

Create and Counterpoints Arts 2020 Autumn School on Cultural Diversity and Collaborative Practice October 2020



COUNTERPOINTS.



Ticket to Atlantis, Mayar Aleksan - Beirut, 2016

We are delighted to bring together a diverse group of artists, activists, producers and researchers, and we especially welcome you to the Autumn School - being delivered online in 2020 because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Despite COVID-19, we aim to create a dynamic set of group conversations, presentations, collaborative challenges and mentoring sessions.

The school is interdisciplinary both in curriculum and composition of participants, presenters and facilitators. It continues (as in previous years) to take the form of a four-day – in this case, virtual – residency, enabling a ‘think and do’ collaborative approach, utilizing creative workshops, critical and comparative case studies, mentoring, international guest artists including curators, policymakers and activists.

We will explore what cultural diversity might mean in practice: in people’s intimate lives, in neighbourhoods and within communities of place and interest. And how the practice of cultural diversity resonates as an intersectional and dynamic part of everyday life.

We will also test how cultural diversity might be imagined, documented and materialised through the lens and methodologies of collaborative arts practice. How cultural diversity informs socially engaged art processes, acting as a powerful driver for social change.

The critical intersection of cultural diversity and collaborative arts practice in the context of decolonisation and global racial justice movements has never been more timely, more urgent. We’ll pivot around these critical and historical intersections through the lens of your own practice and through the prism of a range of local and global creative projects.

Keywords – *subject to change as well as continuity. Please add other keywords that matter to you.*

Art; diversity; dis/placement; care; communities of place/interest; accessibility, participation; solidarity, collaboration; labour; history; intersectionality; decolonisation; housing; rights; racial/social justice; health; inequality/equality; learning/unlearning; social engagement; poverty; new normal; systemic racism; compassion; empathy; citizenship; cooperation; change.

Team

O’Brien (Director); Lima (Artist and Facilitator); Crowley (Manager and Facilitator); AlKafri (Visiting Artist); Braybrooke (Visiting Digital Anthropologist); DelGado (Visiting Artist); Lau (Technical Producer) – see bios at the end of this document.

Schedule

Day One 9th October	14:00 - 15:30	Team introduction to the School's learning pathways and collective goals, to the facilitators and participants Who is in the room and why? Participants meet and exchange mutual stories
	15:30 - 16:00	Break - switch off screens
	16:00 - 17:30	Circulation and outline of the ambitions for the MÁK Challenge. MÁK is a fictional commission which forms the core learning/unlearning spine of the School. We'll explain why the MÁK Challenge is central to opening a space for collaborative thinking, co-producing, collective imagining and social change. Breakout sessions: pre-assigned groups for the MÁK Challenge
	17:30 - 18:00	Final big group conversation – feedback on what we've encountered on Day 1, questions and input.

Optional 14th October	19:00 - 20:30	Optional: Mentoring/ Reading Groups We are offering the opportunity to meet with participants and some of the facilitators to talk through texts from the School Reading List.
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Socially Engaged Commissions: Communities of Place and Dis/Placement



Gresham Horse, Isabel Lima - Middlesborough, 2017

Day Two 16th October	09:00 - 10:00	Digital Kitchen: Informal coffee and chat
	10:00 - 10:30	Introduction to Day Two and recap Spotify playlist - a track to start the day
	10:30 - 12:30	Abdullah AlKafri, Director and Dramaturge, Ettijahat Moderator: Áine O'Brien, Curator of Learning and Research, Counterpoints Arts
	12:30 - 14:00	Break
	14:00 - 15:30	New Digital Platforms and Resources, Kat Braybrooke, Digital Anthropologist Moderator: Áine Crowley, Programme Manager Arts and Engagement, Create
	15:30 - 17:00	Breakout sessions: pre-assigned groups for MÁK Challenge
	17:00 - 17:30	Final big group conversation – feedback on what we've encountered on Day Two, questions and input. Spotify School Playlist – a track to end the day
	17:30 - 18:30	Optional Mentoring Session

Working within Neighbourhoods and Local/Global Ecologies



In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun, Juan DelGado, 2019

Day Three 17th October	09:00 - 10:00	Digital Kitchen: Informal coffee and chat
	10:00 - 10:30	Introduction to Day Three and recap Spotify playlist - a track to start the day
	10:30 - 12:30	Juan DelGado, Artist and Director, Qisetna
	12:30 - 13:00	Isabel Lima, Artist and Director, Gresham Horse Moderator: Áine O'Brien, Curator of Learning and Research, Counterpoints Arts
	13:00 - 13:30	Break
	13:30 - 16:00	Breakout sessions: pre-assigned groups for MÁK Challenge
	16:00 - 17:00	Final big group conversation – feedback on what we've encountered on Day Two, questions and input. Spotify School Playlist – a track to end the day
	17:30 - 18:30	Optional Mentoring Session

Optional 21st October	19:00 - 20:30	Optional: Mentoring/ Reading Groups We are offering the opportunity to meet with participants and some of the facilitators to talk through texts from the School Reading List.
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Day Four 23rd October	09:00 - 10:00	Digital Kitchen: Informal coffee and chat
	10:00 - 11:30	Final breakout sessions: preassigned groups for MÁK Challenge
	14:00 - 14:10	Final Forum - welcome Final MÁK Forum: Participants will present their final collaborative projects to school participants, in addition to several 2018/2019 school alumni, to facilitators and a number of invited international artists, curators and activists.
	14:10 - 14:30	Final forum - presentation 1
	14:30 - 14:50	Final forum - feedback & Q&A 1
	15:00 - 15:20	Final forum - presentation 2
	15:20 - 15:40	Final forum - feedback & Q&A 2
	15:50 - 16:10	Final forum - presentation 3
	16:10 - 16:30	Final forum - feedback & Q&A 3
	16:30 - 17:00	Break and Panel MÁK Evaluation
	17:00 - 18:00	Final big group conversation, 'good byes' and plans for re-connecting and building the network Spotify School Playlist – a track to end the 2020 Autumn School

Selective Reading and Media List – *with more to follow.*

See below for an initial reading list and set of references.

None of the texts and media below are intended to be prescriptive nor definitive, rather shared prompts and provocations for dialogue and debate. We'll send on a few more references to you next week.

Please do come with a collective commitment to tackling critical concepts and ideas, sharing creative and practical challenges, working together to imagine new ways of making sense through and beyond what (at times) might seem insurmountable.

Digital Resource

[#CovidCreativesToolkit](#) created by [Kat Braybrooke](#) - packed list of free and open source tools for use across a range of creative projects and community-building platforms.

Media

[Amin Husain and Nitasha Dhillon on Working to Decolonize the Art World](#)

[Syria: Rojava, the Revolution by Women](#), 25 mins

[James Baldwin debates the 'American dream'](#), 2:59 mins

[To change the system we need systemic alternatives](#), 2:09 mins

[In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun \(DelGado\)](#)

[Boaventura de Sousa Santos – Spaces of Transformation: Epistemologies of the South](#), 23:59 mins

[Knock Down The House](#), full feature, 1:26:39

[Nae Pasaran \(2018\) trailer](#), 2:02 mins

[International Rights of Nature Tribunal Paris Introduction](#), 6:22 mins

[Decolonising the Camera in Racial Time \(Sealy\)](#)

Reading

[Decolonization \(Frieze Anthology\)](#)

[What it Means to be Displaced \(Mohamed/Hermon\)](#)

['Throwntogetherness: the politics of the event of place' \(Massey\)](#)

[Participatory Art \(Finklepearl\)](#)

[Art as Social Transformation \(El Hussein\)](#)

[Three stages in the art of public participation: The relational, social and durational \(O'Neill\)](#)

[Bottom-up cultural policy reforms in times of oppression? \(Dietachmair\)](#)

[Palestine as a Profession \(Farhat\)](#)

[Decolonising Knowledge and the Question of the Archive \(Mbembe\)](#)

[Why we Need Artists in Politics \(Obrist\)](#)

[An Interview with Tania Bruguera](#)

[White Fragility \(DiAngelo\)](#)

[Against the Anthropocene \(Demos\)](#)

[The 1619 Project](#)

[Epistemologies of the South \(DeSousa\)](#)

Together we dance alone: [Building a toolkit for creatives in a pandemic \(Braybrooke\)](#)

Placeless making? [Reframing the power-geometries of digital platforms in China through tactical co-creation \(Braybrooke\)](#)

Autumn School Group Agreement - How we can Work, Collaborate and Learn Together

School Values: Respect; Confidentiality; Generosity; Solidarity; Creativity; Communication; Learning; Honesty; Listening; Patience.

As with all group settings and gatherings – whether online or not – interpersonal communication is key. The following are some core guidelines to help you communicate well and with respect at the Autumn School. Throughout the School, our shared aim is to maintain a balance of fairness, respect and generosity towards peers.

We have designed a simple but essential **Code of Conduct**:

Please abide by the following:

- Sign in on time;
- Be respectful;
- Listen actively;
- Be aware of language diversity;
- Be honest and act in good faith;
- Be collaborative;
- Be generous and sharing;
- Respect privacy;
- Ask permission to share info, record or videotape beforehand;
- Handle disagreement constructively;
- Everyone has a chance to contribute;
- Don't interrupt other people, be patient and wait your turn;
- If you want to intervene in the conversation raise your hand and let facilitator/moderator signal you can proceed
(Raised Hand feature on Zoom and please also use the facilitation cards which we have circulated);
- Or use emoji cards provided to signal to all participants your reactions to what they are saying;
- In break-out sessions, volunteer or nominate someone to moderate conversations.

Because we are conducting the Autumn School online, we will also need to be mindful of time limits and practicalities. **In order to prepare for scheduled Zoom sessions**, please be sure to do the following:

- Have a computer charger and drinks at hand before you start;
- Try and find a quiet space for the meetings. If not possible, consider muting yourself when others are talking;
- Mute your phone;
- Mute messages alerts on your computer.

School Field Notes

We're using the term 'field notes' to help capture some of the ways in which we might learn through and with each other over the days and sessions of the Autumn School.

Each of us is being asked to sketch our daily thoughts, reflections and ongoing questions in process-led field notes. These notes can be loosely structured through writing, images, drawings or montage (in addition to other forms of expression – whatever works best for you).

We simply ask you to assemble your notes around each day, so we can get a sense of the shared rhythm and interrelated threads to the ongoing, collective conversation.

Obviously you can choose which aspect of your notes you wish to share, but having the field notes might help us pinpoint those 'on-the-spot' break through moments of both learning and unlearning and also the unpredictable richness of the collaborative process.

Our aim is to then find the right output and platform in which to publish for a wider audience the diversity of thought, action and imagining of the 2020 Autumn School.

We will be using Slack as a project and content sharing platform throughout, and Zoom for all of the other School sessions, breakout groups and mentoring.

Team Bios

Abdullah Al-Kafri, Executive Director, Ettijahat Independent Culture

A playwright and cultural activist, Abdullah Alkafri works as a trainer in the field of arts and culture. He has taken part in many projects focusing on writing, particularly for theatre, organized by both Syrian and international organizations, and co-organized “Miniatures: A Month for Syria”, in collaboration with Shams Association in 2013; and “Agora: Platform for Theatre Labs”, in collaboration with Hananne Hajj Ali (in 2014), both of which took place in Beirut.

He has published/directed several plays, including *Mrs Ghada's Pain Threshold* in Beirut; was a member of the selection committee for ‘Arab Contemporary Dramaturgy’ (organized by IEVP 2012) selecting nine Arabic texts to be published in French. He has contributed to ‘An Enemy of the People and Pillars of Society: the Tragedy of the Individual’, produced by the Ibsen Conference in 2014 in Norway with Zoukak Theatre Company.

Abdullah was awarded first place in the 19th Mohammad Teymour Competition for Theatrical Creativity for his text ‘Damascus – Aleppo’ (shortlisted for the BBC Competition for Best Translated Work in 2008). Abdullah graduated in Theatrical Studies from the High Institute of Dramatic Arts, Damascus, 2004 and completed his Master’s study at Saint Joseph University, Beirut in 2015. He is currently a PhD Student at Saint Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon.

Dr Kat Braybrooke, Digital Anthropologist and Designer

Kat Braybrooke is a social scientist / designer whose work explores the politics of collaborative cultures and spaces. Kat works at the intersections of feminist techno science, sustainability and critical design practices, and has studied the shifting dynamics of hacker collectives, art museums, libraries and open source communities in Europe, Canada and China. She directs the global design studio *We and Us*, where she advises public institutions on how to invite their communities to the table through material participation (e.g. digital making) and commoning (e.g. cooperation, sharing and care). Kat’s current projects examine the links between creative multispecies practices and socio-ecological transformation, and how museums can co-design remote cultural experiences with/for isolated and vulnerable publics in times of crisis.

Áine Crowley, Programme Manager, Arts and Engagement with Create

Áine advances Create's work to support artists and communities of interest and/or place to realise high-quality collaborative arts practice, through ongoing professional development support, project opportunities and the development of cross-sectoral alliances and partnerships. Áine coordinates the Artist in the Community Scheme, providing project and proposal advice and support, information and guidance to applicants. Áine has worked with Voluntary Arts Ireland as Development Officer, and with dlr County Council Arts Office as Youth Arts Development Worker. Áine worked in Mayfield Arts, Cork for eight years where she collaborated with a diverse range of communities including Cúig - Creativity Unlimited an Integrated Group. Áine holds a BA Fine Art Printmaking from Limerick School of Art and Design.

Juan del Gado, Independent artist and Co-Founder/Creative Producer, Qisetna

Based in London, Juan delGado works across a range of media including installation and photography, exploring themes of displacement, landscapes, disability and gender. The experiential rather than the visual is consistently emphasised through his work. delGado examines issues and themes on-site, in the location where the 'narrative, the content of the project is waiting to be unfolded'. His intention is to actively engage the audience, challenging perceptions of what they are experiencing by presenting varying elements of the work in different media that inform each other; often through the visual and audio.

He is the co-founder and creative producer of *Qisetna: Talking Syria*, an on-line platform initiated in 2013 to share the voices of those internally displaced within Syria. His work has been supported by The British Council, Spanish Ministry of Culture, Artschools Palestine, Arts Council England, The Wellcome Trust amongst others. His film installation *Altered Landscapes* toured across the UK and Internationally, and delGado is currently working on a creative documentary and multi-screen installation, *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun*, set in the Arctic and focusing on human displacement and climate justice.

Vance Wing-sze Lau , Arts and Cultural Programme Coordinator with Create

Vance provides project and event management support for a broad variety of arts projects, professional development workshops and cultural events. She has worked particularly on the Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme (CAPP 2015–2018), a transnational cultural programme focusing on the dynamic area of collaborative arts. She has developed and manages digital platforms, communications and audience engagement strategies for CAPP, including the legacy of the project. She produces the Create and CAPP e-bulletins, as well as documentation of arts projects for promotion and archive purposes. Vance is a theatre-marker and producer, and has a keen eye for photography. Originally from Hong Kong, she holds a BSocSc Honours in Criminal Justice from the University of Hong Kong and an MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management from University College Dublin.

Isabel Lima, Independent Artist and Director, The Gresham Horse project

Isabel Lima is a Newcastle-based artist whose practice addresses the overarching themes of Identity, Culture and Place. Her own family history of displacement is the catalyst for her research. Isabel develops artist-led projects in collaboration with groups of people who have systematically suffered injustice and/or oppression caused by capitalism and colonialism, namely refugees and people seeking asylum.

In her current research Isabel is approaching socially engaged art as a site of production and transformation that goes beyond representation and contains within its scope the possibility to enact change. Isabel construes her role as an artist and that of the artwork as fundamentally linked to openness and vulnerability in a constant process of becoming. This process of becoming is relational and flexible in order to remain committed to place, context and lived experiences.

Dr Áine O'Brien is Curator of Learning and Research and Co-Founder of Counterpoints Arts, London. She has worked across the arts, education and activism in the US, Ireland and the UK and was Co-Director of Counterpoints Arts 2012- 2020. She set up the Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice in 2005 (re-named Centre for Socially Engaged Practice-Based Research), a doctoral programme aligning migration research with the creative arts. She created *FOMACS* (Forum on Migration and Communications) in 2007, developing creative, arts and cross-sector public projects focusing on migration.

Her creative productions to date within the University sector, *FOMACS* and Counterpoints Arts (spanning across documentary film, print, exhibition and curation) explore global storylines linking migration with social justice and change. Including film productions: *Silent Song* (2000) on Kurdish lyrical protest in Europe; *Here to Stay* (2006) on migrant activism; and *Promise and Unrest* (2010) on gendered migration and long-distance motherhood. She is co-editor of a combined book/DVD-ROM *Projecting Migration: Transcultural Documentary Practice* (Columbia University Press, 2007); and is co-editor of *Art, Migration and the Production of Radical Democratic Citizenship* (forthcoming Rowman and Littlefield International).

Áine leads on Counterpoints Arts' Learning Lab platform, developing national and international learning/creative production partnerships (with artists, curators, cultural activists and organisations, policymakers and academic institutions). And on the cross-platform *Who Are We?* Tate Exchange programme at Tate Modern.

