free (…) but at the same time it feels like closed, I feel like I am intruding a little bit. (…) I mean as soon as the first person starts talking to me I understand, it is just my impression, it is not true… but, still, maybe the way the things are organised, maybe this line that enclosed space, there is always somebody at the table that looks like 'I have the right to be here'...I don't know, I don't feel very welcome actually. I try to make

myself at ease, but it is an effort that I am making, it is not natural, so I guess that can happen to other people as well." Visitor (interview)

The value of interaction and meaningful conversation was also raised by artists:

"It is great that people can have a one to one chat with the artist (...) Last year it was about the Afghan camera so people were asking 'why is it Afghan camera?' so this was a good way to start talking about migration.(…) I do projects that talk about my own story of migration (...) we create artworks that maybe, we are reflecting ourselves but then again we want people to talk about it, think about it or reflect on it and so it is very important to have a chat about these things." Farhad Berhman, artist (interview)

"What is interesting to me is possibility for installations (...) for pieces, for processes that happen here to create an environment in which you feel you can say 'here is how I am different to you'. (...) I think it is true that we live in quite isolated communities (...) and I think that this space, what is interesting for artists is that they create opportunities for those isolated spaces to somehow mix (...). I think this idea that we all agree is actually overrated" Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

"We see the same people coming back year to year because they are absolutely mesmerised with this, the different activities. Because we are learning together in public, and we are making in public, and the public are always invited to have input in what we are doing, regardless which section we are in. Even going here to the talk, they can also participate in the talk, or whatever project is happening, they can take part and have their own input and have conversations. And I think that's what keeps bringing people back." Isabel Lima, artist (interview)

"I think it has been amazing to see the conversations. (...) People come in, you know, they just come to the Tate and, especially last year, it was amazing to see how many people came and sat down to the tables and just really got into the conversations, they lasted for quite a long time, and I think they were really surprised, you know, that they came here and they were stitching with these lovely incredible women who would never call themselves artists but in a way they were for the day, for that week. And I think that was amazing. It is a complete experimental space. (...) It totally felt like art but it did not feel like something you could not enter into. (...)" Marcia Chandra, artist (interview)

The importance of working with artists was also valued by academics who referenced it in their talks as observed by the research consultant. Some explained that *"How do we create meaningful public dialogue"* was a question that guided the collaboration and others referred to the power of art to start a conversation: *"What I found so interesting about it is that it was an innovative way of telling a story and having a conversational starting point".*

3- Diversity of experiences and voices (including seeing other people's opinions)

This interaction and emotional affect described so far are also related to the possibility of hearing, seeing and reading from a variety of other people's opinions and experiences, be it artists or other visitors.

"I met someone who lived in many different countries and learnt the languages of those countries" Visitor (feedback form)

"Promoting diverse voices, experiences, etc." Visitor (feedback form)

"[What was the most interesting thing you heard today?] *The fantastic comment about communication and action on the wall"* Visitor (feedback form)

"So we are looking at things that aren't UK centric and I am not from the UK myself, I am from Lebanon, so first of all it is always a breath of fresh air to hear my language, it is such a breath of fresh air to hear Arabic, and I have heard it a few times around, and I have read it (...) so it makes me feel a lot more connected to everything that is going on." Visitor (interview)

4- Empathy

The emotional affect and space for conversation described above also helped visitors to better understand the challenges and oppressions faced by other people.

"Seeing it like this it brings it more to my mind and reminds me of it (...) especially because artists themselves have experienced things that I could never feel". Visitor (interview)

Figure 7. Visitors writing letters to political prisoners held in Turkish jails.

5- Community

Some participants referred to the different atmosphere during the *Who Are We* week at the Tate Exchange compared to other galleries or installations and described it as providing a sense of community.

"There is really a juxtaposition when you have this high brand I guess arts in the Tate Modern with these very recognisable artists but over here it is something that it is more about community I guess." Visitor (interview)

"That Tate provides a space for collaboration and community engagement" Visitor (feedback form)

"I feel this space allows everybody to feel a little bit more connected to other people and it grounds people in communities." Bern O'Donoghue, artist (interview)

6- Freedom to explore

Linked to the points discussed above, freedom to explore was perceived by the visitors and identified as a theme in the data from the interviews and feedback forms. This was also observed by the researcher: some visitors would wander and observe and read, some would write in the post-its or boards of some installations, others would talk to the artists for lengthy amounts of time, others would sit and read or draw and paint. The atmosphere observed reflected this sense of freedom to wander, reflect or interact at one's own pace.

"I feel there is much more freedom to explore" "It feels more like a free space where, if you want, you can engage, if you don't, you can just sit and stay on your own." Visitor (interview)

Figure 8. Visitor reading the messages in the board

7- Empowerment

The analysis of interviews with artists shows that their views not only reinforce the views above from visitors but also emphasise the empowering potential of the *Who Are We* programme for transformational change. This empowering element emerges according to some artists when the depth of meaning and factual understanding from research comes together with the power of the arts to catalyse meaningful conversations and understanding of experiences through affect in the population.

"I think this is a conversation, philosophical, and social, an emotional conversation that needs to be had regularly. Not just in the arena that's Brexit. Not just in the arena that's Europe, but I think a lot of people would find the space to have the sort of conversations that we have had through 'Who Are We' really meaningful. (…) You know, so many people talk about how they feel disempowered now. They find it hard to trust information. I am really interested to seeing if the research that academics gather and then present to government, what if it was presented to the ordinary man and, then, the impact of that work change policy rather than politicians think we can get away with things, we'll see how far we can test things, we'll test the water... What if, people said, actually, not in my name? (...)" Bern O'Donoghue, artist (interview)

"A lot the women [doing the embroidery work in the installation] *are quite marginalised and they are quite amazed at how their work has been valued and celebrated (...) and that's very, very, important. And being part of something like the Tate Exchange is just something outside of their normal sphere (...) so it is wonderful."* Sonia Tuttiett, artist (interview)

8 – Healing

Some of the reflections by artists on what the *Who Are We* programme enables and the importance of it can be described as healing, especially in the context of harsh political and social times. This theme around healing relates to themes identified above such as hope, empathy, community and conversation.

"I am just aware that we live in kind of quite frightening times. Why don't we just try to have a debate about what it is that it is worrying us? (...) We are constantly being told that our opinion matters but I feel that the conversations we are asked to be taking part are about consuming, and about consumerism. I really want them to be about, not just scratching the surface about mental health, about homelessness, about belonging... (…) I see the lack of these kind of conversations really impacts on the health of society. And that's why all these avenues, you know, be it music, or be it, you know, people taking photographs or people singing songs (...) what that does is that it shows people that they are not on their own. And we all feel really alone with our fears. I think it is time for us to kind of, you know, put our hands up and go, look, come over here and it is ok." Bern O'Donoghue, artist (interview)

" I think in today's modern world a lot of people don't do much collaboratively and just last year the amount of people who stayed for hours and hours to sew together and to

talk together that was really very telling. And we are used to sewing and talking because we do it on a regular basis but this was members of the public who had not done this sewing before and the fact they could come and, you know, just, some would stay for 10 minutes but others stayed for a couple of hours sometimes (...) I think there is an appetite for doing things in collaboration (...) actually spending time sitting and talking, yes, it is almost a lost art". Sonia Tuttiett, artist (interview)

3. The impact on artists' practices

Research question 2

How has the work of academics at The Open University changed the ways in which the arts practice of artists engages with issues of migration and citizenship?

> **What has been the role of participatory approaches to research in facilitating this change?**

Artists spoke about the impact of collaborating with academics on their own artistic practice but also about the benefits of the synergy between the two as well as the impact of the partnership to improve academia.

3.1. Reflection, meaning and participatory approaches

For artists specifically, the themes identified revolve around the following: (1) Reflecting in new ways on one's practice; (2) Deeper knowledge and meaning; (3) Participatory research allows greater impact on people's lives. However, another key theme was around the synergies between the two and the impact of these synergies in both artists and academia which is covered further down.

1- Reflecting in new ways

Being able to reflect on one's own practice was a possibility catalysed by the interaction with different frameworks and ways of exploring concepts as well as by the possibility for the artist to not only being a producer of art but also a subject of research.

"What I have been really interested in and what has been really fascinating to me is what happens when you put artists in contact with researchers (...) who actually work in social and political disciplines, for example in migration because, what I personally found is, you know, Umut [Dr. Umut Erel, OU] *just presented a project but tangible, like, actually working with real immigrants who are really feeling marginalisations, that is the marginalisation that is structural, and she is thinking about that from an academic and research perspective."* Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

"I am used to being in a position of facilitating other people's experience with something and getting out of the way. (...) as somebody who is really comfortable presenting an issue rather than presenting myself, I had to keep saying to myself, it is fine, it is really fine, it is just a little bit uncomfortable..." (...) "I learnt that some of the things that I am trying to get across aren't coming across. It is always really good to have a moment of reflection (...) I felt a little bit I was stepping outside my own practice to see it with a fresher perspective". Bern O'Donoghue, artist (interview)

"Academia is a field of rigour and it is a different rigour than artistic rigour and (...) it is a good way to step out of your own thinking bubble because what has been very useful to

me has been speaking to people like Umut [Dr. Umut Erel, OU] *or Agnes* [Dr. Agnes Czajka, OU] *because the questions they ask of me are very different to the questions a producer will ask of me and this is an excellent way to gently restart your thinking"* Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

"I guess that as an artist you kind of go from collaboration to collaboration and so this has been quite a stretch to make you think about why you do something in a way that I probably wouldn't do normally. (...) I guess each collaboration has different dynamics and different purposes and so you are quite used to approach everything, each thing, with a fresh eye but, actually, coming back to this, it has been very interesting, that's something that we don't normally do, we don't normally revisit things we have done or collaborations". Sonia Tuttiett, artist (interview)

"I think the topic of art and politics is a very interesting one so, having someone who is an expert in politics and who can frame these things properly (...) what is interesting here is that I came into it much more form a media point of view, from a story-telling point of view, and the creation of an interactive experience (…). She is looking at it from a very different perspective, which can enrich my discourse" Joan Soler-Adillon, artist (interview)

"It was very interesting for me to learn how people working in a different environment think about the structures like dissemination of knowledge (...) the compromises we all make (…) I think it has definitely changed how I think about ownership and authorship of an artistic project.(...) It is really a mix of two infrastructures that until recently have been largely separated and I learnt a lot from that". Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

This view on authorship was also mentioned by Counterpoints Arts as a risk that artists are willing to test and see in different ways in this collaboration:

"Artists can be quite weary, and partly because of REF, you know (...) the ownership of the work in that relationship can get tricky. But I think it is understood as part of this project. The artists are really open to work with The Open University academics. (...) For artists, this is a valuable experience for them. You know, we all had our own experiences and understandings of what it is to work with art institutions but being part of this project opens door to people. (...)." Dijana Rakovic, Productions (Counterpoints Arts)

2- Deeper knowledge and meaning

Another theme identified was the contribution of academia in adding a different layer of meaning, sometimes seen by artists as deeper knowledge, of an issue or concept.

"I think other collaborations with perhaps arts collaborations or, we do things with theatre sometimes, it is not the same level of understanding of the meaning behind things. It is looking for something different than an art organisation would be looking for. They think more deeply about things actually, so that was quite special, quite interesting" Sonia Tuttiett, artist (interview)

"I think it can actually give it a wider better context if we frame it within the main political research. My work goes to a very specific case, to a very specific way of looking at it and trying to connect with the personal emotions and the personal stories, so having a way giving this another layer (...) the idea is this story should get you interested in a topic and then you have some bigger context in which you can inscribe it so hopefully then the audience could connect a little bit better and have a bigger picture." Joan Soler-Adillon, artist (interview)

3- Participatory research allows greater impact

In relation to the previous point, the value of participatory research was also brought up by another artist, who thought academics conducting participatory research provide a deeper embeddedness and knowledge in a context, which facilitates greater impact.

"What it really came to the fore is her [Dr. Agnes Czajka] knowledge and embeddedness into Milton Keynes and to experience the knowledge of the local community and the issues faced by them. Without that, we would not have been able to find the collaborators, find the venue, and make a project that (...) really honestly has good foundations to actually try and do something in these specific communities. Because the thing I am not really interested in is parachuting from place to place and presenting the same theatre performance or whatever that is not aware of the local context. We would have missed so much if it wasn't for this strong academic relationship". Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

3.2. The synergies between arts and academia

The view that the synergies between arts and academia resulted into a unique space for social impact as well as a way to improve the work of both arts and academia was a predominant theme among artists. There was also the view that the relationship between the two was deep and meaningful as opposed to academia using the arts to tick a box on public engagement.

"It has really given me, it has created a rare opportunity I think for me in which I felt both supported but also I had enough space and breather and time. (...) Sometimes these institutional collaborations can make artists feel instrumentalised and I think it was really the opposite of that (...) and I think that's what makes "Who Are We" (...) a very unique project" Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

This was also raised by one of the academics, who thought this was a different partnership because the collaboration with the artist and research participants was planned as such from the design of the research:

"In my previous experiences, collaboration always happened after. There is an academic project, there are results and then you work with artists to communicate those results

whereas in our project the artists were included from the very start. So they were part of the project in the way, they were there. So, the project was framed around the collaboration. It was not this convenient impact, ok we have this let turn it into something. And so, in that sense, it informed the entire way of thinking for the project. That's why it needed more time as well. It is because the way we thought about method was different." Dr. Deena Dajani, academic (interview)

"Even the labs that happened, it is not just academics speaking, or it is not just artists, or it is not just activists, it brings this wealth of knowledge and voices and, even from different countries, yet sharing the same space, same time, and to have honest conversations and to exchange knowledge and to learn with each other and from each other." Isabel Lima, artist (interview)

"The value [of bringing the two together] *is it gets people outside their little bubble. It helps people to have an alternative opinion but to also question their own opinion a little bit. I think academics really benefit from coming outside of really safe establishments."* Bern O'Donoghue, artist (interview)

"We are looking at the same topic in two very different ways. I am looking at it as an artist and also as a Catalan, obviously, and I feel very strongly about it, and at the same time I am trying to do artwork to talk about this (...) looking at the personal implications of a political situation (…) that she [academic] is researching (...) from a much more one detached as a UK citizen and also from a theoretical background (...). So I think they combine pretty well as to ways of looking at the same thing from very different perspectives." Joan Soler-Adillon, artist (interview)

"What I found with my relationship with people from the OU is that there is this kind of focus on real impacts and real lives that connects in the artistic practice and the research (...) that's like an excellent point to start from. (…) And, in a way, this research is not abstract but actually very much connected to real communities." Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

[On partnering with academia compared to other partnerships/collaborations] *"It is quite different actually! It has been lovely seeing what has been produced in the year since we made the coat. I am very excited by the way that film and the academic research has actually been turned into something that it has extended what the coat was about."* Sonia Tuttiett, artist (interview)

"The evolution of it [the *Who Are We* programme] *it has been really amazing to see; the way that they paired artists with academia and tried to combine the process and try to make research also accessible. I think the open language one, was a really great one because (...) how do you even start to make this research about language engaging to people. And by bringing the stitching and the film work itself it made it a really more, experience for people to understand so I think this has been kind of amazing".* Marcia Chandra, artist (interview)

3.3. The benefits for academia

Artists also talked about the benefits of such collaboration for academia. There was the view that the partnership exposed them to ways of understanding and working that use different frameworks and agilities.

> *"I think academia needs as much of art as much as art needs of academia."* Isabel Lima, artist (interview)

> *"We help academics in animating what it is that they are investigating and making it accessible to people (…) So that was really exciting, they* [public] *really engaged with the objects that symbolised language learning (...) I think because we were coming at it in a more playful way, we got quite some really honest and interesting answers, which we would not have got if we had not been using these elements of play and creativity."* Laila Sumpton, artist (interview)

> *"There is a lot of precarity in art but that means a lot of quick thinking and decision making and (...) I think we are removed from big institutions that operate in slow ways (...) and I wonder if (…) that different kind of agility (...) is probably quite interesting to people who work in academia."* Bojana Jankovic, artist (interview)

> That collaborating with artists pushed academic thinking too was also a view among academics. For example, Dr. Tim Butcher, in conversation with artists at one of the *Who Are We* symposiums said: *"You* [referring to artist] *tested my thinking: Do I use my position as a critical academic or do I just exist?"*

Another academic, although not from The Open University, recognised also learning from other types of knowledge and practice:

> *"I think these kind of tensions were really productive. It takes time to find the language that we you all can work with but in the end you create something that... I mean, I was so touched... as an academic at the beginning I was so critical at the ideas put forward by the artists, I had gotten so used to moderating focus groups the way my mum sits with her aunts and speaks, like with women (...) and then when there was this rigid format of a workshop with stickers and stuff I thought actually it might take away from the experience but actually it totally taught me to recognise as a researcher, to recognise, as an academic, experiences in very different ways. Because it allows you to... again, when people have more ways of expressing themselves, they can actually express more things in very different ways. So, I think that all that productive tension was really, really, good."* Dr. Deena Dajani, LSE academic (interview)

One of the artists, who is also in academia as a PhD candidate, talked about the role of art in decolonising academia by embracing new epistemologies and methods that are not necessarily typically Western and which are excluded for this reason from being considered of the rigour of academia:

"Academia is important for me because I am in both. Particularly what I want to bring is knowledges that are not valid or recognised in academia within the western kind of mode. So I am taking a more of a decolonial approach (…) because I work a lot with communities in neighbourhoods and people that are not usually recognised, not even as citizens, let alone in academia. So, I think they bring different ways of knowing and I think these are important to kind of bring and validate in academia." Isabel Lima, artist (interview)

4. The impact on curatorial practices

The interviews with representatives from the Tate Exchange (Tate Modern) and Counterpoints Arts revealed the following areas of value of the partnership between the three, and the value binding of both arts and academia for learning and social impact. Three major themes identified are: (1) New and multi-layered ways of thinking and understanding the world; (2) Leaning in a public way; and (3) The importance of the long term relationship.

1- New and multi-layered ways of thinking and understanding the world

The representatives from both institutions spoke about the benefits of this partnership for pushing both the institutions and the public to think in new ways.

"It is this kind of meeting of the minds and that real provocation to think about arts and society when they meet and what difference arts can make to society." Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

This is enabled not only by bringing together artists and academia but also by exploring an issue from different academic disciplines.

"Last year the languages 'A stitch in time' project happened and we remained interested in how that school at The Open University understands migration. It is really interesting what they did around the politics of teaching. There is a lot of work going on. You don't consider... you know, what happens to migrants who are educators in this country from their perspective? What is going on? So there is all sorts of connecting things there... and it is just great to have an ongoing relationship, so you don't start from the beginning every time. There is a history to this now." Dijana Rakovic, Productions (Counterpoints Arts)

"Oh, massively! I think enormously, I think to break down that research and to expose it and to have a conversation with people is hugely important; to have artists who are able to think creatively in ways that others aren't, it is amazing; but really kind of exposing and having a dialogue around academia and research is massive" Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

2- Learning in a public way

Another valued benefit of this partnership, linked to the previous one, is the view by curators from Tate Exchange and Counterpoints Arts that this provocation of learning happens in public, through the creation of conversations with artists, academics and a variety of visitors. This public learning was seen as improving the practice of the curators but also as having a profound impact on visitors.

"And I think that more and more that's what Tate Exchange is offering, Tate as an institution is a space for conversations to happen internally but in a public way and, you know, to invite in more voices to this conversation who often will ask questions as an institution but not have the expertise or the knowledge inside to answer these questions. (…) So often I will put questions that I am having to the associates group. This week, the artists at risk question being a really good example but I think more generally, to be in conversation and to improve that knowledge is really wonderful. But also, the associates they ask us questions and they challenges us to be better." Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

"People were coming out just saying how amazing it is to come into a space like this which is still, you know, I am coming to Tate Modern, I 'll go and see art, and we all agree between us it does begin with the work, the artists' work, it is kind of a trigger for everybody. But then you kind of come in and you end up being in a conversation which is, you know, around climate change, or Umut talked about her migrants mothers project yesterday. And for the audience here, for this to be an enriching and a learning opportunity, people walk in and kind of don't appreciate how brilliant it is to have a project with the two so bound together." Dijana Rakovic, Productions (Counterpoints Arts)

"That day I remember so well, people were being interviewed in the office and one person would say 'this is amazing, this has really furthered my knowledge on a subject that I already know so much about but what good does it do if it is just me being in conversation with other people (...) but then what would happen that day is (...) the next person would say 'this is amazing, I didn't know anything about this topic, I had no idea that these things were going on, thank you for telling us this.'. And, you know, I think, that's really special." Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

"And you know that we are a really varied group of people here and people will constantly be surprised and even if people come anyway to the Tate (...) and they really, really, value it and helps us to understand the world. I have learnt so much from being here today." Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

3- The importance of the long term relationship

Both the Tate Exchange and Counterpoints Arts referred to the value of the long-term relationship, which allows this complex and multi-layered knowledge and conversations to evolve and grow.

"The collaborations that seemed the most obvious in the group weren't the ones that have taken off and some of the most interesting collaborations have been not necessarily with the organisations but with their publics and the people that they bring together. I think that this [Who Are We] is a really good example of that actually, of Counterpoints and their public and their audience, and who they are in conversation with and how then that joins in with the OU actually. And that happens on the floor, that's what is very unique about what happens on the Tate Exchange floor. (...) At the beginning we thought that this would be a three year relationship but actually I think that we are really just at the beginning of seeing the possibilities of collaboration in that group" Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

"We value the colleagues that we have developed relationships with at The Open University. The way that they talk about migration, the kind of research in this area, the way that Umut [Dr. Umut Erel, OU], the projects that she's done with migrant women, we respect so much, it is an amazing project. Agnes [Dr. Agnes Czajka, OU] and Áine [Áine O'Brien, Counterpoints Arts] are writing a book together (...) but we developed this relationship and it works, it just works. Sometimes within academic institutions there is a kind of a short sort of term-ness, I need that for this (...) but it hasn't been so with this." Dijana Rakovic, Productions (Counterpoints Arts)

"I think for us the real interest as well was in bringing in new voices that are in a conversation that is as rich as the people involved in it and that, actually, we need to open up our spaces not just for a one-time event but for a durational experiment. Like, what would happened if we were working together for three years, not just with us, as Tate, and one other organisation, but as a group of 63 different organisations, and what strength could we bring to each other, how we could further each other's research but also along members of the public and unexpected audience, and how that might grow overtime" Jane Wells, Programme Manager (Tate Exchange)

5. Conclusion

This research study conducted on-site during the Who Are We 2019 week at the Tate Modern used a plurality of data, from interviews to visitors, artists, academics and curators to observation, feedback cards and social media data.

One of the key insights is the overwhelming overlap of views across different stakeholders (visitors, artists, curators and academics) on the impact and uniqueness of the Who Are We week. These overlapping views and perceptions revolve around the value of this week of activities at the Tate Exchange (Tate Modern) as a space for interactive and meaningful discussion and a sense of community on issues around citizenship and migration.

Visitors talked about feeling provoked to think in new ways, about developing a better understanding of other, and about feeling inspired to think and act differently. The research suggests that academia, particularly through participatory approaches from academics at The Open University, helped to add depth and layered meaning to the issues and that the arts helped to communicate the issues in reachable, affective and empathetic ways. Curators felt this was an important long term collaboration that is allowing them to enable public collective learning and provoking their own institutions to question the ways they engage in important social issues.

Overall, there is a real sense from all stakeholders, including visitors, that this is a rare but necessary space for learning, collaboration, solidarity, understanding and hope, particularly relevant in the difficult social and political times as perceived by the research participants themselves.