

2. Refugees, worldmaking and transversal politics through art

The conflicted welcoming of refugees to postmigrant societies

The considerable number of people living outside their country of origin and the urgent need to resettle those who have been forcibly displaced have given renewed importance to the practices and issues of welcoming newcomers into communities and developing transformative ways of living together that enable newcomers to participate in society. As the Canadian political scientists Feyzi Baban and Kim Rygiel observe in their 2018 report *Living Together: Fostering Cultural Pluralism through the Arts*, European countries are at the forefront of concerns about migration because they are 'key entry points for people relocating due to conflict, poverty, jobs and family'. With greater numbers of refugees arriving from the Middle East and Africa in neighbouring countries within these regions as well as in European countries, anti-migrant and anti-refugee sentiment has grown significantly. 'Faced with such realities, governments must learn how to peacefully govern societies that are increasingly diverse and multicultural', argue Baban and Rygiel. Their thorough and enlightening report, prepared in the scope of the cultural policy studies of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, examines how creative, citizen-led initiatives of civil society organizations and groups 'can open societies to newcomers and [foster] cultural pluralism in ways that transform understandings about who is a citizen and who belongs to the community'. Furthermore, their report convincingly substantiates their proposition that 'culture and the arts can play an important role' in producing inclusive societies.¹

1 Baban and Rygiel 2018, 22–23; see also 24. This chapter is in dialogue with Baban and Rygiel's thorough report, which is part of their comprehensive research project 'Living with Others: Fostering Cultural Pluralism Through Citizenship Politics'. My methods differ from theirs, as does my preference for in-depth analysis of selected artworks and projects. Their mapping of a broad range of projects is geared to produce a different kind of knowledge, and impact on cultural policies. Nevertheless, I have found in their work a rich source of inspiration and further empirical substantiation of the idea that art can contribute to fostering inclusive plural democratic societies. The main research questions of their report *Living Together*

During the war that started in 2011 in Syria, millions fled the country or were internally displaced. The neighbouring countries received the majority of the refugees, with Turkey becoming the largest host country with nearly three million people seeking refuge there, of which half a million settled in Istanbul. Özlem Ece, Cultural Policy Studies Director of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, notes in the Foreword of Baban and Rygiel's report that a survey conducted in 2014 revealed that replies to the question 'Would you be disturbed to have a Syrian as your neighbour?' were equally distributed between 'yes' and 'no' among Turkish society (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 7). The following year, the number of refugees coming to Europe, primarily from Syria and Afghanistan, surged to a record 1.3 million, leading to what was perceived at the time as a 'refugee crisis in Europe'. Germany – the primary European destination for asylum seekers since 2012 – received a record number of 442,000 applications for asylum in 2015 alone, while in Denmark it was 21,316.² Had the question from the Turkish survey been posed to Europeans, it would probably have revealed a similarly ambiguous 'yes–no', reflective of divided populations wavering between hospitality and hostility towards refugees, as well as a sociocultural and political climate of what Jacques Derrida has famously dubbed *hostipitality*. Derrida's neologism captures accurately the interwovenness of hospitable and inhospitable conduct characteristic of nation-states, as well as of individuals towards the other as a stranger, and the ambiguity of how strangers are (not) welcomed: 'The welcomed guest [*hôte*] is a stranger treated as a friend or ally, as opposed to the stranger treated as an enemy (friend/enemy, hospitality/hostility).' (Derrida 2000, 4)

Such ambiguity towards 'strangers' raises the questions of why and under what conditions some communities are more open to cultural differences than others, as well as the questions of what roles art and curating can play in fostering a welcoming culture and environment, and what specific projects and practices have facilitated openness to newcomers. In this chapter, I argue that art and curating can engage citizens and newcomers in ways that may transform understandings of citizenship and cultural belonging as well as aiding the participation and the coming into ap-

indicate just how closely related some of our research interests are: '1) What role or potential do culture and the arts play in opening up space in which to build community, break down binaries, and foster understanding across/through/around difference? 2) How do specific arts and cultural projects create new types of spaces and forms of community that might enable new understandings of belonging that transgress traditional binaries (e.g. citizen/non-citizen/refugee, insider/outsider)?' (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 13).

2. Measured against the country's population, the number of first-time asylum applications in 2015 per 100,000 people was 540 in Germany and 370 in Denmark, with the average number for European countries being 250 (Pew Research Center 2016). For the Danish figures, see Bendixen 2022.

pearance of newcomers, especially refugees and asylum seekers – the ‘unimagined communities’ of European nation-states.

I borrow the term ‘unimagined communities’ from environmental humanities, and more specifically from Rob Nixon’s seminal book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, and his astute analysis of how those displaced by environmental destruction are actively excluded from the national community and narrative. Nixon coined the term to grapple with the predicament of communities whom the state-led construction of mega-dams in the global South has forced to resettle *within* the nation-state, or what Nixon terms ‘developmental refugees’. Yet, his points about the invisibilization of ‘inconvenient’ communities also apply to the transnational refugees and asylum seekers who are the focus of this book:

If the idea of the modern nation-state is sustained by producing imagined communities, it also involves actively producing unimagined communities. I refer here not to those communities that lie beyond the national boundaries but rather to those unimagined communities internal to the space of the nation-state, communities whose vigorously unimagined condition becomes indispensable to maintaining a highly selective discourse of national development. Narratives of national development are partial narratives that depend on energetically inculcated habits of imaginative limit, habits that hide from view communities that inconvenience or disturb the implied trajectory of unitary national ascent. (Nixon 2011, 150)

I propose that artistic and curatorial practices have a crucial role to play in actively reimagining such ‘inconvenient’ communities and providing collaborative platforms that bring them into view. This chapter seeks to provide some local, or rather localized, insight into transformative artistic and curatorial practices by exploring the Copenhagen community centre Trampoline House and the small but internationally acclaimed art space CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, henceforth CAMP. From 2015 until 2020, CAMP was uniquely housed inside Trampoline House, which attracted international interest when it became part of documenta fifteen in 2022.³ This community centre originated as a ‘solidarity art project’ (Siim and Meret 2020, 40) that developed into a community centre in 2010, serving as a meeting place for refugees, asylum seekers, volunteers and citizens of Copenhagen. It was housed in a building in the multi-ethnic area of Nørrebro. Over the years, Trampoline House’s important civic engagement and specific forms of pro-refugee solidarity work became increasingly known and appreciated, both inside and outside Denmark. Over the years, many representatives of organizations and municipalities, along with other people, visited the place to learn from

3 For a chronological overview of all CAMP’s activities, see the annotated and illustrated timeline in Hansen and Nielsen 2020, 20–49.

their model example of how refugees and asylum seekers can be welcomed and recognized as denizens in a local postmigrant community, thereby supporting their process of worldmaking, their performance of cultural citizenship and their interaction with the local population of the receiving country.

Mirroring the amazing history of CAMP and Trampoline House, the present study comprises two chapters both adopting a combined feminist, postmigrant and infrastructural lens. In recent years, artworld professionals have been increasingly preoccupied with questions of infrastructure and how participants can generate infrastructures ‘from below’ by engaging in what philosopher Gerald Raunig has theorized as ‘instituent practices’ that are not necessarily performed within and by established art institutions but, rather, break with them by engaging in instituting as an ongoing, self-critical and transformative process. As Raunig explains, ‘without dispensing with resources of and effects in the art field’, such instituent practices are capable of imagining a new proposition and generating other practices and forms (Raunig 2009, 11; see also Roussou 2021, 181). Likewise, the more commonly used notion of infrastructure has gained traction as a tool to shift the attention to the processual and relational aspects of institutions, and to tease out ‘what’s at stake in radical forms of organization, practices of communing, or in curatorial experiments in the art system’ (Christensen and Mader 2020, 6). As noted by the literary scholars Solveig Daugaard and Frederik Tygstrup and the performance and cultural studies scholar Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt in their introduction to infrastructure as a concept for the study of art and culture in their edited book, *Infrastructure Aesthetics*, infrastructure studies have come to signify ‘a transdisciplinary and intersectional interest in the *organization of social processes* and the *systemic relations* that is afforded to them’ (Daugaard, Schmidt, and Tygstrup 2024b, 4). Overall, ‘infrastructure’ can thus be seen as ‘structuring structures’, in the sense that they are ‘structures of relation and distribution’ as well as ‘structuring devices’ that format material processes (Daugaard, Schmidt, and Tygstrup 2024b, 5–6).

In a sociocultural setting, infrastructure can perhaps best be conceived of as a set of processes that connect people and things, or human and non-human beings. As infrastructure enables processes and generates connections, infrastructures evidently also govern and shape these processes and connections. Thus, infrastructure operates as what the cultural theorist Irit Rogoff has called hidden ‘protocols’. In Rogoff’s view, the concept of infrastructural processes provides a means of shifting the analytical focus from categories to processes, more specifically to *entangled* processes that cannot be named and analysed as separate events or entities. The concept of infrastructure thus acknowledges the complex entanglement of the conceptual, the material and the procedural (Rogoff 2013, 15:30–16:15 min.). Linking Rogoff’s observations to this study, I would like to suggest that infrastructural processes are integral to worldmaking. Adopting the concept of infrastructure, along with its at-

tentiveness to the ways in which infrastructures format relations and time, can add nuance to the analysis of how certain artistic practices can afford refugees' world-making processes. To grasp the existential import of the infrastructural processes initiated by Trampoline House and CAMP as well as the difficulty of analysing such processes as separate events or entities, it is helpful to turn to Laurent Berlant's reading of the epigraph to Ralph Waldo Emerson's book-length poem *Nature* (1836), where Emerson turns from humans to worms. In Berlant's reading, the concluding lines conjure up a poetic image of an infrastructural relation between worm and soil, man and environment: 'And, striving to be man, the worm/Mounts through all the spires of form' (Emerson's *Nature*, quoted in Berlant 2022, 92). What the worm has in common with the human being to which it is compared is its capacity for creation, for giving form to a lifeworld. Berlant suggests that the world that the worm and humankind create for themselves forms an infrastructure that affords the 'movement' that makes up their existence and continually adapts to their way of life as they move along:

The worm creates a space of movement that becomes form. If it is form it becomes social, that is, of the world; at this stage it is movement and singular. In the worm-hole the worm creates an infrastructure to hold itself in the world: the hole fits the worm, but only as it moves. (Berlant 2022, 93)

In this book, the term *infrastructure* is used to designate the generative infrastructural processes of cultural institutions as well as artistic and curatorial practices. It is used with an acknowledgement of the worldmaking import of infrastructures captured by Berlant. More specifically, it serves as an analytical perspective on Trampoline House and CAMP's experiments with curatorial, collaborative and participatory forms of organization and representation. Their work has two levels: the 'institutional' and the 'functional' – that is, Trampoline House and CAMP can be analysed in terms of what they look like, institutionally or structurally, or what they do, i.e. their functions, uses and infrastructural processes, although it should be stressed that these levels cannot be neatly disentangled.

An infrastructural perspective makes it possible to draw the contours of cultural and social activity that is notoriously difficult to pin down and 'measure' because it operates through the 'distributed agency' of many actors (as opposed to a work of art created by an individual). An infrastructural perspective can help answer questions such as: What can collaborative artistic and curatorial practices engender, and how? What are their challenges, potential and limits? In doing so, it enables a better grasp of the tasks makers of critical artistic and social form (such as Trampoline House and CAMP) set for themselves, and what they can achieve.

Chapter 2 explores CAMP and Trampoline House in their local and national contexts. It begins with an introduction to Trampoline House and a brief outline of

Danish asylum policies around 2015, in order to contextualize CAMP's highly politicized curatorial work. To further contextualize CAMP's work, some general remarks on the constrictions on and the potential of art institutions and curatorial practices will lead to an examination of how CAMP's exhibition programme evolved over the years, and how it was embedded in Trampoline House. I use two exhibitions from CAMP's programme, *State of Integration* (2018–2020), to characterize the broad scope of CAMP's curatorial practice, before concluding the chapter with a consideration of CAMP and Trampoline House as 'postmigrant public spaces'.⁴

The communications scholar Slavko Splichal has made a useful distinction between a *public sphere* and a *public*, according to which a public is 'a social category, whose members (discursively) act, form, and express opinions', and a public sphere is 'its infrastructure', comprising various 'channels of opinion-circulation' (Splichal 2010, 28). As Splichal notes, a public sphere cannot 'act'. It cannot communicate, whereas a public can. Thus, a public sphere is 'a necessary but not sufficient condition for a/the public to emerge, an infrastructure that enables the formation of the public as the subject, the bearer of public opinion' (Splichal 2010, 28). Similarly, public spaces provide infrastructures of communication, but they are also more than that. They are spaces (physical or digital) where people gather and/or interact, and hence can be social spaces for relational practices. Public spaces such as Trampoline House and CAMP provide infrastructures that allow for the building of a sometimes frictional and sometimes convivial social community, while also enabling collective learning and the formation of a knowledge-sharing community that reaches beyond the local sphere of the house.

To examine what Trampoline House and CAMP have accomplished in the Danish context, I adopt the categories of 'space' and 'public', along with the concept of postmigrant public space, in order to examine how CAMP created a transcultural contact zone and addressed not just an (art gallery) audience but a plurality of publics while

4 Chapter 2 has evolved from an earlier article on CAMP in which my co-author Sabine Dahl Nielsen and I examined the groundbreaking curatorial legacy of Okwui Enwezor by tracing how the influential multiplatform model he developed for documenta 11 in 2002 can be traced to even a small-scale local art space such as CAMP. I would like to acknowledge my co-author Sabine Dahl Nielsen's contribution to this article, which first discusses core elements of Enwezor's transformation of curating into the creation of platforms for political interventions at his documenta 11 exhibition, and then moves on to explore the specific translation of Enwezor's legacy into the small-scale, local space of CAMP, using the concept of postmigrant public space as a lens on CAMP's plurality of critical publics. Conversely, the present study foregrounds Trampoline House, especially in Chapter 3, which seeks answers to the question of how Trampoline House's embedment in documenta fifteen in 2022 panned out. When we completed our article in 2020, this was still an open question (S.D. Nielsen and Petersen 2021). For a more elaborate definition of postmigrant public spaces, see Chapter 5 in Petersen 2023.

at the same time contributing to building the postmigrant community of Trampoline House as a crucial component of the worldmaking endeavours undertaken by the people of the house. In doing so, Chapter 2 seeks to deepen the understanding of art's role in postmigrant public space and worldmaking, demonstrating by CAMP's example what a transversal politics can be with regard to newcomers to postmigrant societies.

Denmark's asylum policies around 2015

The fact that CAMP's founders Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen had the perseverance to keep a gallery dedicated to migration politics going for six years in Denmark is an extraordinary achievement in itself. Denmark has some of the toughest laws on asylum and immigration in Europe, and within the EU, with its dubious border regime, the slow violence of its asylum centres and its proliferating range of old and new forms of racism and fascism. Historically, Denmark has been held up as a liberal forerunner in respect to the protection of refugees. In recent decades, however, a series of restrictive policies concerning both asylum and immigration has been imposed in the country. For instance, 2015 saw the introduction of a new tertiary protection status, 'temporary protection', for those fleeing general violence and armed conflict. The following year, access to family reunification for those granted temporary protection status was removed during the first three years of residence, unless special considerations applied. Following the surge in the number of primarily Syrian asylum seekers in the summer of 2015, Denmark also ran an anti-refugee ad campaign in Arabic-language newspapers, warning refugees about the plights that asylum seekers and refugees would have to endure in Denmark. Such forms of indirect deterrence can be characterized as a type of 'negative nation branding', intended to discourage refugees and irregular migrants from arriving in the territory and accessing the asylum system. While other EU countries have increasingly followed suit and adopted similar policies to stem the tide of refugees and irregular immigrants from Africa and the Middle East, Denmark, along with some other countries, have also sought to brand themselves as 'hardliners'. Professor in Migration and Refugee Law Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen has thus rightly pointed out that 'Denmark has long openly justified its more restrictive asylum policies with reference to its desire to avoid asylum-seekers' (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2017, 99, 105–106, 109).

Racism obviously permeates this tightening of the laws on asylum. As Naika Foroutan has observed, many of the conflicts at the heart of European plural democratic societies – such as the struggles for equality, freedom, security and democratic rights – are fought, in an emblematic way, in relation to migration (Foroutan 2019a, 13–14). Regarding the European struggles against racism, they are

inseparable from the critique of the highly racialized border control measures generated by European refugee and asylum policies. As the refugee studies scholar Martin Lemberg-Pedersen has remarked, ‘the racialized fears of being demographically swamped by black majorities’ at the core of European border control systems can be traced back to colonial times, when the white Caribbean plantation elites were split between ‘the desire for profit maximization’ and the fear of suppressed Black majorities overpowering them on what the European colonizers regarded as their territories (Lemberg-Pedersen 2019, 260).

Thus, it could be argued that, in a Danish context, the activist and political struggle against unjust and debilitating asylum policies cannot be separated from the struggle against racism.⁵ Accordingly, CAMP’s critical interrogation of asylum and migration politics can be seen as a local variant of the worldwide anti-racism struggle. It is linked, then, to the protests against police brutality against African Americans specifically and systemic racism in general that exploded in the United States after the police killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and which spread like wildfire across the Western world, thanks to the transnational Black Lives Matter movement.

Solidarity work and worldmaking at Trampoline House and CAMP

For refugees and displaced people, their new place of residence – far away from the place that once constituted their world – is not simply the world in which they dwell and a place where they feel at ease, but, rather, an unfamiliar location where a new world must be created, even if it is only a makeshift refuge. It is a place of *worldmaking* that may itself be comprised of many different sites where the building of fragments of a new existence can take place – sites of becoming and the intermingling and cohabitation with strangers, which may, in time, become a world of familiar places and cherished faces. Trampoline House in the northwestern district of Copenhagen was one such site of worldmaking. The paths and acts of many different kinds of people were woven together in this place, including those of artists and curators, especially thanks to the art space CAMP that also ensured that the social, the aesthetic and the political were bound closely together.

The first steps towards the founding of Trampoline House were taken in 2008 at the ‘Asylum Dialogue Tank’ workshop at the Royal Danish Academy of Art in Copenhagen. The workshop was initiated by the artists Joachim Hamou and Morten Goll

5 My use of the term *debilitating* draws on the queer theorist Jasbir Puar’s understanding of the systematic enactment of ‘debilitation’ as a political form of state violence based on the targeting of the unwanted or suppressed in order to debilitate their existence through a protracted process of wearing people down physically and mentally (Puar 2017, xiv–xv).

(who subsequently channelled and transformed his artistic and activist skills into his work as the executive director of Trampoline House), with curator Tone Olaf Nielsen, who all formed a group together with asylum seekers, students of art and architecture, activists and volunteering professionals (Hansen and Nielsen 2016, 121). In Trampoline House's ten-year existence,⁶ the initial core objective did not change significantly but remained that of creating 'a reversed space of exception to the camp's space of exception: a reversed space in which asylum seekers would temporarily be re-equipped with their basic civil rights that they are deprived of in the camps.'⁷ As explained in an early document, Trampoline House's activities were organized in ways that would encourage 'the meeting between Danes and asylum seekers'. They aimed to demonstrate that 'a non-profit, user driven culture space could function', as well as promote 'integration, learning, an exchange of knowledge, creating networks and mutual respect', thereby offering services to asylum seekers in a situation where the encroachment on their lives by restrictive regulation and policies was making it increasingly difficult for them to access such resources.⁸

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- 6 Trampoline House existed for ten years as a community centre with a stable base in Copenhagen, from 2010 in Skyttegade, and from June 2014 until 2020 at Thorasvej. After the centre closed, a group of former users, volunteers and employees set out in the spring of 2021 to establish a new centre on a more sustainable scale. The result was 'Weekend Trampoline House', of which more below. Tone Olaf Nielsen served as programme coordinator of Trampoline House from 2010 to 2018, and as the programme director from 2018 to 2020. She co-founded Weekend Trampoline House with Morten Goll in 2021 and served as its programme and communication director from 2021 until December 2022, when she stepped down after 14 years in the house's service. Morten Goll remained in position as director from 2010 until 2023 when he stepped down after 15 years, and Nynne Roberta Pedersen Pedersen took over as daily manager for a limited period until a reorganisation took place in November 2023 to ensure that the house had a refugee-driven management. In 2024, 75 per cent of the members of the board, chaired by Dady de Maximo Mwicira-Mitali, had a background as an asylum seeker with firsthand experience with the Danish asylum system. See <https://www.trampolinehouse.dk/timeline>, <https://www.trampolinehouse.dk/our-history> and <https://www.trampolinehouse.dk/board> (accessed October 28, 2024).
- 7 Quoted from Siim and Meret 2020, 42. My account of Trampoline House builds on their thorough interview-based analysis of Trampoline House and the community centre's work with refugees.
- 8 Quoted from the flyer 'Trampoline House – A meeting place for asylum seekers, Danes and everyone else', 2009, <https://selinihalvadaki.net/trampoline-house> (accessed August 8, 2022).

Fig. 4: On June 8th, 2019, the Copenhagen refugee community centre, Trampoline House, celebrated its 9th birthday with a festive party for all its members and supporters. Long-time member of the House, Eden Girma, suggested having a fashion show where all the House members would walk down a catwalk in Trampoline House's multizone, wearing their favourite outfit. Some people dressed in traditional garments from the country they had fled, like Eden did in the photo. Others created new outfits for the occasion or wore folk costumes from another part of the world that they borrowed from friends in the House. More than 300 adults and children from all over the world took part in the festivities. Photo: Lars Vibild. Courtesy: The Trampoline House Archive.



For five days a week the house offered various activities and classes (e.g. language classes and classes in democracy), a house meeting, legal counselling, job training, a children's club, a women's club, cooking, and, importantly, a space for conviviality. By creating a hospitable zone of contact, the community centre helped to break the isolation and alleviate the sense of powerlessness that many refugees and asylum seekers experience during their months and years of waiting in the Danish asylum system while their asylum application is being processed.⁹ As gender studies scholar Birte Siim and migration studies scholar Susi Meret note, the basic idea was to create a space where asylum seekers were involved in the daily activities on the same conditions as those which applied to the members of the house and

9 Trampoline House, 'Weekly Program', www.trampolinehouse.dk/program; and Trampoline House, 'It's Your House', www.trampolinehouse.dk/activities (accessed June 30, 2020). See also the annual report (Goll 2019); and Hansen and Nielsen 2016, 11 and 43.

other visitors. This involvement would improve their understanding of how Danish society works and provide a welcoming community, as an antidote to the insecurity, isolation and marginalization many displaced people experience in the Danish asylum and integration system. As René Kreichauf has demonstrated in his case study of ‘campization’ in Greece, Germany and Denmark in the years 2013–2016 (see the Introduction), many Danish shelters were deliberately placed ‘remotely from any urban settlement’. According to Kreichauf, this was a conscious national/political strategy of keeping asylum seekers out of the larger cities, especially greater Copenhagen. Moreover, after the mandatory stay in a centre until asylum had been granted, refugees would then typically be distributed to less populated areas with low proportions of immigrants (Kreichauf 2018, 10–12). Kreichauf concludes that these secluded spaces are ultimately ‘politically developed for the purpose of separating the “own” and the “(ethnic) stranger”, citizens and non-citizens’ (Kreichauf 2018, 14).

What Trampoline House sought to create was a space in-between, a contact zone. The House offered Danish citizens an opportunity to interact and learn from asylum seekers and refugees (Siim and Meret 2020, 42). By bringing newcomers together with their host communities, Trampoline House sought to foster a new sense of belonging as well as reduce the prejudice on both sides, and to challenge notions of who does and does not belong. Ideally, newcomers should be able to share the experience described by the asylum intern Frank in a video introduction to Trampoline House: ‘The moment you step into this house, you are family’ (Goll and Nielsen 2019, 2:26–2:36 min.). In a 2015 interview with Siim and Meret, Tone Olaf Nielsen explained the mutually integrative process:

When we established Trampoline House our first concern was how to get [asylum seekers] out of the camps [the asylum centers] and into the house. We did, and still do this by offering them three-months of practical training, and when they fulfil the contract, we reimburse their transportation costs that permitted them to visit the house at least two times per week. ... We try to find practical training, aimed at building people’s capacities and resources. We strive to facilitate a platform where we can actually exchange knowledge and learn from one another. At the same time, [the asylum seekers and refugees] can make use of all of the other activities: they receive legal counseling, meet the voluntary doctors who visit us once a week ... besides making friends and relationships ... which is not such an easy task when living in the isolation of the camps. But the house is also for ethnic Danes, and international students who are interested in immigration issues, and it is important that they too feel at home.¹⁰

10 Interview with Tone Olaf Nielsen, Copenhagen, January 27, 2015, quoted in Siim and Meret 2020, 43.

Trampoline House and its embedded art space CAMP could thus be seen as an ambitious 'reversed' attempt to confer cultural citizenship on people who were not recognized as citizens, and to encourage a sense of belonging and civic participation in society by creating a supportive infrastructure and welcoming asylum seekers into an environment of solidarity and everyday conviviality by 'rethinking hospitality through the rights of the guests rather than the privileges of the host' (Siim and Meret 2020, 38). It was a civil-society initiative, a coming together of people committed to fighting stigmatization, exclusion and rejection, and to supporting *postmigratory* processes of worldmaking involving both newcomers and locals. As Baban and Rygiel remind us, in a broad sociological understanding, citizenship is not a purely legal concept but a relationship between 'a set of practices (cultural, symbolic and economic) and a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity'. It involves not only institutions, legal status and membership but also the discourses, practices, infrastructures, technologies, etc. by which populations and individuals are governed. Citizenship is thus 'productive of both citizens and non-citizen identities and subjectivities' (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 40) – just like nation-states are productive of both imagined and unimagined communities, as Rob Nixon has explained.

Discussions on cultural citizenship emphasize that cultural rights include rights to representation and meaning-making. According to the sociologist Jan Pakulski, cultural rights (e.g. concerning minoritized groups, indigenous people and LGBTQ+ communities) may be seen as a 'deepening' of political and social citizenship which has 'immense, and seldom clearly spelled out, consequences for the social infrastructure' (Pakulski 1997, 80; see also 77 and 83). They entail the re-evaluation of stigmatized identities and may require more extensive (and thus potentially problematic) state intervention to protect them, e.g. in broadcast and social media as well as educational institutions. More specifically, the claims to cultural citizenship rights involve,

[...] the right to symbolic presence and visibility (vs. marginalisation); the right to dignifying representation (vs. stigmatisation); and the right to propagation of identity and maintenance of lifestyles (vs. assimilation). [...] In other words, claims for cultural rights can be seen as heralding a new wave, a new breed of claims for unhindered representation, recognition without marginalisation, acceptance and integration without 'normalising' distortion. It reflects a pressure for what one may call an extended cultural democracy. (Pakulski 1997, 80; see also Baban and Rygiel 2018, 39)

Instead of taking a strictly chronological approach to the history of Trampoline House and CAMP, I would like to start with what was, at the time of writing, the last exhibition in Trampoline House, because it provides some insight into the

conditions of refugeedom for people in the Danish asylum system from which the House offered some regenerative respite. From this exhibition, organized within the framework of Weekend Trampoline House, I move on to consider, from a theoretical perspective, the ‘direct’ or ‘radical’ form of democracy enacted in Trampoline House in its different incarnations, as well as the peculiarity of its community. Only then do I turn to CAMP’s curatorial activities that unfolded in this context.

After suffering severe difficulties in attracting funds during the COVID-19 pandemic, Trampoline House had to close in December 2020 after ten years of operation. The closure of the house left a large void among the many refugees and asylum seekers who visited it. To fill that void, a group of former users, volunteers and staff set out in the spring of 2021 to establish a new house on a more sustainable scale. The result of this initiative was Weekend Trampoline House, along with profound, and evolving, infrastructural change. In collaboration with the Apostle Church in the Copenhagen neighbourhood of Vesterbro, it opened in January 2022 to run a year-long, non-profit project on Fridays and Sundays, run by volunteers. In the meantime, inflation had hollowed out the value of the allowance given to asylum seekers, making it more difficult for those living in asylum centres outside the capital to afford transportation. Thus, in the following year, from August until October 2023, Weekend Trampoline House moved out of Copenhagen to Roskilde, a smaller city about 20 kilometres from the Avnstrup Centre – a Red Cross-run ‘return centre’ or camp-like facility for families with children whose application for asylum has been rejected, as well as for families whose residence permit has been suspended (Bendixen 2018). In 2024, it was announced on Trampoline House’s website that they were working on transforming the community centre into an independent cooperative, ‘Trampoline House co-op’, and were looking for a new base in Copenhagen.¹¹

Weekend Trampoline House was able to move into a grand old residence named Villa d’Este, thanks to their collaboration with Roskilde’s Museum for Contemporary Art on the off-site exhibition *Non Performing*. This group exhibition was held in some of the historical buildings formerly belonging to the Sankt Hans psychiatric hospital in the outskirts of Roskilde. It was the inaugural event of a three-year programme of exhibitions, residencies and other activities that the museum organized in partnership with the Roskilde Municipality as part of the urban development of the hospital area into a residential neighbourhood – a programme with a site-specific and thematic focus on ‘an urgent debate about how we as a society care for those who fall outside the “norm”’ (Museet for samtidskunst 2023, 3). Thus, it was a collaboration with an art institution that opened the possibility for Trampoline House to move into

11 See Trampoline House’s website, <https://www.trampolinehouse.dk/about> (accessed March 27, 2025).

a house again, albeit temporarily, into a place of their own and a place of worldmaking where they could integrate art-making and social solidarity work, even though they no longer had an art space.

During the exhibition period of *Non Performing*, Weekend Trampoline House was open for its usual weekly opening hours, not only to the regular participants in their activities but also to the exhibition audience who came to Villa d'Este to see the art exhibition comprising Trampoline House's videos from documenta fifteen (2022), and a major mixed-media installation created for this exhibition by the Rwanda-born activist, fashion designer, writer and filmmaker, Dady de Maximo Mwicira-Mitali, with Joachim Hamou and Morten Goll as assistants. Mwicira-Mitali's creative trajectory in Denmark is closely intertwined with Trampoline House, as he was a long-term volunteer in the first Trampoline House, and co-founder of the Weekend Trampoline House and Trampoline House co-op, as well as making a powerful contribution to CAMP's opening event.

The 'art audience' was also invited to take part in activities such as democracy workshops, sewing workshops, house meetings and communal cooking and dining. The staircase leading to the first floor with Mwicira-Mitali's installation *Demystifying and Unpacking Refugee Trauma* was lined with printouts of images from refugee camps and fortified border zones across the world, all carrying the bitter-sweet message 'Welcome to' the country depicted (Algeria, Bangladesh, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Pakistan, South Africa, Spain, etc.) evoking postcards with 'Greetings from' popular tourist destinations. The contours of a world map were painted on the wall above them to emphasize the global scale of refugee encampments and the need for more hospitable ways of welcoming refugees. On their way up the staircase and along the narrow corridor leading to the entry to the installation, visitors would also encounter text pieces listing psychological disorders and symptoms common among refugees, with three screens displaying slideshows of photographs from the Avnstrup Centre and the Sjølsmark and Kærshovedgård deportation centres. The corridor was also decorated with festoons of barbed wire, symbolizing the isolation of refugees in camps and how detention exacerbates their trauma and mental health problems. The installation itself – a makeshift 'house' with two claustrophobic rooms – used the same explicit language and confrontational imagery. The first room formed a primitive shelter for those who 'arrived', furnished with a narrow bed and various psychoactive drugs; the second offered a place for mourning those who did not make it, with a handwritten commemorative inscription scribbled onto a whiteboard placed above a black coffin – the symbolic last resting place of the countless and nameless victims who have died fleeing their country.

The democracy of those who are present

This short account of Weekend Trampoline House's contribution to *Non Performing* confirms that despite these structural and financial difficulties and changes, the core idea of Trampoline House remained the same. When Morten Goll was interviewed about Weekend Trampoline House in 2022, he stressed that although the loss of the house was painful and the financial situation difficult, the scaling down also provided the community with a greater degree of independence from municipal institutions and private foundations, thus strengthening the critical political project – the democracy and cultural citizenship project – at the core of Trampoline House:

We wanted to keep the house as a *place of radical democracy*, one that allows people to develop in their own direction. In that sense, it is very important to understand the difference between institutional democracy, which allows the encampment of refugees, and the culture of democracy that we promote. *Trampoline House democracy is a culture of critique, providing tools of how to improve society.* (Goll, in Bajek et al. 2022, 248; emphasis added)

I would like to briefly introduce here Alan Sears's concept of *infrastructures of dissent*, in order to emphasize that Trampoline House's organizational infrastructures – including the embedded art space CAMP – played a formative role in shaping its radical form of direct democracy. In Sears's sociological understanding, infrastructures of dissent facilitate the processes through which people 'develop the confidence to act collectively and change the world', i.e they provide the basic connections that underlie even apparently spontaneous acts of protest, and are needed for the building and sustenance of forms of 'counter-power' (Sears 2014, 1–2). As Sears observes, '[i]n the absence of this infrastructure, it is more difficult to sustain effective mobilization' (Sears 2014, 5). Infrastructures of dissent provide social movements with the means through which to develop 'political communities capable of learning, communicating and mobilizing together', as well as the capacity for solidarity and envisioning collective imaginaries and what migration and communication studies scholars Martin Bak Jørgensen and Daniel Rosengren Olsen term 'a politics of hope' (M.B. Jørgensen and Olsen 2020, 155 and 162; Sears 2014, 2). Learning based on an individual's own experiences, and the development of a 'counter-knowledge' that challenges the 'ruling ideas' or hegemonic consent about a system (e.g. the immigration, integration and asylum systems), are central to the capacity of dissent to break the structures of consent and move from resistance to transformation, argues Sears (Sears 2014, 7 and 9). Importantly in the present context, Sears acknowledges the impact of radical art on his own activist and political engagement, as well as art's capacity for imagining a better world and

articulating a 'grounded utopianism' based on 'the possibilities latent within the present' (Sears 2014, 19 and 28). He also emphasizes that the development of alternative thinking is dependent on 'cultural, educational and communications currents', or what the cultural studies scholar Raymond Williams referred to as the 'dissident cultural apparatus', comprising a self-learning ethos as well as a broad range of cultural and educational formats, ranging from publications and bookshops, to language classes, cultural centres, and to political theatre and participatory cultural forms such as workers' choirs (Sears 2014, 19–20; Williams 1989, 144).

In their study of the country-wide social movement *Venligboerne* ['Friendly Neighbours'], a civil society initiative within the broader Danish refugee solidarity movement to which Trampoline House also belongs, Jørgensen and Olsen define *dissent* in a way that may shed some light on Trampoline House's 'culture of critique'. They understand dissent as a social and political questioning capable of 'undoing consensus and rendering excluded actors and struggles visible'. Crucially, they stress that dissent is not limited to belligerent action but can also manifest as 'everyday forms of resistance and politics taking place in the "refugees welcome" movement as well as the development of practices of sharing, caring and learning'.¹² According to Sears, solidarity must be cultivated and sustained by supporting structures to become useful and lead to alliance-building (Sears 2014, 21). Jørgensen and Olsen add that 'while individuals may sympathize intuitively with refugees, organizational infrastructures are required to enable solidarity as effective praxis' (M.B. Jørgensen and Olsen 2020, 156). The 2022 interview with Goll suggests that Trampoline House was acutely aware of the importance and generative nature of the community's infrastructures of mutual learning and political dissent. Goll continues:

Now, we want to navigate Weekend Trampoline House in a different direction and develop it as a much smaller operation. [...] There will be no conflict in including rejected asylum seekers, because we don't need to please the government or any municipality. [...] One important instrument is the weekly house meetings, a social gathering, where everybody is seen and acknowledged. The house meeting allows direct deliberative democratic discussions. Unlike representative democracy, it's *the democracy of those who are present*. We always used this talking stick I brought home from a trip to Utah. (MG shows object with feathers). Talking sticks have been used for thousands of years in Native American communities to organize democratic discussions, where everybody is equally heard. We want to show our community that democracy can exist in many different ways. Of course, we also use ... say Danish or Congolese democratic traditions. What is important is that people in the room understand that their diverse cultural backgrounds are

12 M.B. Jørgensen and Olsen 2020, 155. My use of Sears's theory is in conversation with Jørgensen and Olsen's use of Sears in their study of *Venligboerne*.

welcome and heard, and that we will build our improved democracy from these common sources. (Goll, in Bajek et al. 2022, 248; emphasis added)

Thus, in its various incarnations, Trampoline House has always sought to alter the infrastructures of sociality itself through direct democracy and collaboration between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby seeking to bridge the huge differences between citizens and asylum seekers.

One of the tasks that the Trampoline House community set for itself was to provide an inclusive space for *worlding* (Palmer and Hunter 2018) – that is to say, the possibility for refugees and asylum seekers to set up a world and become a community interwoven with civil society. This malleable and open community can be described as a community of mutual learning (M. B. Jørgensen and Olsen 2020, 162). However, the term that best captures the nature of Trampoline House and CAMP as knowledge-sharing communities that reach beyond the bounds of the local and national is probably feminist theorist Alison Assiter's concept of *epistemic communities* (Assiter 1996, 79–97; see also Petersen 2023, 107–144). Assiter's concept is based on the proposition that 'the appropriate epistemological subjects are collectivities', not individuals as traditional epistemologists presume (Assiter 1996, 80). Furthermore, she considers them to be loosely structured "imagined" communities in something like [Benedict] Anderson's sense' (Assiter 1996, 84; see also Petersen 2023, 133). Assiter argues that 'reality is shaped and altered by a community of people' because the construction and validation of knowledge are not individual activities but always 'co-operative, constructive endeavours' (Assiter 1996, 81). She links this idea of collective knowledge production to a feminist intersectional perspective to underscore that subjectivity is integral to the collective processes. As each individual is historically and socioculturally located, all knowledges are arguably situated, and 'some features of the subject of knowledge matter' (Assiter 1996, 81). Consequently, the knowledge produced within an epistemic community is not based on consensus but, rather, generated from the outlook of 'broadly like-minded people' (Assiter 1996, 81). Assiter argues that the distinguishing feature of *feminist* epistemic communities is that they are committed to a set of emancipatory values, and that this is what makes them 'emancipatory' communities (Assiter 2000, 329). As Trampoline House and CAMP were also committed to emancipatory values and social justice for refugees, it could be argued that they, too, should be seen as emancipatory communities.

Marsha Meskimmon has used Assiter's concept of epistemic communities as one of the keystones of a feminist intersectional and transnational theory of transversal politics, understood as a theory of democratic solidarity-building and conflict resolution based on negotiation across the boundaries drawn by difference (Meskimmon 2020, 7; see also 1, 31, 40, 105). Meskimmon argues that transversal politics can produce alliances, solidarities and epistemic communities that revolve around a common cause, but they also entail frictions as participants may position

themselves differently – politically, socially, culturally and artistically. The fact that Meskimmon goes beyond Assiter's definition of epistemic communities as knowledge-sharing, imagined communities is significant to this study of Trampoline House and CAMP. She proposes that epistemic communities 'do not pre-exist knowledge practices' but *emerge through them*, i.e. through mutual listening and responsive dialogues that are always situated and embodied (Meskimmon 2020, 19; see also Petersen 2023, 134 and 143–144). My exploration of how CAMP harnessed artistic and curatorial practices to serve the common cause uniting the art space and the house is in conversation with Meskimmon's understanding of epistemic communities as emerging through processes of mutual learning that also involve friction, negotiation and conflict resolution.

CAMP – curating art on migration politics

Returning to Trampoline House, it was thanks to the presence of the art space that Trampoline House also became a place where nongovernmental organization representatives, activists, scholars, educators, artists and curators came together within the framework of CAMP's programme of art exhibitions and its politically mobilizing, exhibition-related events, which were often woven into the fabric of the everyday life and regular activities of the community centre and its multicultural community of refugees, asylum seekers, volunteers, staff and other citizens of Copenhagen. CAMP was founded by Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen, alias the curatorial team Kuratorisk Aktion ('Curatorial Action'). Their collective and politically engaged approach to curating resonates with that of other collectives, such as the approach explored by *ruangrupa*, a Jakarta-based collective established in 2000. Kuratorisk Aktion has collaborated with *ruangrupa* on several projects, of which the most important ones are *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts* (2006) and *documenta fifteen* (2022). In effect, the closing of the physical gallery space of CAMP in 2020 coincided with Kuratorisk Aktion's increasing engagement in the preparations for *documenta fifteen*.¹³

Kuratorisk Aktion's participation in the curating of this event resulted in the closure of CAMP, but this was not the end of the story. As a collectively organized

13 CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, 'Camp's Founders and Trampoline House Will Be Part of the Next *Documenta*—and CAMP Will Close', Newsletter, June 19, 2020, <http://www.campcph.org/news/1962020> (accessed March 27, 2025). A note on spelling: I capitalize the name when referring to the institution Documenta; when referring to specific instantiations of the quinquennial, I use the variant preferred by the curator(s) in written material, i.e. *documenta 14* and *documenta fifteen*. An exception to this rule is quotes where I maintain the spelling used in the source quotation.

project rooted in art, Trampoline House was invited to develop, over the extended three-year period preceding the opening of *documenta fifteen* in June 2022, ‘alternative ways of organizing and sharing material and non-material resources’, based on the values of solidarity, collectivity and sustainability at the heart of ruangrupa’s curatorial strategy for *documenta fifteen*. While Frederikke ‘Fred’ Hansen joined ruangrupa’s curatorial team in 2019, Tone Olaf Nielsen remained in her position as programme director at Trampoline House, partly to continue her work in what became Weekend Trampoline House, and partly to coordinate Trampoline House’s contribution to *documenta fifteen*, in collaboration with a group of Trampoline House representatives.¹⁴ Despite Trampoline House’s unfortunate closure at the end of 2020, the House did participate in *documenta fifteen* in Kassel in 2022. Chapter 3 considers how members of Trampoline House used *documenta fifteen* as an opportunity to continue their work with some of the users of Trampoline House – as a platform for sharing the history, knowledges and methods of the house, and as a megaphone to communicate their critique of the Danish asylum system globally. Lastly, but importantly, they used the event to develop their own practice and work towards an economically sustainable version of Trampoline House (i.e. Weekend Trampoline House). In this way, Trampoline House’s contribution to *documenta fifteen* turned the international spotlight on the dehumanizing effects of Denmark’s restrictive asylum policies. At the same time, it demonstrated, through Trampoline House’s own example, how artistic and curatorial practices can accommodate the right of refugees and asylum seekers to visibility and dignifying representation, so that their voices, stories and claims can be heard.

Art institutions as providers of infrastructure

The practices of hospitality, solidarity and sharing so central to the welcoming of refugees and other newcomers is dependent on *infrastructures*, i.e. on supporting structures such as social institutions, public and private funds, networks of people and ethical standards for human interaction, forums for political mobilization, platforms for representation and visibility, etc. At this juncture, a note on the role of art institutions is therefore in order. In the artworld, ‘institutional critique’ as an artistic and scholarly concern has, since the 1960s, construed art institutions as something to attack, both aesthetically and politically as well as theoretically. Institutional critique has been important for its pertinent critique of the Western-

14 Tone Olaf Nielsen, email message to Sabine Dahl Nielsen and the author, February 10, 2021. See also ‘CAMP’s Founders and Trampoline House Will Be Part of the Next *Documenta*—and CAMP Will Close’.

dominated artworld's conflation with capitalism, (neo)colonialism and patriarchy, and the ways in which the artworld is banded with those in power and economic elites. Yet it has also contributed negatively to obscure the fact that art and cultural institutions can provide enabling platforms, even if they are invariably limited by various power structures and their dependency on external funds. The point I wish to make here is that in the artworld, institutions provide important infrastructures. As Lauren Berlant has noted, the difference between institutions and infrastructures is often a matter of perspective (Berlant 2016, 403). Institutionalized biennials, such as Kassel's quinquennial Documenta, can be perceived as large-scale institutional infrastructures for hosting curatorial and artistic projects as well as providing platforms for dialogue and discursive interventions into public debates. Small-scale institutions and local artistic and cultural projects can also create supporting and hosting infrastructures, or be themselves hosted by larger institutions. As the example of Trampoline House and CAMP demonstrates, such practices of hosting and support can provide entry points into postmigrant societies and local communities for refugees and other migrant newcomers.

In their 2018 report, Baban and Rygiel map the emergence of a panoply of artist-led projects and cultural initiatives initiated by civil society in Turkey and in Europe since the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015. Their report testifies to the fact that artistic and cultural practices can support some of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of migrants: the refugees and asylum seekers. Baban and Rygiel's aim is to show how art and culture can promote an alternative 'radical cosmopolitan' approach to living together, based on the transformative relationality of human interaction, i.e. on people's capacity to transform one another through interaction. They suggest that '[f]rom the perspective of radical cosmopolitanism, living together does not privilege citizens over non-citizen groups nor the host's culture over that of the guest's culture' (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 11). It is noteworthy that Baban and Rygiel contend that radical cosmopolitanism provides 'a platform for integration' different from those of assimilationist and multiculturalist approaches. In fact, their understanding of radical cosmopolitanism converges with central tenets of postmigrant thought as they also emphasize equality, diversity, participation, multiple belonging, cultural rights and the need to develop pluralist national narratives:

Radical cosmopolitanism is based on marginalised groups acting in ways that force national narratives to reveal their mechanisms of power and exclusion. This is why radical cosmopolitanism is both political and radical; it begins with the assumption that the integration of marginalised groups (such as Turks into German society for example) necessitates transforming particular national discourses. For instance, currently third generation Turkish-Germans redefine

German national identity by challenging what it means to be German through their own experiences of being Turkish and German. (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 37)

According to Baban and Rygiel, the non-hierarchical openness to 'the other' which defines radical cosmopolitanism can reconfigure the established boundaries of communities and the perceptions of who belongs to them. They argue that 'culture and the arts can play a crucial role in fostering such pluralism by creating a deeper understanding between different groups such as newcomers and local populations'. Furthermore, artistic and creative projects give access to platforms for public representation. In doing so, they can help 'restore voice and give visibility to marginalised groups who may be excluded from full participation in society' (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 11).

Baban and Rygiel conclude with recommendations for the kind of cultural policies and infrastructures which are needed to enable cultural and artistic forms of production to create inclusive public spaces where minorities can narrate their stories, make alternative representations of themselves and their social struggles visible, strengthen their self-esteem and sense of belonging, as well as opening the possibility of dialogic engagement between locals and newcomers. Among other things, Baban and Rygiel recommend that government at the national level should support the plural cultural production of marginalized populations and encourage transformative ways of living together. Their recommendation to 'broaden cultural policy and programmes to invest in arts and cultural programming outside of formal institutionalized arts spaces' acknowledges the role of small-scale projects and summarizes their potential in a way that applies to CAMP: 'Smaller more localised cultural projects can lead, over the long term, to audience development, through arts awareness and appreciation. It can also encourage a greater sense of belonging and civic engagement in society.' (Baban and Rygiel 2018, 104–105)

Before delving into CAMP's curatorial programme, I would like to touch briefly on the issue of constrictions on and by art institutions and consider their impact on curatorial practices. It should be noted that curators always work within certain financial, structural and political constrictions. However, there is much to suggest that the Western institutional circumscription of their work is not always so tight where small-scale, (semi-)independent art spaces are concerned. Museums and large-scale exhibitions such as biennials, triennials and Documenta tend to gain extensive media attention and reach large international audiences. However, partly because of these very effects, they often end up being restricted by local politicians, sponsors and marketing departments trying to avoid dealing with explicitly political, and therefore potentially divisive issues such as asylum, immigration, integration, forced deportation and racism.

Anchoring solidarity work in the local

If, on the one hand, larger exhibition projects can sometimes be subject to restrictions, small-scale institutions and art spaces working with lower budgets, smaller audiences and less political and media attention can, on the other hand, experience a comparatively higher degree of curatorial freedom when seeking to address conflict-sensitive issues. This can provide them with a greater scope for contesting the boundaries and limitations of Western systems, and may, therefore, as CAMP's activities show, offer curators a more fertile ground for experimenting with different forms of public address and congregation, which might but does not have to be linked to exhibition making.¹⁵ As a non-profit institution operating on a small scale, CAMP succeeded in creating a critical curatorial model linked to activism. By founding an art space, the curators created the more stable infrastructure needed to prolong its duration and to embed their activities in politically engaged community work on a long-term basis. Furthermore, as a postmigrant public space, CAMP was a space for critical engagement with the world (rather than a space of autonomy and withdrawal). Exhibition-making was CAMP's primary means of critical engagement with the world through art. An exhibition is, in the words of the late curator Okwui Enwezor, embedded in the world as 'a space of public discourse', and it 'can no more assert a distance from its cultural context than it can repress the very social condition that brings it into dialogue with its diverse publics' (Enwezor 2015, 17–18). As suggested above, it was precisely the Danish context of anti-refugee anxieties and politics that impelled Kuratorisk Aktion to found a themed-based exhibition venue dedicated to showing artworks that articulate radical critiques of Western immigration, refugee and asylum politics – a place that reflected on the experience of forced migration while also seeking to stimulate sympathetic and affective encounters and greater understanding between displaced people and the Danish

15 This study of CAMP was conducted in collaboration with Sabine Dahl Nielsen. It is empirically based on our long-term interests *in* and engagements *with* CAMP's curatorial activities. We have both viewed the presented exhibitions, attended various talks, workshops and opening events, as well as participated in guided tours of the exhibitions given by representatives from CAMP's gallery guide educational programme for refugees. It should also be mentioned that I have attended, as a participant-observer, the openings of CAMP's inaugural exhibition and Temi Odumosu's *Threshold(s)*, as well as MTL Collective's *Decolonizing Assembly*. Furthermore, Nielsen and I have researched a broad range of texts, photographs and video-documentation published on CAMP's official website and conducted an in-depth interview on-site with Kuratorisk Aktion on December 13, 2019. We did not conduct interviews with the users of Trampoline House, because the ethical guidelines of the house state that permission to do so is only given if the interviewer works as a volunteer in the house for 20 to 25 hours a week for six months, as explained in Qadim 2020.

public(s).¹⁶ As the curators stated: ‘The objective is, through art, to stimulate greater understanding between displaced people and the communities that receive them – and to stimulate new visions for a more inclusive and equitable migration, refugee, and asylum policy.’¹⁷

Fig. 5: CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, entrance to the exhibition space with the main room of Trampoline House visible to the right, 2017. Photo: Mads Holm. Courtesy: The CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics Archive.



This curatorial mission was effectively communicated right from the inaugural exhibition in April 2015, *Camp Life: Artistic Reflections on the Politics of Refugee and Migrant Detention*. It opened with Dady de Maximo Mwicira-Mitali’s political fashion show *If the Sea Could Talk* (2014), a tribute to the thousands of migrants and refugees who have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, or died elsewhere, trying to reach safety. Here, the mixed audience of gallery goers, artists, intellectuals and activists, along with refugees, asylum seekers, regular users, volunteers and Trampoline House staff were confronted with a show presenting grand dresses sewn out of rice bags from United Nations refugee camps, men’s outfits combining satin and life

16 On sympathy as a precondition for solidarity, see Gilroy 2019, 1–14.

17 CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, ‘About’, <http://campcph.org/about-camp> (accessed March 27, 2025). CAMP’s website has been preserved as an archive at <http://campcph.org/> (accessed March 27, 2025).

jackets and accessories made from barbed wire and bast. Mwicira-Mitali's thought-provoking use of the language of fashion conjured up the friction of multiple, conflicting associations, spanning not just the drama of rescue and survival but also the kinds of societal and environmental crises that necessitate humanitarian aid and refugee camps, the debilitating wait in asylum centres fenced-off from society, and the dream of a good life, safety and affluence, which may help refugees and asylum seekers overcome the ordeal they are going through (Hansen and Nielsen 2016, 36–37). Thus, the intimate connection between the mission of the art space and the purpose of the community centre was obvious from the start. The history of Trampoline House and its coming into being as a critical response to Danish refugee and asylum policies indicates that artists and curators played a significant role in how this unusual infrastructural combination of spaces, functions and objectives came about. As already mentioned, the initiative came from 'artists', and thanks to Tone Olaf Nielsen's participation, Kuratorisk Aktion was involved already in the early development of the house.

Camp Life marked the beginning of the centre's two-year exhibition programme, *Migration Politics*, which presented a series of six exhibitions (2015–2017) that were both locally relevant and internationally significant. The programme included a range of artistic responses to displacement, migratory routes, border politics, refugee and migrant detention, undocumented migration, deportation and visions for alternative migration and asylum policies (Hansen and Nielsen 2016, 19). The works were created by artists, artist groups and social networks that originated from many different countries, and which in many cases had firsthand experience of displacement, migration and asylum-seeking (Torp and Bonnén 2016, 7). This commitment to shedding light on the causes and consequences of forced displacement was also conveyed by the exhibition titles, and perhaps most trenchantly by the title of the international group show *We Shout and Shout, But No One Listens: Art from Conflict Zones* (2017), curated by Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen.

In 2017, Kuratorisk Aktion produced its first pop-up project (with homeless migrants) in collaboration with the Copenhagen-based community radio station, The Bridge Radio, for the annual Roskilde Festival, in Denmark, one of the largest music festivals in Europe.¹⁸

18 For CAMP's project description, see 'The Bridge Radio at Roskilde Festival', CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, <http://campcph.org/past/2962017> (accessed March 27, 2025). This project was later transformed into an exhibition/sound installation at CAMP where the event was named *Economy of Migrant Labor – For the Right to Work*. See 'Economy of Migrant Labor—for the Right to Work', CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, <http://campcph.org/past/2292017> (accessed March 27, 2025).

Fig. 6: Dady de Maximo Mwicira-Mitali's political fashion show *If the Sea Could Talk* (2014) presented at the opening of CAMP's inaugural exhibition, *Camp Life: Artistic Reflections on the Politics of Refugee and Migrant Detention*, curated by CAMP's co-founding directors Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen, 2015. Photo: Alba Oren. Courtesy: The CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics Archive.



The year before, the collective had entered into an agreement with another major cultural institution when it 'exported' a constellation of three of its exhibitions to SMK, the National Gallery of Denmark, thereby reaching other audiences than those who found their way to Trampoline House. Besides the opening show, *Camp Life: Artistic Reflections on the Politics of Refugee and Migrant Detention*, the SMK exhibition comprised *The Dividing Line: Film and Performance about Border Control and Border Cross-*

ing (2016) and *From the Mountains to the Valleys, From the Deserts to the Seas: Journeys of Historical Uncertainty* (2015), a solo exhibition by Tiffany Chung (a Vietnamese American artist).

Fig. 7: Installation view of the group show We Shout and Shout, But No One Listens: Art from Conflict Zones, 2017, curated by CAMP's co-founding directors Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen, with Gohar Dashti's photo series Today's Life and War, 2008 (wall) and Khaled Barakeh's installation Regarding the Pain of Others, 2013 (floor). Photo: Britta Thomsen. Courtesy: The CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics Archive.



In 2018, Kuratorisk Aktion initiated a new two-year exhibition programme, *State of Integration: Artistic Analyses of the Challenges of Coexistence* (2018–2020), which reflected three important changes in their curatorial practice. Firstly, there was a shift of emphasis away from the politics and experience of migration toward those of integration and other long-term effects of migration – in other words, to *postmigration*. Secondly, they entered into collaboration with internationally renowned figures such as the curator and art historian Temi Odumosu (from the UK but based in Sweden at the time) and the American visual culture theorist and activist Nicholas Mirzoeff. The second programme comprised a mixture of ambitious guest-curated group shows and small solo exhibitions in which

Kuratorisk Aktion spotlighted emerging practitioners, mostly with migrant or refugee experience. Thirdly, to further strengthen and develop their existing educational activities, Kuratorisk Aktion established CAMP Education!, a platform of knowledge dissemination geared towards producing educational material for school teachers and other educators as well as continuing the existing gallery guide education programme to enable asylum seekers, migrants, refugees and minority ethnic Danes to become part of CAMP's guide team.¹⁹ Overall, *State of Integration* can be seen as an emphatically local, context-sensitive use of curating as a flexible form of knowledge production that enables cultural producers to use different forms of public address and congregation.

The exhibitions presented within the framework of CAMP spanned a wide variety of formats, aesthetic sensibilities and modes of address. To give an impression of the curatorial breath of CAMP's programmes, I will home in on the two group exhibitions, *Decolonizing Appearance* and *Threshold(s)*, curated, respectively, by Odumosu and Mirzoeff as part of the *State of Integration* exhibition programme.

Curating as a politically mobilizing practice and poetics of relation

Thematically, Mirzoeff's *Decolonizing Appearance* (2018) focused on how appearance is used to classify, segregate and control human beings in today's colonially structured world to which migration is integral. It explored the violence and hierarchies of this regime and how to actively challenge its production of race as a sociopolitical category of distinction and discrimination (Ross 2022, 30). Through photography, video, installation and text-based work, the exhibition created constellations of art projects reflecting on the issue of appearance within the power matrix of 'the colonial'. For example, the video *The Gaze* (2018) by the Danish Trinidadian artist Jeannette Ehlers would confront visitors with a group of Black and Brown people, kneeling on one knee as a symbolic gesture against racism and racialization by 'the white gaze'. The majority of the performers were individuals applying for residence in Denmark, but the group also included the artist herself (T.O. Nielsen and Harrison 2018, 44–45). The dense coalitional formation of their almost motionless bodies, dressed in visually unifying black clothes, intensified the challenge of their steady collective gaze and embodied their claim for the right to dignifying representation. Other examples included Dread Scott's performance still *I Am Not a Man* (2004), which inverted the iconic 'I Am a Man' protest sign of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers' strike in

19 (CAMP 2017, 16–17). See also 'Talking about Art', CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, <http://campcph.org/guide-program> (accessed March 27, 2025), and 'Undervisningsmateriale' ('Material for education'), <http://campcph.org/undervisningsmateriale2020> (accessed March 27, 2025).

of the community centre.²⁰ The most ambitious event was the *Decolonizing Assembly*, organized and led by Amin Husain and Nitasha Dhillon of the New York-based MTL Collective, which combines research and activism with artistic practice.²¹ Prior to the event, the collective had produced banners protesting against deportation with users of the community centre which were subsequently hung in Trampoline House and CAMP as a political and visual spillover of activity by the community to the gallery, and of artist engagement from the gallery to the community centre.

At the *Decolonizing Assembly*, MTL created a forum for asking politically mobilizing questions such as: How can the colonized have the right to look, the right to be seen – in short, the right to appear? What would happen when appearance is decolonized? What has to happen for decolonizing to take place where you live? The last question was emblematic of how MTL's assembly sought to address its public. The 'you' being addressed was a virtual 'you' that could be inhabited by persons with different positionalities. Crucially, on that particular day, it implicated a heterogeneous mix of people participating in the assembly on the history of colonialism and the current call for decolonization, including those who declared themselves as sympathizers, those critically inclined towards the activist approach of MTL Collective, and those situated somewhere in between these positions (Marronage 2019). MTL Collective's assembly thus anticipated and called forth a heterogeneous public of different national backgrounds and political positionalities in a way that resonated with many of the other components of the exhibition. What the participants had in common was a willingness to respond actively to the exhibition's proposition of how we are all entangled in the unfinished history of colonial relations and in racializing regimes of appearance, or as Michael Rothberg would probably say, how we are all implicated subjects (Rothberg 2019, 1 and 19). MTL Collective concluded the assembly by ensuring concrete action was taken within a week by appointing coordinators of a meeting for those who wanted to engage in decolonizing work, so that they could 'walk the talk' locally and collectively. *Decolonizing Appearance* thus represented a turn towards what the political theorist Oliver Marchart has termed 'activist art' and which he understands to be art that employs strategies of political activism in the attempt to stage counter-hegemonic struggles, leaving the art institution behind and forming new alliances of solidarity (Marchart 2019, 26).

20 The curatorial intention of creating *spillovers* between CAMP and Trampoline House is mentioned in the interview with Kuratorisk Aktion on December 13, 2019.

21 T.O. Nielsen and Harrison 2018, 54–55, 65–67. CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics, 'Decolonizing Appearance', <http://campcph.org/past/2192018>, and 'Decolonizing Assembly', <http://campcph.org/events/2392018> (accessed March 27, 2025).

Fig. 9: Installation view of the exhibition *Threshold(s)*, 2019–2020. Guest-curated by Temi Odumosu for CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics. From left to right: Michelle Eistrup, *BeLONGING Vexillum*, 2019 (left); and Luanda Carneiro Jacoel, *Kalunga Unspoken*, 2019 (floor and ceiling). Photo: Mads Holm. Courtesy: The CAMP / Center for Art on Migration Politics Archive.



Marchart distinguishes *activist art* from *critical art* – that is, art that seeks to critique and to instigate hegemonic shifts of critical practices from a position within the very structures and constrictions of art institutions. In contradistinction to activist artists, critical artists consider these institutions to be platforms for intervening into dominant discourses, or, in Marchart's words, 'potentially powerful *counterhegemonic* machines whose symbolic efficacy must not be underestimated' (Marchart 2019, 26). This category offers a more accurate description of the type of criticality and aesthetics represented in Temi Odumosu's *Threshold(s)* (2019–2020). This exhibition, with five Nordic artists of colour, explored female experiences of displacement and exile, in particular how memories and the residual effects (and affects) of colonialism 'travel' with migrants or are transferred intergenerationally as 'post-memory' – an embodied and also mediated heritage that crosses national and temporal boundaries to inhabit contemporary bodies, identities, languages, cultures and everyday life (Hirsch 2008). In *Threshold(s)*, the emphasis was on neither the journey nor the arrival but on the state of being in-between polarities and what it entails to produce critical art from that positionality, fuelled by the dynamics of postcolonial agony, emotional ambivalence and complex diasporic relations to places both in and beyond the Nordic countries. As Odumosu explained in the

catalogue, the exhibition was an invitation to consider 'how a modern body can also be a colonial document' and to explore 'the politics and poetics of relation' (Odumosu 2020, 7). In this case, the institutional platform of the gallery served as a 'counterhegemonic machine' (Marchart 2019, 26), providing female artists of colour with the necessary public space and visibility for their critique of 'inter-racial' relations in Scandinavia to enter into the public discourse on racialization, racism and racist violence in which the local Danish problems are usually minimized and their very existence sometimes denied.

Odumosu's objectives mark the other end of the curatorial spectrum at CAMP. As the art historian Mathias Danbolt has pointed out, curatorial modes of address can condition and produce alternative forms of publics (Danbolt 2019, 65). The objective of Mirzoeff's confrontational address was to decolonize and inspire anti-racist activist mobilization, although the Danish-based decolonial feminist collective Marronage has attacked his exhibition for merely 'decolonizing appearance' for 'the white gaze', as the majority of art-interested visitors to the gallery were likely to be white Danes.²² Conversely, the intended public produced by Odumosu's sensuous, evocative, but not any the less critical exhibition address was, I contend, a mixed audience. The exhibition's 'entangled herstories' invited empathic, bodily responses from everyone and offered a plurality of intersecting points of identification for non-white and female visitors (Odumosu 2020, 4). An emblematic example is Swedish-Ethiopian Saba Bereket Persson's *THE UNSPOKEN: About Unconscious Discrimination* (2015/2019), an installation of mannequins carrying costumes covered with sacks heavy from the unknown burdens they both concealed and exposed. The centrepiece of the installation was a video of dancer Mpululu Ntuye dressed in one of the costumes, her contorted movements giving bodily expression to Persson's experience of living in Scandinavia with a different skin colour than white, accompanied by a

22 Marronage 2019, 117. Marronage understands 'the white colonial mentality' to be integral to 'the white gaze' as a 'pervasive' phenomenon that has surfaced in recent curatorial initiatives taken by Danish art institutions, among others CAMP. Unfortunately, Marronage does not unpack their concept of *the white gaze*. This scopic practice and mental phenomenon is only evocatively linked by a discursive chain of equivalence to '*white fragility*: white people's reduced ability to tolerate racial criticism as a result of their racial privileges' (Marronage 2019, 101; emphasis in the original text). Moreover, Marronage also fails to mention that Kuratorisk Aktion has always sought to transform audience relations by inviting the users of Trampoline House to CAMP's events. As Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen explained in an email to Sabine Dahl Nielsen and the author on September 4, 2020: 'We have always done a lot to make our events open and accessible, and the users of the house have been a significant target group. When it was not possible to schedule CAMP events for days when the house was open and people from the camps [that is, asylum centres near Copenhagen] got tickets through their internship in the house, we would either rent a bus or compensate people for the cost of tickets, so they had the opportunity to attend.'

voiceover that summarizes the results of a scientific survey of common prejudices about Black people in Sweden.

Like *Decolonizing Appearance*, *Threshold(s)* included the staging of discursive and artistic events in Trampoline House. The most important one was the opening. As usual on Fridays, Trampoline House was crowded with regular users. It is no coincidence that the *Threshold(s)* catalogue includes snapshots documenting the conviviality, the mingling and the mixed community. As the evening's attractions included not only the weekly community dinner followed by a party with DJs and bar, but also CAMP's opening event, they were joined by artists and exhibition goers. Navigating through the hallway where children were playing, the newly arrived would pass the kitchen, the smell of freshly cooked food anticipating the pleasure of eating the treats cooked by Sisters' Cuisine. They would also pass by the open door to the meeting room, where the Korean-Danish artist and civil rights activist Yong Sun Gullach's performance was to take place, before entering the large multipurpose room, the heart and hearth of Trampoline House that brought the community together. Among other things, this space had a bar and an area with café tables where people could gather to talk to friends and strangers, play chess, and later that night have dinner. This was also where Odumosu gave her opening speech, and Maria Thandie and Deodato Siquir performed Afro-fusion music, which spread a meditative atmosphere and resonated with the introspective atmosphere of the exhibition. Although the music was soothing, it did not serve the purpose of repressing frictions and politics but, rather, extended the reparative work performed by Odumosu's exhibition into Trampoline House. Just before the live music started, Tone Olaf Nielsen announced the arrival of the bus that was to take parents and children who had come from the Sjælsmark deportation centre back to the centre. If people did not know already that the rejected asylum seekers living under appalling conditions at Sjælsmark were among those who used the house as a brief respite from camp life, they would have learnt about it at the opening event. The encounters between asylum seekers, local Copenhageners and the professional art crowd were obviously not devoid of friction, but it is remarkable that CAMP and Trampoline House managed to facilitate the interweaving of such a heterogeneous mix of people.²³ Odumosu's exhibition address, with its affective and empathic ways of engaging with the 'other' as a human being, was finely tuned to connect to and even blend into this local micro-community. CAMP's creation of such spaces of coming together can be seen as a response to the need to imagine public spaces anew as, what I term, *postmigrant public spaces*.

23 Trampoline House, with its constant coming and going of people of radically different sociocultural backgrounds and its embedment in a cultural climate of 'hostipality', was obviously not devoid of social frictions either and had to continuously find ways to negotiate difference; see Siim and Meret 2020, 44–50.

To conclude, what *Decolonizing Appearance* and *Threshold(s)* had in common, despite their quite different curatorial approaches, was the desire to generate a postmigrant transversal politics that defended the political and cultural rights of refugees and asylum seekers, and which also defied racism. As explained in the Introduction, the term *transversal politics* signals crucial links between political, ethical and artistic agency. My use of the term is indebted to Nira Yuval-Davis's sociological understanding of transversal politics as a feminist, intersectional and transnational theory and practice of democratic solidarity building and conflict resolution, and to Marsha Meskimmon's inspiring extension of Yuval-Davis's concept to the sphere of art. Meskimmon's book *Transnational Feminisms, Transversal Politics and Art: Entanglements and Intersections* offers a theoretical sensibility which not only facilitates an aggregated analysis of sameness and difference that complicates established assumptions about power and domination, but it also examines how intersectionality can 'create kin' and 'affective coalitions' (Meskimmon 2020, 8) – for instance, among the asylum seekers, refugees and members of the host community gathering at Trampoline House.

To better understand how solidarity, collaboration and coalitions were forged in Trampoline House, CAMP and at documenta fifteen, as well as in the art project *100% FREMMED?* ('100% FOREIGN?') discussed in Chapter 4, it is helpful to trace the feminist conception of transversal politics back to its origins in the peacebuilding work of the feminist activist movement Women in Black in Bologna, from the 1970s to the 1990s.²⁴ The group used the term 'transversalism' about the method they used in their work with conflicting national groups – Serbs and Croats, Palestinian and Israeli Jewish women – to find a fair solution to the conflicts. Crucially, as explained by Yuval-Davis, the boundaries between the participants were not perceived simplistically as if they were merely representatives of their groupings; their different positioning and background were 'recognised and respected'. Using the key words 'rooting' and 'shifting', the Bologna feminists worked from the idea that each participant would bring with her 'the rooting in her own membership and identity' but would also try 'to shift in order to put herself in a situation of exchange with women who have different membership and identity'. In other words, '[t]he transversal coming together should not be with the members of the other group "en bloc" but with those who, in their different rooting, share compatible values and goals to one's own' (Yuval-Davis 1994, 192–193; see also Yuval-Davis 1999). In this *intersectional* understanding, transversal politics bring together people who position

24 Meskimmon observes that feminist transversal politics developed concurrently with the philosophical exploration of transversal politics in the writings of Félix Guattari, Giles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, who sought to describe a similar politics based on non-domination, solidarity, self-organization and a radical transformation of subjectivity (Meskimmon 2020, 6–7).

themselves differently (socially, culturally, politically, artistically, etc.) around a common cause, and through their mutual listening, dialogue and negotiation it becomes possible to forge solidarities and coalitions. The postmigrant transversal politics engendered by Trampoline House, CAMP and the 100% *FREMMED?* project could be described as postmigrant because of their commitment to a common cause – the struggle *against* monocultural nationalism and the EU’s practices of migration containment, and *for* equality and multiple, ‘intersectional’ belonging – two basic tenets of postmigrant thought. These tenets are also core values of CAMP and Trampoline House, but as their work centred on people who do not have formal citizenship in Denmark – people who are citizens in the making, so to speak – their transversal politics foregrounded the struggle for the right to asylum and for basic cultural rights, i.e. what this book terms *cultural citizenship*.

CAMP’s off-site events and collaboration with larger institutions

Already, from early on, Kuratorisk Aktion combined exhibitions at CAMP and various kinds of exhibition-related activities extending into Trampoline House, with the creation of platforms for political interventions at multiple other locations, a practice epitomized by Trampoline House’s presence at documenta fifteen in 2022. An early example is Casteaway Souls of Sjælsmark’s contribution to the group exhibition *The Dividing Line* (2016). Here, the transnational group of rejected asylum seekers from Sjælsmark presented a performance in connection with the opening of the exhibition, and conducted so-called ‘meetings of mobilization’ at CAMP, where the harsh conditions of rejected asylum seekers were debated and collective calls for action were articulated (Hansen and Nielsen 2016, 14–15, 122–125). These meetings resulted in participants contributing to the public campaign For the Right to Have Rights, which demanded an end to forced deportations, the closure of asylum camps, an end to the criminalization of migrants and asylum seekers, and the right to move and to stay. CAMP’s activities were thus spatially dispersed, and a multiplicity of platforms were activated over time by means of educational, activist and exhibition-based projects.

CAMP also frequently shifted their activities from the domain of the gallery space to that of the discursive. Such discursive programming could include, for example, talks, workshops, seminars, and guided tours of the exhibitions conducted by users of Trampoline House. Like documenta fifteen, CAMP’s various exhibition-related activities involved participants from a wide spectrum of disciplines. Thus, the discursive programming at CAMP can be said to have transgressed disciplinary boundaries in seeking to set up collaborative platforms for wide-reaching, transculturally networked and cross-disciplinary ways of sharing and producing knowledge related to contemporary migration politics – in other words,

generative infrastructures. As Chapter 3 will demonstrate, Trampoline House's contribution to documenta fifteen was, in many ways, a continuation not only of activities developed in Copenhagen but also of the collaborative curatorial approach that Frederikke 'Fred' Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen had developed at CAMP together with the art space's many partners and volunteers.

In regard to documenta fifteen, it is of note that CAMP had already realized events at large-scale art institutions in Denmark, such as SMK (the National Gallery of Denmark) and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.²⁵ Although CAMP's curatorial team has reflected explicitly on the potential dangers of being co-opted into such trans-institutional collaborations, it continued to operate within these museological contexts, partly because the collaborations provided much-needed possibilities of funding – as did documenta fifteen²⁶ – and because they enabled CAMP to reach more extensive audiences, thus potentially broadening the scope of CAMP's curatorially staged political interventions.²⁷ As Sabine Dahl Nielsen and I have argued elsewhere, the effects of these trans-institutional collaborations were limited. CAMP's presence at SMK and the Louisiana Museum did not impact the institutional practices of these museums in any substantial way. Producing such counter-hegemonic effects would have necessitated long-term engagements as well as negotiations that addressed the power relations between the institutions and the small-scale art space more actively. This reservation aside, the collaborations evidently led to new audiences being exposed to CAMP's curatorial projects. The collaboration with SMK also enabled the free transfer of museum visitors to the lesser-known exhibition site of CAMP, and vice versa, in connection with singular events such as the opening of *Migration Politics: Three CAMP Exhibitions* (S.D. Nielsen and Petersen 2021, 87). The platforms and resources of established institutions can also be used strategically to amplify effects in the art field and

25 Examples thereof include *Migration Politics: Three CAMP exhibitions at the SMK* (2016) and *Spaces of Disappearance*, a literature and film event at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark, September 9, 2019.

26 In addition to Danish private foundations and donors, the 2022 programme of Weekend Trampoline House was supported by documenta fifteen and the Goethe Institute. See 'Those Who Make It Possible', <https://www.trampolinehouse.dk/sponsors> (accessed March 27, 2025).

27 These issues – the potential dangers of becoming co-opted when engaging with mainstream art museums; the pragmatic necessity of securing funding in this way to run an alternative, small-scale institution such as CAMP; as well as the political importance of trying to reach new publics by means of cross-institutional collaborations – have been discussed at various public events, for example when Tone Olaf Nielsen presented CAMP's curatorial practice at the conference *Politics: Orientations and Possibilities of the Present*, Copenhagen University, October 30, 2019. The advantages and disadvantages of engaging with large-scale institutions such as SMK and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art were also touched upon in the above-mentioned interview with Kuratorisk Aktion on December 13, 2019.

to disseminate political critique. This was an important lesson that Trampoline House learned from its participation in *documenta fifteen*, and it suggests why Weekend Trampoline House was among the contributors to the group exhibition *Non Performing*, organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde the following year (2023).²⁸

Postmigrant public spaces

Although CAMP entered into collaboration with major museums, the majority of CAMP's discursive events took place at Trampoline House itself, to ensure a close connection with the regular activities of the community centre and its postmigrant micro-community. This constant interweaving of CAMP's activities and those of Trampoline House played a pivotal role in the curatorial production of what I have termed *postmigrant public spaces*. CAMP's activities materialized in both physical and media spaces and comprised various kinds of aesthetic, social and intellectual participation, public discourse, activism, political protest and acts of solidarity. Taking the spatio-temporal ramifications and the functional diversification into account, I define public space broadly. I call the kind of public spaces generated by CAMP *postmigrant*, to indicate that they are plural and sometimes conflictual domains of human encounter, shaped under the impact of migration and by forms of nationalism which have gained ground under the combined pressures of global capitalism, increasing economic inequality and the rising numbers of migrants and refugees.²⁹ Unlike the notion of the nation as a public sphere, the designator *postmigrant* foregrounds transcultural entanglement, which is a further reason why this concept is apt for describing the particularity of CAMP as a public art space existing within a community centre that is itself a postmigrant public space, albeit of a different kind.

As explained in Chapter 1, I build on Michael Warner's argument that a public 'exists *by virtue of being addressed*'. With regard to CAMP and Trampoline House, it is significant that Warner underscores that a public, in the modern sense of the word, also embraces strangers and outsiders – in fact, anyone who feels that the topic of the address 'speaks' to them. I prefer the term *public space* to *public sphere*: firstly, because I also draw on Chantal Mouffe's notion of democratic public spaces as inherently conflictual spaces; and, secondly, because I am concerned with a specific art space and local community, not the public sphere as a wide-ranging communication framework. In short, this chapter explores postmigrant public spaces as ambiguous,

28 <https://samtidskunst.dk/en/event/non-performing/> (accessed March 27, 2025).

29 For more on 'global capitalism', see Cole 2018.

social and discursive spaces where frictions and conviviality coexist (Mouffe 2007a, 2007b).

According to the proponents of postmigrant thinking, it is not only immigrants and their descendants but also the well-established 'elites' who are expected to adjust to and integrate themselves into the new pluralist structure of postmigrant societies (Foroutan et al. 2015, 3). This aspect of the postmigrant reconstitution of society and the social imaginary came to the fore in Trampoline House and CAMP. As multicultural and multilingual environments that facilitate face-to-face encounters between displaced people and the receiving communities, they testified to the fact that postmigrant public spaces can never be confined to 'the nation' as a public sphere. Such spaces always exist in a dynamic, transcultural relationship with people, discourses and cultures that hail from places beyond the nation-state.

CAMP's curatorial activities aimed at generating *publics* rather than audiences of art spectators, although the exhibitions also did just this. The ambition to produce publics and to 'activate moments of communal publicness' was also evident in the way in which Kuratorisk Aktion worked from a position of embeddedness and solidarity (O'Neill and Doherty 2011, 12). They consciously orchestrated CAMP's activities in Trampoline House to attract and interweave different kinds of people. In doing so, CAMP succeeded in engendering postmigrant public spaces which were relatively open forums, providing the indefinite publics that emerged within them with a place to thematize, discuss and act on issues related to forced migration, asylum seeking and integration, as well as exploring how art can stimulate engagements with these issues and foster solidarity among people.

How did CAMP negotiate latent conflicts and enhance the potential for bridge-building among the heterogeneous mix of individuals who constituted the gallery's public(s)? As already suggested in the outline of CAMP's activities above, the public spaces generated at CAMP had a distinctive local quality, since the centre's regular visitors lived mainly in the Copenhagen area. CAMP's strategy of public engagement thus relied on the possibility of face-to-face interaction and on addressing, in a politically active way, migration and integration issues of interest to the refugees and asylum seekers of Trampoline House, who remained the primary *intended* audience for CAMP's exhibitions despite the fact that it was mostly the art audience that set foot in the exhibition space. Nevertheless, the insistence on catering for the Trampoline House community is significant. Although it proved difficult to entice the majority of Trampoline House users to enter the gallery's 'other space', CAMP found ways to reach out to them and to get different groups to mingle. This was done by consciously seeking to present art projects that did not exclude the users of Trampoline House due to language barriers or excessive use of codifications specifically related to the artworld. As Kuratorisk Aktion stated, 'We look for artworks that do not involve too much language and that are not too conceptual, because we're not just talking to a professional art audience, we also address people in the house who

have no training or maybe a different training in understanding contemporary art. While English is the most commonly used language in the international art world, this might be only the fourth or fifth language to some of our audiences.' (Qadim 2020, 5)

The creation of a heterogeneous contact zone where Trampoline House users and art audiences could intermingle was also achieved by launching the educational programme, Talking about Art. By means of this programme, members of the Trampoline House community who were interested in learning how to become gallery guides were recruited and participated in self-organized workshops; they studied the exhibitions about to be mounted, and co-authored guide manuscripts that they subsequently performed in duos throughout the periods of the exhibitions.³⁰ In this way, encounters were staged within the exhibition space that effectively challenged the binaries of inclusion and exclusion, guest and host. Last but not least, getting different groups to come into contact within the curatorial framework of CAMP was made possible by co-organizing performances, film screenings, public debates and opening events in the familiar environment of Trampoline House, which its users regarded as 'their' space.³¹ These events offered platforms for democratic participation, aesthetic experience and raising and sharing sensibilities in discussions (or listening to discussions), as well as for informal conversations and sociability. Thus, the art events in Trampoline House, and the guided tours of the exhibitions given by refugees and asylum seekers, constituted the crucial contact zones where art and curating facilitated transcultural exchange between refugees, asylum seekers, local Copenhageners and (inter)national art audiences.

Returning to the question of how CAMP imagined public space otherwise – that is, as a contact zone for local Copenhageners (privileged) and asylum seekers (sub-altern) – it is important to stress that this contact zone was not primarily a space for rational, critical debate, although the premises sometimes fulfilled this purpose. Rather, it was a space of coming together, which made possible intersubjective encounters that would leave affective traces, provoke reflection and might even sow the seeds of sympathy, solidarity and pro-asylum seeker and anti-racist activism. Drawing on Jürgen Habermas's, Chantal Mouffe's and Michael Warner's theorization of the public sphere, art historian and curator Alpesh Kantilal Patel submits that there is a need for 'a public sphere (whether agonistic or counter)' which assigns a defining part to embodied, affective sociability in public dialogue. Patel suggests that in such spaces of coming together, the artistic practices (and, it could be added, the curatorial practices by which artworks are usually mediated) 'can be envisioned as

30 For more information on the Talking about Art programme, see Qadim 2020, 7.

31 The here-mentioned challenges of enticing Trampoline House users to enter CAMP's exhibition space, and vice versa, have been reflected upon by Kuratorisk Aktion in an interview with Sabine Dahl Nielsen and the author on December 13, 2019.

making felt – if only transient – connections among different, perhaps conflicting, counterpublics or subjects' (Patel 2017, 173).

Although CAMP's discursive events had a strong oral and local place-bound component, they were also communicated and expanded through use of the centre's website, exhibition catalogues (both printed and online), social media, and, sometimes, news media. In order to better grasp the implications of Kuratorisk Aktion's work, however, we need to look beyond CAMP. In 2011, Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty identified a 'durational approach' in public art, based on case studies of temporally extended art projects that prioritize spatial and public forms of expression and knowledge production, and develop methods of working which dissolve the boundaries between artistic and curatorial modes of thinking, researching and organizing (O'Neill and Doherty 2011, 10–11). Because of their long time span, observes O'Neill, such enduring projects engender 'a complex set of interactions'. This suggests that they are capable of creating and sustaining 'a certain connectivity' among their participants and publics, that is, a deeper form of engagement that 'aspires to create an ethos of patience, perseverance and attentiveness' at odds with the usual round of globalized exhibition-making and the fleeting encounters between audiences and artworks in transit between venues (O'Neill 2011, 51, 55). As Andrea Baldini submits, 'enduring artworks' – and curatorial projects, it might be added – 'are important since they provide the opportunity to engage members of public-art publics in a more sustained and intense way, thus promoting more structured forms of discussion' (Baldini 2019, 19). As a long-term thematic curatorial project, CAMP operated along similar lines, generating different and repeated forms of coming-together which engaged many different actors in 'an exchange of ideas as part of an initiated process of potential transformation' (O'Neill 2011, 55). Such open-ended processes permitted conflicts and tensions to surface, but also allowed for the building of solidarity and what Foroutan has termed *postmigrant alliances*, that is, strategic bridge building between migrant and non-migrant actors who pursue a common goal.³² By bringing together different people based on a shared experience (for example, of migration, racism or discrimination), or with a common ethical stance on migration and diversity, postmigrant alliances enable new interest-based relationships to develop 'beyond homogenous peer groups'. By blurring the boundaries, these alliances between people of different heritage and citizenship status have the potential to restructure the understanding of identity and belonging, because 'other nonethnic principles are promoted in order to undermine the legitimacy of ethnic, national, or racial boundaries' (Andreas Wimmer, quoted in Foroutan 2019a, 199).

32 For Foroutan's definitions of solidarity and postmigrant alliances, and how they relate to one another, see Foroutan 2019a, 198–202.

To conclude, the participation of CAMP's audiences and the users of Trampoline House diverged from that of traditional visually oriented spectatorship and, instead, approximated a form of civil practice enacted by individuals as citizens or denizens. The durational character of this small-scale institution's curatorial engagement with migration, its long-lasting commitment to the development of solidarity, accountability and sustainable institutional structures, including the setting up of so-called support systems for participants, plays an important part in this shift. It enabled CAMP to experiment with varying forms of public address and congregation embedded in politically engaged community work, sometimes linked to activism and strategies of care. Crucially, it was the relationship between the different projects and events in the same place across time that enabled the activities to cohere synergistically, as their effects accumulated and produced transitory constituencies which supported CAMP's continual work towards more equitable migration, refugee and asylum policies.