

PassTheMic!
Decolonizing Education
Through Arts
Venice, Lisbon, Athens

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Published by
Adriatico Book Club

TABLE OF CONTENTS

00	<i>The Project</i>
00	<i>Theoretical Assumptions</i>
00	<i>Implementation/Methodology</i>
00	<i>Watchwords</i>
00	<i>Lexicon (Exercises)</i>
00	<i>Venice case study</i> Texts by Wissal Houbabi, Delio Jasse, Anna Serlenga and Viviana Gravano
00	<i>Lisbon case study</i> Texts by Helena Elias, Alesa Herero, Rita Natalio, Natalia Mendonça and Francesca de Luca
00	<i>Athens case study</i> Texts by Fotini Gouseti, Magd Assad, Ermira Goro, Theo Prodromidis and Christos Korolis
00	Bibliography—Links

This user-guide has been compiled under the project **PASS THE MIC! Decolonizing education through arts (PTM)** to share with a wider public the conceptual premises, a reproduceable methodology and some of the artistic practices developed during the project.

The constraints of the **COVID-19** pandemic and the consequent restrictive measures implemented by governments all over the world have limited people contact and access to places. Accordingly, the methodology of **PTM** has been adapted to comprehend a mix of face-to-face and on-line activities.

User Guide

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THE PROJECT

Pass the Mic! is a project that pursues the decolonisation of education through the articulation of art practices, research and activism, implementing hybrid format between higher education and artistic experimentation.

The project builds upon researches, artistic experiences and social movements that claim the urgency to problematize Eurocentric, discriminatory narratives and hegemonic pedagogical contents in schools and society at large. It is also concerned with school abandon rates and lower access to higher education among racialised people and groups exposed to structural inequalities.

While the project is not aimed specifically to immigrants but to the educational and societal context at large, we have chosen schools and centres with high percentage of racialised people and students with a migratory background, acknowledging migration and people circulation over space and time as a fundamental aspect of human behaviour that has to be put at the centre of the pursue of decolonisation of education.

In Pass the Mic! we consider education as the first provider to decolonize lexicons, practices, imagery and bodies, understanding decolonisation not as a static formula but as a dynamic, plural and collaborative process that

gathers and mediate the concerns, positions and proposals of all participants involved.

To accomplish this goal, we have formulated a replicable methodology that involves the collaboration of artists, curators and researchers with students (from secondary schools and educational centres), teachers and school staff, but also activists and civil society. This methodology aims at fostering the decolonisation of education by activating creative processes of self and collective awareness, triggering critical thinking and increasing the access to higher education by opening up students' connections to transnational professional networking.

THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The data on enrolments in higher education in Europe denote an under-representation of minorities, with particular reference to students from first or second generation migrant backgrounds, marked by higher rates of school drop-out during secondary education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019), although it represents the most dynamic segment of the school population in terms of annual increase. The 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report shows that throughout the European Higher Education

Area (EHEA), the participation and completion rates of students with a migrant background lag behind those of domestic students, whether they have recently arrived or belong to first- or second-generation migrants (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2018b). While a lower access to higher education is often attributed to socio-economic conditions, recent scholarship (Apple, 2011; Ploner, Nada 2020) highlight how the persistence of structural inequalities that affect minorities, racialized people and migrant populations cannot be disentangled from the lack of problematization of the colonial past and the forms it reproduces in present times. More than the lack of economic capacities or the lack of information stressed in the International Organization for Migrations study “Higher Education for Third Country National and Refugee Integration in Southern Europe” (2019), the underrepresentation of students with a migration background in European universities must be traced back to structural conditions of subalternity (A. Gramsci, 1948; E. Said 1978; D. Chakrabarty 2004) that prevent many students with migrant background to access forms of social mobility.

Recent scholarship has shifted the attention to how school systems reproduce unequal power dynamics (Apple; 2011) and point toward Eurocentric, racialized curricula in

European schools as activators of social inequalities (Abrantes 2016; Peters 2015). Schools curricula reinforce the transmission of what Ploner and Nada define “epistemic heritage”, referring to the “Eurocentric, and thus discriminatory, intangible traditions of thought, reasoning, and knowledge production that originate in modern Europe and continue to influence, if not dominate, [...] pedagogies, curricula, and academic practices across the world” (Ploner, Nada, 2020: 378).

Starting from these premises, in designing the project Pass the Mic! we have approach decolonization as a collaborative process that is needed to reflect upon and deconstruct the “epistemic heritage” (ibid.) that shapes and preserve education and culture, intervening both on pedagogical contents / practices and accessibility to higher education.

Within the educational context, activating micro-processes of decolonization means confronting, discussing and challenging those concepts, histories and practices that reproduce colonial mindsets, and taking creative actions to overcome them.

IMPLEMENTATION, METHODOLOGY

With Pass the Mic! we propose an operative device that interlaces horizontal, peer-to-peer training, participatory artistic residencies and interventions in and outside the schools, involving a transnational network of artists, secondary school students and professors, researchers, curators and activists. While this methodology is conceived face-to-face, the activities can be adapted to be carried out online [see 04. LEXICON exercises and 05. ATHENS in Appendix]. The methodology is loosely divided into three successive phases that can partly blend and overlap depending on the conditions of realisation of the project.

The three phases include:

- I. a collective, peer-to-peer training involving the students and teachers with researchers, curators, artists and activists. This horizontal training takes place through various encounters inside and when possible outside the school and has the objective to create a shared lexicon of decolonisation [see 04. LEXICON] by discussing and problematizing words and concepts starting from participants’ lived experiences. The training aims at individuating, deconstructing and reframing

the colonial matrix through which we interpret culture, people, education, history but also environment, gender, power, class etc.

- II. collaborative artistic residencies, in which invited artists work inside the school - involving students and school personnel - and outside of it, by connecting the school with their own networks (art centres, university faculties, activist organisations, associations etc). The artists guide participants through the co-creation of an artistic project that has the aim to put decolonisation into practice. Artists' participatory work with students will be fundamental to empower participants' self-awareness and to trigger forms of critical thinking that will be put in practice in the third phase of the program (Pass the Mic!).
- III. Pass the Mic! phase in which the transfer of knowledge and know-how of the previous steps will serve the students to design and develop their own projects with the mentoring of curators, researchers and artists. The works and auto-narrations developed by the students, in a hybrid format between lifelong learning and display, circulate inside and outside of the school among the broader network of universities and cultural organisations involved in the project.

WATCHWORDS

In this section we share some ideas and concepts in the form of watchwords that outline a conceptual framework for the methodology proposed.

Context-specific

In designing the activities, we have given specific attention to the local worlds in which we were going to intervene. A context-specific approach means considering the social, cultural but also political and structural dynamics in which all participants are involved, taking into account the social composition of the school, its connections with local communities and the broader regional or national landscape, but also the artists and researchers social worlds and how they culturally connect to the school. Which activities to carry out and which connections to establish with other people and organisations should be formulated only after taking into consideration these aspects and negotiating them with the participants, focusing on the structural difficulties that many people face to access culture.

Self-Definition and Self-Determination

The schools and centres we have chosen to implement the project have a high representation of students coming from (so labelled) “minority” groups: racialized people, students with a migratory background (either 1st or successive generations) and people that are considered “different” from normative social criteria. We use the term “minority” critically, as in mainstream discourses it tends to reproduce power hierarchies by clustering people together based on perceived characteristics that differentiate them from a supposed “normal” majority.

In the methodology proposed, we question the dialectic normal/different or majority/minority and favour a posture where subjects’ self-definition and self-determination permits participants to perform according to their own storytelling, which is shared and negotiated with others. Participants are encouraged to situate themselves, to reflect on the conditions that allow them (or not) to occupy certain places, to explore the multifaceted identities that come into play in social life and how they connect people in groups or communities depending on varying criteria: birth place, family history, profession, social and cultural traditions, race, gender and sexual categories, titles, class and power, among others.

From personal experience to public voice

We propose three steps to produce self-awareness through one’s own personal experience, which as such is never “particular” but “personal”: first step, the demolition of differences as distinctions and the affirmation of differences as a natural condition; second step, horizontal and peer-to-peer sharing with participants who, in talking about themselves, no longer have the preconceived “need” for a priori “moral judgement” (positive stereotypes*); third step, the experience of all, with the differences born during sharing, produces a multiform common voice.

The positive stereotype limits the agency of all actors in the group because it already defines roles. Who is the good guy and why. Who is the heir of the negative inheritance does not have to discuss his status.

Collaborative Process

The activities strive to follow a peer-to-peer, horizontal methodology, without hierarchies, where exercises are proposed to elicit processes of knowledge sharing and not following a top-down transmission.

*Positive stereotype: “he is a foreigner he cannot be racist; let him speak because as a foreigner he knows what it means to suffer an act of racism; racism is “white” on “black””.

A collaborative process implies that we consider the other person as a carrier of living material to be developed in the process. Possible knowledge, which materializes at the very moment when the exchange begins and not on the basis of assumptions. To achieve this goal, we propose to exit from the performance logic of the final result, and include in the collective process the fall, the misunderstanding, the refusal, which are however raw materials and can be studied and “used”.

Circular space

Decolonising education passes through rethinking spatial perceptions and geographical boundaries. We consider the schools as activators of decolonising practices, so their location (i.e. the periphery), environment and connections to urban centres are important aspects to consider and act upon.

To invert and overcome the hierarchy centre/periphery (either symbolic and physical), the methodology proposes to give specific attention to the participants’ own geographic and affective maps, to the territory they live in, the spaces they cross and the places they find difficult to access, adapting the activities of the project accordingly.

The actions that start in the school (the training to create a collective lexicon, the activities of the artistic residencies and those proposed by the students to put decolonisation in practice) branch out and circulate into a larger space made up by the network of people involved. At the same time, researchers, curators, artists and activists involve the students in seminars, workshops and activities outside the school.

The idea is to rethink the places engaged in the project (the school, art centres, universities, cultural organisations etc.) and the broader area around them as a circular space in which participants can move, dwell and that can domesticate. This is a fundamental aspect of the methodology because it ignites micro-processes to overtake barriers to cultural organisations and higher education while enriching the cultural exchange among participants.

Networking

The collective, peer-to-peer and horizontal aspect of this methodology relays on networking as a fundamental aspect for the implementation of sustainable actions. The network of schools, artistic organisations and universities connects students, artists,

researchers, curators and activists which in turn broaden the scope of the project through their own networks at the local and the transnational level. This approach enriches the interdisciplinary format and enables a mixture of audiences that participate in the program activities fostering integration and social change through an innovative art-based exchange.

Lexicon
(Exercises)

Anna Serlenga,
Francesca De Luca,
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The Words.

Which words are unspeakable because they have a discriminatory or racist connotation or because, on the contrary, they are bearers of too much pain, fear, unmanageable, conflicting, disputed?

To avoid "goodness", to make complex and stratified words really emerge, it is necessary not to remain only on the level of "bad" words that are easy to point at because they are already socially labelled as negative, but to allow conflictual, disputed words - which can be considered correct for some and incorrect for others - to be spoken.

In order to do this, the exercise must be enunciated clearly, without too many limits or initial statements.

LEXICON

Decolonising education involves a continuous scrutiny of the language and expressions used, which are the first space of sedimentation of contents and imagery. Tackling words critically allows for better understanding the worlds we reproduce with them, acknowledging the multiple meanings, their effects on people's lives, to negotiate and create new definitions.

The *Lexicon* is the collective, open-ended device in which participants propose and discuss, deconstruct and reformulate words and concepts that they connect to the decolonisation of education and culture, starting from their own experience and point-of-view.

The *Lexicon* involves (01) deconstruction / explosion of words followed by a work on a (02) productive decolonial posture and, finally, (03) the multiplication / re-signification / re-writing of possible meanings by all participants.

The line of development of the training follows this idea of construction, which starts from oneself to open to a dimension of collective experience and, finally, to the construction of a public voice.

Note: During the Covid19 pandemic we have carried out the exercises online, separating but articulating the group of the school professors with the groups of students. The following exercises are formulated for both vis-à-vis or online modality, in separated sessions for students and professors.

EXERCISE 01 Vis-à-vis or online (2-3h)

Step 01

Each person writes just one or two “swear words”, according to the wording in the title, and puts them in a space at the centre of the group (when vis-à-vis) or in front of the webcam (when online). This creates a mosaic of words. When done on-line, the facilitators take one/two screenshots of the screen with all the words and share the screen to show the mosaic. Start discussion not on the single words but on the words as a whole: see if any come back more than once, notice which type of word is dominant and so on. The parameters for this first screening are not dictated by the facilitators, participants themselves make considerations about the set of words (if they do not start the facilitators can ask an icebreaker question, but then let the discussion flow).

Step 02

The first words to be tackled are chosen and the person who proposed the word explains how he or she understood it. Everyone can have their speech, say if they agree or disagree, if they have another opinion, if they have another meaning. Then at the end, word by word, we ask ourselves: is this

word unpronounceable in the courtroom or should/can we pronounce it? If yes, why and how, if no, why and how?

Step 03

We repeat the same operation for all the words.

Step 04

If two or more people have written the same word, they start with a discussion between them.

Step 05

In case the exercise is carried out separately, at the end, the facilitators ask the teachers which of the words that have emerged they would like to pass on to the students who will take part in the workshop after them. At the end of the workshop with the students, the facilitators ask which of the words that have emerged they would like to discuss in the classroom with the teachers.

Homework

The teachers and the students are asked to bring in the following session an image of any kind that came to their mind when they thought of their word, or if they wish, of another person's word.

EXERCISE 02
Vis-à-vis or online (2-3h)

Step 01

Each participant has a set of post-it of primary colours (or primary coloured paper of the size of a post-it). Start by looking at the pictures that each person has brought. One person at a time shows their material (picture and word) and talks about it briefly. At the end of each explanation, each participant places a post-it beside the picture (or cover the webcam with the post-it) with the colour that elicited that image. For each word's colour mosaic the facilitators take a screenshot and send it to all. The discussion about the images begins, and we also talk about the instinctive results that the colours showed with the post-its.

Step 02

At the end of the discussion we ask: which of these materials could be used (and how) in the classroom to explain the words that emerged?

Step 03

The teachers are asked which images they would like to leave for the students for their next workshop, knowing that the students will not know which word each image was associated with.

Step 04

During the workshop with the students, the pictures of the teachers and the words that the teachers sent are shown and the students are asked to make associations and discuss. Only at the end the facilitators show the students the associations that the teachers have made.

EXERCISE 03

Vis-à-vis or online (2-3h)

Step 01

Facilitators share the images that they think have a connection with what has been said, and present them to the professors and the students, without saying which word they correspond to. A discussion opens in which they make word-image associations and explain why.

Final

Each participant officially hand over one word for the *Lexicon* with an associated image. Then all together participants build a sort of constellation where words are linked together with a thread, in such a way that at the end there is a circle and the last one links up with the first one.

The chosen words are “performed” in a short video, or in a image with text to be put together in the *Lexicon* (in the project *Pass The Mic!* we have shared the *Lexicon* online.

Pass The Mic!
Case Studies from the
Artistic Residencies

Wissal Houbabi,
Delio Jasse,
Helena Elias,
Alesa Herero,
Rita Natalio,
Natalia Mendonça,
Fotini Gouseti,
Magd Assad,
Ermira Goro,
Theo Prodromidis

VENICE CASE STUDY

In Italy, the peer-to-peer training took place on-line, while two artistic residencies started afterwards, when the secondary school where PTM was implemented in Mestre (Venice) was accessible again to external visitors. The training was run by the researcher and curator with the collaboration of cultural operators active in anti-racism politics and creative endeavours. The artistic residencies were organised in a week-long, full immersion modality, involving students from two classrooms that collaborated in activities proposed by the artists.

Wissal Houbabi

The escape – (Mis)Representing

We are made of paper more than flesh: our bodies are dragged by the documents that we bring along. From this observation, we started to let the texts breathe, to bring them out of paper, and to set us free from control.

From a theoretical point of view, this allowed us to reflect on how we perceive our institutional privilege, i.e. our body's freedom of movement based on the documents that adopted us. From a practical point of view, instead, it allowed us to discover how our

voice behaves in front of an audience, with a microphone, and to learn how to use our body to describe and, if necessary, also to lie, kneading and manipulating plural identities in order to set us free: in case of no written proofs, our voice can turn us into whoever we want, especially if we have no choice being migrants who are fleeing from their country.

The process took several steps, starting from ourselves through dialogue and debate. The two classes built through relational practices a group able to break any kind of embarrassment or judgement. Later, we started to read texts in front of the class, to understand from where we start and how we can improve our speaking skills. Then, we organized a poetry slam, a very popular format able to stimulate and create a competition free from toxic dynamics of power or sense of inadequacy. We divided the classes into six groups; each of them chose their participation strategy, and they confronted each other in three rounds, showing everyone their speaking skill. Each performance was rated by the judges from 0 to 10, eliminating the lowest and the highest scores.

The group that obtained the highest score had the chance to start creating a plural story, which will be a real choral performance.

Simultaneously, we mentioned various present-day performative poets, all very

young and eclectic in their approaches and contents, talking about the *Alberto Dubito* Prize in Spoken Music, and using also other legendary artists who were useful to deepen the discussion, e.g. Demetrio Stratos or Patrizia Vicinelli. On several times, we met on Zoom some spoken music projects, so the students had the chance to talk with the artists of the Zoopalco collective to understand “where to start from” with this kind of artistic work and, above all, why poetry is important for our generation and what poetry is nowadays.

We built the story all together, thanks to the suggestions of everyone. We divided the story into six acts, one for each group, in order to make them choose their own narrative style, point of view, etc. The story turned into the journey of a couple that gradually changes from brother/sister to mother/son: they travel across the world blowing up the geographical space and interacting with very different situations. The most important thing is that they are the only ones knowing who they really are – this is the dark side of documents, that are so obsessive and suffocating for foreigners. Documents, orality, body and voice reappropriation are intended as real tools, while stories as the power to change the world or to overturn the ruling power.

Lastly, another seventh group was able to produce in record time a soundtrack for the

story. So, the students became more confident with their writing and narrative skills, but, above all, they produced something they wouldn't expect to be able to do. For me, this was really moving.

Delio Jasse

The goal of the workshop was to introduce participants to the alternative photo printing techniques, such as cyanotype or Van Dyke Brown.

We started from a theoretical introduction: I introduced my art practice and, in particular, some of my works in which I used these alternative techniques. Then, I presented the techniques in details – the materials to be used, such as gloves, UV lamp, paintbrushes, basins, etc. –, and I went on with the presentation of the first technique: cyanotype.

I showed the participants how to create a cyanotype by printing a negative on a Fabriano paper sheet.

Then, we passed to the practical part, whose goal was to make the participants understand how to create an image. At this point, every participant was asked to use the materials coming from their family archives (photos, documents, newspapers, etc.) to create an artwork or their shot (a publication, a

fanzine, a booklet, etc.). The students worked through the appropriation of personal images belonging to their own archives, allowing us to work on the concept of “memory”. By the use of photography, documents, and newspapers clippings, each student created an artwork describing their personal universe: each student created a folding publication, using the alternative pressing techniques introduced during the workshop week.

LISBON CASE STUDY

In Portugal, 3 artistic residencies took place vis-à-vis in a public secondary school in Amadora, near Lisbon. Each artist worked with a different group of students and the residencies consisted of weekly encounters over a period of three months. Contemporarily, the peer-to-peer training was integrated in ethnographic-based interventions in and outside the school, involving students, professors and the researcher/curator in reflecting on and elaborating the lexicon, producing a critical documentation of the activities and collaborating with other artistic organizations, researchers and activists in activities inside and outside of the school.

Helena Elias

Helena Elias proposes strategies to decolonize the education environment, its instruments, performativities and specific modes of interaction. The objective is to challenge pedagogical contents and practices by inviting participants to take other approaches, entering the artistic universe, resisting, appropriating and exchanging experiences in this medium. The activities proposed aim at questioning and reframing the process of knowledge acquisition, disassociating from massive, repetitive and encyclopedic knowledge and creating new frameworks and methodologies by learning in the territory of artistic experience.

One workshop started from an archive of visual documents (photographs) of the Portuguese Colonial Missions for settling the African boundaries according to XIX/XX century agreements between Portugal and other European nations. Initially, the artist distributed among participants short descriptions of the landscapes depicted in the photographs, without revealing the colonial archive from which they were taken and written in a “neutral” language (with no references to colonial or tropical elements). Following the descriptions, participants created visual compositions of landscapes through the technique of

the collage, using their own visual archives made of magazines, journals, pictures etc. The last step consisted in revealing the colonial archive from which the workshop had started, comparing the compositions realized in the workshop with the original pictures and engaging in a collective reflection about land, colonial gaze and the illusion of photographic neutrality. This deductive strategy departs from the previous embedded colonial meanings, deconstructing the assumptions of the colonial gaze towards nature and human beings and promoting a “decolonisation” of images by questioning, dislocating and (re)configuring subjects from their original purposes.

Another workshop consisted in crossing sculpture with physics and chemistry programs, studying acoustics, sound projection and velocity through the sensorial engagement with clay. Instead of clean and idealized sci models which aspire to be smooth, round, and continuous to conduct an experiment without interferences, clay’s materiality provides a body approach to weight and surfaces, offering a multisensorial experience to learn about time, distance, velocity, and weight. The clay material versatility, as a raw, wet, or dry body, allows one to play different settings and learn through the body. The final work consisted in 1) a sculptural, performative and sound installation where

words - of freedom, revolt, social justice - were spelled inside the sculptures, measuring the sound waves they generated according to variable volumes, thicknesses, textures and 2) a laboratory session in which clay balls mixed with different substances were used to gauge how different materials affect velocity and experience.

Alesa Herero

“Decolonization is the process of emancipation of colonial territories from colonizing metropolises, generally leading to their independence.”

This is the first definition to be found in the most consulted online “encyclopaedia”, Wikipedia, although colonization is now recognized as having been a much deeper process than just the occupation of territories.

What do we know about colonization and consequently about decolonization? What does it mean to decolonize and what and who do you need to decolonize? How far does the concept of territory extend? Can language, body, gestures, gaze, behavior and thought be territories, colonized territories? During the artistic residency, Alesa Herero has proposed to delve into these and many other questions

that incessantly arise, through conversations, readings, writing, sensory exercises and listening to silence; a journey that feeds on the proposals of those who are willing to travel through the known-unknown.

Rita Natalio and Natália Mendonça

Rita Natálio and Natália Mendonça workshop moves between the fields of contemporary dance and performance, moving questions that connect ecology, gender identity and sexuality, but also movement, performance and revolt.

Together they have proposed a collaborative work between body expression, spoken poetry and dance, with the objective to activate the group's memories about the school and its surroundings, creating a collection of dances and actions that literally give body to the school, its limits, its possibilities, its loving, tender, or brutal stories.

For this job, participant don't need to have any kind of dance training, but work with the dances that each 1 does, at home in front of the mirror, at a party or in dreams. It's not about dancing well, but about dancing to summon the strength of being together as it really happens when we go to a party, a concert or a demonstration.

As a starting point of the workshop, Natália Mendonça has shared with the students her radical experience in Brazil, with the formation and rehearsals of the occupation colectiva, a group created in 2017 during the uprising of the movement of secondary school students in the city of São Paulo. They occupied during over a year several public schools and spread this gesture of celebration and revolt throughout the country. From the encounter between rebellion and theatre, between formation and creation, the collective Occupation was born, as a territory for investigation of different languages and narratives from the uprisings and urgent combats of our time: bodies in revolt, which now occupy new spaces and narratives.

ATHENS CASE STUDY

The Educational Programs of the Onassis Foundation participated in the Pass The Mic project with the realization of two online art workshops that saw the participation of immigrant and refugee teens. The organization of these two art workshops was commissioned to four independent artists, who formed two separate artist duets. Another component of the endeavour was the selection of a curator, who remained open to

dialog and communication with the two artist duets for the span of the process. Lastly, the presence of a local community advisor was critical, as they maintained a channel of communication with the immigrant and refugee teens and the respective organizations representing them.

Fotini Gouseti & Magd Assad

In the beginning of our meetings with the teens, we wanted to get to know them through their interests. We tried to find common points of interest among the team and avoid going into private details of each one's life. We showed them some of our own artworks, discussing on how and why we made them, in order to allow the teens to acquaint with us, as persons and artists. Through their comments on our work and the subsequent discussions, a ground for dialog was created. We asked them to show images and themes they were interested in, as well as their own work. The result material included sketches, drawings, music, musical instruments, and poetry. After the sessions, we took a closer look as artists on the material supplied by the teens, in order to gain an insight on the things that interest them and deepen the dialog between us. We observed that the artistic

medium of choice between the teens was sketching/drawing, so we decided to make them the primary tools of collective creating among the team. We asked the teens to bring their own sketches and discuss on them all together. We suggested them to refrain from copying or mere representation, and try to convey what they imagine through drawing. We showed them examples of artists who we like. Alexandros gave a live drawing performance. We asked them to bring examples of wall writings and photos of street graffiti that they found interesting. We began compiling an archive of the images they liked and those they were creating. We proposed to draw all together in dialog during the session. All the teens contributed with ideas and to their realization, hearing one each other. If a teen didn't want to draw, they just joined a conversation, or attended the communication among the children sharing the camera and the team, or put on some music. In a constant dialog between all of us, we decided which were the elements/symbols we wanted to keep from what we overall produced. As the sessions moved on, the number of teens participating changed, affecting the team composition; however, it didn't constitute a problem or obstruct the common creative process. In the last sessions, we decided to offer the children time (and space) to work in a quiet

environment, like it would happen if we were sharing the same room. We drew together or in dialog, showing each other what we were drawing and discussing the meaning of the images we were creating.

The fact that we didn't speak constantly to the teens, trying to guide them or intervene in the way they mediated their thoughts, gave them the ease to talk on more personal thoughts, express their feelings, and communicate with each other. Thus, a team-as-interaction was created. This dynamic offered us the chance to learn more from the teens, reversing the usual condition in which adults direct the learning process inside a team. This manner of collaboration with the teens brought us closer to a decolonizing approach of education. The material was meaningful to us and, based on the dialog on it, the ideas we discussed during the sessions, our own interpretations, and the research we made in the city, we later created a photo installation that we presented at Centrale Fies in Italy in September 2021, and that we will use accordingly to create a mural in Athens in December 2021 – January 2022.

Ermira Goro & Theo Prodromidis

We started the sessions in the spirit of creating a space of mutual understanding and sharing through gestures of active listening, aiming to the gradual production of an entrusted space that eventually would enable us to propose models of participatory actions among us, where problems of connection to the conference platform and the difference in age and experience would potentially become our tools. Allowing time for sharing interests and stimuli, focusing mainly on the artistic references suggested through favourite songs, images and objects from the private universe of the participants, we tried to approach these very moments where our small, everyday stories will transform into elements of artistic practice. Influenced by the drawings and the disguise videos uploaded on Tik Tok by the participants, we began delving together into the practices of transition and transformation, as manifested through the narrative form of superpower. Gathering these desires of transcending space and time through teleport, invisibility, communication with ghosts, and transformation into other states of life and representation, we began constructing small settings inside our rooms. We tried to link our spaces and actualize our desires, using the objects and

the limited space and time at our disposal, to achieve becoming someone else, another character, at times of another gender and under different circumstances. Through these processes, we reached a comfortable and safe place where to share stories and experiences from the long journey the participants had to do to arrive at their current place of residence. Having shared desires and superpowers, we managed to ascribe images and motion to these stories, which by turn supplied the context and emotional breadth to these desires of transformation shared earlier. Based on this common space between us, we documented the motions, colours, and volumes formulated through these desires and instances of storytelling, in order to animate these compositions within a performative installation.

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PassTheMic! Decolonizing
Education Through Arts.
Venice, Lisbon, Athens

Editing: Anna Serlenga
and Eleonora Bonino

User Guide edited by:
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Eleonora Bonino, Francesca
De Luca, Delio Jasse
and Wissal Houbabi

Translation:
Gilda Dina

Copyediting:
Malvina Borgherini

Design:
Lorenzo Mason Studio

Typeface: LMS Renato Regular,
Lorenzo Mason Studio

Printing and binding:
Grafiche Veneziane, Venice, Italy

Publisher:
Adriatico Book Club

ISBN: 978-88-945731-1-4
First edition, 2022

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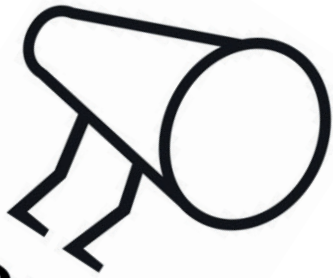


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With kind support of
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The project was carried
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fellowship *Forms of displaying:
analogical supports, digital
platforms and forms of living*
funded by Università Iuav di
Venezia and Associazione
Dimore Storiche Italiane



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