

Arts for Social Cohesion

Raphael Vella (University of Malta)





This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement n.º 870621.

Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture (AMASS)

Raphael Vella (University of Malta)



*The word 'amass' is usually defined as
'to gather, to accumulate, to bring together, or
to collect a fortune'.*

*The aim of AMASS is to create concrete
opportunities for people to come together and
accompany artists as agents in creative projects
and interpretations.*

Some of AMASS's Objectives

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of **existing literature (using the Intervention-Outcome-Population structure), case studies and best practices** that engage with societal challenges in ways that include and benefit peripheral European communities and citizens.
- Developing multidisciplinary methods for capturing, assessing and harnessing the **societal impact of the arts**.
- Planning, implementing and evaluating a **Europe-wide testbed with around 30 experiments** that aim to reduce isolation amongst women, children and minority groups through various forms of participation in the arts and various educational models.
- Evaluating and develop **new policy frameworks** for using arts to overcome societal challenges and making these frameworks available to a broad range of stakeholders.
- Introducing pedagogical content into **web-based learning portals** (e.g. online courses) and Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).

A couple of research questions

- 1) How can **transformative arts-based educational activities** be used to strengthen skills and competencies of underserved communities? How can arts education be used to foster cognitive and communication skills of **marginalised youth**?
- 2) How can multidisciplinary methods capture, assess and scale up the societal impact of the arts? **How can the impact of arts-based methodologies and artistic processes for social good be measured?**

Conducting Participatory Arts Projects: A Practical Toolkit

Planning general guidelines for action and documentation in the AMASS pilot projects and experiments.

1. Exploring the Context
2. Communities and Participants
3. Methodologies
4. Recruiting and engaging participants
5. Participatory strategies
6. Educational Strategies
7. Working with Stakeholders
8. Considering a Venue
9. Creating Sustainable Connections
10. Legacy
11. Documentation



Some AMASS pilot studies and experiments



Charles University, Prague

Using mixed methods based on Participatory Action Research, art based and a/r/tographical approaches, this research project investigated the possibilities of home art gallery education during the pandemic. It aimed to understand **what educational models can be designed to meet creative, critical and art based learning requirements when people are isolated from cultural resources?** And what is the artist's role in these processes?



The pilot study's accent was educational. However, the pilot study included artistic creative processes (taking photos; creating glass installations; family performance, etc.) and communication with participants (direct oral and distance). **The goal was to overcome the participants' isolation**, to provoke and support communication about the glass objects and related family identities and memories. Glass objects were used as a tool for transferring the family memory.

Corvinus University Budapest

This research project intends **to empower young Roma girls and women to effectively express themselves online**, develop a powerful presence and give voice to contemporary, social issues and achievements. **Roma artists were invited as sources of inspiration and mentoring**. Innovative project methodology: Social media have not been utilised before to provide artistic content and thus utilise the Arts to overcome barriers between the communities of the majority (Hungarians) and minority (Hungarian Roma) and promote discussions about common problems. These involve integrated schooling versus segregation, prejudices versus facts based assessment of Roma lifestyles and recognition of artistic achievements.

1. Is it possible to change the mindset of Hungarian youth through arts-based social media messages reflecting Roma achievements?
2. Can young women of Roma heritage establish themselves in social media through cultural messages?
3. Do they have an appeal and impact beyond their own community, also among Hungarian youth?
4. Can they have an impact on the attitudes and publication practices of mass media covering Roma issues?



Roma influencer képzés - összegzés

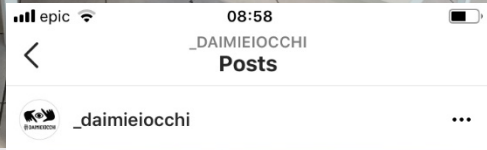


University of Lapland

The project approached **the city of Rovaniemi as a common home for all its inhabitants**. *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* arose from **the need to meet, interact and connect with another person** -- a neighbour, an unknown person on the street, a family member – open-mindedly and without preconceived notions. Intercultural connections were strongly present in one of the artistic works by immigrants to Finland: as asylum seekers they chose to build a scaled model of the Ishtar Gate, which symbolises a show of love for their new home country Finland.



Methods for data collection included workshops, participant observations, interviews (focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews) and video documentation. The workshops were organised by lead artists.



PACO Design Collaborative (supported by L' Albero della Vita)

The project deals with **the marginalisation that kids and teenagers living in the suburban areas of Milan feel every day**. These areas are often dominated by neglect and crime. The challenge is to give youth an opportunity to become active citizens and to help them imagine and design a better place to live in.

How can participatory art help youth to become agents of change in their own community? How can participatory art give youth the possibility to look beyond everyday realities?

Research methods included meetings with the participants' parents, WhatsApp connections, Zoom and Miro presentations, group interviews, note-taking and recordings. **PACO used photography as a research tool**. Photography gave the youth the possibility to focus their minds on details that their daily routine hid from them. This is the starting point for becoming agents of change and to reflect on the power they have to improve the environment they live in.



APECV – Portugal

This research project worked **to improve access to educational activities by persons with mental disabilities living in rural areas**. The study aimed to understand the nature of learning spaces through arts-based and educational activities that made use of photovoice. Designers, artists, educators, caregivers and other facilitators contributed to the social emancipation and social inclusion of participants.



Working with research methods ranging from participant observation, photovoice and Gentle Teaching practices (a form of therapy that relies on the creation of strong connections and a sense of trust between participants and caregivers), APECV promoted art making and **collaborative learning experiences to foster emotional well being**.

Zoom Meeting
Recording... Total non-video participants: 34
Speaker View

David Emily Axel
Karl Marcus Susan

Unmute Start Video Security Participants Polls Chat Share Screen Pause/Stop Recording Breakout Rooms Reactions More

Type here to search

Stedina għall-ewwel qari tad-dramm NSFW
Kitba ta' Simon Bartolo, direzzjoni ta' Toni Attard.

Il-Flamis 19 ta' Novembru 8pm - 9pm
Diskussjoni 9pm - 930pm.

Il-qari ser isir fuq Zoom, u membri tal-udjenza ser jintalbu jimlew sfhariġ qabel u wara l-qari, bihala parti mir-riċerka dwar l-impatt tal-arti fuq is-soċjetà. Wara l-qari jkun hemm diskussjoni dwar l-iżvilupp tax-xoghol.

Il-qari huwa parti mill-proġett AMASS (Acting on the Margins, Arts as Social Sculpture), ikkoordinat minn Department of Arts, Open Communities and Adult Education (University of Malta).

Inkiteb hawn qabel it-Tnejn 16 ta' Novembru:
<https://bit.ly/3kRyhzF>

Jieħdu sehem: Benjamin Abela, Mikhail Basmadjian, Josette Ciappara, Stephen Mintoff, Loranne Vella, Chris Vincent Jung

L-Università ta' Malta

amass
acting on the margins: arts as social sculpture

This project is funded by the European Union

NSFW – Culture Venture supported by MGRM

The main objective of this study is to create a theatre production that puts a focus on the stigma of people living with HIV in Malta.

The specific research questions that this study aims to address are:

How can theatre advocate for the rights of HIV positive persons?

Can theatre have an impact on people's attitudes towards discrimination?

Can research in the field help to develop characters that will provide new roles for Maltese speaking professional actors?

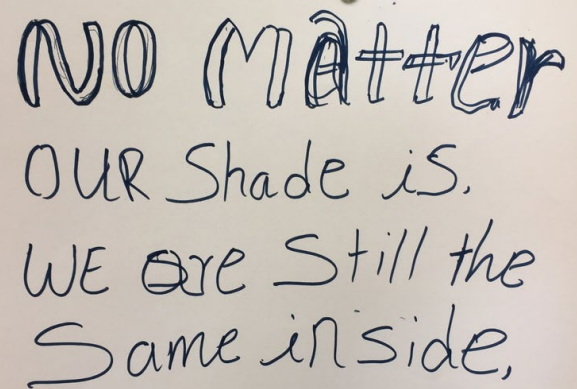
Research methods include a pre- and post-online survey, interviews with participants, an evaluation of the online theatrical production (rehearsed reading) and a paper and pencil survey of the visitors of the public theatrical production.

Suitable Citizens



This project aims to engage with issues of integration and inclusion of third country nationals in artistic events. **It has two main aims: 1) bringing artists and non-professionals to work together in a non-hierarchical process of co-creation, and 2) studying the impact of participatory art on societal challenges related to a sense of belonging and citizenship.**

Data collected will include the participants' expectations and perceptions of arts projects, their knowledge of the arts, their general well-being, experiences of discrimination through close-ended questions – all this both before and after the project's activities. In a focus group, open-ended questions on the participants' experiences in Malta, integration into local communities, and perceptions of the arts will be discussed. Participating artists and the coordinator will keep reflective journals. Data collected from the local people taking part will include perceptions of discrimination, integration, and arts projects.



NO MATTER
OUR SHADE IS.
WE ARE STILL THE
SAME INSIDE,

Comparability of testbed research

Internal (local)
comparability

Transnational
comparability

Examples of comparability

Methodological
comparisons (use
of attitude
testing,
Photovoice,
artists' journals,
etc)

Research on
specific
populations
(Roma, persons
with disabilities,
elderly, etc)

Research on
specific **societal**
challenges
(unequal access
to the arts, urban
regeneration, etc)

Use of particular
art forms or
therapy (forum
theatre, painting,
art therapy,
dance, etc)

Contexts
(museums,
galleries, local
councils, etc)

Outcomes
(enhancement of
specific skills,
civic engagement,
etc)