

The Boundless Museum:

intercultural exchanges across boundaries

ABSTRACT

The flow of people moving daily across borders is continuously growing. Academic studies have covered a wide range of issues including economic, social, political and cultural incorporation of immigrants in arrival cities. However, few examines the role of immigrants in reproducing urban, art and cultural scenes by their practices and experience of migration. This research examines on how immigration transforms a city's spaces and reshapes the arts and cultural scene, particularly in Rotterdam, a city of world trade and cultural diversity since the 19th century.

Under post-war restructuring, Rotterdam has been an arrival city since the 1960s. With the development of harbors and port industries, rural-urban and international migration brought an influx of guest workers and families, shaping South Rotterdam into an international working-class neighborhood. While immigration has provided the city with labor force and enriched cultural diversity, it has also caused social, economic and cultural contradictions. Facing discrepancies and segregations, immigrants and non-immigrants often face challenges in associating with each other. The research aims to explore the role of a museum as a platform to foster intercultural exchanges across boundaries, so as to rediscover the inherent and multifaceted depth of South Rotterdam.

Based on immigrants' experience on migration and acculturation, the research introduces how migration practices and cultural integration process contribute to the production of art and culture. In view of problems brought by cultural differences and social segregations in South Rotterdam, the project aims to facilitate intercultural understanding through art and spatial experience in a local museum. In the age of frequent migration, the museum can be seen as a place that offers opportunities for immigrants and their respective cultures to be displayed and experienced, reflecting the heterogeneity in a city. The design of spaces are aimed to be flexible and adaptive, responsive to human movement, reflecting the migratory and transient nature of contemporary life.

Keywords: Immigration; migration; acculturation; multiculturalism

Word Count: 307

CONTENTS

Introduction	4-6
Chapter 1. Immigration, Cultural Integration and Multiculturalism	7-9
Chapter 2. Immigration, Migration and Urban Transformation	10-16
Chapter 3. Immigration, Acculturation and Art	17-21
Conclusion	22-23
Bibliography	24-26
Notes	27-29

INTRODUCTION

Cities are transformed by migration spatially. Trade liberalization, intensified transport and communication network have encouraged immigration and emigration movements worldwide since the 1980s. Everyday living patterns produce and reproduce social, political, and economic spaces in cities, no matter whether migrations are rural-urban, urban-urban or international. Transnational exchanges of culture are thus created through networks and communication across different nations. Brickell and Datta (2011, 14) argue that cities are site in which immigrants “reflect and influence migratory movements, politics, identities, and narratives”.¹ This variety of origins, cultures and languages makes up multicultural scenes in arrival cities.

While this transformation promotes cultural heterogeneity, it also causes discrepancies and segregations. Due to social, economic and cultural differences, physical and cognitive boundaries are often formed between immigrants and non-immigrants, leading to challenges when they associate with each other (Lamont and Molnar 2002).² Physical boundaries refers to the segregation caused by geographic or biological differences, such as residential location or skin color. But more often, immigrants integration to the host cities are hindered by cognitive boundaries because they have different cultural identities, education level, interests and beliefs.



Fig. 1. Diversity of shops in Groene Hilledijk, Bloemhof, South Rotterdam in 2018, Google Maps, accessed 18 January, 2021.

In South Rotterdam, both cultural heterogeneity and social segregations can be found in neighborhoods. Non-Western immigrants are concentrated in the southernmost districts such as Tarwewijk, Bloemhof and Oud Charlois, ranging from 30% to 60% (Onderzoek010 2019).³ While non-western shops and churches have formed diverse economic, cultural and religious landscapes (see Fig. 1), neighborhoods are also facing social problem of crimes and deprivation. According to statistics from online database of Onderzoek010 (2018), these districts in South Rotterdam have safety index lower than 80, which is 65% lower than that of more developed districts such as Katendrecht and Kop van Zuid.⁴ Besides, tendency of people moving out from these districts is high, as shown by departure rates three times higher than average (Onderzoek010 2019).⁵ This shows that both cultural diversity and social boundaries exist in immigrant neighbourhoods in South Rotterdam.

In view of transformations and challenges that immigration has brought to South Rotterdam, the project aims to explore the role of a museum as intercultural understanding across boundaries in South Rotterdam, so as to rediscover the inherent quality of an arrival city: a place of hybrid cultural identity. The project deals with a research question: how can a local art museum facilitate intercultural exchanges beyond boundaries in Rotterdam? Located in Tarwewijk, a historic migrant workers neighborhood, the museum can be seen as a place to create opportunities for stories of people from different backgrounds and their respective cultures to be exchanged. By exploring immigrants' dialectic process of socio-cultural adaptation and transformation of cityscapes in Rotterdam, the research aims to search for a common ground between binary perceptions such as "foreign" and "native", "us" and "them".

The research will be conducted quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative approach mainly addresses population diversity and discrepancies between immigrants and non-immigrants in Rotterdam. It includes statistics on the population in Rotterdam, such as differences in income, education background and household sizes. The qualitative approach develops on the base of quantitative results, further analyzing how non-locals live with and react to these discrepancies and boundaries. The experience of immigrants will be explored in terms of how art and culture are preserved or transformed in the process of acculturation. The current artistic and cultural scenes in relation to immigrants in Rotterdam will be studied in local examples. The main sources are primary and secondary materials. The former includes site photos, observations and archival materials; the latter includes statistical reports, books and articles. However, this research had a number of limitations, such as impossibility to access physical archive and conducting interviews in South Rotterdam and limited scope of discussion on the topic of immigration, which relates to complex historical background.

The research is divided into three chapters, each connects the theme of immigration and its influence in the city. First, historical background of immigration and its relationship to the multicultural character of Rotterdam will be discussed. Second, spatial transformations that immigrants have brought to the neighbourhood will be explored. Third, artworks and cultural scenes related to immigrants experience will be studied. These three chapters point to historical, architectural and artistic perspectives of immigration, which provide directions of how the museum can be designed and what to be exhibited.

To sum up, regarding immigration and its influence on cities, my first hypothesis is that immigration has brought multiplicity of cultures and traditions, and subversively transformed the urban and artistic scenes in multiple ways. Regarding the research question of how a local art museum can facilitate intercultural exchanges beyond boundaries in Rotterdam, my second hypothesis is that a common ground should be provided between domesticity and foreignness through exploring the city's art and culture in a global and migratory discourse. While centralised museums are criticised for following a national and monotonous agenda (Ulz 2019, 329),⁶ the project strives for a heterogeneous exhibition narrative that opens up diverse perspectives, underlining the museum's role as a common ground for intercultural exchanges.

CHAPTER 1: IMMIGRATION, CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

1.1 History of immigration in Rotterdam

Immigration flows have reshaped host countries in cultural, political and socio-economic aspects. While immigrants do not only assimilate into the dominant culture but also preserve, integrate and reproduce minority cultures, multicultural societies are formed. Immigration has extended the cultural horizons of cities, as shown by the fact that Rotterdam is commonly known as a city of intercultural profiles where a wide range of cultural identities co-exist (Council of Europe, 2012).⁷ According to Algan et al. (2013, 5), multicultural perspective presents immigrants as “active integral segments of the whole society rather than just foreigners or outsiders”.⁸

The historical background of immigration in Rotterdam, especially South Rotterdam, has suggested how the multicultural scene and its associated challenges emerged in the city. In the early 1960s, the Netherlands experienced a significant rise in immigration flows. Post-war immigration to Rotterdam follows several reasons: post-war and post-colonial restructuring, expansion of harbor facilities and recruitment of guest workers, and acceptance of refugees. Immigration streams started after de-colonization of Indonesia, Surinam and Dutch Antilles in the early 1950s, providing the country with dock workers and industrial labours in South Rotterdam (Zorlu and Hartog 2001, 4).⁹ The inflow of guest workers further increased in the 1960s, in response to the need of low-skilled workers in port-related industries. These guest workers were recruited from mainly Mediterranean and South European countries, mostly decided to extend their stay and were joined by their families in the 1980s. As a result of family reunification and childbirth, immigrant populations have surged rapidly, especially those with Moroccan and Turkish origins. Till now, in districts near Maashaven where guest workers were accommodated, such as Tarwewijk, Oud-Charlois and Afrikaanderwijk, population with Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan backgrounds remain the highest among all other immigrants (Onderzoek010 2018).¹⁰

In South Rotterdam, where international trade and industrialization took place in the mid-19th century, immigration has brought the neighborhoods with multicultural scenes. However, problems caused by cultural, political and socio-economic disparities can also be found. Since

the early 20th century, South Rotterdam has been widely reported as an area that mainly attracts disadvantaged people, showing that public impression towards the area was generally negative (Focus Migration 2014).¹¹ The following analyses the challenges that the multicultural city is facing in terms of social and cultural integration.

1.2 Challenges in social and cultural co-existence

First, economic disparities lead to difficulties in social integration in South Rotterdam. Portes and Borocz (1989) suggest that inequalities in income, education and weaken immigrants' ability to socially integrate.¹² Comparing to neighbouring areas in Rotterdam, neighborhoods in South Rotterdam are relatively deprived. While redevelopment and owner occupied housing plans were started in areas such as Kop van Zuid, Katendrecht and Feijenoord in the 1970s to attract middle income classes, affordable rental housing in South Rotterdam has led to an influx of lower income class. With the decline of port industries in the south bank in the 1970s, fewer manual labors were required and low-skilled immigrants were unemployed (Zorlu and Hartog 2001, 5).¹³ In 2014, the average number of unemployed people in districts with high concentration of immigrants was over 1400, which was around three times of neighboring areas such as Katendrecht and Kop van Zuid (onderzoek010 2014).¹⁴ Having a relatively high percentage of socio-economically vulnerable households, residents in In 2018, people feeling connected in Tarwewijk, Carnisse and Zuidplein area were below 42%, which was significantly low among all districts in Rotterdam (onderzoek010 2018).¹⁵ This shows that socio-economic environment in South Rotterdam is undesirable in the past decades.

Second, cultural disparities has led to challenges in co-existence of different cultures. As stated by Algan (2013, 6), when facing conflicts with the host country, immigrants choose to actively preserve their own culture instead of assimilating.¹⁶ This implies that differences in languages, religions and cultural practices between immigrants and non-immigrants can be turned into cultural segregation. In the 1990s, anti-immigrant parties began to gain popularity when dissatisfaction of general public towards former guest workers grew (Focus Migration 2014).¹⁷ Some non-immigrants perceived that immigrants generally had low Dutch proficiency and were mostly criminals. As a result, complaints from native Dutch started to appear in the society. Until now, co-existence between immigrants and non-immigrants remains as a problem, as shown in recent protests against immigration in Rotterdam. In 2018, dutch political parties, with their hundreds of supporters, gathered in the square in front of

Rotterdam central station, expressing their dissatisfaction towards Turkish and Moroccan immigrants (The Times of Israel, 2018).¹⁸

The above problems suggest that boundaries between locals and immigrants exist in South Rotterdam, so the aim of this project is to alleviate social and cultural segregation through promoting intercultural dialogues. Although immigration has its associated challenges, it has also created transformations to the urban spaces in the city through migration, interaction and communication. Brickell and Datta (2011, 31) pointed out that cities are “sites of translocality par excellence harbouring places of origin, settlement, resettlement and transit”, where spaces are “rearranged and reloaded with meaning”.¹⁹ The following chapter describes the urban transformations that immigrants have brought to South Rotterdam.

CHAPTER 2: IMMIGRATION, MIGRATION AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION

2.1 Immigration and migration

Before deciding to permanently stay in the country, immigrants have gone through journeys of migration across borders. South Rotterdam, where guest workers and their families from different countries first inhabited, is a particular place that people and ideas from other places traverse across boundaries and come together. Etzold (2020) argues that migration is the driver of urban transformation, producing and reproducing transient, transnational and subversive urban spaces.²⁰ In South Rotterdam, immigrants have restructured the urban scenes through their daily interaction and exchanges. From social, cultural, economic and political structures created in the city, one can see how immigrants' own package of identities, values and perspectives are mixed with the local context. The following would discuss spatial transformations that can be seen in the city.

2.2 Industrial spaces

As mentioned in the previous chapter, first-generation immigrants from former colonies and Mediterranean countries mostly came to South Rotterdam as temporary industrial workers. Tarwewijk, located near industries along Maashaven, is a district named after the wheat industry. The proximity to the factories has made Tarwewijk an immigrant neighborhood where the first generation lived and worked there. According to Frijhoff (2015, 32), ports and factories are sites of memories that provoked a mass immigration of guest workers who lived on the south bank of Rotterdam, shaping South Rotterdam a place of its own sense of multicultural identity.²¹

Although the port industry in South Rotterdam has been declining since the 1970s, industrial settlements linked to Maashaven can still be seen, forming a cluster of buildings that contain the history of guest workers. Fig. 2 shows the location of these factories along the harbor and their respective functions. First-generation immigrants were employed as dock workers, warehouse workers and construction workers in these factories for the grain-based industry, forming the character of Tarwewijk as a "wheat neighborhood".

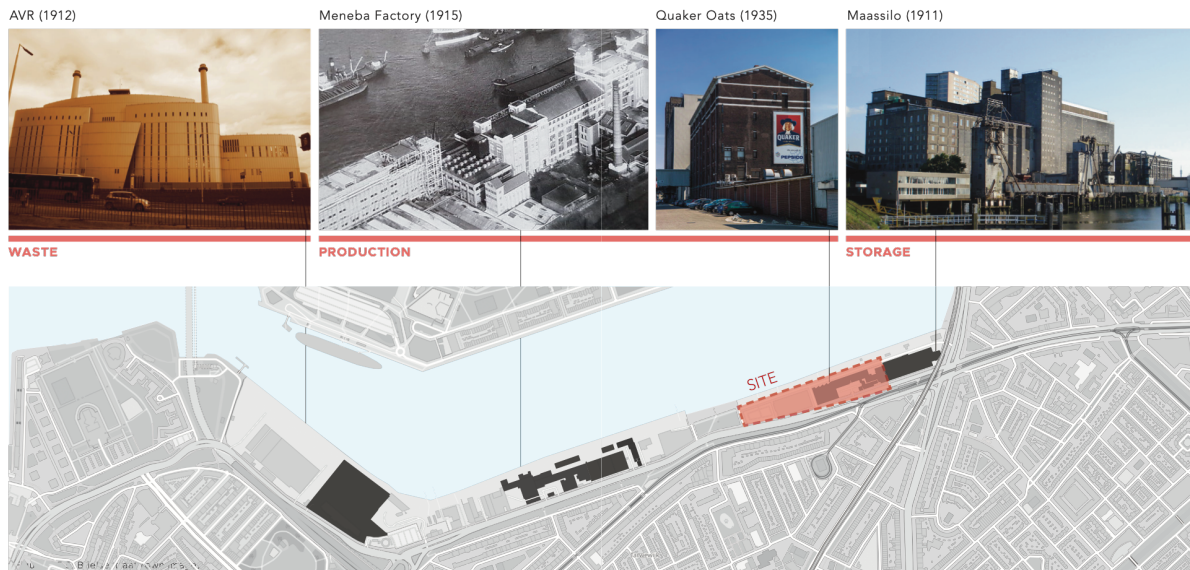


Fig. 2 *Grain-based Economy in Tarwewijk*, retrieved from “Power” Research, Public Building Studio 2020

Traces of immigrants’ daily lives in the neighbourhood can also be found in their social activities in the port areas, such as laundry rooms, canteens and harbor front. Fig. 3 and 4 have demonstrated the lives of the port workers in the 1960s and 1980s. They gathered and socialized in canteens and laundry rooms, and voiced out their opinions in labour strikes at the harbour front. This shows that they have transformed the working environment into social spaces in which they interacted and exchanged their daily lives, ideas and values.



Fig 3. BNA Photographic, *Laundry room for dock workers in Rotterdam*, February 7, 1969, Alamy Stock Photo, accessed 18 January, 2021, <https://www.alamy.com/port-of-rotterdam-modern-laundry-room-for-harbour-laborer-date-7-february-1969-location-rotterdam-zuid-holland-keywords-port-workers-ports-laundry-rooms-image34093444.html>.



Fig 4. BNA Photographic, *Canteen for dock workers in Rotterdam*, February 7, 1969, Alamy Stock Photo, accessed 18 January, 2021, <https://www.alamy.com/port-of-rotterdam-modern-canteen-for-dockers-date-february-7-1969-location-rotterdam-zuid-holland-keywords-port-workers-ports-canteens-image340993457.html>



Fig 5. BNA Photographic, *Labour strike at Rotterdam harbour*, February 27, 1987, Alamy Stock Photo, accessed 18 January, 2021, <https://www.alamy.com/discussion-of-harbour-workers-during-open-day-strikers-rotterdam-harbour-strike-leader-paul-rosenmoller-speaks-attendees-on-day-date-27-february-1987-location-rotterdam-zuid-holland-keywords-disares-strikers-personal-name-rosenmller-paul-image341750214.html>

2.3 Commercial Spaces

After the first-generation immigrants from former colonies and Mediterranean countries came to South Rotterdam as guest workers and settled down, they set up their own business with families (Juzwiak 2014, 8).²² Retail stores, cafes and restaurants of foreign cultures has formed special transnational streetscapes. Along main commercial streets such as Beijerlandse laan, Groene Hilledijk and Pleinweg, restaurants, boutiques and grocery stores from foreign countries such as Turkey, Istanbul and Surinam are commonly found. Fig. 6 shows the emergence of a variety of commercial spaces in South Rotterdam, such as Islamic butcher shops, Afro supermarkets and Turkish restaurants. This transformed cityscape show the economic activities driven by immigrants in the neighbourhoods and how they transfer their living habits and religious practices from their own countries to South Rotterdam.



Laxmi Nagar Store



Islamitische Slagerij Het Kalf



Targovishte Supermarket



Afro Supermarket



Slagerij Islam Centrum Rotterdam



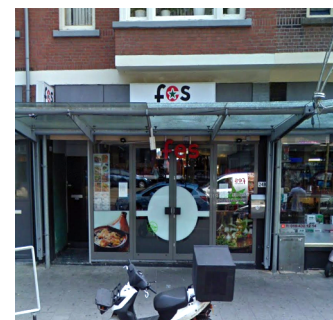
Sate Man



Afsana Afghaans Restaurant



Meram - Rotterdam Zuid



Restaurant Fes

Figure 6. *Variety of shops and restaurants in South Rotterdam, Google Maps, accessed 18 January, 2021.*

As immigrants tend to leave South Rotterdam when they become financially better off, these commercial spaces operated by them are constantly changing. For example, in Groene Hilledijk, a variety of shops and restaurants can be found. From 2009 to 2018, the streetscape has changed (see Fig. 7). In the photo taken in 2009, only a Chinese restaurant is found. However, in 2018, more foreign stores opened, including a religious goods store and an Indian wedding outlet store. The streetscapes are reshaped and reconstructed with the inflow and outflow of immigrants, showing that commercial spaces are transient and are traces of the transitory journeys of people from different parts of the world.



Figure 7. Diversity of shops in Groene Hilledijk, Bloemhof, South Rotterdam in, 2009 (top), 2016 (middle) and 2018 (bottom) respectively, Google Maps, accessed 18 January, 2021.

2.4 Cultural and Religious Spaces

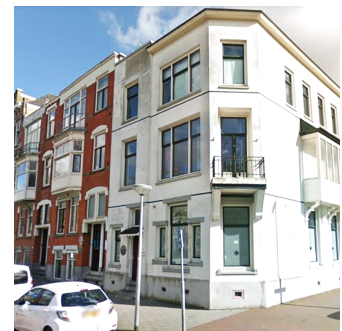
Apart from commercial activities, culture and religion of immigrants are also creating spatial transformations in the city. Immigration leads to the rise in religious plurality, which is visible in architectural cityscape (Burchardt and Hohne 2015, 2).²³ Mosques, churches and cultural centers are commonly found in the neighborhood, reflecting immigrants' belief, values and identities. Fig. 8 shows a variety of cultural and religious constructions that represents the preservation of immigrants' own cultures from foreign countries. Examples of mosques has illustrated the presence of Islam in Rotterdam. Since the first-generation migrant workers from Turkey originally planned to return to their home country after a certain period of time, they did not build representative mosques. Instead, houses and shops in buildings were reconstructed into mosques. New types of mosques, namely "backyard mosques" or "storefront mosques" were dispersed in the city (Wildt et al. 2019, 7).²⁴ From immigrants' reconstruction of mosques in Dutch buildings, flexibility and adaptive qualities of cultural spaces can be seen.



Mosque Al Wahda



Mosque Laleli



Pakistan Islamic Center Rotterdam



Victory Outreach



Stichting Bulgaria Holyfire Int. Church



Adventkerk

Figure 8. *Mosques and Churches in South Rotterdam*, Google Maps, accessed 19 January, 2021.

2.5 Political Spaces

Besides cultural and religious constructions, immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, have also reproduced subversive urban spaces to raise public awareness on immigration equality. Some of the transient urban interventions even pose challenges to political powers, aiming to reflect the demand for equal treatments and challenge governmental regimes (Etzold 2018).²⁵

An example can be seen in the “We Are Here” movement initiated by a group of undocumented immigrants in the Netherlands in 2012. The collective of undocumented immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, expressed their opposition on not being accepted by the country. Through this movement, they hoped to make their voices heard in order to gain the right to live in the country. Since 2012, the group started occupying public space and squatting empty buildings, including empty churches, abandoned office spaces, government-owned buildings. Fig. 9 shows the group’s occupation of Vluchtgarage, a government building in Amsterdam in 2013. During the period of squatting, they held different kinds of activities such as debates, legal discussions and music performances (We Are Here 2017).²⁶ This shows that the squatted or occupied spaces are not only social and cultural but also political spaces in which different groups of immigrants gather and express their concern on human rights. These groups of undocumented immigrants have rearranged and reused the space, subverting their original functions and transforming them into spaces of their own identities.



Fig. 9. *We Are Here* squatting the Vluchtgarage in Amsterdam, We Are Here, 13 December, 2013, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://wijzijnhier.org/tijdslijn/squatting-and-the-undocumented-migrants-struggle-in-the-netherlands/>

CHAPTER 3: IMMIGRATION, ACCULTURATION AND ART

3.1 Immigrants' acculturation experience as expressed in contemporary art

While cultural differences have led to social problems and urban transformation in the city, it has also stimulated artistic production. Immigration, which involves the conjunction of different cultural systems, evokes a dialectic process of assimilation and integration, as well as resistance and separation (Martiniello 2019, 70).²⁷ In these processes of acculturation, immigrants preserve their cultural identities in different ways. This creates new perceptions and ideas that reshape and renew the contemporary artistic scene. This chapter explores the relationship between art and acculturation processes, and examines the role of art in expression of immigration in the past and present, in the Netherlands and beyond.

3.2 Artworks and performances in Rotterdam

In Rotterdam, the city's multicultural identity has evoked artistic productions. The Summer Carnival is an obvious example of how immigrants have integrated their own cultures into the host country. It is an annual event held in Rotterdam and Kortrijk, celebrating the traditional carnivals in Latin America and the Cape Verde Islands. This festival, inspired and organized by Afro-Caribbean immigrants from former Dutch colonies, is full of artists and bands performing in street parades (Alferink 2012, 109).²⁸ Fig. 8 and 9 respectively show the original carnival in Cape Verde and the one reorganized in Rotterdam. The festival is an example of import of immigrants culture to the host country, forming a rearranged artistic scene in where they preserve and renew their collective identities.



Fig. 10. *São Vicente Carnival in Cape Verde*, The Cape Verde Experience, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.capeverde.co.uk/guide/festivals-and-music>



Fig. 11. *Summer Carnival in Rotterdam*, De Havenloods, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.dehavenloods.nl/nieuws/algemeen/968854/rotterdam-unlimited-en-zomercarnaval-2020-afgelast->

Apart from art performances initiated by immigrants, artworks are produced in remembrance of guest workers in the post-war period. In 1957, Naum Babo, a Russian-born sculptor, has designed and constructed “National Monument to the Guest Worker” next to the Bijenkorf in Rotterdam. Fig. 12 shows the 27-meters-high statue standing in front of the main entrance of the department store. The statue was designed to pay tribute to the guest workers who contributed in the post-war reconstruction period, and to call for awareness on social equality. The artwork conveys the message that it is unjust to exclude guest workers from Rotterdam’s history. Mohammed Benzakour, a Moroccan-Dutch writer, has also written a poem named “Dream”, in honor of the first-generation guest workers (see the below poem). These artworks show that the social role of immigrant workers has impacted not only the city’s history, but also reconstructed the artistic scene.



Fig. 12. *National Monument to the Guest Worker*, 1957, accessed 19 January, 2021, <http://www.hansvanhouwelingen.com/projects/nationaal-gastarbeidermonument/>

Dream
 To the Guest Worker
 In the Beginning was the Dream
 Travelled the seas, exchanged skies
 His soil remained his soil
 Sun on back, eyes clouded
 His moon remained his moon
 Leg petrified, foot rusted
 His soul remained his soul
 Then, sweat dried, he placed his hand
 His shoulders touched ours
 And we built, we built
 A tower in the sky
 Home in the heavens
 A new dream...
 In the Beginning was the Dream, and
 the Dream is
 with us

“*Dream*” written by Mohammed Benzakour, 2010, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.stroom.nl/media/HvHgidsENGweb.pdf>

Besides festivals, poems and sculptures, immigrants in the Netherlands relate their own origins and experience to art installations, in an attempt to raise public awareness on immigration and non-western culture. Remy Jungerman, a Suriname-Dutch artist who left his homeland for Amsterdam in the 1960s, has aimed to raise social awareness on immigrants and preservation of non-western culture through art. His installation exhibited in Stedelijk Museum articulates the his experience of once being a migrant (see Fig. 13). According to him, the squashed toad on the motif is used as metaphor of people who step out of their original habitats in order to escape from danger, despite knowing the risk of being “squashed flat”. Constructed out of textile, threads and wood, Fig. 14 is a reproduction of culture and traditions of Surinamese Moroons. The use of motifs and textiles take reference from African and Maroon culture, in homage to Jungerman’s ancestors.



Fig. 13. *Installation “I am a native foreigner”*, 2017, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/exhibitions/i-am-a-native-foreigner#slideshow-48946>



Fig. 14. *Promise IV*, 2018, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/digdeeper/remy-jungerman>

3.3 Art as a response to global injustice

In the past decade, the issue of immigration has become a significant driver of contemporary activism, which means an activism through art, in response to political or social oppression. Street art, according to Becker (2019, 3), is an “assertive counteraction within a larger, infrastructural power scheme”.²⁹ Cities has become platforms for street artists to speak out against immigration bans through subversive and ephemeral interventions, such as murals and graffiti.

Street artists paint murals as strategies of vandalising urban space and drawing governments’ attention on their immigration policies. Fig. 15 shows a mural painted by Banksy, an English artist known for his criticism on social and political issues through satirical and subversive street arts. The mural showed a group of dark grey pigeons standing against an exotic green swallow, holding signs of hostile words such as “migrants not welcome” and “keep off our worms”. The mural was painted in Clacton-on-Sea, a British town where an anti-immigration political party hoped to gain public support (Erlanger 2014).³⁰ This implies Banksy’s intention on expressing his concern towards the country’s immigration policy.



Fig. 15. *A mural by the artist Banksy in Clacton-on-Sea, 2 October, 2014, The New York Times, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/03/world/europe/banksy-mural-removed-england-clacton-on-sea.html>*

Apart from murals, anti-border street art has also become a global protest tactic in border regions where immigration is prohibited. Anti-border street art along the US-Mexico border suggests how bottom-up artistic strategies are used to subvert the separating function of the wall, denouncing existing stereotypes on immigrants. Fig. 16 shows murals painted on the

border wall which follow the tradition of Mexican muralism. “Justica”, a Spanish word for “justice”, is seen on the wall, simply conveying the wish for equal treatment. On the right, the word “lies” is painted inside a stop sign, creating the message of “stop lying” (Bristol 2020). The upside-down American flag on the further right represents the turmoil of the country, implying the country has been distressed by the anti-immigrant agenda. Fig. 17 shows the “Teeter-Totter Wall”, a temporary art project set up by Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello. Temporary seesaws attracted people from both sides of the wall to gather and play, subverting the separation by connection. The seesaws symbolizes the pursuit for economic and social equality, conveying the message of “sharing, community, collaboration and generosity” (Cascone 2019).³²



Fig. 16. *Anti-border street art*, February 18, 2020, Panoramas, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://www.panoramas.pitt.edu/art-and-culture/political-art-us-mexico-border>



Fig. 17. *Teeter-Totter Wall*, July 28, 2019, Artnet News, accessed 19 January, 2021, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/us-mexico-border-teeter-totter-wall-1612897>

CONCLUSION

This research has examined how immigration has transformed Rotterdam's socio-economic, cultural and political scenes. It has also explored how contemporary art has been reshaped by immigrants and artists in the Netherlands and beyond. All these reconstructions and changes, no matter detrimental or constructive, are the results of migration history and societal relations within different groups of people.

From all the discussed urban transformations in the city, the present character of Rotterdam of being multicultural and superdiverse is closely related to the inflow of new ideas, cultures and identities from other countries. Although undesirable effects of social and cultural segregations are still existing in South Rotterdam, the potential of facilitating transcultural exchange is also shown by its historical background and diversifying streetscape. An art museum which can provide a common ground between immigrants and non-immigrants in the neighborhood is significant to motivate intercultural understanding, further promoting Rotterdam as a receiving society. As stated by Handlin (1955) in "The Positive Contribution by Immigrants":

Immigration was also a symbol that the nation was not an island in itself, but inextricably bound up in its fate with the rest of the world...for the receiving society, the open gates are evidence of the worth of its own institutions and of its capacity to absorb the foreign.³³

From the analysed aspects of transformation that immigration has brought to countries, it is obvious that immigrants and people who concern about this issue has tried to express their ideas in official and unofficial, legal and illegal, implicit and explicit ways. Subversive street art and transient occupation of urban space are seen as tactics to catch public and governmental institutions attention on immigrants' rights. While the legitimacy of national immigration policies remain as a controversial question, it is important to consider the role of a museum to accommodate art from various cultural and political background. The inclusion of all voices, especially those from the disadvantaged and alienated people, is significant to achieve the aim of promoting intercultural exchanges.

In the 21st century of globalization and migration, divisions and segregations among people from different backgrounds are still existing due to physical and cognitive boundaries. The

multiplicity of cultures and traditions that immigration has brought to the city reminds us of the need to reflect on perceived binary divisions. As stated by Hamid (2019), “Humans are in motion across time as well as geography. Why must we be divided, the migrant versus the native?”³⁴ Through architectural design and display of artworks, the project aims to provide a place where people can experience freedom of expression, communication and exploration. In the future world where migration might be unprecedented and necessary, the museum aims to provide a vision of defining Rotterdam less by national background, and more by the multiplicity of ideas, cultures and imaginaries.

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