4. A postmigrant civic ethics from the perspective of the refugee

Dilemmas of representing refugees

Chapters 2 and 3's study of how Trampoline House and CAMP gave space to those facing a rigid asylum system suggests but does not elaborate on the fact that representing refugees and asylum seekers presents many challenges and dilemmas, no matter whether the chosen format is a form of assisted or mediated self-representation, an artist-led participatory practice, or if the artist is the authoritative figure who creates representations of precarious others, speaking *for* instead of *with*. Critical questions of how refugees and asylum seekers are represented may also arise when the artist has a refugee background herself, as in the work of the Vietnamese American artist, Tiffany Chung. In *The Syrian Project* (2011–2015), which figured prominently in her solo exhibition at CAMP in 2015, Chung used quantitative data from UNHCR statistics to represent visually the routes and scale of the Syrian exodus. For all their breathtaking beauty and the acuteness with which her small, delicate maps register the Syrian crisis, they do not escape the pitfall of reducing refugees to anonymous numbers. Nor are the works of artists who have themselves been victims of state persecution above criticism, as evidenced by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's documentary *Human Flow* (2017). Capturing human stories in 23 countries across the globe, Ai Weiwei's film documents the staggering scale of the worldwide refugee crisis and the suffering of the many refugees who have sought shelter and struggle to survive in the squalor of overpopulated camps. In this case, the fact that the film was made in solidarity with refugees does not make obsolete the critical question why the figure of the world-famous, globe-trotting artist is repeatedly foregrounded, so the focus shifts to the artist's strong identification with what he describes as 'these unfortunate people who are pushed into extreme conditions by outside forces they are powerless to resist'.[1] In her insightful critical discussion of Ai Weiwei's unquestionably urgent

1 Ai Weiwei, 'The Refugee Crisis Isn't about Refugees. It's about US' (The Guardian, February 2, 2018; quoted in Ross 2022, 191).

and thought-provoking film, Christine Ross captures the tensional ambiguity of the artist's empathy eminently well, with the concept of the *pharmakon* as being both a poison and a remedy or cure. Ross uses this concept consistently throughout her book, *Art for Coexistence: Unlearning the Way We See Migration*, as a tool to analyse the ambiguities that representations of forced displacement are steeped in, especially those that seek to move the viewer to empathize with refugees. Ross demonstrates that the ambiguities and 'pharmakon paradox' inherent in art is one of its strengths with regard to the representation of migration and coexistence (Ross 2022, 178). She also suggests that the call for empathy is constant in Ai Weiwei's many works on 'the dehumanization of migration', but 'it tends to be ambivalent precisely because of its identificatory dimension' (Ross 2022, 191). This is most manifest in Ai Weiwei's photograph of himself posing as the drowned three-year-old Kurdish refugee, Alan Kurdi. The result of his attempt to express his empathy by literally staging himself as Alan as depicted in Nilüfer Demir's widely reproduced press photo from September 2015, showing the infant's body lying face down at the water's edge of a Turkish beach, is, Ross argues, a misguided over-identification that 'vampiristically' absorbs the young boy's body and redirects the attention to how the artist feels (Ross 2022, 192). Here, the 'poisonous' side of the pharmakon takes over at the expense of its 'therapeutic' side. Conversely, there are scenes in *Human Flow* where the 'poisonous' side of the artwork-as-pharmakon is partly overtaken by its 'therapeutic' side (Ross 2022, 194–195).

What Ross's reflections on art, empathy and the pharmakon make evident is that the representation of 'the other' is a minefield. Even representations grounded in the very best of intentions, or which are created by someone who is a member of the community being portrayed, may be questioned. Chapter 4 examines some of these problems of representation by shifting the focus from asylum-seeking newcomers to those who have been granted permission to stay and build a life in the postmigrant society of Denmark.[2] To quote a postmigrant watchword coined by the German activist movement Kanak Attak in the 1990s, and reintroduced into the debates in 2016 by Esra Küçük (who was at that time head of the Gorki Forum at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin), an important point in this chapter is that what matters in a postmigrant politics of representation is 'Haltung statt Herkunft', or 'It is not about where you are from, but where you are at' (Petersen, Schramm, and Wiegand 2019, 21; Küçük 2016).

Before I turn to the dilemmas of representing people from refugee backgrounds, some general remarks on representation and difference are needed. 'Representation is a complex business', observed Stuart Hall, especially when dealing with 'people and places which are significantly different from us' (Hall 1997a, 225–226). This is because 'difference' is a contested area of representation that constitutes a key site of

2 This chapter builds on a previous study; see Petersen 2021.

the ongoing negotiation between the competing social and political forces through which power is defended, contested and shifted. In addition, representations of difference, especially *visual* representations, engage emotions and attitudes. They may trigger the viewer's anxieties and desires, as well as mobilizing cultural stereotypes that reinforce already existing prejudice and conventions. Representations are important, therefore, not only because of what they *are*, but also because of what they *do*, i.e. for their discursive and cultural functions and effects.

Drawing on Foucault's discursive approach, Hall stresses that the subject is *produced within discourse* and can thus become 'the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces [...and] the object through which power is relayed' (Hall 1997b, 55). In discourse, the subject has two sides or 'sites'. As a representational practice, discourse produces *subjects as identifiable figures* – the national citizen, the foreigner, the refugee, etc. In doing so, discourse also constructs *subject-positions for the reader or viewer* from which to make sense of its particular knowledge and representations (Hall 1997b, 56). Hall's point about the dual role of the subject in practices of representation is fundamental to any engagement with representational practices pivoting on 'difference', especially when the practices of representation have a stake in the construction of a binary opposition between 'us' and 'them', self and other, as is the case with the representation of forcibly displaced people.

To begin with, it should be stressed that the focal point of Chapter 4 is not the uprooting and flight from home, nor the forced displacement of refugees. As Emma Cox has noted, 'an emphasis on *transiting* bodies risks distilling refugee subjectivity to beleaguered mobility' (Cox 2017, 495). This chapter shifts the perspective to the open-ended processes of 'regrounding' (S. Ahmed et al. 2003) and worldmaking (Meskimmon 2017, 2011) that refugees undergo in the receiving country, and it links the representation of such processes to the broader debate about belonging and citizenship in Europe. Despite their mundane character and embeddedness in the inconspicuous elements of everyday life, the processes of settlement and belonging are inseparable from political discourses and the tightened policies on asylum and integration which have been implemented in connection with the resurgence of nationalism and the fortification of national borders in many Western countries, i.e. 'the European border and migration regime' (Hess and Kasparek 2017, 58–60). Refugees and representation is thus a profoundly politicized topic that brings societal conflicts to the fore, also when experiences of refugeedom and questions of asylum are addressed within the sphere of art and literature, which is still widely believed to possess some degree of freedom and distance from society despite the fact that the rich tradition of political art developing since the 1960s and 1970s has effectively refuted the modernist idea of radical autonomy and separateness.

Given the politicized nature of the topic, a study of artistic and curatorial modes of representing refugees should include a consideration of the entanglement of aesthetics with politics and ethics. Instead of going the traditional route and turning to

Jacques Rancière's theorization of the relationship between aesthetics and politics, thereby following in the footsteps of the numerous scholars and other professionals in the art field who have embraced Rancière's theory in recent decades, I aim to pursue some new avenues.[3]

The ethical dilemmas and conflicting aims and perceptions involved in representing refugees are many, as Hannah Arendt suggested in the very opening sentence of her 1943 essay 'We, Refugees': 'In the first place, we don't like to be called "refugees"' (Arendt 2007, 264). The question of how to 'represent' refugees (and other marginalized or vulnerable groups) leads to two kinds of ethical consideration. Firstly, there is the risk of conforming to pre-existing tropes and thereby unintentionally exacerbating stereotypes of suffering and victimization, or their compensatory antidote, which over-emphasizes assimilation and 'notions that refugees should be "just like us"' (Blomfield and Lenette 2018, 325). Secondly, there is the issue of agency and empowerment: should refugees be represented, or should they represent themselves in the receiving country? Should they 'have' agency, voice and visibility, or should they be 'given' agency, voice and visibility by spokespersons and other mediators in order to increase their chance of being 'heard' and 'understood' by the authorities and citizens of the receiving country? Should they be given full control over the means of representation and platforms of communication? Or should 'speaking' and 'making visible' in public spheres be based on a collaboration between refugees and native citizens? If so, what can participatory practices accomplish, and what dilemmas and conflicts of domination and suppression do they involve?

This chapter will explore the problem of representing refugees by way of a case study of the art project *100% FREMMED?* ('100% FOREIGN?'), initiated in 2016 by photographer and curator Maja Nydal Eriksen and Metropolis/Copenhagen International Theatre. *100% FREMMED?* is Denmark's first major documentary collection of individual accounts of former refugees. It consists of 250 life stories and photographic portraits of individuals who were granted asylum in Denmark between 1956 and 2019. It can be said, therefore, to form a collective portrait and multivocal narrative that inserts citizens of refugee backgrounds into the narrative of the nation, thereby expanding the idea of national identity and culture, or more specifically 'Danishness'. Additionally, at the time of its completion in 2019, it was distinguished as the most encompassing civic participation project yet undertaken in Denmark. *100% FREMMED?* was an extraordinary ramified, expansive and viral project that engaged inhabitants, cultural institutions, cultural producers and municipal officers in cities across most of the country.

3 For a critique of Rancière's theory, see Marchart 2019, 13–14. For a recent example of how Rancière's theorization of the relationship between aesthetics, politics and ethics can be applied in a study of representations of refugees, see Arda 2019.

100% FREMMED? was also an interdisciplinary project aiming to 'give voice' to people with refugee experience. It spanned several genres – interview-based narrative, photographic portrait, art in public space, and more. The project allows us to think of participatory art as a privileged locus for the exploration of intersubjective relations and the question of how to 'represent' citizens with refugee experience as well as the history and practice of asylum – the building of a future life in a foreign country.

In a study of arts-based methods in refugee research, Isobel Blomfield and Caroline Lenette proposed that, through collaboration with people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, artists can create representations which are more empowering. One way of achieving this is to produce 'counter-narratives that provide a more holistic construction of refugees' individual historical, gender, political and cultural circumstances' (Blomfield and Lenette 2018, 325). Yet, there are many dilemmas and ambiguities involved in such an endeavour. *100% FREMMED?* will serve here as the analytical reference point for a discussion of some of these issues. This chapter's basic methodological premise is that both the politics of representation and the ethics of representation must be addressed when engaging with representations of refugees, and that such representations must be situated in their immediate contexts of production and reception for their politicized character and meaning to become comprehensible. Only by considering the socio-historical circumstances and political climate is it possible to understand what *100% FREMMED?* set out to do, and why and how the project sought to engender a new civic ethics from the perspective of the refugee.

To situate the project in its historical and regional European context, I will briefly consider Danish immigration and asylum policies in the 2010s, starting from the proposition, put forward in the Introduction and further elaborated in Chapter 1, that Denmark can be described as a postmigrant society. My consideration of the *ethical* aspects of *100% FREMMED?* draws on Arendt's essay and what the English studies scholar Andreea Deciu Ritivoi has described as Arendt's attempt to articulate an 'ethics of alterity' from the perspective of the refugee (Ritivoi 2019), as well as the Vietnamese American filmmaker and theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha's concept of *speaking nearby*. When considering the *political* aspects of the project, I return to the feminist concept of transversal politics adopted in Chapters 2 and 3 because it has a strong intersubjective and ethical component (Yuval-Davis 1999; Meskimmon 2020). The case study illuminates some of the difficulties involved in representing refugees in a participatory art project, especially the challenge of ensuring that there is scope for the participants' agency to unfold (Blomfield and Lenette 2018, 235), as well as the question of how to create narratives that counter stereotypification and articulate claims for the democratic right to be treated as an equal – or, in other words, a postmigrant civic ethics for a plural democratic society, springing from the perspective of the refugee. It is hoped that by threading the theoretical discussion through an

example, this chapter can contribute to a deeper understanding of how participatory art forms and their interpretive and collaborative practices can intervene in the field of representation, and what they can bring to the ethical politics of representing refugee experiences and the understanding of postmigrancy.

Politics, ethics and aesthetics

For the purposes of this case study, I define ethics broadly but with a special emphasis on what ethics is understood to be within the domains of artistic practices and aesthetics, understood here in the broad sense of 'sensory embodied experience' and not as a branch of philosophy and art theory. I adopt Geoffrey Galt Harpham's understanding of ethics as 'the arena in which the claims of otherness – the moral law, the human other, cultural norms, the Good-in-itself, etc. – are articulated and negotiated' (Harpham 1995, 394). As Harpham explains, ethics has two functions: to formulate an ethical critique of the norms that are constituted within a given ethical system; and to articulate and defend different norms. I would like to suggest that *100% FREMMED?* sought to fulfil both purposes. Another way of describing the project's dual function is to see it as pursuing both political and ethical ends. This rephrasing indicates why it is relevant to turn to Hannah Arendt. As Ritivoi observes, Arendt's 'ethics of alterity' was connected to her ideal of a political community as an arena in which individuals are not seen as born with a fixed and unchanging identity, but defined by their actions, opinions and shifting positionalities; a plural community in which figures of alterity are not pushed to assimilate into sameness, but where difference is embraced (Ritivoi 2019, 104–105).

In recent decades, the discourses on ethics and literary practice have increasingly focused on questions about otherness and witnessing related to the practices and responsibilities of both authors and readers (Newton 2019, ix). In the field of contemporary visual arts, however, the discourse on ethics has taken a different and somewhat understudied course. Since the 1960s, an expansive definition has extended the significance of art beyond the singular, discrete object, which is the work of art, to encompass the human relationships engendered by its production and its reception, as well as its institutional and social framework. As a result, artistic production has become increasingly reflexive about its complex relation to society and shifted towards a strengthening of the connections between the work of art and its social context, site(s) of reception and its audiences. To strengthen the interaction of audiences with works of art, a host of participatory practices – ranging

from 'relational aesthetics',[4] to 'relational antagonism',[5] to 'artivism'[6] – have been introduced by artists who more often than not engage with politicized social issues, such as inequality, marginalization, gender, racism, stigmatization, climate crisis, and more. The discourses on the so-called 'social turn' and 'participatory turn' in art are thus inseparable from questions about 'aesthetics and politics'.[7] It is from within these dominant and entangled discourses that a contemporary discourse on 'the ethics of aesthetics' has emerged and has sought to define the special qualities of the social field and the intersubjective relations that an artwork engenders, and of which it is also a part (Beshty 2015, 18). In other words, the discourse on art and ethics is a discourse *within* the discourses on art's relation to politics, participation and social engagement, from which it is rarely singled out for separate theorization. A rare example is the artist and writer Walead Beshty's attempt to define an 'aesthetics of ethics' in his introduction to the anthology *Ethics*, with its source texts from the 1970s to the early 2010s. Beshty characterizes art that turns to ethics as 'an art that operates directly upon the world it is situated in' (Beshty 2015, 19) and whose ethical dimension is 'manifest in the aesthetic appearance of the work itself' and in the 'conditions of reception' it creates for its audience in order to propose 'a modification to the social contract, with the artwork acting as the signification of this modification' (Beshty 2015, 20). Applied to the practices of representing refugees, this understanding would shift the attention from the work of art as a discrete object to the ethical relationship between the way in which an artwork depicts subjects as *identifiable figures* and how it co-constructs *subject-positions* (Hall) to make its figures and message readable for the recipient – or, to borrow a more accurate term from literary parlance, for the implied reader who is often also what Michal Rothberg names an *implicated subject* (Rothberg 2019).

Denmark's immigration and asylum policies

To fully understand the implications of *100% FREMMED?* as an artistic, ethical and political intervention into current public debates, it is necessary to outline the contours of Denmark's asylum policies and the popular feeling in the country regarding

4 This much debated concept was coined by art theorist and curator Nicholas Bourriaud (Bourriaud 2002).

5 This term was coined by art historian Claire Bishop as part of her seminal critique of Bourriaud's concept (Bishop 2004, 77).

6 'Artivism' is a contraction of art and activism. For a definition of the term and practice, see Reestorff 2017, 16.

7 This brief outline does not do justice to the breadth and complexity of these discourses on contemporary art. For a more elaborate account on the social and participatory turns, and for further references, see Petersen and Nielsen 2021.

immigration and the growing demographic diversity of the population around the time when the project evolved. For decades, immigration has divided public opinion and turned demographic change into an existential question about the perception of self and other. What does it mean to be Danish? And what does it mean to be foreign?[8] What does it take to become 'a member of society' in social terms, or to be recognized as a citizen in the legal sense of the word?

Since the influx of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa into Europe in 2015, the narrativization of arrival has placed refugees within 'a condemnatory frame' that is legitimized by concerns about refugees being a threat to national safety rather than people in need of aid and shelter, and which is backed by 'combative modes of political leadership' (Cox 2017, 485). An important change in European asylum policy and law is the introduction of further restraints on the possibility of gaining the security of permanent residency and access to citizenship. As Chapter 3 explained, in recent years, Danish governments have introduced some of the toughest requirements for naturalization in the world as a means of 'negative nation branding' (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2017), including a new tertiary status of 'temporary protection' (2015) and a three-year postponement of access to family reunification for those granted temporary protection, unless special considerations apply. Important to this chapter is the fact that the restrictions on citizenship also affect well-established groups in society, such as immigrants who have lived and worked in the country for most of their lives, as well as their descendants. In 2021, a report from the Danish Institute for Human Rights criticized the fact that only 65 per cent of the descendants of immigrants born and raised in the country obtained Danish citizenship. The fact that the number of people granted citizenship has declined to its lowest point in 40 years has also raised concerns about the democratic problem that a growing section of the population does not have the right to vote (Danmarks Statistik 2021; Andersen et al. 2021, 48, 58–59, 132–135).

Furthermore, in 2019 a study from the three Nordic countries, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, showed that young adults in Denmark thought that the acquisition of citizenship had become too difficult, indicating that there is a widening gap between parliament and the views of its population, especially young people (Erdal et al. 2019, 29–31, 60, 228–229). Although most researchers have argued that there is no genuine *political* multiculturalism in Denmark, recent surveys suggest that Danish 'monoculturalism' is waning (Holtug 2016; C.A. Larsen 2016a, 2016b). In addition, both the philosopher Nils Holtug and the sociologist Christian Albrekt Larsen have suggested that Danes increasingly base their notion of national community on the

8 Lisa Abend makes similar observations in a feature article about the effects of Danish immigration policies on public opinion and the self-perception of the Danes (Abend January 16, 2019).

idea of Denmark as a political entity rather than a cultural community. Larsen has convincingly argued that the growing significance of diversity in the Danish national self-perception results primarily from *generational* effects and can therefore be considered irreversible. Based on a comparison of two large surveys conducted in 2003 and 2013, Larsen concludes that the national self-perception of the population seems to be 'moving slowly but surely towards multiculture' (C.A. Larsen 2016a, 135).

What can be observed in Denmark is a split between, on the one hand, a growing openness to 'cultural diversity' in civil society and among some politicians, which ties in with a germinating critique of 'institutional racism' (e.g. in the labour market, the police, film and media, higher education, etc.), and, on the other hand, a broad coalition in parliament pushing for stricter laws on immigration that target especially refugees and irregular migrants. In short, Denmark, which has historically prided itself as being a liberal advocate of the protection of refugees, has become increasingly reluctant to integrate even comparatively small numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. Anxious to stem the tide of right-wing nationalistic backlash and win back voters from the anti-immigration populist party, *Dansk Folkeparti* (the Danish People's Party), both the conservative and the centre-left blocs in parliament have more or less appropriated the anti-immigration policy of *Dansk Folkeparti* and supported the seemingly endless series of restrictions on asylum, immigration and citizenship, thus testifying to how an 'invasion complex' has permeated national politics (Papastergiadis 2017, 13; see also Papastergiadis 2012, 36–40).

In 2019, the year that the project *100% FREMMED?* was completed, the flagrant dehumanization of refugees by Danish asylum policies became obvious when the social democratic government declared that some asylum seekers from Syria could be sent back to the Damascus province, although no other country in the world had yet declared this region safe enough to return to. This repatriation plan was fiercely contested by left-wing politicians, humanitarian organizations, ordinary citizens, and, importantly, young Syrian refugees who saw their whole existence destroyed, as well as by some members of the social democratic party. Even so, Danish politicians still find voter and parliamentary support for continuing their aggressive anti-asylum seeker policies, as explained in the Introduction (Abend 2019).

As noted by Nils Holtug, immigration policies are closely linked to the policies that govern civil society at large. It is reflected in the scramble for votes and the fact that 'there is a growing part of the political spectrum that sees a welfare state and a multicultural society as directly incompatible, or at least difficult to have side by side'. The broad political and voter support for such restrictive policies indicates that 'Danes are quite polarized over immigration', as Holtug puts it (Holtug, quoted in Abend 2019, n.p.; see also Holtug 2013). The polarization over immigration is aggravated even further by the ways in which anti-racism and feminist identity politics are often framed in the media and public debates by hostile narratives on 'political correctness' and 'the culture of hurt', and are wrongly interpreted as attempts

to introduce prohibitions and suppress freedom – especially the white majority's freedom of speech – rather than as struggles for social justice and expressions of a changing demography (Marker and Hendricks 2019, 120–121, 148). As philosophers Silas L. Marker and Vincent F. Hendricks observe in their book on the Danish public debates, both narratives 'are used by one side of the debate to frame the public as an *us*, who are the sensible and rational ones who do not get offended or hurt by trivial matters, and a *them*, who can be hurt by anything, has no sense of humour and cannot take a joke' (Marker and Hendricks 2019, 163).

With immigrants and their descendants making up 16 per cent of the population, a figure expected to rise to 22 per cent by 2070, it could be stated that Denmark is already well on its way to becoming a multi-ethnic society (Danmarks Statistik 2024, 7). In a 2022 study of the origins of children up to the age of 16, which used a more fine-grained set of classifications than Statistics Denmark, Jeppe Fjeldgaard Larsen and Christian Albrekt Larsen have even shown that, in 2019, 23.4 per cent, not 13.4 per cent, of children and youth had some kind of non-Danish heritage, and that the classifications hitherto used have underestimated the ethnic diversity among the youngest citizens, especially in greater Copenhagen (J.F. Larsen and Larsen 2022, 47–49 and 59). They conclude that, although 'ethnic diversity' is difficult to measure, the trend is clear:

> All in all, it is not an easy task to provide a meaningful description of ethnic diversity in a society. Essentially, the problem is that on the one hand, ethnic divides are a fact. They are reflected in language and culture. They are reflected in experiences of discrimination. They are reflected in settlement patterns. But on the other hand, ethnic divides are also ephemeral and constantly changing. These changes will be particularly evident among children and young people. (J.F. Larsen and Larsen 2022, 50)

Denmark can thus be characterized as a postmigrant society (see Chapter 1). At this juncture, the point I wish to stress is that the ways in which Danish governments have dealt with the challenge of refugees and their protection have not only affected the people directly concerned. In the longer term, the historical move away from the humanitarian commitments that were defined in the 20th century will also change the Danes' perception of society and national identity. It has, in fact, already changed. As Søren Jessen-Petersen, the former Assistant UN High Commissioner for Refugees, has said:

> Today, the joy and pleasure I felt by being Danish in an international organization, has been replaced by shame and embarrassment when former colleagues and friends contact me after yet another critical article in a major international

medium about constraints, restrictions and inhuman treatment of asylum seekers and refugees in Denmark. (Jessen-Petersen 2021, n.p.)

100% FREMMED? – an overview of the project

The *100% FREMMED?* project emerged from and grappled with the socio-political circumstances outlined above. At the same time, it also engaged with the world history of refugeedom since the end of the Second World War and the adoption of the United Nations' Refugee Convention in 1951. It constituted a targeted attempt to expand the understanding of citizenship by inserting a wide range of personal stories about, and portraits of, citizens with refugee backgrounds in the official narrative about Denmark, thereby adding a new chapter to Danish history (Padovan-Özdemir 2020, 3).

It is important to underscore that the aim was not to tell the stories of the wars and persecutions that forced people to flee, or about internment in detention camps and asylum centres or the other troubles refugees have, and have had to go through before being granted asylum in Denmark. *100% FREMMED?* aimed to involve citizens with a refugee background in a multivoiced rethinking of national identity as a heterogeneous rather than an ethnically homogeneous category. Here, the refugee and migration perspective became a tool for bringing the country's actual diversity to light. In other words, the project was not about the escape, the journey and the arrival but the process of building a life in a foreign country and the lifelong, open-ended formation of identity it entails. As explained to the digital visitor on the project's website, the aim was 'to update the national romantic portrayal of Denmark and place the participants in the official image of Denmark'.[9] In addition, the project made an ambitious attempt to unite art, history, identity, inclusion, learning and democratic participation in one project.

Maja Nydal Eriksen and Metropolis initiated the project in 2016. The first phase resulted in a series of 100 photographic portraits and interview-based stories by former refugees living in Copenhagen. It was first shown at an exhibition in Copenhagen City Hall in the spring of 2017; it also included the performative event *Levende fortællinger* ('Live stories'), during which the audience was able to engage with some of the participants in a one-on-one conversation. This was followed later that same year by an open-air exhibition at a centrally located quayside in Copenhagen. In the next phase (2018–2019), the project was transformed into a travelling exhibition, expanding the project's geographical reach to include participants in cities across the country, where the project was shown in public spaces and included

9 '100% FREMMED?', https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/ (accessed March 30, 2025).

newly added portraits of local residents.[10] With each city, ten new portraits of local inhabitants were added. The exhibition was also accompanied by other events, such as theatre productions (with some of the participants as performers), community dinners, events at local libraries, and, importantly, educational activities for school classes.[11] The latter, as a spinoff from the documentary project, was developed by Nydal Eriksen and the project group into an ambitious educational package which was launched in 2021, consisting of a website about dual cultural identity based on material and nine key themes from the exhibition, as well as classroom material and classes taught by former refugees.[12]

Fig. 15: Installation view of the 100% FREMMED? *('100% FOREIGN?') exhibition in the city of Viborg, Denmark. The general exhibition setup with the local portraits was on the ground level, with the 100 portraits from Copenhagen installed on cubes on the steps above them. Curated by Maja Nydal Eriksen in collaboration with Metropolis/Copenhagen International Theatre. The photographic portraits and the texts are mounted on cubes measuring 200 x 200 cm. © Maja Nydal Eriksen.*

10 '100% FREMMED?', https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/ (accessed March 30, 2025).

11 In addition to *Levende fortællinger* at Copenhagen City Hall in 2017, Teater Katapult in Aarhus co-produced *100% fremmed? Levende fortællinger* ('100% Foreign? Live Stories') with Metropolis/Copenhagen International Theatre. It premiered in 2019 and was based on the life stories of six participants in *100% FREMMED?* living in the Aarhus area (Christoffersen 2019).

12 For a critical analysis of the classroom material and how it was used in classes observed in a field study, see Jacobsen and Padovan-Özdemir 2024.

A postmigrant society

Although the idea for *100% FREMMED?* arose from the debates about the 'European refugee crisis' which dominated the media in 2015, the project's focus on the Danish context must be understood from its origins in Maja Nydal Eriksen and Metropolis's previous collaboration with the Berlin director and author group, Rimini Protokoll, on the staging of a Copenhagen version of their successful *100% City* concept at the Royal Danish Theatre in 2013. In *100% City*, the 100 individuals on stage were selected based on statistical criteria, with each individual representing 1% of a city's inhabitants, so the group collectively drew a sociological portrait of the city, thus inviting the audience to ponder the relationship between individual and type and between individual and society. Since the premiere of *100% Berlin: A Statistical Chain Reaction* in 2008, the *100% City* concept has been developed into many productions, including *100% København* ('100% Copenhagen'), with the 100 Copenhageners on stage selected through statistical criteria, as prescribed by Rimini Protokoll's *100% City* concept (Eacho 2018, 185). *100% FREMMED?* used a similar method to select the first 100 participants,[13] and aimed to include equal numbers of male and female participants. In the portrait photographs, Nydal Eriksen also played with gender stereotypes, depicting women in typical 'masculine' postures, and vice versa. There are, for instance, more men shown lying down and more women playing an 'active' or 'leading' part. Moreover, many of the individual stories address questions of feminism and equality through narratives of social control, both positive and negative, and by seeking to unsettle gender stereotypes.[14]

As a unique feature of the Copenhagen edition of *100% City*, the performance *100% København* was followed, in 2015, by an exhibition of staged portraits of the people behind the statistics, accompanied by their own suggestions on what sets them apart from the crowd. Here, Maja Nydal Eriksen assumed the dual role of artist

13 The statistical method was explained on the project's first website (now closed) and included information about how the 100 participants from Copenhagen were distributed over 29 different countries of origin. The same figures were given on a large poster placed at the entrance to the exhibition at the Copenhagen City Hall in 2017. The fact that this statistical distribution was not included in the catalogue with the 100 portraits from Copenhagen published the following year indicates that the project had evolved and freed itself from Rimini Protokoll's *100% City* concept (Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018).

14 Maja Nydal Eriksen, in an email to the author, June 1, 2021. For some examples of reclining men, see https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/news-1/ahmed-kadhim-al-sovirawi, https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/news-1/gervais-nombe; for examples of active, leading women, see https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/news-1/rawan-abdullah, https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/news-1/santha-selvam (accessed March 30, 2025).

and curator. This exhibition thus provided the model for *100% FREMMED?*,[15] with the portraits in both cases emphasizing the actual cultural and ethnic diversity of the capital.

It could be argued, however, that the meaning of the figure '100%' changes, because *100% FREMMED?* does not seek to map the demography of a whole city but, rather, suggests that alienation and belonging can be measured quantitatively on a scale from foreign to Danish. However, the question mark indicates that the proposition is deliberately provocative and should not be taken at face value. If anything, it implies that the binary opposition between 'Danish' and 'foreign' should be questioned. This is, in fact, what many of the participants did. Some refused to be measured according to this binary system. For instance, Sri Lankan-born Santha Selvam declared herself to be her very own 'Santha mixture'.[16] Others used the percentage scale to criticize anti-immigration sentiment and policies, or to express their feeling of alienation and stigmatization, or conversely, their sense of belonging and inclusion. Overall, the percentage scale was used by the participants to communicate, in a succinct way, their personal experience of and their position on social inclusion and exclusion. Moreover, most of their stories imply knowledge of the fact that being Danish and foreign are coexisting parts of the participants' identity and feelings of dual belonging. As such, the project is a multivoiced articulation of a postmigrant sense of belonging.

This emphasis on complexity brings me back to the idea of postmigration. As Chapter 1 explained, it offers a framework of understanding within which art's contributions to societies in the process of recognizing that they are moving towards increasing cultural and demographic diversity can be examined. This collective process of cognition and transformation is full of conflicts and entails a number of battles for recognition and equality alongside struggles over identity and culture. The postmigrant condition is thus characterized by political disagreement and clashes between, on the one hand, various forms of cultural pluralism, and, on the other, of nationalism, including anti-immigration and racist right-wing populism – clashes that have also brought *100% FREMMED?* into the firing line. When the exhibition's portraits of mainly Brown and Black citizens were shown outdoors at Islands Brygge in Copenhagen over the summer of 2017, unknown perpetrators scrawled graffiti over all the exhibited portraits and threw half of the exhibition in the harbour – a vandalism that not only contained a gloomy reminder of the boatloads of refugees drowning at Europe's borders, but also raised some concerns

15 For the theatre production, *100% København*, see https://www.metropolis.dk/tag/100-koebenhavn/ (accessed March 30, 2025). For a recording of the performance, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2oisa3Eh4I (accessed March 30, 2025).

16 Santha Salvam, https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/news-1/santha-selvam (accessed March 31, 2025).

in the municipalities with which the project team subsequently collaborated. Would the exhibition be vandalized again? If so, this might risk producing some negative publicity, shifting the focus to the racism and hostility in the local area.[17]

On the one hand, postmigrant thinking relaunches migration and sociocultural diversity as a normal state of affairs and thus as circumstances that affect all citizens regardless of origin, simply because they are embedded in everyday life; on the other, it remains, at the same time, critically attentive to the pervasiveness of anti-immigrant sentiment in European societies and political discourses. In her perceptive analysis of postmigrant democratic societies as societies in transformation that harbour a significant potential for social conflict, Naika Foroutan has argued that 'migration' operates as 'a twofold trigger' and 'a symbolic battlefield for social self-description'. She suggests that migration functions as 'a metanarrative loaded with accusations of social conflict and insecurity, against which social antagonisms are constructed'; and that it also serves as a vehicle for 'identity formation that trades in the normality of diversity, hybridity and plurality as new markers of alliances and changing post-migrant peer group identities' (Foroutan 2019b, 153). *100% FREMMED?* positioned itself at the centre of this symbolic battlefield for social self-description and collective obsession with 'migration'.

However, the concept of a postmigrant society also harbours a normative, or perhaps even utopian dimension: it is nurtured by the dream of change towards a more pluralistic and inclusive democratic society – a postmigrant imaginary, which also sustains *100% FREMMED?*. Of relevance to the participatory method underpinning the project, Foroutan argues that connections through family, friends, school, political engagement or the workplace have produced 'new kinds of knowledge, empathy and attitudes', which construct 'post-migrant alliances' of 'heterogeneous peer groups' whose participants share moral and democratic ideals:

> Immigrants and their descendants are not alone in their struggle for representation and participation. They have supporters for their cause who do not necessarily have a migration background but share views on democracy and equality. […] Post-migrant alliances are a powerful tool to challenge structures of discrimination: they enable a shared fight against racist attitudes and the isolating othering of migrants, transcending socially constructed divisions and concepts. (Foroutan 2019b, 158)

From a postmigrant analytical perspective, *100% FREMMED?* can be seen as a response to the migration-related changes and debates of the 21st century, and as an attempt to put the postmigrant negotiations, ambivalence and contradictions

17 Interview with Maja Nydal Eriksen, November 26, 2019.

that surround national identity into perspective by raising the question about the refugee experience of belonging and alienation. The exhibition catalogue, with the 100 chronologically arranged portraits from Copenhagen, reflects the contemporary political situation, because it makes clear that the feeling of being a stranger and not belonging is most pronounced among the participants who have been granted asylum in recent years, not just because they have only had a few years to build a connection to Denmark but also, as explained above, because asylum seekers have been surrounded by growing suspicion in the political and legal system, and it has become more difficult to obtain a permanent residence permit and citizenship (Petersen 2020, 21–23; Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018).

Individual and type

Thus endowed with a postmigrant perspective, we can take a closer look at some of the individual portraits and stories in *100% FREMMED?*. The photographs suggest that Nydal Eriksen deliberately used the tension between individual and type in the original *100% City* concept to challenge the viewer's expectations. Overall, the portraits communicate that the project is not an advocacy of assimilation into a predefined, monocultural Danishness, but an attempt to put something else in place of the national romantic myth that unity presupposes sameness by demonstrating the actual diversity of the population. In the photographs, Nydal Eriksen also consistently follows a contrapuntal principle that a slightly humorous, experimental, and often colourful, visual staging of the portrayed should provide a contrast to their stories, which often give glimpses of adversity, alienation, ambivalence and criticism. The text and the image thus form a tensional whole, where the image sometimes tells one thing about the person and the text something else. That tension is deliberately constructed through the curation of the participants' voices and appearances, and helps to nurture the audience's questioning interest about the individual's character, precisely because image and text do not validate one another in any straightforward way.

Let us take two examples from the first part of the project, in which all the participants were photographed in the Tivoli gardens, one of the oldest amusement parks in the world and located directly opposite Copenhagen City Hall. Tivoli is popular among Copenhageners and tourists because its environment combines contemporary forms of entertainment with a nostalgic mix of exotic historical styles appropriated from other cultures, something that has been the visual hallmark of the park since its inauguration in 1843.

At the photographer's request, the participants chose the clothes they would like to be depicted in and brought an object or person(s) they wanted to be photographed with. A cross-sectional gaze will quickly detect variations in how participants and

photographer use attire and props to express identifications and affiliations. In some cases, a 'type' or stereotypical figure is implied, in the sense that the portrait of the individual rubs up against common notions of particular ethnicities and nationalities. For example, if anyone might have expected to encounter a primitivist stereotype in the portrait of Congolese-born Julien Kalimira Mzee Murhul, they will be surprised to meet a highly educated man who signals, with his tie and attaché briefcase, an affiliation with the business sphere.

Fig. 16: Maja Nydal Eriksen, portrait of Julien Kalimira Mzee Murhul, from 100% FREMMED? *('100% FOREIGN?'), 2017. Photograph, 110 x 100 cm. © Maja Nydal Eriksen.*

But there is something else in the image that provides resistance to stereotypification and puts the viewer to work. Murhul's right arm is clad in armour, the meaning of which is open. It could be interpreted as a sign that he is a man who has something to fight for – or against – but other interpretations are also pos-

sible. Behind him is a white mansion-like architectural model, which could carry thoughts in the direction of the White House in Washington, DC, or Marienborg, the official residence of the Danish Prime Minister, and thus towards the centre of political power and parliamentary influence from which the surrounding fence seems to exclude Murhul. Tivoli's Concert Hall can be glimpsed in the distant background. Unlike the amusement park's original concert hall, which was built in a flamboyant Moorish style and crowned by onion domes, the current building, from the 1950s, is a piece of de-exoticized modern modular architecture that discreetly supports Murhul's photographer-assisted self-representation.

Fig. 17: Maja Nydal Eriksen, portrait of Nawras Al-Hashimi, from 100% FREMMED? *('100% FREMMED?'), 2017. Photograph, 110 x 100 cm. © Maja Nydal Eriksen.*

Conversely, the portrait of Iraqi-born Nawras Al-Hashimi plays overtly with the exotic. His aubergine-coloured winter coat almost blends into the deep burgundy

semi-darkness of the background, from which an enigmatic construction in green and gold emerges as if from Aladdin's cave, conjuring up fantasies of oriental palaces and mystics. However, the figure of Al-Hashimi pulls the flying carpet of imagination from under the feet of any spectators who might think that they can recognize an 'oriental type' in this portrait. Not only does Al-Hashimi look back at the viewer with a piercing gaze, but when reading his story, viewers will discover that he is a childhood educator and lives in 'a spiritual collective, where, through meditation and therapy, we heal and support one another to help us find and accept ourselves as we are, freed from culturally based layers of identity such as gender and ethnicity' (Al-Hashimi in Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018, n.p.). Thus confronted with their own stereotypical expectations, the viewers' migrantizing perception of Al-Hashimi as an 'outsider inside' (S. Ahmed 2000, 3) is nudged towards the realization that the source of mysticism in the picture should not be sought in the Middle East, but in the western spirituality movements that have become an ingrained part of Danish culture.

A Human Exhibition?

Because several of the portraits play with the notion of the exotic, *100% FREMMED?* could potentially be read by some as an exoticizing project. For example, Marta Padovan-Özdemir, who researches integration, discrimination and pedagogy, has argued that it is a 'migrantological human exhibition', because the portraits set in the Tivoli gardens recall a problematic aspect of Tivoli's history. Between 1878 and 1909, there were 50 'human' exhibitions in Denmark that displayed 'exotic' human beings from distant cultures. These exhibitions travelled to major European cities. When reaching Copenhagen, they were often hosted in the Tivoli, or alternatively at Copenhagen Zoo, where huge crowds of curious Danes visited exhibitions such as 'China in Tivoli' (1902) and 'South India in Tivoli' (1903). These displays of ethnographic stereotypes stimulated both scholarly anthropological interest and a popular desire for entertainment and the spectacularly exotic (Bak 2020, n.p.). In addition, these exhibitions did not just passively reflect the fact that racial hierarchies and prejudice permeated European mentalities of that time, they actively contributed to disseminating the theories of race and European civilizational superiority which were used to legitimize colonial exploitation abroad. Considering Tivoli's past, Padovan-Özdemir's comparison of *100% FREMMED?* to the historical human exhibitions is therefore not surprising, but it does come across as somewhat superficial, because it is based solely on the observation that persons of foreign descent have been portrayed in Tivoli, and the fact that racial prejudice and fantasies of white supremacy still persist. Such a reading overlooks all the

historical differences and the 'postmigrant' message the photographs communicate that is key to this project.

A straightforward comparison with the earlier human exhibitions neglects the fact that in the early 21st century the audience for exhibitions in public urban spaces is inherently diverse. Padovan-Özdemir, for example, assumes that the audience of *100% FREMMED?* is similar to the crowds of white Danes who visited the human exhibitions around 1900. This leads her to conclude that the reception of these representations of 'refugees' is 'pedagogically dependent on the imagination and the aesthetic and discursive register of the majoritized viewer' (Padovan-Özdemir 2020, 55). There were also sexual and ethnographic aspects to the human exhibitions, as 'exotic' peoples such as 'Laplanders' (i.e. Sami), Nubians, Bedouins, Indians (India) and Japanese were displayed with sexual connotations. According to Rikke Andreassen, the leading Danish expert on the subject, 'the women were often half naked and performed sexually provocative dances' (Andreassen 2003, 22, 25). Moreover, there was a connection between the exhibitions and the scientific disciplines of anthropology and ethnography, which explains why great attention was paid to the 'authentic' ethnographic details of the exhibits and the way in which exotic people were displayed, not as individuals but as representatives of racialized groups according to the scientific paradigm of evolution that dominated the decades around 1900 (Andreassen 2003, 22, 26–28).

The peoples staged in the human exhibitions did not have any 'voice', either collectively or individually; nor did they have any influence on how they were represented in the commercial and ethnographical images of the time – as opposed to the participants in *100% FREMMED?*, who were co-producers of both their portraits and their stories. Moreover, as an exhibition based on portraits of named individuals, *100% FREMMED?* sought to create a kind of 'contact zone' (Pratt 1991) which could facilitate mediated face-to-face encounters between people living in Denmark. Conversely, the human exhibitions were mass spectacles of temporary 'guests' performing their 'authentic' daily life as allegedly unspoilt people of nature, living with their animals in an exhibition environment designed to look untouched by western civilization (Andreassen 2003, 23–27). In other words, the stereotyped tableaus of these exhibitions were designed to serve as mirror images of their '"primitive" villages', thereby 'preserving a European white world order' (Andreassen 2003, 35):

> The majority of Danes did not personally engage with the exhibited people; they remained distant observers. For them, as for Denmark as a whole, the exhibitions had a larger cultural function in creating a racial imagination of the nation. (Andreassen 2003, 147)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has used the term *worlding* to criticize the process of mental colonization, in which the colonized internalizes the colonizer's perception of their land, language and culture so that it is 'worlded' for the 'natives' according to their master's logic and disdain for their culture (Spivak 1985b). As my analysis of the co-production of the portraits in *100% FREMMED?* has demonstrated, this project distances itself from the way the colonial human exhibitions forced the people on show to see and represent themselves, or, to follow Spivak, to *world* their native land and its ancient customs as imagined by the other. The collaborative approach in *100% FREMMED?* is, I argue, more akin to Donna Haraway's understanding of thinking, writing and worldmaking as a work of *sym-poiesis*, of making livable worlds together – worlding *with* (Haraway 2015, 255; 2016, 58).

In summary, an ahistorical comparison neglects how Nydal Eriksen's artistic and curatorial approach differs from the human exhibitions, and how the subtle evocation of racial exhibition history is intended to bring the difference out: all the details of individualized backgrounds and the participatory strategy of portrayal testify to the fact that Danish society has become multi-ethnic. That only people of migrant backgrounds have been portrayed arguably makes the project *migratizing*, but in a country which has not yet officially recognized that it has become a postmigrant society, such a systematic inclusion of 'other' bodies, voices and stories – their coming into appearance in the public sphere – is a necessary first step that may help pave the way for a deeper understanding of what living under postmigrant conditions entails for all citizens.

Here, a note on how the word 'foreign' is used in the title *100% FREMMED?* is in order. On the one hand, 'foreign' designates someone who has arrived from an 'outside' and is perceived as 'an Other', and thus it has an othering or a migrantizing effect. On the other, the question mark points up the inadequacy of the term and conveys that the dual aim of the project was to problematize the misconception that people of refugee background do not transculturate and 'belong', and to acknowledge the persistent, albeit in many cases dwindling, feeling of alienation that refugees (and immigrants in general) must tackle, precisely because they are subjected to various forms of exclusion and migrantization. Arguably, representations of people who are already migrantized in the popular perception and public discourse will never be completely free of racial markers or hierarchies of power, but this should not overshadow the point that dignifying representations can work against marginalization and exclusion and radically challenge the nationalist divide between 'us' and 'them'.

A comparison with a study of another travelling exhibition can help us get a better grip of the ethical and political work that *100% FREMMED?* aspired to do: this is Alfred Steichen's 1955 exhibition *Family of Man*, as interpreted by Ariella Azoulay, an expert on photography studies. Azoulay describes *Family of Man* as 'a landmark event in the history of photography and human rights' (Azoulay 2013, 19). As with

100% FREMMED?, its objects of display were photographs of people from across the world, and it was likewise historically related to a particular time period, the period after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948. The purpose of Steichen's exhibition was to demonstrate the universality of human actions in daily life and the human life cycle. Azoulay reads the images of the exhibition as an 'archive containing the visual proxy of the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (Azoulay 2013, 20). She notes that the exhibition could not be ascribed to a single creator, i.e. the curator, but, similar to *100% FREMMED?*, bore 'traces of an encounter of multiple participants' that included both subjects and viewers (Azoulay 2013, 32). Importantly, Azoulay underscores the 'multiplicity' of the photographic material that Steichen subsumed under categories such as 'work' and 'family', and how its 'heterogeneity' seemed to work against misconceptions of universality as an ideological regime of sameness and the eradication of difference. Its multiplicity suggested diversity in unity:

> The identical format of black-and-white photographs showing humans in allegedly similar situations actually foregrounds to what extent the photographed persons differ from each other – their crafts vary, their gestures are multiple, and every expression or smile hints at a different experiential world that cannot be organized along generalizations of nation, gender, or race. (Azoulay 2013, 28)

Paying close attention to the exhibition's potential effects, i.e. what the exhibition *does*, Azoulay proposes reading the photographs in *Family of Man* not as 'descriptive statements with universal claims' but as 'prescriptive statements claiming universal rights' (Azoulay 2013, 20). Turning back to the portraits of the Danish project, I propose to read them not as documentary descriptions but as prescriptive statements claiming democratic rights, including what Chapter 1 termed *cultural rights*, and which Pakulski has argued comprise the right to symbolic presence and visibility, the right to dignifying representation, and the right to the propagation of identity and maintenance of lifestyles (Pakulski 1997, 80). As prescriptive, rights-claiming statements, the worlds and stories of *100% FREMMED?* resonate with the prefigurative politics adopted by Trampoline House and the lumbung community of documenta fifteen, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The domestic culture of public discourse

With its basis of co-creation and collaboration between citizens, interviewers and artist/curator, *100% FREMMED?* can be linked to a broader current in contemporary art where artists, curators and other professional actors reach out to new user groups and audiences in participation-based projects. Like Trampoline House,

100% FREMMED? belongs, therefore, to the growing number of such projects which have sought to find ways to 'give voice to' minority groups and to improve their access to democratic participation in society. Although every story in *100% FREMMED?* is based on a long interview, the conversations are systematically reduced down to short stories of a uniform length and with varying perspectives on the overall question of belonging and alienation that was posed to all the participants: 'What percentage foreign do you feel?'[18] Using Padovan-Özdemir's accurate wording, the voice speaking can thus be described as a 'curated voice' (Padovan-Özdemir 2020, 50). While she criticizes this artistic-curatorial approach for being a 'pedagogically domesticating form of oppression' that 'neglects structural suffering and offers the resolution of alienation' (Padovan-Özdemir 2020, 55–56), I prefer to perceive the project as an ethical and political attempt to introduce an alternative mode of representation and to establish the kind of voice or enunciation that Trinh T. Minh-ha called 'speaking nearby'. Minh-ha defines speaking nearby as an alternative to the prevailing practice of speaking *about* the Other, thereby making the Other an object that is 'absent from the place spoken from'. She describes speaking nearby as an 'indirect' way of speaking – for example, it could appropriately be added here, through the dialogic form of an interview. This mode of enunciation does not disempower those affected (deprives them of their voice and visibility), and it is predicated on the speaker's/artist's awareness of their own privileged position of utterance (Chen 1992, 82). In *100% FREMMED?*, the privileged position is that of the white majority, understood as a position of naturalized dominance and preference that eases the access to airtime and to making oneself heard in the Danish public sphere.

As Nermin Duraković has explained, 'the domestic culture of public discourse' is dominated by 'a discourse in which "they" (foreigners) are seen as objects rather than subjects' (Duraković 2021, n.p.). Or put differently, speaking nearby is something of a rarity. Duraković is in a better position than most to highlight this problem. As a child, Duraković came to Denmark from a Yugoslavia being ravaged by a brutal civil war. He has therefore been part of 'them', the newcomers. At the same time, he is also a graduate of the Funen Art Academy, Denmark, and a recognized figure on the Danish art scene. He is thus undeniably part of 'us'. Such ambiguous 'both–and' positions have tremendous difficulty in finding acceptance in Danish politics, public discourses and mainstream national culture. People with a dual or multiple sense of belonging are rarely embraced, and it is into this ideologically and emotionally charged field that *100% FREMMED?* made an intervention. As Duraković puts it, the public conversational culture treats '"them" (strangers)' as:

18 'Hvor mange procent fremmed føler du dig?', quoted from Maja Nydal Eriksen's unpublished interview guide 'Samtaleguide 100% FREMMED?' (2016), n.p.

> anything but an included part of our common consciousness or as a common and equal voice that must be taken seriously and that can act and function with a critical potential. It tells us very directly that our society does not rest on equality, equal rights or equal access to critical expression, and that there is still a long way to go. The idea and the realization of equality require a more nuanced view of ourselves. (Duraković 2021, 82)

Although the delicate balance between listening and communication that the ideal of speaking nearby requires is hardly achieved in all 250 interviews, comments like the following show that the participants in *100% FREMMED?* could articulate experiences with structural discrimination, suffering and alienation. This not only must be presumed to separate them from the white Danish interviewers, but it also leaves a question mark over the modern myth of Denmark as a country characterized by democratic equality, populated by friendly residents who, with openness and tolerance, welcome strangers as their equals: 'I have found it very difficult to feel at home here because it's been a constant struggle with the Danish Immigration Service', says Samira Khalifa. Similarly, the aforementioned Julien Kalimira Mzee Murhul explains, as he voices his claim for democratic representation, how changing governments have created a climate of inhospitality by using refugee policy for negative nation-branding to scare refugees from seeking asylum in Denmark: 'I feel foreign in Denmark, even more than 100%. When the government constantly tightens legislation on immigration instead of making legislation that will facilitate integration, it is hard to feel at home. … Us new Danes born south of the Sahara are not part of the Danish Parliament (*Folketinget*), and as a result we don't feel like we are part of society either' (quoted from Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018, n.p.). The experience that it is difficult to be recognized as a 100% citizen is shared by Cong Hung Nguyen, who describes the feeling of alienation in a way that is strikingly similar to the critical reader's letters and posts that Brown and Black Danes increasingly publish in the daily press and on social media, especially since the Black Lives Matter protests against racism which flared up in the early summer of 2020, after the police murder of the African American George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota: 'I have no ambition of returning to my home country like a lot of other foreigners talk about. I am 50% foreign, but only because everyone always asks me where I come from.'[19]

Last but not least, there is the issue of silence as resistance. In this case, the silence is visual and differs from the kind of silence that Rob Sharp observes sometimes occurs as 'a form of political protest' that rejects the conditions on

19 Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018, n.p. For a critical introduction to Danish refugee policy, see Gammeltoft-Hansen 2017. For a critique of the historical development in Danish immigration policies since the mid-1990s, see Bolt Rasmussen 2011.

which voice is offered normatively (Sharp 2024, 11). In *100% FREMMED?*, the rejection of visually mediated expression comes across as a form of self-protection. Included among the 100 portraits from Copenhagen are two interviews with anonymous female refugees. To maintain full anonymity, a greyish silhouette has been substituted for a portrait with identifiable features, which arguably protects these individuals from being identified as refugees, and identified at all. In contrast, their voices are clear, and their stories suggest that their need for anonymity might be rooted in memories of extreme vulnerability. One interviewee still feels '100% foreign' because she had only been living in Denmark for 18 months at the time of her interview. Her story suggests that her family had been pushed around so much within the international refuge regime that it had become extremely difficult for them to grow attached to any new country or to rebuild trust in other people and the authorities: 'I feel that I have always lived in wartime, in Syria, in the Lebanese refugee camp, and also through my dad who still grieves every day about the war in Palestine. […] My mother is from Jordan, so when we fled from Syria we wanted to go there, but they would only let my mother in the country. Not us, because we are Palestinians.' (Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018, n.p.) The other interview is with an unaccompanied minor who arrived in Denmark at the age of 14 and declares herself to be '100% Syrian'. Yet, her story suggests that during the two years she spent in a residential institution for children and young people before reunification with her parents, she learnt Danish and grew into an independent person used to making own decisions and was therefore finding it difficult to readjust to being in her parent's custody again (Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2018, n.p.).

Both anonymous stories convey an acute sense of longing for a country of origin, either Palestine or Syria. In her study of postmigrant homesickness, Anna Meera Gaonkar starts from the observation that for people of migrant backgrounds, especially descendants of immigrants, homesickness can both manifest as sickness *for* a home and as sickness *of* home, and she argues that the latter results from a pressure from 'unhoming' discourses and social practices. An everyday example of this could be growing up where majority-ethnic strangers feel entitled to ask migrantized individuals where they come from (implicitly conveying that they are presumed to be from 'elsewhere' and do not 'belong'). A political example could be the Danish special laws for social housing areas with a high percentage of tenants of non-Western backgrounds racialized as 'non-white' (Gaonkar 2022, 9–12, 27–29). Such practices produce the kind of sickness *of* home expressed by Murhul and Nguyen. As regards the parliamentary politics, Gaonkar argues that they produce what she terms *affective evictions*. This term could be extended to Murhul's and Nguyen's feeling of being *unhomed*, and their perception of their new homeland as a site of discomfort where they are produced by social practices and political discourses as exterior to the affective territory of the national home. Murhul's and Nguyen's stories indicate that they are identified as what Sara Ahmed has described as the outsider inside the nation

space who draws the boundaries of proximity and distance, difference and sameness, and whom that very boundary-drawing process transforms into an exterior figure (S. Ahmed 2000, 3, 33–36). Gaonkar asks the timely question: 'who can feel at home in society, and who has the power to *affectively evict* bodies from the community of the national home?' (Gaonkar 2022, 127; emphasis added) Her question, and her study of cinematographic, literary, cultural and parliamentary political expressions of homesickness in Danish society, spur a question central to this book's study of visual art emerging from similar conditions of postmigrancy, in particular my exploration of *100% FREMMED?*: Do artistic and curatorial practices have the power to *affectively include* bodies in the community of the national home?

In summary, the participants of *100% FREMMED?* took part in a project based on informed consent that was very much about claiming democratic rights, specifically the rights of refugees. To that end, the project sought to provide a framework for self-representation in public – even though it is evident, particularly in the photographs, that it was an assisted and mediated form of self-representation, where the artist remained the ultimate curator of the project's individual representations and its overarching narrative. An additional point is that the majority of those who have seen one of the exhibitions or read the catalogue, and the pupils who have explored some of the individual stories in school, have probably not applied a top-down or 'vertical' birds-eye view. The curatorial design deliberately hampered attempts to survey the exhibition in its totality. Instead, it constructed for viewers/readers a 'horizontal' experience, in which they moved around the exhibition, or browsed the catalogue or the website, and let themselves be captured by the stories and portraits that aroused their curiosity. It was exactly this conscious curatorial organization of mediated intersubjective face-to-face meetings – i.e. encounters with one individual after another (rather than an encounter with a group or a mass) – that opened up the project's narratives and portraits to different interpretations, identifications and counter-identifications by recipients whose position in relation to, and their affective response to, the depicted individual depended on similarities and differences in gender, class, ethnicity, age, experience, political conviction, hometown, country of origin, etc.

Hannah Arendt's ethics of alterity

As a participatory project foregrounding both actual and imaginary intersubjective relations, *100% FREMMED?* offers a productive site for examining the ethical potential and dilemmas of representing refugees by speculating on what conflicts of domination and suppression the project involved, and how it may contribute new answers to vital questions on democratic participation, integration, belonging and citizenship. According to Ritivoi, Hannah Arendt 'grounded ethics in aesthetics be-

cause she viewed aesthetic representation as a way of understanding how the world appears to different human beings. To let the imagination "go visiting" another's world, as she put it, was all the more important when it could recover marginalized and repressed perspectives' (Ritivoi 2019, 103).

As a Jewish refugee from the Nazi persecution and genocide of European Jews, Arendt emigrated from Germany to France in 1933 and came via Portugal to the US in 1941. Her essay 'We Refugees' was first published in 1943 in the Jewish-American periodical *Menorah Journal*, but its rhetorical construction suggests that it was addressed to a larger American audience as well, 'the audience of citizens, rather than immigrants' (Ritivoi 2019, 110). It would be fair to say that *100% FREMMED?* is also addressed to a larger audience, and notably one that includes both citizens and immigrants. Despite this difference, Arendt's essay serves as a reminder of the pressure to assimilate that can be imposed on refugees – a pressure *100% FREMMED?* sought to counter by stressing how the navigation between different cultures has fostered in each participant a unique, *composite* character which does not conform to traditional notions of being Danish, born and bred. At the same time, the project explored the effects of this pressure by measuring the participant's mixed feelings of belonging and unbelonging against 'the official image of Denmark'.[20] Even if the project challenged the dominant image and proffered an alternative founded in an ethics of alterity, the curatorial framing nevertheless had to walk a fine line in order to steer clear of the subsumptive approach that overemphasizes resemblances and thereby subsumes minoritarian differences under a majoritarian umbrella of cultural commonality. Arendt can help us understand this probably unsolvable ethical (and political) conundrum of representation better.

The 'we' of Arendt's essay fuses her own fate as a Jewish refugee during the Second World War with a general analysis of the predicament of refugees forced to settle temporarily or permanently in whichever country will receive them.[21] She critically analyses the dual assimilative pressure put on refugees by the expectations of the receiving country and the efforts of the refugees themselves to blend in, as part of their process of building a new life and gaining recognition as a fellow citizen. Arendt describes, and not without humour, how Jews fleeing Nazi persecution rushed headlong to assimilate and become ordinary citizens of the host country (Meyer 2016, 45). According to Arendt's analysis, refugees are driven partly by the desire to rid

20 '100% FREMMED?', https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/ (accessed March 30, 2025).

21 Hannah Arendt actually used Denmark's provision of refuge for its Jewish citizens and some Jewish refugees during World War II as a historical asylum case. Nathan Bell has convincingly argued that Arendt's use of the case of Denmark sheds light on her understanding of political responsibility and her influential notion of 'the right to have rights', i.e. the right of refugees to asylum: to be admitted to the territory and accepted into a political community to ensure that their human rights are upheld (Bell 2020).

themselves of the label 'refugee' and to erase all traces of refugeedom and a different heritage that may result in self-disclosure, and partly by the inducements and pressure of the host community: 'We were told to forget; and we forgot quicker than anybody ever imagined. In a friendly way we were reminded that the new country would become a new home; and after four weeks in France or six weeks in America, we pretended to be Frenchmen or Americans' (Arendt 2007, 265). In wartime US, German refugees were perceived not only as 'prospective citizens' but also as 'enemy aliens' (Arendt 2007, 266), so they were anxious to not convey their refugee status:

> we are already so damnably careful in every moment of our daily lives to avoid anybody guessing who we are, what kind of passport we have […]. We try the best we can to fit into a world where you have to be sort of politically minded when you buy your food. (Arendt 2007, 269)

As an antidote to this assimilationist erasure of the refugees' difference and past, Arendt proposes a new political self-consciousness of refugees who insist on the right to disclose their character, deviate from the norm and not subject themselves to 'the narrowness of caste spirit' (Arendt 2007, 274). However, the public appearance of such performances of alterity would require a change of attitude in the host community. Drawing on Arendt's ethics, Ritivoi suggests that '[t]o recognize and respect alterity requires us to understand another's standpoint and see how it came about, as well as what beliefs and values it makes possible' (Ritivoi 2019, 104).

Seen in the light of Arendt's ethics of alterity, *100% FREMMED?* presents as an ambiguous endeavour because it contributes to politically self-conscious processes of identity formation. Not surprisingly, the 250 individual stories and portraits reveal that the participants responded differently, some stressing their (partial) integration into and identification with Danish society, others their critical stance, their (partial) difference and their ties to their country of birth. Recapitulating Hall's point about the dual role of the subject in representation, this participatory project could be said to construct for recipients a vantage point or subject position from which it was possible to glimpse the diversity of standpoints taken by migrantized citizens as identifiable figures who have to continually negotiate their identity and subjectivity, and who do so in very different ways.

Interestingly, Arendt used the metaphor of the blueprint to explain how aesthetic representation can serve as exemplary. Writing on Franz Kafka, she likened his stories to a blueprint representation of a model or plan, i.e. a tool that enables us to imagine what a future construction will look like. The metaphor of the blueprint captures the *emergent* nature of aesthetic representation and also suggests that the audience needs 'to realize by their own imagination' the intentions of its maker and the future it envisions (Arendt 2007, 76–77). The metaphor thus suggests that it is indeed the indeterminate character of *100% FREMMED?* that enables us to see in it

the contours of a future plural society. In Ritivoi's accurate wording, the blueprint 'captures configurations in which we can discern both a world now around us and the world as it is most likely to take shape' (Ritivoi 2019, 107).

Transforming the image of Denmark

I turn now to the second phase of *100% FREMMED?*, in which participants from cities other than Copenhagen were photographed in local cultural landscapes and thus inserted 'in the official image of Denmark' in both a concrete and a symbolic way. These portraits raise the question of whether this approach represents an 'apparently consensus-seeking' update of the image of Denmark (Padovan-Özdemir 2020, 48), or, rather, as I would suggest, an intervention that reveals some of its cracks and changes. As my examples show, Nydal Eriksen was not content to merely state that citizens with a refugee background are also included in the Danish cultural landscape (Padovan-Özdemir 2020, 51). The portraits and stories did not leave the official image of Denmark unchanged.

Fatima Yassin, for example, was photographed together with some of the other participants from the town of Sønderborg at Dybbøl Mill. The image shows that they have come on Segways as tourists on a guided tour to one of the most important memorial landscapes in Danish history, Dybbøl Banke, the site of the war against the Confederation of German States in 1864 and a traumatic national defeat that nurtured an enduring fear of strangers from the south. Behind Fatima Yassin stands an elderly gentleman wearing a uniform jacket similar to those worn by Danish soldiers during the battle. Yet, his bicycle helmet suggests a different time and role – that of a Segway-riding tourist guide. The introductory text for the exhibition in Sønderborg described Dybbøl Banke as 'a memorial landscape of war and peace for two nations and a symbol of Danish identity and community'. It also explained that the visit reawakened the participants' 'own experiences of war and unrest, the delineation of borders, as well as minority and majority issues'.[22]

22 The introductory text for Sønderborg is not on the project website. Quoted from an email from Maja Nydal Eriksen to the author, March 15, 2021.

Fig. 18: Maja Nydal Eriksen, portrait of Fatima Yassin, from 100% FREMMED? *('100% FOREIGN?'), 2018. Photograph, 110 x 100 cm. © Maja Nydal Eriksen.*

The picture of Fatima Yassin and the others reveals nothing about how they each experienced their own history crossing tracks with Danish war history. It communicates a general message about the connection between past and future, anticipation and memory. The portrait plays on the contrast between the older man, a gatekeeper of Danish history, in the background, and the young woman in front who is eager to move on. Fatima Yassin stands still like a statue on her Segway, and even though the photograph freezes all movement, her figure nonetheless speaks of mobility and change. The bodies on wheels introduce today's motorized mobility into the representation of a commemorative landscape serving as a synecdoche for national history. At the same time, the female figure's latent restlessness supports the interview's narrative of a mother who came to Denmark from Syria in 2015 and who is now looking to a future where Danish culture has undergone some changes. As she observes, 'My children must learn both cultures, but I think they will become

90% Danish' (Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2021, 45–46). What the last 10 per cent of the children's cultural identity might include is suggested by Bosnian Danish Amira Saric's story: 'I love the Nordic names, but since both my husband and I are of Bosnian origin, it would be too strange. I would feel as if I had stolen the child of someone else. My middle daughter is named Esma, and one of her girlfriends has got a rabbit that she calls Esma. That's my secret plan. That it should not be abnormal to be named Esma in Denmark.'[23] This desire to make Denmark more culturally inclusive is akin in spirit to what I have described above as a postmigrant mindset, a mindset that will pave the way for an understanding of migration and sociocultural diversity as a normal and integrated dynamic in society.

Turning to the portrait of Alia Ismail El-Aynein from Vejle, it becomes clear that 'the Danish cultural landscape' must be understood in an expanded sense, which also includes the digital landscape and the way politicians use social media, and specifically Facebook (Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2021, 165–166). Most Danes will remember how, in 2017, a grinning Inger Støjberg posed with the crown jewel of the traditional Danish birthday celebration – the layer cake – to boast that she, as Minister of Immigration and Integration in Prime Minister Lars Lykke Rasmussen's Liberal government at the time, had implemented 50 tightenings of the immigration laws. Danish media willingly helped spread the controversial image of the minister with the layer cake adorned with Danish flags over interconnected media platforms, so that the image and everything it said about Danish immigration policy became an indelible part of the memory of citizens across the country – a part of collective memory. Nydal Eriksen, together with Alia Ismail El-Aynein, created a counter image to this piece of digital cultural heritage. El-Aynein, who runs a catering company in Viborg, presents a magnificent heart-shaped layer cake decorated with berries and flowers to the viewer. Behind her stands Amira Saric, who holds a small plate with a piece of layer cake and thus acts as an identification figure for the viewer, making it easy to imagine that you are receiving a piece of the cake yourself. El-Aynein is photographed at the Kongernes Jelling (home of the Viking kings) heritage site, the place where, in the Viking Age, two rows of stones formed the outline of the ship that, according to Norse mythology, sailed the dead to Valhalla. Today, the 'ship' is marked by large slabs of concrete. As in Fatima Yassin's portrait, there is a clear thematization of travel and mobility as integral to the Danish cultural landscape. El-Aynein stands at the head of the 'ship' like a traveller ready to walk down the gangplank. Just as Dybbøl Banke is portrayed as a place where different war memories intersect, Jelling is interpreted as the place where religions meet, because in this image the Old Norse faith intersects with both Christianity and Islam.

23 https://www.100pctfremmed.dk/til-undervisere-1/amira-saric (accessed March 30, 2025).

Fig. 19: Maja Nydal Eriksen, portrait of Alia Ismail El-Aynein, from 100% FREMMED? *('100% FOREIGN?'), 2019. Photograph, 110 x 100 cm. © Maja Nydal Eriksen.*

Nydal Eriksen has photographed from an angle, causing the two rows of concrete tiles to encircle El-Aynein like a mandorla, or the tapered oval halo which often encloses the entire figure in medieval Christian images, as in images of the Virgin Mary. As an art historian raised on Western pictorial traditions, this is my first association. El-Aynein's red scarf and red-edged clothing flutter in the wind, so the folds in the cloth create a visual abstract and spiritual dynamic around the figure, as seen in Renaissance and Baroque religious paintings, like Titian's famous altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the Frari Church in Venice (1516–1518). However, my association is quickly followed by another observation: El-Aynein's headscarf is a Muslim tradition. In the interview, she explains that it connects her with her roots in Lebanon, where she was born to Palestinian parents: 'When I came to Denmark, I did not wear a headscarf, but I started to miss it. I do not quite know why: Maybe you are looking for your roots when you come to a new country?' (Jensen, Nat-George, and Eriksen 2021, 165). Drawing on the political and popular meaning of the cake, the history of the site, the religious symbols and the visual composition, Nydal Eriksen, together with El-Aynein, has created a counter-image to Støjberg's image, which exposes the inhospitality of Støjberg's self-presentation and elevates El-Aynein to be the true defender of the layer cake as a positive symbol of hospitality and heartwarming generosity. She is at once portrayed as the newcomer who goes ashore in an unknown country, and the hostess who invites us all for cake.

A postmigrant transversal politics through art: Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have threaded a theoretical discussion through a case study to provide an answer to the question of what participatory artistic practices can bring to the ethical politics of representing refugees. To underscore the challenges involved in representing alterity, the chapter opened with Stuart Hall's observation that representation, especially the representation of 'difference', is a complex and contested matter that provokes strong emotions and conflicting sentiments. As a participatory project, *100% FREMMED?* took a collaborative approach to representation by 'speaking nearby' (Minh-ha). It brings to the ethical politics of representing refugees a transformation, firstly, of the way in which subjects of refugee backgrounds are depicted as identifiable figures by ensuring that each participant is portrayed as a unique individual; and, secondly, of the way representations co-construct subject positions for the audience. The latter is achieved by way of a 'horizontal' curatorial design that stages the visitor's encounter with the portrayed as a one-on-one encounter.

Through looking at a selection of four named and two anonymous portraits, I have shown how *100% FREMMED?* has contributed to creating a richly differentiated and inclusive narrative about identity, belonging and citizenship in Denmark. As I have argued above, this encompassing documentation of the experiences of those living in Denmark with a refugee background should not be read as mere documentary descriptions but, rather, as prescriptive statements claiming democratic rights (Foroutan 2019b, 158).

The ethics and politics that governed the collaboration on *100% FREMMED?*, as well as how the individual portraits and stories were curated to stimulate audience engagement, can be more accurately described through the feminist concept of *transversal politics*. A further reason for turning to feminist theory is the fact that Nydal Eriksen has consistently foregrounded a feminist notion of equality by including men and women in equal numbers, and, as previously explained, by consciously letting some women adopt a classical 'masculine' pose, as seen, for instance, in the image of Fatima Yassin leading the Segway trip to Dybbøl Banke.[24]

The term *transversal politics* indicates vital links between political, ethical and artistic agency. As Chapter 2 explained, the feminist conception of transversal politics derives from the peacebuilding work of the feminist activist movement Women in Black in Bologna. From the 1970s to the 1990s they developed and used a method of working with conflicting national groups that they called 'transversalism'. Importantly, in the context of *100% FOREIGN?*, the different positionings and backgrounds of the participants are recognized and they are not perceived simplistically as mere group representatives. The Bologna feminists

24 Maja Nydal Eriksen in an email to the author, June 1, 2021.

worked with the dual concepts of 'rooting' and 'shifting' and from the idea that each participant would be rooted in her own membership and identity, but would also try to shift her position to establish a situation of exchange with women of a different membership and identity (Yuval-Davis 1994, 192–193; see also Yuval-Davis 1999). Thus defined, transversal politics can be seen as a practice of intersubjective exchange that is in agreement with Hannah Arendt's idea of an ethics of alterity from the perspective of the refugee. Both are based on the conviction that to respect alterity, we need to recognize another's standpoint and to understand how it came about, and what compatible values and beliefs it makes it possible to share. In addition, they both envision political community as an arena where individuals do not maintain a fixed identity but are defined by their actions and interaction with others. As the postmigrant motto goes: it is not about where you are from, but where you are at. Such transversal politics that seeks to bridge difference though intersubjective exchange based on the dynamic principles of rooting and shifting, and which moves beyond essentialisms and polite 'tolerance' towards the Other, is central to what I have termed above a *postmigrant civic ethics*.

Like Meskimmon, I understand feminist transversal politics to have both political and ethical effects as it is founded in 'situated and embodied forms of critical engagement', acknowledges 'epistemic location' and calls for 'dialogues in difference' and 'connective conversations', as in the practice of rooting and shifting developed by the Women in Black in Bologna (Meskimmon 2020, 1). A postmigrant transversal politics can likewise be said, through art, to have such political and ethical effects. The dialogic dimension was obviously central to *100% FOREIGN?*. As a participatory, interview-based art project it foregrounds the ethical significance of dialogue and intersubjective exchange – the importance of listening to the voice of the other, of *speaking nearby* (Minh-ha). In doing so, it formulates an ethical critique of the exclusionary norms of the nation as an ideological infrastructure, as well as the affective unhoming and evictions (Gaonkar) that these norms produce. Instead, the project articulates and defends other norms as it seeks to engender ethical relationships among migrantized and native citizens that modify the social contract, thereby prefiguring a postmigrant civic ethics based on the fundamental acknowledgement of the migrantized other as one among equals in the imagined community of the nation. Crucially, as an art project that turned to ethics, it materializes an 'aesthetics of ethics', to borrow Beshty's term, as its hundreds of images and individual stories act as the signification of this modified social contract (Beshty 2015, 19–20).

Like Trampoline House, *100% FREMMED?* was a durational project that built an infrastructure for collaboration (albeit one without a physical and institutional structure). Both projects brought people of refugee backgrounds and natives of Denmark together 'transversally' around a common politico-ethical cause: to dismantle the divisive logic of 'us' versus 'them' by imagining the national community otherwise. *100% FREMMED?*'s exploration of how people of refugee backgrounds have

emplaced themselves in Danish society brings political questions of migration, citizenship and borders in contact with ethical issues of hospitality, dialogue, openness to the other and cohabitation with others (as did Trampoline House). The project gathered together people of many different heritages and from all walks of life to collaborate on the production of portraits, stories, exhibitions, educational material, cultural events, and, importantly, *solidarity*, and what Foroutan has described as reshuffled peer groups or *postmigrant alliances*, where people of different ethnic, national and religious backgrounds come together because they share similar attitudes on equality and diversity as hallmarks of a plural democracy. Interestingly, with regard to the recipients' engagement with the exhibition, Foroutan notes that postmigrant alliances are 'also possible without contact or interaction' and that they can be forged on the basis of empathy and proximity, but also 'be more than just empathetic; they can be political or strategic' (Foroutan 2019b, 158).

I have used the Bologna feminists' terms to explain how transversal politics was practised in *100% FREMMED?* and to suggest that the project invited producers, participants and recipients to adopt the interactive approach of rooting and shifting. Admittedly, the audience for such an art project in public space would obviously also have comprised individuals who refused to be interpellated, or hailed, as an ally, and who remained critical, even hostile, to its ethics and politics of representing people of refugee backgrounds as included in the image of the nation. The project can be seen, then, as a continuation of the long tradition of using art exhibitions and art projects as instruments for the education of the audience or the public. *100% FREMMED?* provides an opportunity to discuss essential issues of democratic participation, recognition and belonging, and it gives those willing to listen some new answers to the question of what cultural citizenship is, and what a civic ethics from the perspective of the refugee can bring to a postmigrant society.