Imagining new ways of representing refugees – Teaching proposal

Elsa Gomis

Imagination is not an innate talent. This is the revelation that I had at the age of 11. The director of my school in a small village in Southern France had managed to secure funding for a small publication. I was proud. One drawing I had made had been selected by her to be part of our little book. It represented a distinguished rooster wearing a large red cloak. Once the book had been published, I was very disappointed: I realized that the rooster I was so proud of happened to be a pale copy of Disney's Uncle Scrooge. Something I thought I had created out of my own imagination was mimicking a famous comic character. Since then, I kept this insightful event in mind. Later, when visiting Scotland as a teenager, I understood that the image of the forest I always had in mind was more the Scottish emerald hardwood forests disseminated in Disney's version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves and of Robin Hood, than the dryer garrigue version of the forest I had always known in Provence. When I was teaching art in primary schools years later and asked the pupils to create 'imaginative drawings' of humans, I was then not surprised to see them reproducing the appearance of manga characters with big disproportionate heads and enormous eyes.

If imagination is not a unique construct given *ex nihilo* to individuals and results from the imprint in the minds of the intense and repeated circulation of same images produced by a dominant visual regime, one's situatedness vis-à-vis such a regime is key. In my case, it is that of a white privileged woman. I must acknowledge this positioning when reflecting on the origins of my imaginary. When studying the collective imag-

inary of migrations via the Mediterranean during my Critical PhD by Practice in Film Studies, I observed that a narrow range of visual motifs (rubber boats, life jackets and survival blankets) was encapsulating refugees in mainstream media images. European border regimes impact the way Westerners picture fellow humans fleeing their homelands in what Nicholas De Genova coined as "Border Spectacle": an aesthetic that reifies migrant "illegality" "in an emphatic and grandiose gesture of exclusion".[1] This aesthetic conveyed by mainstream media images composes a collective imagination that imprints other visual fields (contemporary art, cartography, fashion) and influences migratory policies.[2]

How to build an educational proposal that allows bringing awareness of the insidious influence of media imagery on our consciences? How to ethically apply this teaching proposal to the contemporary human odysseys of those considered "illegal"? I decided to create a teaching proposal with two goals:

- Revealing the impact of mainstream images of migration in the minds.
- Finding alternative means to visually portray contemporary migrants.

After introducing the teaching strategy rationale, the present article introduces the chosen teaching scenario and discusses it. Challenging mental representations of refugees carried by mainstream media (1), is materialized by an attempt to deconstruct the gaze in 30 minutes (2) that raises ethically complex issues (3). The concluding remarks suggest a potential follow-up to extend the reflection on the dominant visual regime portraying contemporary refugees.

Teaching method rationale: challenging mental representations of refugees carried by mainstream media

Today's mainstream images of migration capture refugees in spectacular photographs portraying them in ways that strike the imagination.[3]

These images show refugees as masses conveying either a sense of threat or of pity.[4] For understanding how these circulating images compose a collective imaginary that affects border policies,[5] I borrowed the theoretical framework of the field of visual anthropology. Represented by Hans Belting in particular, this subfield of social anthropology considers man not only as a political animal, but as *homo pictor*: a being who shapes images, who produces images and who understands the world in images.[6] Today's Western border regimes evolve in what Nicholas Mirzoeff defines as "visuality", an organization that produces "a visualized deployment of bodies and training of minds, organized so as to sustain both physical segregation between rulers and ruled, and mental compliance with those arrangements".[7] Mainstream images of contemporary migration fall in the framework of visuality, as they perpetuate physical segregation between viewers by showing refugees at a distance, grouped in human masses, especially when framing dark-skinned people.[8] How can Western countries' education raise awareness on visuality? The following teaching proposal relies on the concept of critical pedagogy according to which "the production and organisation of knowledge is related to forms of authority situated in political economy, the state, and other material practices".[9] Having in mind that education curricula reflect forms of authority from which also stems visuality, challenging the collective imaginary of migration thus implies interrogating the production of knowledge, not only throughout the pedagogic processes used during the teaching session, but more broadly, by evidencing the cognitive framework in which this imaginary is rooted. In practical terms, the teaching strategy returns to leverage one drawing exercise, literally connecting the mind and the hand, to meta-communicate about the authorities of power that suture mainstream portrayals and thus individual mental projections on racialized others. In this regard, the teaching strategy used in the crash test course experimented on participants of the Teaching Artistic Strategies conference fits into a decolonial approach as it aimed to bring awareness of the impact of dominant visual culture on the consciousnesses. Organized by the Academy of Art and Design, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, the aim of this conference was to experiment with such

teaching strategies by proposing to participants to test them on others during the conference. Drawing on Zavala for building my proposal, I have assumed that if decolonial thought "makes visible that which is concealed by Modernity, namely, the cultural logic of colonialism",[10] decolonial teaching strategies allow revealing the impact of ideological imagery on the learners' conceptions through a transformative process. The process that can therefore feel disturbing for Western students as it can highlight the integration of an oppressive visual heritage.

In this context, I thus shaped my teaching experiment within the scope of arts-inquiring pedagogy, defined by Savin-Baden and Wimpenny as "the use of inquiry within the teaching of art, of whatever sort, to ensure that students develop critical abilities in the class room".[11] Used to illustrate and explicate a social problem (Savin-Baden and Winpenny), this teaching strategy constitutes a process one undertakes "to transform prior understandings and misunderstandings through the manipulation of material and symbolic tools and the reconstruction of social and cultural meaning".[12] These manipulations are explained in the following section.

Teaching scenario: an attempt to deconstruct the gaze in 30 minutes

The arts-based inquiry pedagogy approach is assimilated to practice-based research, the type of research I implemented during my Critical PhD by Practice.[13] During my research, I considered artistic practice, in my case filmmaking, as a formal laboratory to visually delineate the collective imaginary of migrations via the Mediterranean and experiment with alternative ways of portraying refugees. Before leaving for Malta's archipelago to direct a feature documentary titled *The People Behind the Scenes*, I analysed mainstream images disseminated on Google Images under the keywords *migration + Mediterranean*. A narrow range of visual motifs such as rubber boats, life jackets and survival blankets were repeatedly appearing in press photography reporting on the so-called "crisis". I searched for artworks related to this topical issue

and found that these motifs had been widely reused by contemporary artists such as Banksy,[14] Gandolfo Gabriele David,[15] Arabella Dorman,[16] Alex Seton[17] or Bianca Argimon.[18] I then looked at couture houses' creations produced in the aftermath of the 2015 "crisis" and discovered that the survival blanket material had been part of Givenchy[19] and Celine[20] designs. Because of these motifs' presence, the artworks and the fashion pieces that incorporate them lag behind media images to which they content to be echo chambers.[21] Being intensely repeated, these few motifs reinforced migrants' objectification and visual, if not spatial, confinement in Western imaginary. The use of art inquiry within teaching was therefore intended to ensure that students develop critical abilities towards stereotyped images of people considered "illegal", so that this way they could be drivers of social change. As artistic practice is the core of my research,[22] I considered it the most appropriate way to exercise one's critical ability. Beyond its advantages regarding time and cost, I thought that a drawing exercise involving the hands would be the best way to quickly manifest the complexity and challenges inherent to the representation of refugees. "With them [the hands] man becomes aware of the difficulty of thought" as art historian Henri Focollion stated.[23] From there, the teaching ark develops in a three-steps process: 1. Ask participants to make a first drawing out of a visualizing exercise. 2. Propose associating definitions of words with mainstream images to trigger reflection. 3. Ask for a second drawing and for comments on the difference between their initial and final pictures.

I decided to proceed as follows for the 30-minutes slot I had been allocated during the conference.

Teaching script

All students were provided with drawing material prior to the beginning; the mainstream images were displayed blank side up on the whiteboard; a timer should be at hand to check the timing of the activities. All the teaching material is provided in the appendix.

1st activity (1 minute)

Script: "I propose that you close your eyes for a minute and that you let the image arise that you see when you hear the word *refugee*."

2nd activity (5 minutes)

Script: "Thank you. Now, can you please make a drawing, as specific as possible, of the image you pictured on the paper in front of you? You have 5 minutes."

3rd activity (8 minutes)

Script: "Thank you very much for this. For me the collective imaginary of migration is this: the images that come to mind, all the images that we inherit, that are transmitted down the generations and that arise in our minds when we hear about refugees.
I am going to gather all drawings here on my table for now and we are going to delve more concretely into the topic."

Pick up all the drawings.

Script: "I am now going to provide you with:
4 words related to migration: refugee, asylum seeker, economic migrant, migrant.
4 definitions of these words (see appendix),
4 stories of migration (see appendix)."

Write on whiteboard or display a slide indicating:
"Please match...

1. The words and the definitions
2. The definitions and the stories
3. The stories with the images on the whiteboard."

Turn over the 4 images previously displayed blank side up on the white-board.

> Script: "You have around 7 minutes by pairs for this and then I will ask some of you to share their findings with the rest of the group."

4th activity (8 minutes)

> Script: "What did you find out? How do you explain the matches you did?"

> "For the last moment of this teaching demonstration, I would like to ask you to make another drawing, this time representing the image that you saw when reading these stories of migration. You are free to choose the one you want and have 7 minutes for making this drawing and for giving it a title. We will then reflect altogether on your creative productions.
> Display drawings from the 2nd and the 4th activity side by side."

5th activity (8 minutes)

> Script: "What do you think of these exercises? What did you learn? What has changed since the beginning of the course?"

The drawings produced during the first session pictured the following images:

> The death of the little Aylan Kurdi; a group of life jackets gathered in a rubber boat; a hand-written note indicating "dark-skinned person with a vest on an inflatable boat in the sea floating in huge waves holding the rope which is attached to the side of the boat which is shaking by the many movements of other people holding each other, frightened (not) to arrive where they wanted to go"; someone crossing a barbed-wired fence; a family of farmers sadly looking at a gigantic flower drawn on the ground; a written note indicating "I simply cannot take me back"; a map of the world connecting continents

with lines of flux and including two suitcases, one closed and one opened; a barbed-wire fence above a back-pack, a lying child and a stretch of water; a pair of boots; someone covered by a survival blanket; a mass of people crammed into an inflatable boat; a temporary camp close to the sea with two tents and someone wrapped in a sleeping bag.

The drawings produced after activity three were the following:

A desk covered with papers, a typewriter, a coffee cup and an ashtray titled Leftover work; a bundle of cash titled The farmer from Ghana; a family portrait of a couple and a toddler; a digital short message sent at 1:30am and saying "Don't worry"; a family of six carrying luggage and walking side by side; a young back-packer and a pair of flip-flops; four smartphone screens showing a man looking at a woman and a child; a series of short messages including several emojis, a Google map, a Facebook page with a window indicating "Apply now" in capital letters; a woman with a child talking to a group of people on her smartphone; a small key pointing towards a lock bearing the word Security; a fruit above a cultivated field followed by flames and by the same field, devasted by the fire, titled Broken root … Fruit from another land; the face of a young woman surrounded by floating written pages and stamped envelopes.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDENTS' PRODUCTIONS

A general observation of the first series of drawings seems to confirm the initial assumption made at the beginning of the teaching proposal: they reflect media images of the migratory "crisis" (the photograph of the little Aylan Kurdi, masses of people crammed into rubber boats, temporary camps, survival blankets) and allegorical motifs of exile such as suitcases, barbed-wired fences, and shoes. One drawing also resonates with mainstream cartographies of streams of people symbolized by lines connecting territories. The second series of drawings offers a greater variety of representations that can hardly be summarized in *categories* but seem to offer a *closer* look at refugees' lives. The proximity is not only

achieved through the chosen distance to the pictured elements (bodies and faces are bigger and more detailed), but also with the degree of intimacy with refugees' lives that they provide (the personal messages and private screen views). Inspired by the migrants' stories read during the third activity, this second series of drawings also focuses on the reasons motivating these journeys and on the lives that have been left behind (the abandoned desk, the poor harvest, the bundle of money). In sum, reading and reflecting on the few documents provided between the two drawing sessions seem to have triggered less archetypal representations and to have conveyed more complex ideas about contemporary refugees. While the first series of drawings is in general mirroring illustrative media coverage of the "crisis", the second series offers a reflection on this geopolitical situation by relying on emotions. By their variety and the polysemic readings that they suggest, they better express the complexity of the real-life situations leading to departures. The second series of pictures also approaches more accurately feelings and experiences inherent to migration that cannot be encapsulated by legal and administrative definitions. The sense of exile and of distance from the loved ones is emphasized in almost all drawings whereas in the first series, the focus was essentially put on the very act of border crossing. The positioning of the participants seems to have shifted throughout the teaching session: from the external point of view of the host populations to actual feelings that the refugees are likely to experience. Connecting human stories to administrative categories and mainstream press photography would thus have created empathy with the refugees. This seems to be confirmed by the reluctance of some participants to reproduce the images that came to their minds during the initial visualization exercise, which one of them refused to do (and wrote "I simply cannot take me back"). Another also admitted at first being ashamed of this first vision but willing to sincerely acknowledge it by complying with the instructions. Here, the pedagogical path followed seems to achieve the first goal of the course – to reveal the impact of mainstream images of migration in our minds.

The two drawing exercises involved the hand through the act of drawing in two distinct ways. First, by connecting it to a mental con-

struct resulting from a visual culture, second, by making it emerge from a short reading and a reflection. While the first drawing was just reproducing a narrow set of images crystallized in the mind by their mere repetition, the second series of drawings witnesses a displacement: that of projecting themselves into the refugees' stories. The first series of drawings provides evidence on the way mainstream images have rubbed off in our minds: the hand has obeyed the brain. The second series reflects a more complex displacement: from the brain (the connecting and exercises), through the heart (the emotions triggered by these activities) to the hand. Evaluating this teaching session would thus return to analyse the differences between the two drawings made by each participant. The transformation between them is symbolically the path they made to put themselves in the place of the refugees. Empathy is a displacement towards the other, as identification is. While the first drawing requested equals a Pavlovian reflex of restitution, the second one expresses their emotional response to the refugees' fate. In an interview conducted on the occasion of the DVD release of his box office success *Welcome*, French director Philippe Lioret raises the notion of identification.[24] He does not estimate that the triumph of the film (one million viewers just in France), lies in its social and political dimension. Based on one hundred public screenings, and on his own writing of the scenario, Lioret argues that the audience simply sees it as a story about people: "The film touches the heart first and then moves to the brain. A political pamphlet would engage the mind without involving any feeling, any emotion, and have less impact. When you involve the emotions first, and then engage the mind, it has more impact. That's why the film was such a word-of-mouth success".[25] Emotions conveyed by the refugees' stories would have created more feelings of identification than those generated by media images. Being chosen by press agencies for their spectacular (the human masses) or decorative (the vivid and shiny colours of the life jackets and survival blankets on an azure field) qualities, these images would provide a sense of astonishment devoid of thoughtfulness. During the second drawing session, the reflection that arose from the reading of written words moved the hearts of the participants and consecutively led to representations in which the refugees were shown as subjects with

mixed human emotions (facing difficult decisions, feeling lost, feeling lonely, being uprooted, missing a loved one). The teaching strategy used to bring the participants to this second series of drawings corresponds to the second goal of this experiment which is to find alternative means to visually portray contemporary migrants.

On a wider scale, this teaching experiment could be applied in media and humanitarian studies as a tool to support practitioners in the making of more respectful and inclusive images. Quoting Henry-Armand Giroux, art and visual culture education scholar Elizabeth Garber argues that "Social justice education can also be thought of as guiding students to know themselves and their worlds, and to live and act as part of community and society as critical citizens, employing 'the principles of justice, liberty, and equality' in creating a radical democracy".[26] I believe that teaching strategies providing effective tools to renew mainstream representations of racialized others can lay the ground for radical democracy by creating empathy. This intention should, however, be accompanied by thorough ethical reflections.

Teaching method discussed: Ethically complex issues raised when trying to undermine a dominant visual regime

The four definitions that I gave belonged to a lexical field used in Western European policies. These words are used in countries positioned as dictating stakeholders in migratory regimes. Moreover, these definitions gain an increased legitimacy when given in a teaching situation in which power dynamics are implicitly present between the teacher and the students.

In practice, concrete examples could have helped participants to better contextualize the meaning of the four given words especially when used by the various actors operating in the field of migration (e.g. international organizations, NGOs, journalists, and asylum seekers, see suggestions in the appendix). This leads me to ask myself: am I entitled, as a white privileged woman, to address the issue of representation of racialized others?

The day after the teaching session, one participant shared with me her doubts on this question which she had also been confronted with during her own research. I fully acknowledge not having a direct experience of contemporary forced displacements to draw on for shaping the present teaching proposal. At a structural level, teachers with refugee background could contribute to decolonializing the curricula by bringing a framework of knowledge from which I did not benefit. In the meantime, does this mean that it would have been better not to provide this teaching? I do not think so. Rather, I consider it more constructive to raise these questions than not even attempting to question Western mainstream representations. These representations dominate European languages in the media and from there, in policymakers' speeches. As an example, the use of the term *flow* to qualify migrants' arrivals mirrors endless queues of refugees in press photography. It is reflected in the words of former British PM David Cameron who talked about "a swarm of migrants crossing the Mediterranean".[27] A key for getting out of this schizophrenic dilemma is perhaps to consider mainstream images as "temporal industrial objects".[28] For Bernard Stiegler, philosopher and theorist of the effects of digital technology, such objects are songs, pieces of music, speeches, films, TV series, radio and television programmes, commercials, video games, etc. which are characterized by an existence intimately linked to time and its flow.[29] Taking the example of popular songs to which he listened when watching the French film *Same Old Song*, Stiegler observes: "The songs *fashion me* long before I cite them. I recite them without knowing that I am citing them, without realizing it. They are interlaced with the time of my consciousness, and without my being aware of it, except when, as in *Same Old Song*, I realize that in fact *every-one*[30] knows the songs, me included. And that, as such, this 'every' is a 'one' rather than a 'we'[31]: I belong to this neutral, impersonal, and yet so intimate, 'one'".[32] Questioning a memory transmitted across generations that composes a collective imaginary (that Stiegler designates with the term *epiphylogenesis*) is thus necessarily an uncomfortable exercise.[33] However, as an imagined community is a visually constructed community that underpins the coexistence of people, I follow Stiegler when he states, "The most important political question,

and perhaps the only one, if ever a question can still be political, [is] that of the aesthetics of the 'we'".[34] If images circulating online are temporal industrial objects that fashion our imaginaries, what about the family images among which one grew up? My filmmaking experience in Malta unexpectedly encouraged me to explore in this direction.

When making the film *The People Behind the Scenes*, I experienced the impact of my own imaginary of migration on my cinematographic choices. When I looked at my digitized family archives after the shooting, I realized that I had unconsciously chosen to film situations that had been precisely filmed by my grandfather in Algeria, the land in which my parents and grandparents were born. As these family archives constitute *my* imagination of exile, I instinctively left in search of images that were present in my memory. In this regard, the film is an act of contestation against the rhetoric of objectivity generally attached to migration research as I decided to acknowledge the influence of my own imaginary of migration and to consider myself as an "implicated subject" to create what Rothberg coined as "long-distance solidarity" and as new "alliances" with today's migrants.[35] For this reason, and to detect the potential kinship of the drawings with her family memories, I have tried to understand why two drawings made by one participant seemed different from the rest of the productions. What both drawings had in common were representations of a cultivated land. The participant came from Latin America and seemed to have been inspired by her intimate imaginary of migration. The drawings she produced apparently result from the imprint of her own background experience of exile rather than the mainstream circulating images of migration.

Conclusion: Potential follow-ups

As a conclusion, I would like to open lines of thought to further explore teaching methods aimed at renewing the collective imaginary of migration. These questions deal with issues of care:

- How to handle these issues with students having the same background as the marginalized populations seen in mainstream media images?
- How to deal with graphic images, often in media images about refugees' deaths at the borders, likely to offend the students?

In the meantime, expanding knowledge on the genealogy of Western visual culture seems essential to fully grasp their scope and influence, not only on policymaking, but on the production of knowledge. "To resist requires a background of understanding of how power works" states Elisabeth Graber.[36] Quoting Giroux, she adds that it also requires a background of understanding how "the production and organization of knowledge is related to forms of authority situated in political economy, the state, and other material practices".[37] It also necessitates a constant self-reflection that goes along with the acknowledgment of uncertainty, fragility and doubts.[38] With this spirit in mind, I will carry on analysing artworks that experiment with alternative visual means for portraying contemporary refugees, in particular through the *New Imaginaries of Migration* webinar series that I have led at the Maison Française of Oxford, for considering art, not as the echo chamber of mainstream images of migration, but as a cutting-edge equipment to contend with today's "aesthetic of the we".

Appendix

a refugee   is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Article 1, 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

asylum seeker: "An asylum-seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. Every year, around one million people seek

asylum. National asylum systems are in place to determine who qualifies for international protection."

<div align="right">UNHCR definition.</div>

economic migrant: "A person who leaves their country of origin purely for economic reasons that are not in any way related to the refugee definition, in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood."

<div align="right">UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms.</div>

migrant: "Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is."

<div align="right">The UN Migration Agency (IOM) definition.</div>

Four stories of migration

a) I was very reluctant to come here to live. I had an interesting job, I loved working for a museum in Zagreb, then I met my (British) husband at an exhibition and we moved to Camden. I knew it would be difficult for me with a young child and not knowing anyone.

Croatian interviewee, female, aged 56. From, Gayle Munro, Transnationalism, Diaspora and Migrants from the former Yugoslavia in Britain, Routledge, 2016.

b) Boochani was born in Ilam, Iran in 1983. He has described himself as "a child of war", referring to the 1980s war between the Iraqi Ba'athists and "Iranian zealots" fought largely in his Kurdish homeland in western Iran. He graduated from Tarbiat Modares University and the Tarbiat Moallem University (now named Kharazmi University), both in Tehran, with a master's degree in political science, political geography and geopolitics. He began his journalistic career writing for the student newspaper at Tarbiat Modares University,

before working as a freelance journalist for several Iranian newspapers such as Kasbokar Weekly, Qanoon, and Tehran-based Etemaad as well as the Iranian Sports Agency. He wrote articles on Middle East politics, minority rights and the survival of Kurdish culture. In secret, he taught children and adults a particular Kurdish dialect from the region of Ilam, regarded as their mother tongue. He co-founded and produced the Kurdish magazine Werya (also spelt Varia), which he regarded as his most important work,[5] and which attracted the attention of the Iranian authorities because of its political and social content. The magazine promoted Kurdish culture and politics; Boochani felt it very important for the Kurdish city of Ilam to retain its Kurdish identity, language and culture. As a member of the Kurdish Democratic party, outlawed in Iran, and the National Union of Kurdish Students, he was watched closely.

In February 2013, the offices of Werya were raided by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps which was founded after the 1979 revolution to protect the country's Islamic Republic system and to quell uprisings of "deviant movements" and had previously threatened Boochani with detention. Boochani was not in the office that day, but 11 of Boochani's colleagues were arrested, several of whom were subsequently imprisoned. After publishing news of the arrests online and the news spreading globally, Boochani went into hiding for three months and on 23 May 2013, fled Iran and made his way to Indonesia via Southeast Asia.

From the Wikipedia page of journalist Behrooz Boochani.

c)   Haqyar worked as a manager for an international NGO in Heart province in the northwestern corner of Afghanistan, enjoying a healthy salary and a comfortable home in Herat with his wife and four children. The family hoped to move to Germany at some point, where Haqyar's brother- in-law lived [...] Then one day insurgent militants from the Taliban movement captured and brutally murdered one of Haqyar's colleagues. Terrified that he would be next,

Haqyar and his wife quickly found a buyer for their house, selling it in two days for a quarter of what they'd paid for it. They packed up their things, including several of Haqyar's German-language text-books, which they'd need when they arrived in Germany, rounded-up their four children, and left. They travelled over the mountains into Pakistan, then to Iran. There hadn't been time to obtain official documents.

From Sonia Shah, *The Next Great Migration*, Bloomsbury, p. 20.

d) Osei, the farmer from Ghana.
    It was essential for him to let people know that he did not want to leave: "I never thought of leaving my country. I owned my own farm. I was born there and my father before me. We weren't very rich but I had enough to feed my family… Like every year, after the harvest, I burned my field, but this time the wind blew the fire on a neighbour's field. He filed a complaint, and I was ordered to pay 600 euros. As I couldn't pay, I decided to go to Libya to work. In the region, a lot of men go to work there. That way I would be able to pay my debt and pay for my children's education, so that they wouldn't be in the same situation as me. But when I got there, it didn't happen like that. I was arrested, locked up in a basement. They demanded $15,000 for my release. I couldn't pay that kind of money. Who would I ask?! So, I managed to escape with others, but after that I had no choice but to cross the sea. I raised 500 euros because I couldn't go back. I never thought I would go so far away from my family…

From *Les naufragés de l'enfer. Témoignages recueillis sur l'Aquarius*, Marie Ra-jablat, Digobar, 2017, translation Elsa Gomis.

refugee: "The refugees of Manus Prison were being held indefinitely without charge, but in many ways they have also been denied entry into

communities of thinkers and planners and are only able to function in limited roles when working towards their liberation."

Omid Tofighian, in *No Friend But the Mountains* by Behrooz Boochani.

asylum seeker: "A charter flight to remove asylum seekers who recently arrived in the UK on small boats is due to take off despite last-minute high court actions in the early hours of Wednesday morning and other interventions which have led to at least 19 people not boarding the plane."

Diane Taylor, The Guardian, 12 August 2020.

economic migrant: "Distinguishing economic migrants from those with a genuine claim for protection and returning them to their country of origin will be essential if a large and growing flow of economic migrants is to be avoided."

Migration Watch UK website.

migrant: "The United Kingdom has not faced anywhere near the scale of migrants coming to Europe as other countries because we are out-side Schengen and retain control of our borders. And in Calais, we have worked together with the French to strengthen security to deter migrants from trying to enter Britain."

David Cameron, UK-France Summit, 3 March 2016.

Notes

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8   Maneri, Marcello. 2021. "Breaking the race taboo in a besieged Europe: how photographs of the 'refugee crisis' reproduce racialized hierarchy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 44, n°1, 4–20.

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11   Savin-Baden, Maggi and Wimpenny, Katherine. 2014. A Practical Guide to Arts-Related Research. Rotterdam. DOI:10.1007/978-94-6209-815-2. p. 4.

12   Kraehe, Amelia M. and Brown, Keffrelyn, Awakening Teachers' Capacities for Social Justice With/In Arts-Based Inquiries, Equity

& Excellence in Education (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Online, 2011), 491, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2011.610682. p. 491.

13   Savin-Baden, Maggi and Wimpenny, Katherine. 2014. A Practical Guide to Arts-Related Research. Rotterdam. DOI:10.1007/978-94-6 209-815-2. p. 19.

14   In his dystopian attraction park Dismaland, Banksy included a migrant boat pond piece.

15   The artist and designer originating from Palermo exhibited 66 flags made from lifejackets' fabric as alert signs in Marseilles' ancient port in 2017. He also organized a workshop with exiles in which they were asked to paint, on this same fabric, what represented hospitality for them.

16   In an artwork called *Falling*, the British artist displayed life jackets and a rubber boat in St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London, in December 2015.

17   In *The Island*, an exhibition from the Newcastle Gallery, the Australian artist made a series of marble sculptures representing lifejackets to question the Australian asylum policy.

18   The young fashion designer created *Euroflot*, a lifejacket pinned with European flags that was exhibited from 24 November 2017 to 7 January 2018 in Palais de Tokyo in Paris and that has been put up for sale online.

19   *Madame Figaro*, Défilé Givenchy Printemps-été 2017 Prêt-à-porter, published 2 October 2016, Accessed 25 November 2022: https://madame.lefigaro.fr/defiles/givenchy/printemps-ete-2017/pret-a-porter-0/117056 'The guests playfully drape themselves in the available survival blankets, with the exception of celebrities Kim Kardashian, Courtney Love and her daughter Frances Bean Cobain, Irina Shayk and Gigi Hadid, who want to look their best in front of the swarm of paparazzi' (personal translation).

20   A survival blanket was displayed on the Maison de Couture's website in 2018.

21   Gomis, Elsa. 2021. *Challenging the Collective Imaginary of Migration*. PhD dissertation. Norwich: University of East Anglia https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/85956. p. 53.

22   Ibid.

23   Focillon, Henri. 2018. *In Praise of Hands*. New York: Parkstone Press International.

24   Lioret, Philippe. 2010. *Welcome.* Produced by Nord-Ouest Films, Studio 37 and France 3 Cinéma. US: Warner DVD. Bonus of the 1h50 min. colour film.

25   Ibid.

26   Graber, Elizabeth. 2004. "Social Justice and Art Education". *Visual Art Research*, vol. 30, n°2, 6–7. p. 6.

27   BBC News. 2015. *Migrant crisis: David Cameron "'totally focused" on the issue in Calais*, 30 July 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxI CuymjNuU, accessed 15 August 2022.

28   Stiegler, Bernard. 2011. Technics and Time 3, Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise. Stanford University Press, Stanford California. p. 16.

29   Ibid. p. 106.

30   "On" in French.

31   "Nous" in French.

32   Stiegler, Bernard. 2011. Technics and Time 3, Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise. Stanford University Press, Stanford California. p 25.

33   Ibid. p. 33.

34   Ibid. p. 73–74.

35   Rothberg, Michael. 2019. *The implicated subject. Beyond victims and perpetrators*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. Here p. 12 and p. 21.

36   Graber, Elizabeth. 2004. "Social Justice and Art Education". *Visual Art Research*, vol. 30, n°2, 6–7. p. 6–7.

37   Ibid. p. 7.

38   Corso, Alessandro. 2022. "Judgment, Doubt, and Self-doubt: A Reflexive Turn from the Borderland of Lampedusa". *Public Anthropologist*, vol. 4, n°2, 208–232. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/25891715-bja10 041.