

***Foreword.* In: Performative Language Learning with Refugees and Migrants: Embodied Research and Practice in the Sorgente Project**

Item Type	Book section (Accepted Manuscript)
UoW Affiliated Authors	Hickey, Tobias and Grobler, Petrus
Full Citation	Hickey, Tobias, Grobler, Petrus and Stanic, M. (2024) Foreword. In: Performative Language Learning with Refugees and Migrants: Embodied Research and Practice in the Sorgente Project. Routledge Research in Language Education . Taylor & Francis, Abingdon, xiv. ISBN Hardback: 9780367553357 • eBook: 9781003093077
DOI/ISBN	Hardback: 9780367553357 • eBook: 9781003093077
Journal/Publisher	Routledge Taylor & Francis
Item License	CC BY-NC-ND
Rights/Publisher Set Statement	This is an Accepted Manuscript of a foreword published by Routledge in Performative Language Learning with Refugees and Migrants: Embodied Research and Practice in the Sorgente Project on March 29, 2024, available online: https://www.routledge.com/Performative-Language-Learning-with-Refugees-and-Migrants-Embodied-Research-and-Practice-in-the-Sorgente-Project/Piazzoli-Dalziel/p/book/9780367553357 ('Each individual author or contributor can also choose to upload one chapter from the 'Accepted Manuscript' (AM)...to an institutional or subject repository...after an embargo period of 18 months for Humanities and Social Sciences books')
Link to item	https://www.routledge.com/Performative-Language-Learning-with-Refugees-and-Migrants-Embodied-Research-and-Practice-in-the-Sorgente-Project/Piazzoli-Dalziel/p/book/9780367553357

Once the photograph of the body of a little Syrian boy, face down on a beach in Greece, was seen by the world, it became impossible to ignore the plight of thousands of migrants. It took an image to establish an awareness that the migrant crisis was not merely a body of statistics, a political construct or just another geopolitical problem. It demanded consideration of our empathy for fellow humans. Migrants are people who fear, die, live and dream like all of us.

Images have always been pertinent in aiding our interpretation of events, ideas and ideologies. Whether they came from newspapers or the picture books that were instrumental to our literacy, encouraged our imagination or shaped our understanding of places, people and concepts.

The Sorgente project was inspired by images from the book *Migrations: Open Hearts, Open Borders*, featuring a selection of a collection of over 350 postcards.

The MIGRATIONS postcard project was aimed at providing an alternative to the negative media bias around migrants and the concept and practice of migration. It was crowd sourced from an international community of illustrators and artists who were asked to interpret the words 'migrant' and 'migration' and to visually communicate their interpretations through bespoke postcard artworks.

The guiding concept was developed of birds (postcards) migrating and joining as one (producing choral voices). The simplicity of the bird as a metaphor encourages free dialogue that speaks across linguistic barriers and aims to discard the distinction between amateur and professional artists.

Inclusivity was also the aim when the postcard format was chosen: it is highly itinerant, cheap and easy to obtain and to send, thus maximising participation. A postcard is symbolic of travel and movement, from the stamps reflecting its origins, to the marks, wear and damage picked up during its journey, to the borders and bureaucracies that might hinder its passage. It reflects the dangers and perils on the migrant's journey.

On the back of each postcard the artists provided context for their work, which took the form of a personal account of migration, a meaningful quote, or a positive comment that challenged negative views of migrants. Amongst this community of illustrators, were also asylum seekers as well as refugees having fled war and settled in the UK:

"I came to UK as a refugee in 1993 because of the war in my country.... In my suitcase I had eleven paintbrushes. I thought they would help me to survive in my new life. Now I am a glass artist, have my safe nest (studio) and am making little birds out of melted glass"

Maya Stanic, Bosnia & Herzegovina

The postcard collection was exhibited in such a way that gave access to both sides of the artifact and allowed an intimate, immersive experience.

The tension and suspension of the postcards was interconnected by the installation of a wire network which rippled when the card was examined. This inter-connectedness was designed as a physical embodiment and re-construction of the virtual networks that had brought the works together, while also facilitating the interaction of the visitor.

According to the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, the volume of press coverage featuring the terms 'immigration' or 'migration' steadily increased in the years between 2011 and 2015. European news media have stoked fear and prejudice towards the migrants, often containing derogatory terms and phrases when referring to them. The Migrations research project set out to challenge the current interpretation of the words, 'migrant' and 'migration' at the time of the 'migrant crisis' of Europe (2015 to present). The project research revealed that in contrast to the numerous negative news media stories of this subject, artists from around the world were responding to this theme and communicating a more nuanced understanding.

The fact that our book has flown into the hands of a research project and its migrant community, becoming a catalyst and inspiration for workshops around voice, belonging and identity, extends and surpasses the hopes and imagination of our project's origins. *'All migration is an act of imagination, a flight of imagination. A hope that frequently exercises a previously unknown human potential'* writes Shaun Tan in the Foreword to the MIGRATIONS postcard book.

'Can small gestures- a picture, a friendly message- make a difference?'

Like he, we believe they can.

Tobias Hickey

Piet Grobler

International Centre for the Picture Book in Society (University of Worcester)