

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award

Project Title				
Representing Eastern Europe: Diversity, Inclusion and (De)coloniality in the UK Creative Economies				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution	University of Birmingham			
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation	Centrala Space/Polish Expats Association			
Website URL	http://centrala-space.org.uk/			
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<p><i>Representing Eastern Europe</i> examines the (under)representation of Central and Eastern European art in the UK and barriers to inclusion experienced by migrant artists. In close collaboration with community arts organisation Centrala, it unpicks Western bias in the UK’s creative industries and works towards an intersectional and decolonial approach to diversity.</p> <p>Central and Eastern European (CEE) migrants in the UK are subject to xeno-racism and complex forms of discrimination (Narkowicz, 2020; Sivanandan, 2008). In the job market, they find that the qualifications and experience gained in their countries of origin are not recognised by UK employers (Johnston, Khattab and Manley, 2015). Previous research has shown how xeno-racism impacts on the everyday lives of migrants from the region (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012), on their experiences at school (Tereshchenko, Bradbury and Archer, 2019) and in the workplace (Samaluk, 2014; 2016), and – especially since Britain’s departure from the EU – on their ability to negotiate the UK’s border regime (de Noronha, 2018). However, very little is known about how this relates to cultural representation of these communities and the experiences of CEE migrant artists in the UK. It is widely recognised that diverse cultural representation is crucial to inclusion and community cohesion (e.g., Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016): understanding if and how CEE art and artists are represented in UK theatre, festivals and galleries is thus essential for those working against xenophobia and towards the integration of one of Britain’s largest migrant communities.</p> <p>In this Collaborative Doctoral Award, the PhD researcher will develop a mixed methodology to explore: a) the national representation of CEE art and artists in the UK creative economies across sectors; b) the lived experiences of CEE migrant artists within the UK creative economies; c) the perspectives of arts funders and programmers; and d) the impact on migrant communities of the underrepresentation of art from the region. The theoretical framework of the project will draw on critical whiteness theory (e.g. Botterill and Burell, 2018; Samaluk, 2014) and innovations that explore the connections between post-socialism and post-colonialism (e.g., Melegh, 2006; Profant, 2019).</p> <p>Central and Eastern Europe and Central and Eastern Europeans occupy a space in-between, a semi-periphery in the Western European cultural imaginary, in which they are constructed as white, but “not quite”, and European, but “on the margins” (Halej, 2015). One reason that we know so little about the cultural representation of this migrant group is that they are largely invisible in diversity monitoring. Predominantly identifying as “white other”, they are frequently subsumed into a group</p>				

that includes white Western Europeans, North Americans and Australians, who tend to have very different experiences of racialisation, xenophobia and the hostile environment. An analysis of how these racial and civilizational hierarchies are reflected in the world of art and culture will make a significant contribution to rethinking how diversity is measured, monitored and performed.

Centrala is a Birmingham-based arts space dedicated to the support of CEE art and artists, and the communities of which they are part. The proposed project emerges directly from the work of Centrala with migrant artists and their observation over several years of the kinds of challenges and discriminatory practices that they experience. The research will provide Centrala with an essential resource for their policy and advocacy work for marginalised CEE artists and communities. Centrala's goal is to foster real change amongst funders (especially Arts Council England) and regional and national policy-makers and implementers in terms of how diversity is conceptualised, monitored and promoted.

The doctoral researcher will benefit from the close co-operation with Centrala throughout the project. They will be co-supervised by Professor Sara Jones (UoB), Dr Charlotte Galpin (UoB) and Alicja Kaczmarek, Director of Centrala. The student will spend an average of 1.5 days/week working with Centrala throughout the project (amounting to approximately 14.5 months in total). They will gain experience, knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Organisation and management of a community arts organisation.
- Co-organisation of community arts events.
- Organisation of a network of CEE artists in the UK.
- Advocacy and policy work on behalf of CEE artists and the communities of which they are part.

Alongside the thesis, the student will disseminate their research in single- and co-authored public-facing articles and a policy-focused report produced with the support of the supervisors.

These skills and experiences will significantly enhance the student's employability within the arts sector and – especially through the extensive experience of research impact – within academia.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Professor Sara Jones
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