

“Maybe You Should Explore That”

An Analysis of Negotiating Non-Western Migratory Backgrounds and Artistic
Expression in the Western European Cultural Landscape.

Student Name: Arsalan Ishaqzai

Student Number: 662891

Supervisor: Dr. L.E.A Braden

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master Thesis

June 12

“Maybe You Should Explore That” - An Analysis of Negotiating Non-Western Migratory Backgrounds and Artistic Expression in the Western European Cultural Landscape.

Abstract

Many examples of diversity policies can be found on the websites of Western European cultural institutions. However, these policies often remain in abstraction or include the artist in separate and exoticizing exhibitions, indicating ingenuine attempts to include marginalized perspectives. For this reason, it can be questioned how this notion of inclusion influences artists with migratory backgrounds. Therefore, this project aimed to research artists' experiences with a migratory background in the Western European art sector. By engaging and reflecting upon the following theoretical concepts: *Migratory Aesthetics*, *Representing Marginalized Identities*, and *Navigating Confined spaces*, the following research questions have been formulated: Firstly, *how do visual artists with a non-Western background negotiate migratory cultural backgrounds in their art practice within the Western European art sector?* Secondly, *how do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western backgrounds?* Lastly, *how do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western backgrounds?* Data was analyzed employing the methodologies of thematic and discourse analysis. Drawing from ten semi-structured interviews, the findings suggest how motivations to negotiate migratory backgrounds among artists differ from a tool for visibility to conserving heritage practice, reinforcing the argument that migratory aesthetics as a commodity for visibility is an oversimplified view. Thereby, there was ambivalence among participants when I inquired how Eurocentric biases inform artistic expression. Artists acknowledge bureaucracy, rigid art structures, and perceptions challenging their art practice. However, the respondents distance themselves from altering their practice for the curating culture. Interestingly, in the context of the Netherlands, artists studying at the art academy experienced instances where their practice had to fit preconceived notions of their cultural background. Lastly, policy-driven quotas have taken prominence in the cultural debate, indicating a favorable cultural landscape for artists with migratory backgrounds. Nevertheless, my findings illustrate how professionals within the sector cannot understand nor support artists with migratory backgrounds due to a lack of knowledge, counteracting the favorable cultural landscape and, instead, challenging artists in their practice development and sustainable career trajectories.

Keywords: Migratory Aesthetics, Diversity and Inclusion, Artists with Migratory Backgrounds, Tokenism, Structural Change, Eurocentrism, Policy Analysis, Curating Conflict.

Wordcount: 15.936

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| Theoretical Framework..... | 7 |
| <i>Migratory Aesthetics</i> | 7 |
| <i>Representing Marginalized Identities.</i> | 9 |
| <i>Navigating Confined Spaces.</i> | 13 |
| Research design..... | 18 |
| <i>Interviewees</i> | 18 |
| <i>Ethical Considerations</i> | 20 |
| <i>Positionality</i> | 20 |
| <i>Operationalization</i> | 20 |
| <i>Thematic analysis</i> | 22 |
| Findings..... | 23 |
| <i>Beyond Countering Narratives</i> | 23 |
| <i>Rigid Art Structures and Surface Understanding</i> | 27 |
| <i>Imposed Exploration of Cultural Backgrounds</i> | 30 |
| <i>Trendy Diversity Tricks</i> | 33 |
| Results | 36 |
| Conclusion | 41 |
| Literature..... | 43 |
| Appendix..... | 46 |
| <i>Appendix A</i> | 46 |
| <i>Appendix B</i> | 47 |
| <i>Appendix C</i> | 48 |

Preface

I want to thank the wonderful and inspiring respondents who have trusted me with this research project. I am grateful for the insights and inspiration I have received this past year. Moreover, I want to thank my partner for supporting me and Dr. Laura E.A. Braden for her guidance in this project.

Introduction

“Pronounced attention to and application of the Code for Cultural Diversity,” “interested in introducing local artists and artists from the Global South,” “open to diversity and collective emancipation,” “Share art in all its complexity and diversity,” and many more examples can be found when one briefly reads over the diversity policies on the websites from cultural funds, and cultural institutions across Western European countries (Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2022; Tate, 2023; Palais de Tokyo, 2022; Mondriaan Fonds, 2020). The diversity policies indicate the inclusion of artists from non-Western backgrounds and a strong commitment to cultural diversity. However, reading between the lines, it becomes challenging to find concrete actions indicating a strong commitment to creating a platform. Furthermore, when action is mentioned, the cultural background of the artist in question takes the foreground instead of their artistic practice (Wilson, 2018). Moreover, initiatives to give a platform to marginalized perspectives are not fully integrated within the museum, segregating the artist as “diverse” content. In this light, the seemingly genuine attempts to include marginalized perspectives appear to leave power dynamics that marginalize artists with migratory backgrounds unquestioned, indicating tokenistic attempts from these institutions (Hylton, 2007). In the context of diversity and inclusion, one can wonder who shapes this inclusive discourse and how this notion influences artists with migratory backgrounds.

For instance, as elucidated by Raagini (2023), art practice exploring themes such as displacement, the domestic, gender, and ethnicity take the foreground in the context of Western Europe. While these topics are undeniably fundamental in the Western cultural landscape as they encompass the experiences of migrants in Europe and produce counternarratives for the hardening political landscape in Europe (Davis & Deole, 2017), the question arises whether there is oxygen for artists with migratory backgrounds to explore topics beyond their migratory backgrounds. Therefore, this thesis's first research question aims to answer the following question: *How do visual artists with a non-Western background*

negotiate migratory cultural backgrounds in their art practice within the Western European art sector? Secondly, this thesis aims to elucidate the second research question: *How do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western backgrounds?* Lastly, this thesis seeks to elucidate the last research question: *How do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western backgrounds?*

This research project aimed to explore the experiences of artists with a migratory background in the Western European art sector by engaging with and reflecting upon the following theoretical concepts: *Migratory Aesthetics, Representing Marginalized Identities, and Navigating Confined Spaces*. This thesis aims to investigate the experiences of artists from marginalized backgrounds within Western European art spaces. Therefore, this thesis could be interpreted as applying conflict theory, as these spaces uphold hegemonic notions in defining art. In the first subsection of the theoretical framework, I aim to highlight the potential of art to evoke smaller-scale resistance in the social domain by exploring the concept of migratory aesthetics by Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011). Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) argue that art shifts our frameworks, eradicating the stability of the social domain. This perspective on art suggests that artists from migrant backgrounds use art as a tool to assert their visibility within society. However, while this framework argues for a non-dictating approach, perceiving art as a tool for visibility generalizes the practice of artists with migratory backgrounds.

The second subsection of the theoretical framework illuminates the contributions of diasporic and postcolonial artists to challenge essentialist notions of cultural identity, inviting a nuanced understanding of transcending arbitrary boundaries Bhabha (1990) and Hall (1990). However, as rightfully criticized by Bennett (2011), the disregard for aesthetics and practice segregates the artist from the mainstream art discourse, emphasizing the focus on the migrant identity (Willson, 2018). Simultaneously, Wilson in Reily (2018) argues that exhibitions become merely interested in including postcolonial others if their otherness is emphasized within an exhibition. In this light, Mosquera in Reily (2018) argues that artists with migratory backgrounds are constantly asked to display an oversimplified form of their cultural identity. In this light, the potential to evoke critical thought becomes curtailed by tokenistic tendencies, as illuminated by Hylton (2007).

The third subsection of the theoretical framework draws upon Berger's (2008) analysis of the surveyor within women; I aim to assert a parallel phenomenon observable among individuals with non-Western migratory backgrounds within the Western European cultural landscape. In Berger's essay *Ways of Seeing*, Berger (2008) elucidates that a woman

is situated within a confined social realm, relegated to men's guardianship. As a result, women must scrutinize their image as it is reflected through stereotypical societal norms and expectations. An analogy could be drawn by Wilson's (Reily, 2018) characterization of the Western Art world as a game played by European standards and regulations, meaning that adherence to these Eurocentric rules is indispensable for success. Therefore, the artist with a bicultural or migratory background is situated within a confined realm regulated by the Western gaze.

The third chapter consists of the methodological decisions made during the research. This thesis aims to research the experiences of artists from marginalized backgrounds negotiating their cultural background within Western European art spaces. Therefore, this thesis does not aim to inquire about the quantifiable aspect of diversity and inclusion within the cultural sector. In this light, it became evident to conduct ten semi-structured interviews with artists from migratory backgrounds working and exhibiting their art in Western Europe. The interviews were conducted with artists from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Africa (MENA), and Southeast Asia. Drawing upon Braun & Clark's (2006) methodological guidelines on thematic analysis, this thesis employs a thematic analysis loosely inspired by the discourse analysis methodology. The fourth chapter consists of results, divided into the following themes from the qualitative data: *Beyond Countering Narratives, Rigid Art Structures and Surface Understanding, Imposed Exploration of Cultural Backgrounds, and Trendy Diversity Tricks*. In the last chapters, I analyze the findings in the result section and aim to draw conclusions based on the findings.

Understanding the negotiation of cultural backgrounds can stimulate cultural awareness within society, leading to equitable cultural practices within the sector. Illuminating the so-called blind spots within the cultural landscape can challenge stereotypes and preconceived notions, promoting an inclusive understanding of artistic practice. Furthermore, it is essential to understand that marginalized narratives come with uncomfortable perspectives that challenge the hegemonic discourse of Western Europe, illuminating complicity to colonialism and perpetuated imperialism. It is impossible to include migratory perspectives in a palatable manner to avoid dissonance. This study contributes to critical theory by inquiring how power dynamics within the cultural sector affect artistic practice and career trajectories. Therefore, this study contributes to the research field of curating conflict.

Theoretical Framework

Migratory Aesthetics

Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) explore art's ability to evoke small yet impactful forms of resistance within the social realm. By elucidating Mouffe's conceptual dichotomy between the political and politics, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) highlight the realm of the political as a domain of incongruence and friction. Interestingly, as illuminated by Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011), incongruence is not negatively annotated as it evokes debate and sheds light on subject matters that often remain in the periphery of our thinking. Interestingly, a parallel could be drawn between Mouffe's realm of the political and Habermas's concept of the public sphere. Barrett (2011) sheds light on Habermas' notion of the public sphere, wherein the exchange of ideas and debate is fundamental to the core of society. This analogy emphasizes the significance of friction, dialogue, and deliberation within the political sphere (Barrett, 2011; Bal and Hernández-Navarro, 2011). While it is favored to shed light on marginalized perspectives, the incongruence of the abovementioned realm disarrays the function of institutional bodies that strive for order, categorization, and control (Ahmed, 2012). Consequently, friction and disarray are substituted for a culture of consensus, resulting in exclusion and marginalization of perspectives outside the dominant narration (Bal and Hernández-Navarro, 2011). Bal and Hernández-Navarro shed light on the intricate dynamic between the realm of incongruence and the realm of order, as well as the political and politics, and argue how the disarray erupts at the cracks of the orderly façade. In elucidating the potential of art and its disruptive nature, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) shed light on how art facilitates thought as the materiality of art maintains communication between the object and the audience. Bahri (2003) expands this notion by considering the interplay between materiality and aesthetics in post-colonial literature. Extending the thinking of prominent philosophers Adorno and Hebert Marcuse, Bahri elucidates how aesthetics can uncover engagement that is inexpressible through conventional discursive rationality. In other words, Bahri highlights that art can reveal dimensions of sensuous experience that surpass rationality (Bahri, 2003). In this light, art has the potential to expand our frameworks, shedding light on the fragility of organized entities and evoking smaller-scale resistances (Bal and Hernández-Navarro, 2011).

The role of migration in this framework becomes apparent as Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) illuminate how migration is characterized by the contradictory and non-linear movement that transcends movement beyond fixation. As Garcia Canclini (2011) elucidates, migration is a radical manner of experiencing uncertainty, breaching communication

transmission among individuals. Within migratory societies, it is not only the breach in language that opaqueness the transmission; different modulations of metaphors and imaginary senses coexist within a pluriform society and thus in interaction. In this light, in a migratory culture, new ideas and conceptions emerge in a migratory society, as well as contradictory and conflictual conceptions juxtaposing the linear movement of society (Garcia Canclini, 2011). In this notion, tensions become visible, shedding light on the inherent instability of the social domain (Petersen, 2020). Additionally, Gui (2014) argues that aesthetics enables the staging of political tension, resulting in a heightened recognition and acknowledgment of livability amid instability. To specify, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) posit that what we cannot perceive due to its dissonant nature with established frameworks must be available for perception, potentially becoming visible. Refraining from dictating its politics, art possesses the potential to uncover the non-visibility of situations, events, and people while leaving it to the viewers to enact (Bal and Hernández-Navarro, 2011). For this reason, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) argue that art has the potential to shed light on alternative frameworks and, therefore, can be and has been used by artists to engage with marginalized perspectives.

For instance, in his essay on Black Aesthetics, Paul Taylor (2020) exemplifies how Black Aesthetics can effectuate this transition to visibility. Taylor (2020) illustrates how modernity has been built on the myth of black people and their lack of culture or civilization. Within this framework, practices performed by black people have been perceived as homogenous, primitive, and inferior. In a similar trend, black art and cultural expression have been separated from the framework of Western civilization (Taylor, 2020). One of the tasks of black aesthetics has been to navigate, understand, and highlight the experiences of black people (Taylor, 2020). This example elucidates the staging of political tension, illuminating frameworks outside our perception and emphasizing the instability of social life (Bal and Hernández-Navarro, 2011). Nevertheless, while Bal and Hernández-Navarro shed light on the potential of migratory aesthetics to illuminate the unstable social realm within contemporary societies, the notion of moving to visibility and challenging established norms within society ineffectively takes into consideration how art practice that is informed by cultural background is not always intended as a tactic for visibility among artists with migratory backgrounds.

As Garcia Canclini (2011) argues, artists work with concepts and metaphors that intellectually organize their perception. In this light, intuitions are converted into art and communicated. For this reason, interpreting migratory art practice as a tool for visibility overlooks the artistic and intuitional side of artists and their practice. Bennett (2011)

elucidates how the discourse on migratory aesthetics and its contribution to today's cultural landscape has been curtailed by cultural elites and their reliance on hegemonic art theoretical conceptions of aesthetics. As Bennett (2011) illuminates, artworks touching upon non-Western backgrounds become categorized as content matters or perceived as commodities for visibility, mitigating alternative perceptions of migratory aesthetics.

In exploring the concept of Migratory Aesthetics, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) illuminate art and its potential to evoke smaller-scale resistance in the social domain. Drawing from Mouffe's interplay between the political and politics, Bal and Hernández-Navarro emphasize the essence of friction in the social domain as consensus comes at the cost of plurality. Art can potentially be a medium to provoke thought due to its materiality and sensory appeal. Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) argue that the materiality of art allows communication between the object and the viewer, enabling art to challenge established power structures and prevailing narratives. It is, therefore, as argued by Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011), that art engages with shifting our frameworks, eradicating the stability of the social domain. This perception of art suggests that artists from migrant backgrounds employ art as a tool to assert their visibility within society. However, this framework proposes that artists from migratory backgrounds employ their practice to assert visibility in society, curtailing migratory aesthetics by an art theoretical tendency to mitigate non-Western artistic practice as tools to assert visibility. In this light, while migratory aesthetics rightfully elucidate how aesthetics stages dissonance, it fails to perceive migratory aesthetics outside the realm of visibility.

Representing Marginalized Identities.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I aimed to explore Bal and Hernández-Navarro's (2011) conception of migratory aesthetics and its potential to evoke small yet impactful resistance in the social realm. By illuminating the non-linearity of contemporary culture, migratory aesthetics emphasize the instability of the social realm (Garcia Canclini, 2011). As Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) argue, migratory aesthetics has the potential to challenge established power structures. Therefore, artists can employ this as a tool to assert visibility. Nevertheless, while this notion illuminates the importance of migratory aesthetics as a tool for narrating counter-narratives within a hegemonic art world, this conception ineffectively situates migratory aesthetics outside of the art discourse, thus making it prone to subjugation

as content matters, perpetuating the separation between the dominant art discourse and migrant art as a commodity for visibility (Bennett, 2011).

Before I highlight Azoulay's (2015) argument on imagination, it is important to emphasize how the subjective nature of the social imagination influences the perception and understanding of art. Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) argue that art can evoke communication between the object and the viewer. While Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) elucidate how art evokes thought and challenges existing frameworks in a non-dictating manner, I want to point out that this argument neglects the contingency of art and its materiality upon the social imagination of the observer (Azoulay, 2015). As Azoulay (2015) elucidates, imagination is an important component of our consciousness. Imagination enables the mental representation of stimuli inaccessible to the senses (Azoulay, 2015). For this reason, the call on imagination appears constantly and constructs mental images, social relations, and identities. However, in this light, imagery can foster discrimination, engender exclusionary practices, and reinforce power structures (Petre Glavenau & de Saint Laurent, 2015). Backvall (2019) exemplifies Azoulay's (2015) argument on the imagination by illuminating the discourse on immigrants containing racializing stereotypes in Swedish media. Backvall (2019) then elucidates how these gendered stereotypical figures of the racialized other limits and conditions public understanding of racialized social groups (Backvall, 2019). Consequently, I would argue that the abovementioned reason makes the interpretation of art ambiguous, dismantling the linear notion of migratory aesthetics and its potential to evoke critical thought and challenge the existing frameworks among audiences.

Shedding light on exclusionary practices in the construction of art history, Pollock in Reily (2018) contends that this has been selective and racially biased, positioning artists with a migrant background outside modern art's construction. From this framework, it can be argued that the construction of contemporary art history, despite being presented as neutral, has perpetuated a narrative of exclusion and subordination (Reilly, 2018). For this reason, many post-colonial scholars have aimed to illuminate marginalized perspectives within the art discourse. For instance, Bhabha (1990) has emphasized the contributions of diasporic and postcolonial artists in challenging invisibility and stereotypical notions of racialized identities. Similarly, Hall (1990) criticized the intricate interplay between differences and similarities in constructing meaning-making. These contributions became significant between 1989 and 1995 as exhibitions departed from traditional curatorial practices (Wilson in Reily, 2018). These exhibitions aimed to insist that contemporary culture could not deny the marginalization of non-Western artists and their practice, seeking to deconstruct the binary

oppositions between similarity and difference (Wilson, 2018; Hall, 1990). Nevertheless, as Wilson (2018) argued, most of these exhibitions were criticized for overemphasizing political correctness and identity politics. Wilson (2018) carefully constructs his argument, utilizing the example of the exhibitions that took place in the 90s, how exhibitions aiming to include artists from migratory backgrounds face accusations of sacrificing quality in favor of multiculturalism to this day. In this light, I argue how these accusations perpetuate exclusionary practices and reinform power dynamics (Backvall, 2019). Interestingly, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) aim to challenge these power dynamics by rejecting the notion of identity politics. Nevertheless, positioning migratory aesthetics as a tool for visibility generalizes artists with migrant backgrounds and their practice as a commodity to challenge established frameworks upheld by Western hegemony. In this framework, the themes of migration, globalization, and post-coloniality have become prevalent in many biennales and international art exhibitions. However, the political emphasis on artists with migratory backgrounds perpetuates the inability or reluctance to acknowledge how non-Western artists in a highly globalized sphere should have influenced the form, dynamics, and perception of aesthetics (Bennett, 2011). On the contrary, this conceptual framework divides migratory aesthetics merely as add-ons to mainstream culture, perpetuating subjugation and exclusionary practices of racialized social groups (Reilly, 2018; Backvall, 2019).

As mentioned above, artists with migratory backgrounds' responsibility to challenge dominant structures tends to confine them in their artistic practice. However, the perpetuation of the division between migratory artists and Western curating culture remains unchallenged (Wilson, 2018). In this light, including artists with migratory backgrounds within the Western European art world can be perceived as a tokenistic gesture (Hylton, 2007). As Hylton (2007) illuminates, the call for representation of minority artists in British arts institutions has evoked a necessity to reach a policy-determined 'quota' of representing artists of minority communities. While such policies are met with enthusiasm among artists who are happy to be included, they also sparked criticism for being perceived as a tokenistic gesture (Hylton, 2007). The concept of tokenism, as coined by Kanter (1977), is defined as an act undertaken by an organization that seems to support the limited participation of people mistreated in society due to their social category but is not meant to make changes that would help in a lasting way. In the context of museums, Raicovich (2021) observed occasions where white individuals predominantly led cultural institutions that projected a public appearance of inclusivity but were unable to involve ethnic minority groups genuinely. From this perspective, the inclusion of migratory perspectives becomes tainted by policy- and

marketing-driven motivations that benefit the institutions for being inclusive. Drawing from Raicovich's (2021) analysis of the ungentle involvement of ethnic minority groups within the European art sector and Hylton's (2007) notion of tokenism, I would argue that artists from migratory might experience collaborations with European cultural institutions without aiming to challenge hegemonic and Eurocentric discourses in the art world.

For instance, in the context of the Netherlands, the notion of including diversity without the attempt to challenge hegemonic discourse alludes to when van Huis (2018) sheds light on postcolonial, post-migrant, and artists of color who have faced challenges to counter the dominant Dutch manner of remembering the past. Van Huis (2018) elucidates how the immaterial meanings and memories attributed to art and heritage ought to create dissonance. However, artworks touching upon migratory or marginalized perspectives cannot escape the subtle persuasion of control imposed by cultural elites and their norms, influencing visual arts creation, distribution, and consumption processes (Alexander, 2022). In this light, dissonance is substituted for harmony, and structural change becomes substituted for displaying an oversimplified and familiar form of their cultural otherness (Mosquera in Reily, 2018). In this framework, I aimed to exemplify the politics of remembering, using Mouffe's framework, between the political realm of contested narratives and politics as the substitution of dissonance. Furthermore, I would argue how Western European cultural institutions and their aim to include diverse perspectives become neutralized as they harbor themselves from dissonance that comes with post-colonial and post-migrant narratives (van Huis, 2019), indicating ingenuine attempts at inclusion.

Thereby, the tokenistic tendencies within the cultural sector become apparent when artists frequently find themselves represented primarily because of their cultural background rather than their accomplishments (Reily, 2018). For instance, Kimberly Pinder has highlighted, using the example of artist Henry Ossawe Tanner, that African American artists are often described in art-history textbooks through the scope of their Blackness, overshadowing the international acclaim as painters of religious pictures (Wilson in Reily, 2018). Hall has identified this representation as segregated visibility, replacing invisibility with carefully constructed, segregated visibility (Wilson in Reily, 2018). In other words, the 'migrant art' may exist in relative separation. Within this framework, constructing an inclusive art sector becomes a shallow process where those in power select, curate, legitimize, and shape the discourse on representation in curating culture (Wilson in Reily, 2018). Interestingly, Wilson's (2018) analysis of segregated visibility has been supported by

the exclusion of artists with migratory backgrounds from mainstream exhibitions (Reily, 2018).

The transformative potential of art intersects with political discourse, offering avenues for small yet impactful resistances against prevailing power structures. Reilly's (2018) critique of modern art history exposes inherent biases perpetuating exclusion, particularly affecting artists with migrant backgrounds. The contributions of diasporic and postcolonial artists, as emphasized by Bhabha (1990) and Hall (1990), challenge essentialist notions of cultural identity, inviting a nuanced understanding of transcending arbitrary boundaries. However, as illuminated by Hylton (2007), this notion of inclusivity has tokenistic tendencies. Therefore, narratives reinforcing the existing order are preferred within the art sector does not challenge the discourse on art.

Navigating Confined Spaces.

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, it is challenging for artists with migratory backgrounds in the Western European cultural sector to escape the curatorial preferences of cultural institutions and art exhibition spaces. Curatorial preferences could be argued to confer the subtle persuasion of control of cultural products (Gramsci, 1971). Drawing from Alexander's (2023) conceptual framework of the cultural diamond, Western Europe's creation, consumption, and distribution processes could be seen as modes influencing artistic practice and careers of artists with migratory backgrounds. In this light, Mosquera (in Reily, 2018) argues that artists with migratory backgrounds often face the challenge of displaying an oversimplified form of their cultural identity. Hall (1990) and Bhabha (1990) have emphasized the contributions of diasporic and postcolonial artists in challenging invisibility and essentialist notions of cultural identity. In a comparable notion, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) illuminate how migratory aesthetics has the potential to challenge established power structures. It is undeniably important and valuable to challenge notions that marginalize individuals from non-Western backgrounds or explore their cultural heritage through artistic practice. However, I would argue, drawing from Muftee and Rosales (2023), how artists with non-Western cultural backgrounds are, in contemporary culture, expected to revolve their artistic practice on exploring their cultural identity. Consequently, the artist navigates a confined space in the Western European art world as their artistic expression might be shaped by the curating culture and their quest for diversity. Within this framework, as argued by Muftee and Rosales (2023), the capability of artists originating from non-

Western European backgrounds to engage in artistic work becomes tied to the constructs of stereotypical figures. As elucidated by Ashcroft et al. (2007), the notion of othering illuminates processes in which marginalized groups are constructed as society's others, contradicting what is perceived to be society's social and cultural normative. In this dichotomous framework, the others are constructed as marginalized, inferior, and outside of the identities situated in society's normativity (Hall, 2005). In this light, artists with non-Western cultural backgrounds are, in contemporary culture, expected to revolve their artistic practice on stereotypical notions of their cultural background (Muftee and Rosales, 2023). Consequently, the artist navigates a confined space in the Western European art world as their artistic expression might be shaped by the curating culture and their quest for diversity.

Drawing upon Berger's (2008) analysis of the surveyor within women, I aim to assert a parallel phenomenon observable among individuals with bicultural and migrant backgrounds within the Western cultural landscape. In Berger's essay *Ways of Seeing*, Berger (2008) elucidates that a woman is situated within a confined social realm, relegated to men's guardianship. As Berger (2008) contended, women's social presence is cultivated through their ability to adapt and maneuver this confined realm. Nevertheless, this has fragmented the selfhood of the woman. As a result, women must alter their image as it is reflected through stereotypical societal norms and expectations. In short, women are constantly conscious of being objectified as the fragmented self is in a constant state of self-observation. While Mead's (1964) theory of the fragmentation between the self and the I applies to both the female and the male gender, Berger's (2008) notion differentiates by arguing that the spectator within the woman is male. Consequently, the woman continually watches herself through the gaze of the man. In light of the European art sector, Willson (2018) characterizes the Western Art world as a game played by European norms and regulations, meaning that adherence to these Eurocentric rules is necessary for success. Therefore, an analogy can be drawn where artists with migratory backgrounds negotiate confined social realms, relegated to the hegemonic curating culture (Wilson, 2018). This confinement enforces the capability to adapt and maneuver the confined realm at the cost of altering their artistic practice to stereotypical societal norms and expectations (Laberge, 2004).

Interestingly, diverging from Berger's (2008) analysis to conforming to societal norms, Collins (2000) elucidates the struggle of female artists affected by gendered stereotypes. As argued by Collins (2000), stereotypical images of the social others circulating within society normalize sexism, racism, and other embodiments of social injustice. In this

light, the imagery, as mentioned above, reinforces exclusionary practices (Petre Glavenau & de Saint Laurent, 2015). Muftee and Rosales (2023) elucidate in their study how female artists negotiate and sometimes counter the controlling images in a manner that formulates their sense of identity. In this light, drawing from Bhabha's (1990) argument of the contributions of diasporic and postcolonial artists in challenging essentialist notions of cultural identity, Muftee and Rosales (2023) illuminate that artists with a bicultural or migratory background often feel the obligation to take the explanatory role and counter stereotypical narratives about migrants. In this notion, artists were expected to represent more than themselves as individuals, feeling an overwhelming burden to make work about their experiences as narrowly defined by stereotypical aspects of their ethnicity. Consequently, as exemplified by Muftee and Rosales (2023), artists with migrant backgrounds experience the desire to engage in artistic expression without restrictions while feeling the obligation to make art that takes the explanatory role of migration or navigating their otherness in social life (Collins, 2000). By elucidating Berger's and Collin's analysis, I aim to construct a confined space for artists with migratory backgrounds within the Western cultural landscape. In this framework, artists with migratory backgrounds negotiate the hegemonic curating culture through self-awareness of their practice and feel responsible for countering discriminatory notions in Western Europe. Consequently, they sacrifice their artistic freedom.

Furthermore, Hall (2005) has identified how representation within the Western art sector tends to function as segregated visibility, leaving the dominant discourse on art. In other words, the 'migrant art' may exist in relative separation from the dominant discourse. Therefore, it becomes interesting to inquire how the artistic careers of artists with a migratory background progress. Purcell et al. (2010) elucidate, drawing from the concept of the glass ceiling, how the glass ceiling metaphor highlights gender and racial disparities that become more visible at higher levels of an organization. These disparities have been illuminated in multiple occupational settings, such as corporations, social work, science, and state-level bureaucracy. To shed light on disparities in the art sector, Reilly (2018) illuminates how inequalities against marginalized artists perpetuate multiple dimensions of the art world; galleries, permanent collections, and press coverage often leave artists with migratory backgrounds within the peripheries of the sector. The notion of visibility of marginalized identities does indeed diversify art galleries and biennales. However, the arbitrary distinction of form-content that specifically subjugates artworks of non-Western-European artists from other artworks and merely focuses on their postcolonial identity makes it difficult for the

artists to transcend beyond their cultural identity and advance past a certain point in their artistic career because of their qualifications or achievements (Purcell et al., 2010).

Considering the abovementioned theoretical frameworks of *Migratory Aesthetics*, *Representing Marginalized Identities*, and *Negotiating Confined Spaces*, I have distilled the following three research questions.

- 1.) *How do visual artists with a non-Western background negotiate migratory cultural backgrounds in their art practice within the Western European art sector?*
- 2.) *How do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western backgrounds?*
- 3.) *How do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western backgrounds?*

Firstly, as Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) elucidate, art can foster communication between the object on display and the viewer. Therefore, art evokes questions, challenging existing frameworks and eradicating the stability of the social domain. There is a vast amount of literature interpreting migratory art practice as a tool for visibility. However, most studies overlook the artistic, intuitional, and individual sides of artists and their practice. For this reason, it is insightful to inquire about the motivations of individual artists to incorporate their cultural background within their art practice. Thereby, while there is much literature on female artists and black artists, little research has been performed on artists from other migratory backgrounds, such as the MENA-region or Southeast Asia. For this reason, it is essential to research the experience of artists from other backgrounds. Therefore, the first research question aims to examine how artists with migratory backgrounds negotiate their migratory background in their art practice situated in Western Europe. Therefore, the first question of this study aims to research the following question: *How do visual artists with a*

non-Western background negotiate migratory cultural backgrounds in their art practice within the Western European art sector?

Secondly, as illuminated by Wilson in Reily (2018), inclusion into the contemporary art discourse has been laborious. The inclusion of marginalized communities has been connected to the belief that it is at the cost of sacrificing artistic quality, perpetuating exclusion (Backvall, 2019). As exemplified by various scholars, the demand for recognizing cultural diversity within the cultural institutions of cities in Western Europe has increased. Notably, so has the policy response to these demands (Martinez-Arino et al., 2018). For instance, cities in France and Germany have encountered higher diversity policies associated with center-left dominance or higher population diversity (Martinez-Arino et al., 2018). In the United Kingdom, as Jancovich and Stevenson (2023) illuminated, cultural policies focus on a diverse and pluralistic landscape. In the context of the Netherlands, alderman Touria Meliani aims to diversify the cultural landscape in Amsterdam, making diversity and inclusion a condition for cultural organizations to receive funding (Ekker & Wagemakers, 2023). While such policies are met with enthusiasm among artists who are happy to be included, they also sparked criticism for being perceived as a tokenistic gesture (Hylton, 2007). For instance, Raicovich (2021) elucidates how cultural institutions projected a public appearance of inclusivity but were unable to involve ethnic minority groups genuinely. While Eurocentrism within the cultural sector has been a prevalent topic in studies, and cultural organizations highlight their attempts at inclusion, it is interesting to research biases and tokenistic acts that affect artists' career trajectories. Furthermore, Muftee and Rosales (2023) illuminate that artists with a bicultural or migratory background often feel obligated to produce counter-stereotypical narratives about migrants in Sweden. In this notion, artists were expected to represent more than themselves as individuals, feeling an overwhelming burden to make work about their experiences as narrowly defined by stereotypical aspects of their ethnicity. As open calls actively seek artists who revolve their practice on their cultural background, it is interesting to research whether this has informed the artistic practice of artists with migratory backgrounds. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the second and third research questions: *How do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western backgrounds? How do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western backgrounds?*

Research design

Interviewees

This research project aims to research the following research questions:

- 1.) Why do visual artists with a non-Western background negotiate their cultural identity in their art practice within the Northern European art sector?
- 2.) How do Eurocentric biases inform the artistic expression of artists with non-Western migratory backgrounds?
- 3.) How do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western migratory backgrounds?

The first question delved into the role of cultural identity within the art practice. Therefore, it was interesting to get insights into what inspired and motivated artists within their artistic practice and how this translates into their work. The second question explored how Eurocentric notions on non-Western backgrounds influence artistic expression, as hegemonic standards could potentially alter practice among artists. The third question explored how artists with a non-Western migratory background experienced the Eurocentric notion of cultural identity influencing their artistic careers. What galleries, museums, or exhibitions make space for artists working on cultural identity, and what are perceived restrictions and challenges within their artistic trajectory?

As this thesis worked with experiences, impressions, motivation, and perceived challenges, a qualitative approach was the most suitable method for collecting data. Qualitative research allowed for in-depth exploration of personal experiences (Bryman, 2016). This thesis project drew on ten semi-structured interviews with artists. I used an interview guide to take the lead during the interview, even when the interviewee and I drifted off-topic (Bryman, 2016). Since the interviews were semi-structured, I was guided by the argumentation and thinking processes of the interviewees so that they could contextualize their experiences (Bryman, 2016; Angrosino, 2011).

I have recruited the respondents for this interview through several methods. First, I recruited participants through my existing network of artists with a bicultural or migratory background, which I obtained by being active in the Dutch cultural sector. I have shared a post on Instagram asking for respondents. This post was shared among friends within the sector and reached friends of friends. Therefore, I used criteria and snowball sampling to obtain participants (Bryman, 2016). Secondly, I have asked friends who have studied at the art academy if they want to participate in my research project. Lastly, I have browsed through

the websites of Boijmans op Zuid, Buro Stedelijk, FOAM Talent, Nederlands Film Festival, MAMA, and Kunstinstituut Melly and emailed possible participants for my research project. Important criteria for this research project were that the participants had graduated from an art academy, which indicates that an artist meets the requirements for participating in the institutionalized cultural sector in Northern Europe. It mitigates other possible actors, indicating the progression of an artistic career or art practices. The artists I interviewed have graduated in fine arts, photography, film, and fashion. These choices have been made because the cultural infrastructure for performance arts, dance, and music differs from the visual arts, making this study prone to other factors influencing art practice and careers.

Furthermore, for this research project, it was essential to make a schematic overview of whether artists are still active in the cultural field, have been inactive for a while, are trying to get exhibitions, or have participated in group and solo exhibitions. Choosing artists who have not participated in exhibitions or their art practice for a while is interesting to inquire what has motivated them to quit. In the case of artists being active in the sector, it was interesting to differentiate between the types of exhibitions my participants have partaken in to inquire about different experiences.

Lastly, to demarcate migrant or bicultural background, I selected interviewees who are either first- second or third-generation migrants. Therefore, I also chose artists who have at least one parent from a migratory background. According to Dutch law, a citizen is still considered a migrant with at least one migrant parent (CBS, 2022). Therefore, I will apply the Dutch law on migration across other countries in Europe, meaning that I will interview participants who are, for instance, second-generation German-Afghan. This demarcation allows me to interview artists with a double nationality. Furthermore, I have used the term bicultural identity because I find it interesting to interview artists who work within their artworks with themes regarding diasporic identities. This also allows me to interview artists from former colonies living in Europe for multiple generations and aim to share underrepresented stories with their art practice. Lastly, the experiences of assigned female and male artists might differ, considering the intersection of characteristics such as gender and race that might inform experience (Crenshaw, 1991). I have not emphasized and analyzed these differences within my research.

Ethical Considerations

This project follows Ethical considerations following the EUR guidelines. Participants have been informed beforehand that the interviews are being recorded for research purposes and that I will be the only person working with the data. I have stored the transcripts within my computer, which required a password to enter so that only I could access the data when needed. The participants' names remained anonymous by using culturally sensitive pseudonyms. If the participant wanted, I would anonymize the names of institutions as well, if preferred. In the light of mitigating possible (emotional) harm, participants are aware that they could refrain from the research project at any given time or decide not to answer questions they do not feel comfortable with.

Positionality

As someone active in the Dutch cultural sector as a programmer and curator, I have experienced how topics such as diversity, inclusion, and decolonization can create tension within cultural organizations. Furthermore, I have a migratory background and have been experiencing, at times, with collaborations, how the notion of giving a platform or diversifying perspectives sometimes can overrule or even be a key factor for people or organizations within the sector to collaborate. Therefore, my positionality can be advantageous in building trust between the participant and me as I might recognize specific experiences among the participants. On the other hand, it could have hindered the interview process as I might take certain information for granted, missing the opportunity to get in-depth interviews with the artists. Therefore, it was important to cultivate naïveté while conducting the interviews and avoid biasing the data (Angrosino, 2011).

Operationalization

This thesis aimed to explore the perspective of artists with non-Western cultural backgrounds and their experiences within the Northern European cultural sector. The following three research questions aim to illuminate artists' experience in the Northern European art sector, their aim to challenge Eurocentric notions, and the influence of Eurocentric biases on their art practice and career trajectories. The research questions are cited below:

- 1.) Why do visual artists with a non-Western background negotiate their cultural identity in their art practice within the Northern European art sector?
- 2.) How do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western migratory backgrounds?

3.) How do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western migratory backgrounds?

Firstly, I was curious about why artists choose to work with their cultural background. In the chapter on Migratory Aesthetics, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) illuminate art and its potential to evoke smaller-scale resistance in the social domain. Drawing from Mouffe's interplay between politics and political, Bal and Hernández-Navarro emphasize the essence of friction in the social domain as consensus comes at the cost of plurality. Art can potentially be a medium to provoke thought due to its materiality and sensory appeal. Bal and Navarro-Hernández highlight that the materiality of art allows communication between the object and the viewer, enabling art to challenge established power structures and prevailing narratives. Therefore, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) argue that this perception of art suggests that artists from migrant backgrounds employ art as a subtle tool to assert their visibility within society. The theoretical concept of Migratory Aesthetics provides a conflictual framework on why artists might use their cultural backgrounds in the Northern European art sector. Therefore, I aim to operationalize the concept of Migratory Aesthetics into artists' motivations, communicating contentions, and visibility.

The second research question aims to delve further into the contentions and disruptions artists aim to achieve through their art practice by drawing upon the theoretical concept of Representing Marginalized Identities. This chapter aims to highlight the critique of modern art history and expose inherent biases perpetuating exclusion, particularly affecting artists with migrant backgrounds. It exemplifies diasporic and postcolonial artists' contributions, as Bhabha (1990) argued. Hall (1990) challenges essentialist notions of cultural identity, inviting a nuanced understanding of transcending arbitrary boundaries related to the notion of migratory aesthetics to evoke little resistance within the status quo. However, as Mosquera (in Reily, 2018) argued, within hegemonic curatorial practices, artists with migratory backgrounds are constantly asked to display an oversimplified form of their cultural identity. In this light, the potential to evoke critical thought becomes curtailed by tokenistic tendencies, as illuminated by Hylton (2007).

Focusing on how artists challenge Eurocentric notions within their art practice, I aim to subdivide them into dimensions such as challenging stereotypes, agency in storytelling, highlighting nuances, and conforming expectations.

As Bennett (2011) criticized, refuting the aesthetical aspect of migratory art segregates the artist from the mainstream art discourse, shifting the focus on the migrant

identity (Willson, 2018). This separation reinforces dichotomies between Northern Europe and artists with migrant backgrounds. Similar to this notion, the chapter on The Surveyed Art Practice and Glass Ceilings argues how contemporary culture could not ignore the marginalization of large groups of non-Western artists, suggesting a stronger foothold in the cultural infrastructure for artists of color (Wilson in Reilly, 2018). However, the current discourse might burden the artists to adapt themselves to the Eurocentric gaze. Thereby, within the European art sector, ambiguously distinguishing migratory aesthetics as content matters subjugates artworks of non-Western-European artists from other artworks, making it difficult for the artists to transcend beyond their cultural identity and advance past a certain point in their artistic career because of their qualifications or achievements, resulting in a possible metaphoric glass ceiling in their artistic careers (Purcell et al., 2010). Focusing on how Eurocentric biases influence artistic expression and career trajectories, I aim to subdivide them into dimensions such as self-consciousness, agency, imposed expectations, and unfair treatment.

Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis method has no clear outline for collecting qualitative data (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, I have decided to merge the thematic analysis with the methodology of critical discourse analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Braun & Clarke (2006) have elucidated, thematic analysis has the advantage of methodological flexibility. For this reason, I have decided to merge methodological aspects of critical discourse analysis, which I found suited for this research project. For instance, the critical thematic approach employs a constructionist research method. Thus, qualitative data will be collected and assessed with theoretical backing (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the case of this research project, the interview guide was informed by the theoretical framework. This thesis had an iterative approach between theory and obtained data to remain flexible in the research process (Bryman, 2016). There have been multiple moments of movement between analyzing qualitative data and theoretical reflection (Bryman, 2016)

Secondly, in this research project's coding process, the data's conceptual interpretation has informed the initial coding process, meaning that coding has been conducted selectively (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thereby, I coded semantic content which informed, in my opinion, underlying ideas and assumptions. For this reason, the latent coding method has been employed in this research project (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The codes were sorted and collated into potential emerging themes. Thereafter, the emerging themes, deriving from the

emerged codes, were written out in the findings section and reviewed for internal homogeneity and external differences (Braun & Clark, 2006). In this phase, the data will be distilled into a narrative, and emerging patterns, similarities, and differences were crystalized (Braun & Clark, 2006). Lastly, the emerging themes were given names that caught the essence of the report (Braun & Clark, 2006). This project's coding phase was realized through Atlas. ti.

Findings

Beyond Countering Narratives

While interviewing the artists, I wondered what art meant to them and how they would position the role of art within society. Cahya was the first person I spoke with. She moved to the Netherlands in 2020, in the first year of COVID-19, to pursue her postgraduate at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Cahya described her art practice as a “social practice.” By referring to her practice as a social practice, Cahya perceives her practice in relation to society. In this light, art can provide a lens through which we can analyze the values and beliefs of a society. Interestingly, Cahya perceived her practice's role to “better society.” This wording illuminates Cahya’s critical point of view towards society. The critical standpoint toward Western society can derive from her position as an Indonesian woman living in the Netherlands. Because of the colonial history between the Netherlands and Indonesia, the intricate power relations between the oppressor and the oppressed are still prevalent in the blueprint of Dutch society. For this reason, despite our efforts of (non-) remembering our historical past, Cahya's practice sheds light on the dissonance and counter-narratives that have co-existed among the Dutch narration of the past. As the conversation proceeded, she elucidated that art “reaches the soul and can impact society.” In this sentence, it becomes clear that art provisions emotional experiences that can potentially reach and impact individuals, communities, and society. Interestingly, this phrasing does suggest that art can challenge conventional frameworks and change our perception. It should be noted that this practice, which aims to affect direct surroundings, perpetuate communities, and eventually society, is a bottom-up approach that can be overwhelming for artists. This phrasing suggests somewhat of a linear movement between the presented object and the enlightened individual after perceiving the object. Nevertheless, this framework leaves out the social imagination of individuals, which makes the interpretation of art more ambiguous.

Borimir and his family fled the Bosnian War when Borimir was only a child. Despite the precarity of fleeing your home country and becoming a refugee in the Netherlands,

Borimir looks back at his childhood and remembers his creativity. Borimir elaborates on how art, theater, and creativity were prominent within his family. Unlike his family, who were discouraged from becoming artists, Borimir's parents supported him in becoming an artist, and he was the first in generations to pursue an arts education. For this reason, Borimir described his awareness that expressing oneself was intrinsically “political.” The description of art as political connotes how art can illuminate narratives that ought to be forgotten for society to be presented as harmonious. Interestingly, his awareness of being the first to attend arts education unveils how the ability to engage and challenge dominant discourses critically comes with privilege. It can be questioned which individuals can engage critically with society. For this reason, Borimir stated: “Art became a form of expressing that became bigger than myself. It became something I could do for those who could not express themselves.” In this light, art has the intrinsic value of challenging preconceived notions, creating antagonism and instability within society by questioning the norms and amplifying marginalized voices. Interestingly, while Borimir and Cahya perceive the role of arts as politically and socially bound, Borimir’s perspective on illuminating marginalized narratives emphasizes marginalized narratives from individuals who did not have the privilege to tell their stories within the Dutch context. In contrast, Chaya’s critique sheds light on the subordination of individuals, communities, and ecosystems due to colonialism and imperialism— following Borimir, Azadeh, and Jovana's emphasis on the role of art as a tool for criticizing society or illuminating underrepresented narratives within society. Azadeh used the metaphor describing “artists as the doctors of society,” indicating that artists and their artworks contribute to society for the better. For Jovana, it is important to illuminate historically erased narratives. More specifically, within her practice, Jovana aims to illustrate the war trauma in former Yugoslavia and the resilience of the people who have experienced the war.

Hassan is a Belgian Iraqi artist. Born in Iraq but moved to Belgium because of the war in Iraq in the 90s. Animé and the design of its game covers always intrigued him as a child. Furthermore, Hassan described his family house in Iraq, how the rooms were covered with Iraqi carpets, and how these motives told the story of a century-old craftsmanship. Hassan studied graphic design at the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten and became a visual artist. For Hasan, the value of his practice lies in its urgency. Hasan describes art as urgent when artists aim to conserve a “dying practice.” The narration of the past is formulated, and cultural practices deemed essential are conserved to shape cultural identities. In this perspective, a dying practice connotes how certain cultural practices are not perceived as necessary enough to conserve for future generations. When assessing what objects define

the narratives of the past and what does not, power relations come into play. In this perspective, heritage and art situated outside the narration of Western cultural hegemony are given less value, resulting in endangered or dying practices. Indeed, when our conversation proceeded, he highlighted how Western imperialism endangered Iraqi heritage and how he aims to honor Southern Iraqi tapestries within his practice. “because of the colonial history of Iraq, and the war in the 90s which has impoverished Iraq its infrastructure and resources, the precious, rich, and yet humble practice of making tapestries have become endangered.” It becomes apparent that Hassan aims to conserve a cultural practice that has been endangered. Working from urgency aligns with Jovana’s aim to preserve history and culture that should be forgotten in our contemporary society. These narratives often do not align with the construction of the Western identity. Nevertheless, Hassan’s practice diverges from Jovana and Borimir as the emphasis of his practice lies in conserving heritage. While it can be argued that conserving heritage is a political act within a hegemonic cultural landscape, it can also be argued that the act of care and inheritance of culture can motivate this practice.

While I was talking to Yezda, we touched upon the role of artists in society, and she described working with art as “a selfish act,” undermining the relationship between the artist and society. According to Yezda, a 28-year-old half-Kurdish and half-Dutch visual artist, artists are mainly preoccupied with themselves, and therefore, the artist and their art are rather selfish acts. Yezda has studied at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and is currently a guest student at the prestigious Städelschule in Frankfurt. She describes her practice: “I work with human emotions and memories, feelings of disappointment and mourning. I use my own experiences from my family as a beginning point.” This quote illuminates how the artist gets inspiration from emotions and memories, which are universal aspects of the human experience because geographical or cultural boundaries do not bind emotions. Interestingly, there is a difference between Cahya and Yezda. While Cahya utilizes emotion as a universal aspect to challenge our (non-) remembering of the Dutch colonial past, Yezda emphasizes the emotional experience within her practice, making the geographical location of her practice secondary to human emotions. While using different methods, both challenge the construction of hegemonic narratives that distance and subordinate marginalized narratives. However, in Yezda’s practice, asserting art as a tool for visibility does not take the foreground. Yezda further elucidates how art became a manner for her to map what has happened in her life and what is currently happening. “There is this urgency within me to understand what has happened in my life and with my family. It sounds cliché, but art has allowed me to understand my life.” The abovementioned quotes shed light on the ambiguity

of the role of art. While some artists emphasize the societal value of art and relate their practice to society, others utilize art to research raw emotions bound to difficult circumstances one has experienced. Yezda describes this perception of art as a selfish act as she researches emotions that have taken a central role in her life. Interestingly, as raw emotions are not bound to migratory contexts, there is a chance that this selfish practice might resonate with individuals from either migratory or non-migratory contexts.

Farhad's practice includes conserving Iranian history through photography. He was born and raised in Iran and studied photography at the University of the Arts in Isfahan. After working for a few years at an art gallery in Tehran, he pursued a master's in photography in London. Farhad researches declassified photographs from historically significant periods that can be found in antique stores in Iran. Farhad's practice, like Hasan's, is concerned with conserving collective memory and the historical narrative. Interestingly, Farhad's practice is bound to the Iranian context, whereas Hasan illuminates dying practices due to colonialism and Western cultural hegemony. Farhad's practice aims to conserve declassified photographs within the context of Iranian archival bodies. In this light, it could be argued how his practice challenges the history that is being preserved and thus illuminates marginalized narratives in the Iranian historical timeline. However, interestingly, when asking Farhad about the political aspect of his work, he responds:

People think my work is highly political, but I am using the ontology of photography and just using a material of the revolution. I am focusing on the relationship between the photographer and the spectator, so I am not discussing the revolution and its consequences.

At first, within this quote, Farhad deflects his practice's political aspect. However, this quote emphasizes the ambiguity of preservation that Hassan navigated, which could also be perceived as political. However, it does not take prominence in preservation practices. Therefore, Farhad's practice could be informed by the political context of Iran, but it refrains from taking a stance with his practice. Furthermore, Farhad emphasizes the relationship between the photographer and the spectator within his practice, which he believes is often not perceived when discussing his practice. This quote underscores how asserting art as a tool for visibility, and thus framing it as political, undermines the artistic research and aesthetical aspect of artists with migratory backgrounds and their practice.

Rigid Art Structures and Surface Understanding

At the beginning of our conversation, Cahya noted that she had little experience collaborating as an artist with more prominent institutions in the Netherlands. Instead, she elucidated that she has participated in smaller exhibitions that were more “artist-driven.” Cahya collaborated with artist-driven initiatives because she “felt more comfortable” partaking in them. This quotation clarifies how Cahya chooses the exhibitions she wants to partake in, indicating how the Western cultural sector is highly differentiated. Therefore, artists can choose what spaces make them comfortable displaying their art. In this light, the artist has more agency in delivering the message within their practice. While this differentiated sector can lead to the gathering of like-minded people and perhaps a more contextualized understanding of artistic practices, I question whether antagonism is reached when most audiences share, to some extent, norms, and beliefs. Interestingly, as our conversation proceeded, Cahya illuminated what she had noticed within the cultural sector in the Netherlands.

What stands out to me, compared to Indonesia, is how art in the Netherlands feels rigid. In the sense that the artist must always look for funding, and curators and gallerists work within their assigned time. Because of this, making art is connected with some source of capital, and therefore, art loses its fluidity.

By emphasizing the rigid structure in the Netherlands, Cahya underscores how art moves in “an institutional manner” and is already established here. Her deliberate wording of “fluidity” connotes how, within the Dutch cultural landscape, artists lose the ability to explore, innovate, and challenge notions without being hindered by external constraints. This constraint contradicts the conception of how art should be able to challenge conventional notions. It illuminates how bureaucracy and its rigid structures assert indirect power in the produced artworks and narratives. Art’s connection with a source of capital makes artists and institutions dependent on a funding source, resulting in maintaining the status quo. The analogy between funding and the status quo highlights how hegemonic power is intertwined with sources of capital. In this light, contested and counter-narratives are subjugated, undermining the potential of art to shed light on disarray and dissonance in the public realm.

Regarding the connection with time, Noura elucidated how the institution she studied at was involved in scandals. In the beginning, among hundreds of other students, Noura was motivated to bring change within the institution. Nevertheless, only two weeks later, a handful of people showed up during board meetings as the students were confronted with the high pressure of their education. The rigid structures Cahya mentioned in the Dutch art world and the high time pressure of arts education Noura experienced unveil how work schedules

and time pressures can restrict people from their aim to challenge existing structures. Interestingly, when I talked to Yezda, she briefly touched upon sources of capital within the academy she is currently attending as a guest student. As Yezda explained:

In February, judges visit our academy, and the artists feel puzzled by their presence. On one hand, we wonder why these judges should even be here. They are rich and influential people who invest in controversial companies. On the other hand, we as artists depend on these sources for our income, so can we reject them?

Yezda illustrates the relationship between artists who depend on the capital of affluent individuals. This relationship elucidates a dilemma artists face within the art sector in Western Europe. Is it possible for artists to reject those whom we depend on? Yezda continues, “There was a case where a judge criticized artists who were vocal on politically sensitive topics.” This illuminates the unequal relationship between artists and investors, in which the artist, and indirectly the institution that facilitates space for the artist, is affected by the investor's viewpoint. Within this light, the structures within the art sector and the sources of capital are two actors that impair artists from challenging hegemonic notions.

Interestingly, in this light, similar trends could be observed among other interviewees, where the hegemonic gaze towards artists who work with migratory concepts affected their perception of the practice. For instance, after graduating with his masters in London, Farhad has had solo exhibitions at the Fotografisk Center in Denmark and group exhibitions in France, Germany, Netherlands, and England. Farhad noticed how artists talk or have conversations with historians, curators, and other photographers, which would lead to questions unrelated to his photography. Farhad exemplifies:

A few weeks ago, I gave an artist talk at a gallery in London about my practice, followed by a Q&A. Four out of the five questions were about the revolution in Iran, and no questions were asked about my practice, which made me feel like an outsider.

In this quote, Farhad elucidates how questions related to the revolution in Iran overshadow his artistic practice. Instead of engaging with the artwork, the observer has a preconception about Iran. This exemplifies how the constructed image of the racialized other persists through various attempts from artists with migratory backgrounds to reject dominant narratives about their cultural background. In this light, the artwork and its autonomy to communicate to the audience is mitigated by preconceived notions within the social imaginaries of Western European curators, co-artists, and audiences. Consequently, conversations about and interpretations of the artworks remain at the surface, solidifying preconceived notions, and Farhad has to challenge these preconceptions about Iran. While

initially frustrated that conversations would remain on the level of Western preconceptions about Iran, he jokingly noted that he has now developed methods to make people aware of their preconceptions.

Similarly, as the conversation between Cahya and me progressed, I asked Cahya how she sees her art being described within art exhibitions in the Netherlands. At first, she finds developing something on top of her head difficult. However, she proceeds:

Most people think my work is mostly about care, but that is only on the surface because there is much criticism within it. Art has room for interpretation, so it depends on what the spectator sees, wants, and does not want to see.

Aligning the experience of Farhad, Cahya elucidates how the interpretation of her work remains at the surface. Besides being unable to reach beyond the surface, Cahya also questions whether people want to reach a deeper interpretation of her work, mainly because of the Dutch colonial history in Indonesia. In this light, Cahya noted the importance of working with institutions she feels safe to work with. When collaborating with institutions, it is essential to inquire about the institution: “Who are the people working there, and who are they working with? Will they give a platform to our voice without making it more palatable?” Within this quote, it becomes clear that Cahya collaborates based on trusting that the institution will not “dilute” the political aspect of her work to make it more “palatable” for a broader audience. The words dilute and palatable connote how contested narratives on the remembering of Dutch history must be reformulated or mitigated to remain harmonious and avoid the discomfort that comes with the dark chapters of the Dutch heritage. While Farhad and Cahya both argue about how their practice is perceived on the surface, Farhad associates the political annotation of his practice as superficial. On the other hand, Cahya wants people to see the political nature of her work. At first glance, this might seem coincidental, but I believe this has to do with the situatedness of their practice. To specify, Farhad’s work is situated in the context of Iran. I do not intend to ignore the challenges Iranians face in their country. However, Iran is constructed ideologically as the opposite of the West, resulting in a political interpretation of Farhad’s practice. In the case of Cahya, her practice criticizes Dutch and Western complicity in colonialism. Consequently, the narrative of the West as an aggressor becomes difficult to admit, interpreting Cahya’s work as care.

Imposed Exploration of Cultural Backgrounds

Borimir looks back at his time as a student at the University of the Arts in Maastricht, and he recalls how the university did not understand his artistic research within the fashion department. From Borimir's perspective, he experienced little guidance in developing his practice.

I felt I had to do everything alone because I liked research and theories to contextualize my work. The teachers would not understand my emphasis on research, but fashion became a tool for sharing cultural stories for me.

This quote encapsulates Borimir's interest in contextualizing his practice within the bounds of his cultural heritage, indicating Borimir's intense theoretical research in his work. Notably, artists from non-Western migratory backgrounds who aim to contextualize their work within their heritage often encounter limited guidance, as there is a scarcity of knowledge and tools to support and highlight marginalized perspectives within the art universities. This makes it challenging for artists from non-Western migratory backgrounds to be supported in their research within their practice. Right after graduation, Borimir initiated a collective aiming to make fashion an interdisciplinary practice. Borimir elucidates that the collective aims to challenge conventional perceptions of fashion and question who decides what we perceive as fashion. Interestingly, Borimir has experienced a cultural shift that affected the perception of his collective as Borimir illuminates:

In the beginning, people working in fashion would make fun of us.

Over the years, however, we witnessed a change in society and the arts, where social and environmental justice became prominent. We were invited to give guest lectures and workshops and examine students.

This passage highlights a discursive shift within the fields of arts and fashion. Borimir and other participants elucidated that the art sector changed in the past decade, and the Black Lives Matter movement proliferated the change process. A demand for structural change droned within the cultural sector, and the sector had to adapt to these demands. Consequently, Borimir experienced a shift in the perception of his collective. This discursive shift resulted in a policy-driven call for diversity and inclusion in the cultural sector. Interestingly, while the demand for structural change was a bottom-up approach, implying change within the sector appeared top-down as professionals in the sector, often highly educated individuals, had to shape a more inclusive sector. In this light, it was interesting to inquire whether artists of color were asked to revolve their practice around their cultural backgrounds. While discussing this with Azadeh, she noted how there had been cases where she was aware she

would get curated in an exhibition of her work revolved around her cultural background. Nevertheless, she refused as she described it as “disrespectful” to the artist. Interestingly, this quotation illuminates a more prominent framework where artists perceive altering their practice to fit the curatorial demands as a breach of their artistic integrity, disapproving of artists who commodify their practice to fit the curating demand.

While most respondents rejected the commodification of their practice, the respondents who have pursued an art academy in the Netherlands have experienced how their supervisors and teachers would impose them to explore their cultural identity in their practice. For instance, Tom experienced how the teachers within his university would also request Tom to investigate his cultural identity. At first, Tom wanted to work on surrealism, but his teacher kept motivating him to explore his cultural background in his practice. While this felt imposed initially, these topics did spark an interest in him. In accordance with Tom, Louella had experienced how teachers imposed working on her Caribbean heritage. While Tom found his interest in these topics, Louella described it as if “she was held in a pigeonhole,” Louella’s choice to describe the expectation of her arts academy to explore her heritage as a pigeonhole connotes how her cultural background reduced the recognition of her as an artist and her creative expression. Instead of being perceived as an individual, she became a category, leading to expectations to continuously produce work that fit the stereotypical notions of her cultural background. Louella described this reductionist perception as suffocating as she felt it was imposed to become the voice of an entire marginalized community. She noticed a difference between her and Dutch students, who were free to explore their artistic practice. Unfortunately, this illuminates the counterproductive effort of promoting inclusivity, as Louella experienced less artistic freedom to explore their practice. In the bigger picture, artists with migratory backgrounds who aim to explore their artistic expression are held back as their practice should represent a marginalized identity. Louella exemplified how remarks from teachers during her graduation project made her feel misunderstood:

I wrote a story and wanted to create a space to recite it. A teacher approached me and advised me to make a hut and place sand on the ground so people could be transported to the beach. However, this did not relate to my story, making it clear that there were no tools to foster a conversation and create a safe environment to research my heritage.

This quote outlines how teachers could not disconnect Louella's artistic expression from their perception of how Louella should express her artistry because of her background. Louella felt

that motivating her to build a hut or work with sand felt insensitive and inauthentic, as her practice did not relate to these suggestions. Insensitivity and inauthenticity suggest that teachers did not possess the right tools to support artists with non-migratory backgrounds to explore their heritage within their practice. However, as institutions were aiming to become culturally diverse, the stories the universities were producing, including diversity, became a tokenistic act from the university as artists were expected to revolve their practice on their heritage to give the university an international allure, resulting in unsafe experiences among artists with non-Western migratory backgrounds who do not wish to research their lived experience. In a similar trend, Azadeh explained how her Iranian background has definitely “placed some values,” indicating that her background formed her taste in aesthetics and her practice. However, while studying, she experienced how the teachers expected more emphasis on her Iranian heritage in her practice. Azadeh felt she had to thicken her Iranian heritage for her practice to be appreciated. In contrast, Azadeh experienced how her Dutch classmates were free to explore their artistic practice.

In the case of Noura, she has found inspiration in her Moroccan heritage while studying arts at university. She aims to blur the arbitrarily set boundaries between Morocco and the Netherlands within her practice. However, following Louella, Noura believed the academy was unsafe for students “that did not fit the profile.” This quotation could be analyzed in terms of power dynamics; fitting the profile emphasizes the dominance of a particular group in determining the standards and expectations. Individuals who do not meet the standards face marginalization and hostility, resulting in unsafe environments for students who do not fit the profile. Simultaneously, these students who do not fit the profile were expected to produce work on their cultural heritage. As Noura illuminates, her second year was challenging because of this expectation, as one teacher continuously questioned her practice.

For a school project, I photographed a woman who was becoming a bodybuilder. However, the teacher was constantly negative about my project. He did not understand my creative process. Eventually, I created a photo project of my family living in a working-class neighborhood, and the teacher stopped questioning my practice. Apparently, my practice finally fit in their perspective.

This quote unravels the experience of an artist who faced difficulties in having their artistic practice understood. At first, the photo project on a woman becoming a bodybuilder faced negativity and a lack of understanding from the teacher. When the artist changed her practice to a project depicting her family in a working-class neighborhood, the teacher’s criticism

disappeared, suggesting that this new project aligned with the expectations and perspectives of the teacher. This quote elucidates how artists with migratory backgrounds might feel pressured to conform to expectations, for instance, emphasizing their cultural identity, to gain acceptance within academic or artistic institutions. It sheds light on the potential challenges artists face in expressing different aspects of their identity without facing misunderstanding. While talking to Hasan and Yezda, I expected similar patterns in their experiences at their art academy. Nevertheless, both had different experiences. Yezda recalls how her academy focused on developing artistic concepts, and therefore, her decision to research the Kurdish landscape within Kurdish cinema felt authentic. However, she did mention that the academy was initially hesitant about her research project as she wanted to go to Kurdistan. This was perceived as dangerous, indicating her persistence and confidence to research this theme made her go through. Interestingly, Hasan attended an art academy in Belgium, and, in his experience, the teachers faced difficulties in assessing and helping Hasan with his artistic research. Thereby, it was challenging to find books on his research interest within the library of his academy, delineating how there was a lack of support to develop his research practice. However, Hasan did not recall specific moments where he felt compelled to work on his cultural heritage, and surprisingly, while integrating into the Dutch art scene, Hasan discerned a more commercialized sector in which cultural diversity functions as a commodity.

Trendy Diversity Tricks

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, Hasan elucidated how, in his experience, cultural institutions in the Netherlands appear to be more “market-oriented” when compared to Belgium. By referring to the Dutch sector as more market-oriented, Hasan explains how the sector prioritizes the desires of art consumers. In this light, art practices that attract an audience are favored, undermining the potential to challenge our frameworks. As Hasan further argues, artworks about diversity tend to be very “stereotypical and from a Western gaze,” indicating how these narratives aim to diversify perspectives and question perceptions about different cultures, in contrast, reinforce presumptions. While perceiving another person's practice as stereotypical is subject to Hasan’s evaluation of subjectivity, it outlines the duality artists face within the European art sector. On the one hand, the artist aims to challenge hegemonic notions of non-European culture. On the other hand, the artist is navigating an industry where they have to keep in mind the desires of the Western art

consumer. Within a cultural sector where conventional narratives on diversity are privileged, Hasan explains the importance of staying true to your practice instead of replicating practices that catch the attention within the sector.

Borimir posits an interesting position within the art sector in the Netherlands. He has been working as a visual artist, founded a collective to give artists a platform, and is on the Dutch Ministry of Culture advisory board. This gives Borimir a holistic view of the art sector in the Netherlands. As Borimir briefly alluded, art practices focusing on thematizations such as cultural identity, diversity, and diaspora are “trendy” in the current cultural landscape. By referring to these thematizations as trendy, Borimir elucidates how art practices focusing on diversity are privileged within the sector. For instance, cultural institutions are eager to collaborate with artists or initiatives that amplify marginalized communities' narratives; therefore, more artists are willing to work with themes touching upon these themes. However, by using the word “trendy,” Borimir connotes the temporal nature of including marginalized perspectives. It becomes apparent that collaborations with artists from marginalized communities are not intended to challenge power structures favoring white people in the sector. Indeed, as our conversation proceeds, Borimir experiences invitations and collaborations with cultural institutions due to his cultural background. As he proceeded, he started using words such as “feeling tokenized” and “positive discrimination.” The abovementioned highlights how the temporality of working with diversity debouch into the conflation of art practice and cultural background, dismissing the genuine attempt to dismantle the hegemonic notion of Western art. Furthermore, the notion of trend dismisses the aim to democratize the perception of aesthetics, as aesthetics outside the Western hegemony become trendy add-ons, indicating inclusion in the segregation of the dominant art discourse. Borimir elucidates that he aims to inquire whether organizations are sincere when a collaboration is requested. Nevertheless, Borimir also believes that playing with positive discrimination is essential as opposing it ‘disadvantages him even more,’ indicating that criticizing and moving against tokenistic attempts to include marginalized perspectives disadvantages him as an artist. This quotation illuminates, as mentioned by Yezda, the dilemma of not wanting to bite the hand that feeds you.

In conversation with Noura, she jokingly refers to herself as “a little cliché,” indicating that she is aware that, like her, multiple artists of color research similar themes within their practice. By referring to herself as cliché, Noura irradiates consciousness of how choosing to work with her cultural background might be perceived as overused or a trick to gain popularity within the current artistic landscape. While discussing exhibitions, Noura

questioned whether her artistry would be perceived separately from her Moroccan background in the Dutch art sector, and, therefore, she might always question whether she has been tokenized. She exemplified the following after being selected for a talent award for a renowned cultural institution in the Netherlands:

When I heard I was selected for the Talent Award, I would hear people say that it had to do with my Moroccan identity and that the institution aims to recover its image to the public. I became insecure at first because I did check all the diversity boxes.

By elucidating remarks from her surroundings and mentioning checking all of the diversity boxes, Noura illuminates a more significant problem I have observed among other participants. Including artists from migratory backgrounds has taken prominence in the current curatorial debate. While it is important for conversations to take prominence in curatorial practices, the emphasis on promoting diversity might discredit the artists' achievements and mitigate their success because they embody diversity checkboxes. In this light, while artists like Noura are proud of their achievements, recognizing their talent is dismissed and portrayed as a charitable act to include marginalized perspectives.

While it is tempting to believe that the cultural landscape favors artists with migratory backgrounds, the attempt to include marginalized perspectives without questioning structures that disadvantage artists with migratory backgrounds challenges artists in the progression of their careers. For instance, Jovana graduated from Willem de Kooning in Rotterdam in 2020. Reflecting on her graduation and her life after graduation, I can sense disappointment and resentment toward the art sector in the Netherlands. Jovana elucidated: "During our graduation exhibition, I noticed a division between Dutch artists working on themes that found resonance with a Western audience, reaching high publicity, and non-Dutch artists working on themes adjacent to them but lacking resonance." In this quote, Jovana illuminates a division between artists who are receiving more publicity while working on themes that find resonance with a Western audience compared to artists who are working on themes that do not resonate with a Western audience. Jovana's observation sheds light on the possible influence of cultural biases and preferences in the reception of artistic practice. Furthermore, it underscores the concept of resonance and its impact on the visibility of artists within the Western cultural landscape. Artists from migratory backgrounds, despite being situated within seemingly more favorable circumstances, encounter significant challenges in reaching resonance with audiences and cultural professionals. This highlights the inherent difficulties in migratory aesthetics, where cultural dislocation complicates the recognition of the talent of

migrant artists within the established cultural sector. I asked Jovana whether she had experienced this division after graduating. She then replied that she had become highly insecure after graduating as her practice was not within "popular" themes, and her practice differed from that of former colleagues and artists within her network who would participate in exhibitions and reach publicity. It made Jovana question if the art world was interested in her work. Consequently, she decided not to send her work to open calls from art organizations.

While talking to Yezda, she elucidates how she deliberately aims to avoid repetition. Yezda is currently in Frankfurt as a guest student. A lecturer invited her to attend a prestigious art academy as a guest student for three semesters. As we talked about her art projects, it became apparent that she deliberately chose to make other projects unrelated to Kurdistan. To illustrate, Yezda's graduation project researched the Kurdish landscape in Kurdish cinema, and her short film caught international attention. However, she noticed how she was described as "The Kurdish Filmmaker," indicating the categorization of her cultural background in her artistic practice. While she reflects and mentions how this categorization creates visibility and, eventually, equity within the cultural landscape, she is conflicted:

Of course, I am a Kurdish filmmaker, but I am not only making Kurdish films. I think that is where the misunderstanding lies. And I made a film which was situated in Kurdistan, but neither Kurdistan nor my background should take the foreground.

This quotation illustrates a more significant challenge artists with migratory backgrounds face in the Western cultural sector. While Yezda's work touches upon her cultural background, the art sector hastily categorizes Yezda as a Kurdish filmmaker, merging her practice with her cultural background. This reductionist view might lead to typecasting effects where the artist is expected to produce work that continuously fits into the preconceived notion of their cultural background, limiting the recognition of the artist's broader creative expression. Consequently, artists with migratory backgrounds can become conscious and question how their art is perceived, struggling with aligning or countering expectations to represent their cultural background. In contrast to Yezda, Borimir mentioned playing along with the positive discrimination because it will create visibility. Eventually, there will be people in the audience who will be moved or inspired by your artwork.

Results

In the first chapter, Bal and Hernández-Navarro (2011) illuminate the potential of migratory aesthetics as evoking smaller-scale resistances within the social realm. Drawing from

Mouffe's conceptual framework, Bal and Hernández-Navarro emphasize how art can facilitate incongruence and friction, challenging our perception. For this reason, art illuminates the instability in the social sphere (Bal & Hernández-Navarro, 2011). It is therefore argued how artists from migratory backgrounds can use art to navigate and highlight disarrays within the public domain (Bal & Hernández-Navarro, 2011). While Bal and Hernández-Navarro's (2011) argument posits migratory aesthetics predominantly as a visibility tool, it generalizes the layered and multifaceted aspect of artistic practice, curtailing a deeper understanding of migratory aesthetics. For this reason, the first research question this thesis aims to answer is as follows: *How do visual artists with a non-Western background negotiate migratory cultural backgrounds in their art practice within the Western European art sector?*

This research question involves inquiring how artists integrate elements of their cultural heritage and migratory experiences into their artistic practices. In line with Bal and Hernández-Navarro's (2011) conception, respondents emphasized art's societal aspect as it sheds light on marginalized narratives, aiming to challenge existing frameworks. In this light, artists who communicate the value of art within societal or communal contexts emphasize the importance of art as an apparatus to challenge hegemonic conceptions (Bal & Hernández-Navarro, 2011). In this notion, artists elucidate how their practice sheds light on marginalized communities by collecting untold stories. Notably, the importance of conserving endangered cultural heritage also motivated participants to make art inspired by their cultural background. While this participant elucidated the destructive effects of Western imperialism and war on heritage conservation, illuminating the societal aspect of their practice, heritage conservation could be perceived as an act of care, indirectly making counter-narratives visible. Interestingly, in opposition to artists who position their cultural background in social criticism, some artists did not relate their practice to producing counter-narratives. For instance, artistic practice aimed at researching universal emotions did not negotiate their cultural practice as an apparatus for the visibility of marginalized perspectives. Instead, these artists perceived their cultural background as subordinate to the artwork, arguing how their cultural background should not be emphasized within their practice. Interestingly, while it could be argued how the abovementioned artistic practices produce counter-narratives, Bal and Hernández-Navarro's (2011) argument on migratory art as a tool for visibility leads to the oversimplification of the artist. To specify, this reductionist view might lead to typecasting effects where the artist is expected to produce work that seeks to challenge dominant discourses, limiting the recognition of the artist's broader creative expression.

The second chapter, *Representing Marginalized Identities*, sheds light on the prevalence of themes of migration, globalization, and post-coloniality in many biennales and major international art exhibitions. However, as illuminated by Bennett (2011), the inability or reluctance to acknowledge how migratory art practices have influenced the perception of aesthetics divides migratory aesthetics merely as add-ons to mainstream culture, perpetuating exclusion from the mainstream discourse (Reilly, 2018). The perpetuation of the division between migratory artists and Western curating culture remains relatively unchallenged (Wilson, 2018). Interestingly, van Huis (2018) sheds light on postcolonial, post-migrant, and artists of color who have faced challenges to counter the dominant Dutch manner of remembering the past. Van Huis (2018) elucidates how the immaterial meanings and memories attributed to art and heritage ought to create dissonance. However, artworks touching upon migratory or marginalized perspectives cannot escape the subtle persuasion of control imposed by cultural elites and their norms, influencing visual arts creation, distribution, and consumption processes (Alexander, 2022). In this light, dissonance is substituted for harmony, and structural change becomes substituted for displaying an oversimplified and familiar form of their cultural otherness (Mosquera in Reily, 2018). Consequently, including artists with migratory backgrounds within the Western European art world can be perceived as a tokenistic gesture (Hylton, 2007). In this light, the following question was formulated. *How do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western backgrounds?*

Unlike Mosquera's in Reily (2018) argument on artists who are directly asked to display their cultural identity, the findings of this thesis illuminated a differentiated cultural sector where the artists, to some extent, have agency in the development of their practice. Nevertheless, some artists pointed out the subtle persuasion of cultural control within the cultural sector. For instance, in the Dutch context, bureaucracy and its rigid structures assert indirect power in the produced artworks and narratives. Respondents have pointed out how the funding structures and the institutions constrain artists and their ability to push boundaries as these structures create financial dependency. This constraint contradicts the conception of how art should be able to challenge conventional notions. Thereby, cultural biases and preferences in the reception of art disadvantage artists with migratory backgrounds. Drawing from the experiences of my respondents, often, the perception of their artworks remains on the surface or does not find resonance among the audiences. While it could be plausible that this could result from nescience, artists expressed how this could result from discomfort, primarily when referring to Dutch complicity in the colonial and imperial projects. These

findings undermine Canclini's (2011) conception that artists with migratory backgrounds remove the distance between the artwork and the viewer. Instead, my findings suggest that the social imagination maintains the distance between what the artwork aims to communicate and its interpretation. Therefore, the findings highlight the inherent difficulties in migratory aesthetics, where cultural dislocation complicates the recognition of the talent of migrant artists within the established cultural sector. Interestingly, the artists I spoke to remained authentic to their practice and emphasized the importance of authenticity, elucidating negative attitudes towards using their cultural identity as a commodity for personal gain within their practice. In this light, I would argue that artists feel conscious of how their artistic practice should not recite oversimplified or stereotypical depictions of their cultural background that enforce preconceived notions, rejecting altering their work for the curating culture. While respondents rejected altering their practice as artists, associating it with disrespect for their practice, it became apparent how most artists who were students in the Netherlands felt pressured to change their practice to emphasize their cultural background within their practice. Instances were discussed where teachers questioned the thematic choices when these did not fit preconceived notions of their cultural background. Consequently, these artists felt pressured to revolve their practice around their cultural backgrounds when they were becoming artists. While supporting students in researching their cultural heritage is not fallacious, questioning students who choose not to research their heritage and cultural insensitivity confines the students from cultivating their practice authentically. Interestingly, assuming similar trends in Western Europe, I had expected similar expectations from students who had studied outside of the Netherlands. However, one artist who had studied in Belgium did not experience pressure to revolve his work around his cultural background. This could be explained by differences in cultural policy, influencing the cultural landscape in Belgium, or by the artist's motivation to base their research on Iraqi tapestry.

Lastly, Hall (2005) has identified how representation within the Western art sector tends to segregate artists of color from the dominant discourse on art. In other words, the 'migrant art' may exist in relative separation from the dominant discourse. Therefore, it was interesting to research how the artistic careers of artists with a migratory background progress. Hylton (2007) illuminates that the call for representation of minority artists in British arts institutions has evoked a necessity to reach a policy-determined 'quota' of representing artists of minority communities. The concept of tokenism, as coined by Kanter (1977), is defined as an act undertaken by an organization that seems to support the limited

participation of people mistreated in society due to their social category but is not meant to make changes that would help in a lasting way. While the cultural sector appears to diversify, Purcell et al. (2010) elucidate, drawing from the glass ceiling concept, how the glass ceiling metaphor emphasizes racial and gender disparities that are more pronounced at higher levels of an organizational hierarchy, aligning Kanter's (1977) definition of tokenization. To shed light on disparities in the art sector, Reilly (2018) argues how inequalities against marginalized artists invade multiple aspects of the art world, from gallery representation to inclusion in permanent collections, solo exhibition programs, and press coverage, leaving artists within the peripheries of the sector. For this reason, the last research question was formulated: *How do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western backgrounds?*

Interestingly, as mentioned above, the cultural landscape in Western Europe aims to diversify its cultural landscape, implying diversity quotas in its policy reports (Hylton, 2007). Nevertheless, as illuminated by respondents, the emphasis on diversity and inclusion in the current cultural debate has taken prominence. While it is important for conversations to take prominence in curatorial practices, the emphasis on promoting diversity might discredit the artists' achievements and mitigate their success because they embody diversity checkboxes. In this light, while artists should be proud of their achievements, recognizing their talent is dismissed and portrayed as a charitable act to include marginalized perspectives. Thereby, the findings in this thesis highlight that some artists believe that the topics of their practice are currently perceived as trendy in the context of the Netherlands. Nevertheless, while this thesis does not aim to dispute a favorable cultural landscape for artists with a migratory background, the trendiness of a topic does illuminate the fleeting nature of inclusion without aiming to bring structural change, aligning with Hylton's (2007) conceptual framework of tokenization. Following Hylton's (2007) findings, the findings of this study suggest how some artists strive to break free from the belief that their success is due to perceived tokenization or the trendiness of arts related to migration. Other artists choose to leverage this perception for their benefit. They believe it might be counterproductive to resist an externally imposed label, instead opting to use it as a strategy for achieving funds. Notably, the "favorable" cultural landscape is sometimes unjustly used against artists with migratory backgrounds, and artists internalize this idea of being lucky due to the current cultural landscape. Nevertheless, my findings illustrate how professionals within the sector cannot understand nor support artists with migratory backgrounds due to a lack of knowledge,

counteracting the notion of being lucky and challenging artists in their practice development and career trajectories.

Conclusion

This project aimed to research artists' experiences with a migratory background in the Western European art sector. By engaging and reflecting upon the following theoretical concepts: *Migratory Aesthetics, Representing Marginalized Identities, and Navigating Confined spaces*, the following research questions have been formulated: Firstly, *how do visual artists with a non-Western background negotiate migratory cultural backgrounds in their art practice within the Western European art sector?* Secondly, *how do Eurocentric biases influence the artistic expression of artists with non-Western backgrounds?* Lastly, *how do Eurocentric biases influence the career trajectories of artists with non-Western backgrounds?* Drawing from ten semi-structured interviews, the following themes emerged: *Beyond Countering Narratives, Rigid Structures and Surface Understanding, Imposed Exploration of Cultural Backgrounds, and Trendy Diversity Tricks*. In short, my findings suggest how motivations to negotiate migratory backgrounds among artists are diverse. Aligning Bal and Hernández-Navarro's (2011) theory, some artists employ it as a tool for visibility. However, among other artists, other motivations, such as conserving heritage practice, emerged, reinforcing the argument that migratory aesthetics as a commodity for visibility is an oversimplified view. Thereby, the findings illuminated ambivalence among participants when I inquired how Eurocentric biases inform artistic expression. At the same time, artists acknowledge bureaucracy, rigid art structures, and perceptions challenging their art practice, aligning with Alexander's (2022) notion of cultural hegemony in the art industry. The respondents distance themselves from altering their practice for the curating culture, countering Mosquera's in Reily's (2018) conceptual framework discussing experiences of artists of color within the Western cultural sector. Interestingly, in the context of the Netherlands, artists studying at the art academy experienced instances where their practice had to fit preconceived notions of their cultural background. Lastly, following the last research question, my findings illuminate how policy-driven quotas have taken prominence in the cultural debate. However, this presented "favorable" cultural landscape is unjustly used against artists with migratory backgrounds, as their success is associated with tokenism. Consequently, artists internalize this idea of being lucky due to the current cultural landscape. Nevertheless, my findings illustrate how professionals within the sector cannot understand nor support artists with migratory backgrounds due to a lack of knowledge, counteracting the

notion of being lucky and challenging artists in their practice development and career trajectories.

This thesis could be interpreted as employing conflict theory, as this thesis aims to research artists from marginalized backgrounds within Western European art spaces. My research interest was not in the quantifiable aspect of diversity and inclusion within cultural institutions. Instead, this thesis unveils power dynamics and experiences negotiating the cultural landscape in Western European countries. Therefore, it was evident to conduct ten semi-structured interviews of approximately 50 minutes each. The artists were either Caribbean, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, or Southeast Asian and obtained a degree in visual arts. For this reason, this thesis implied a criteria sample. These criteria were chosen to mitigate confounding biases influencing artistic expression or careers. For instance, artists without a degree in arts face other challenges integrating into the cultural landscape. In the methodological section, while this thesis aimed to challenge generalized notions of artists with migratory backgrounds, I have generalized the diverse cultural backgrounds of the artists. For instance, negotiating cultural backgrounds diverged among participants from former Dutch colonized countries compared to first-generation refugees. Furthermore, while I aimed to sample artists who have exhibited in multiple Western European countries, most of my findings have gravitated toward the Dutch context since I am acquainted with this context the most. For the abovementioned reasons, I suggest narrowing down the sample criteria. Furthermore, while semi-structured interviews provide in-depth analysis, it is challenging to reach theoretical saturation as the experiences of individuals can diverge, making it difficult to localize patterns in the data.

During the interviews, I asked about the role of art practice and activism and how artists aim to challenge dominant discourses. However, as the interviews proceeded, it became apparent that not all artists perceived their practice as activist or political, illuminating my bias in thinking that all artists who work with their cultural background have an activist stance. For this reason, I engaged more critically within my theoretical framework and would only ask these questions when artists hinted at their practice and activism. However, while the method of conducting semi-structured interviews is not contested, it comes at the cost of transparency in the interview process (Bryman, 2016). Lastly, all interviews were conducted online, including participants from Antwerp and London. However, as the interviews were conducted from a screen, it was challenging to interpret body language. As mentioned in the introduction, it is essential to understand that marginalized narratives come with uncomfortable perspectives that challenge the hegemonic

discourse of Western Europe, illuminating complicity to colonialism and perpetuated imperialism. Therefore, it is impossible to include migratory perspectives in a palatable manner to avoid dissonance. For this reason, this study contributes to critical theory by inquiring how power dynamics within the cultural sector affect artistic practice and career trajectories. Further research is suggested in curating conflict, examining how exhibitions and curatorial practices engage with and represent power dynamics, whether historical or contemporary.

Literature

- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On Being Included*. In Duke University Press eBooks.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395324>
- Alexander, V. D. (2020). *Sociology of the Arts: Exploring Fine and Popular Forms*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Angrósino, M. V. (2011). Doing ethnographic and observational research.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208932>
- Ashcroft B, Griffiths G, Tiffin H (2007). *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Azoulay, A. A. (2015). *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*. Verso Books.
- Backvall, K. (2019). Constructing the suburb: Swedish discourses of spatial stigmatisation. *PhD Thesis*, Uppsala University, Uppsala.
- Bahri, D. (2003). *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, politics, and postcolonial literature*.
<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB05337953>
- Bal, M., & Hernández-Navarro, M. Á. (2011). *Art and visibility in migratory culture: Conflict, Resistance, and Agency*. Brill.
- Barrett, J. (2011). *Museums and the Public Sphere*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Berger, J. (2008). *Modern Classics Ways of seeing*. National Geographic Books.
- Bennett, J. (2011). Migratory aesthetics: Art and politics beyond identity. In *Art and visibility in migratory culture* (pp. 107–126). Brill.
- Bhabha, H.K. (ed.) 1990. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.
- Bocart, F., Gertsberg, M., & Pownall, R. A. (2017). Glass ceilings in the art market. *Social*

- Science Research Network. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3079017>
- Boijmans van beuningen (2022, June 20) *Open Call- Boijmans Hillelvet Commission*.
<https://www.boijmans.nl/nieuws/open-call>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. SAGE.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006b). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Canclini, N. G. (2011). Migrants: Workers of metaphors. In Bal. M., Hernández-Navarro (2011) *Art and Visibility in Migratory Culture* (pp. 21-35). Brill.
- CBS (2022, march 18). *New classification of population by origin. The Hague/Heerlen/Aruba: Statistics Netherlands*. <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/longread/statistische-trends/2022/new-classification-of-population-by-origin/5-the-new-classification-in-figures>
- Palais de Tokyo (2022) *Collective performance*.
<https://palaisdetokyo.com/en/evenement/performance-collective/>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stan. L. Rev.*, 43, 1241. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Collins P.H. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ekker, J.P. & Wagemakers, T (2023). *Diversiteitseisen voor cultuur? Wethouder houdt boet bij stuk: ‘Anders gebeurt het niet’ Het Parool*.
<https://www.parool.nl/amsterdam/diversiteitseisen-voor-cultuur-wethouder-houdt-voet-bij-stuk-anders-gebeurt-het-niet~ba1e80cd/>
- Davis, L., & Deole, S. S. (2017). Immigration and the rise of far-right parties in Europe. *ifo DICE Report*, 15(4), 10-15.
- Gramsci, A. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell. New York: International Publishers, 1971. Print.
- Glăveanu, V. P., & De Saint Laurent, C. (2015). Political imagination, otherness and the European crisis. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 11(4), 557–564.
<https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v11i4.1085>
- Gui, N. (2014). The migrant longing for form: *Pacific Coast Philology*, 49(2), 153.
<https://doi.org/10.5325/pacicoasphil.49.2.0153>

- Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In Rutherford, J (Eds.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (222 – 37). Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hall, S. (2005). The rediscovery of 'ideology'; return of the repressed in media studies. In Bennett, T. (Eds.), *Culture, society and the media*(pp. 52-86). Routledge.
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. Routledge
- Hylton, R. (2007). *The Nature of the Beast*, Institute of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts, Bath, UK
- Kanter, R. (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*, BasicBooks, United States of America
- Mead, G. H. (1964). On Social Psychology: Selected Papers.
- Mosquera, G (1992) The Marco Polo Syndrome In Reilly, M. (Eds.), *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. National Geographic Books.
- Laberge, Y., In Amelia Jones (2004), *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, Londres-New York, Routledge, In Sight : Visual Culture , 2003, 560 p. Cahiers Internationaux De Sociologie, 116(1), IV. <https://doi.org/10.3917/cis.116.0175d>
- Muftee, M., & Rosales, R. L. (2022). 'We just want to make art' – women with experiences of racial othering reflect on art, activism, and representation. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 29(4), 559–576. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505068221127127>
- Martínez-Ariño, J., Moutselos, M., Schönwälder, K., Jacobs, C., Schiller, M., & Tandé, A. (2019). Why do some cities adopt more diversity policies than others? A study in France and Germany. *Comparative European Politics*, 17, 651-672.
- Petersen, A. R. (2020). Transculturality, Postmigration, and the Imagining of a New Sense of Belonging. *The Journal of Transcultural Studies*, 11(1), 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.jts.2020.1.24140>
- Pollock, G. Vision and Difference (2015) In Reilly, M. (Eds.), *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. National Geographic Books.
- Purcell, D., MacArthur, K. R., & Samblanet, S. (2010). Gender and the glass ceiling at work. *Sociology Compass*, 4(9), 705–717. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2010.00304.x>
- Raagini, R. (2023, 7 april). 4 Contemporary South Asian Diaspora artists you should know. *TheCollector*. <https://www.thecollector.com/4-contemporary-south-asian-diaspora-artists-worth-knowing/>
- Raicovich, L. (2021). *Culture Strike: Art and Museums in an Age of Protest*. Verso Books.
- Reilly, M. (2018). *Curatorial activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. National Geographic

Books.

Suleri, S., & Spivak, G. C. (1988). In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics. *Modern Language Notes*, 103(5), 1201. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2905224>

Tate (2023, August 29). *Our Commitment to Race Equality*.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/our-commitment-race-equality>

Taylor, P. C. (2020). Black Reconstruction in Aesthetics.

Wilson, (2018). Tackling White Privilege and Western-Centrism In Reilly, M. (Eds.), *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. National Geographic Books.

Appendix

Appendix A – Interview Guide

First of all, I want to thank you for participating in my research. I want to investigate how artists with a bicultural background try to challenge Eurocentrism within the cultural sector and how these prejudices can influence artistic expression. I am particularly curious about you and what you say about the theme. There is no right or wrong answer; it's mainly a conversation between us. The conversation will be recorded for research purposes but will not be shared or published with anyone else. Also, I will keep your identity anonymous. Is this okay with you? I also have a consent form here; we can begin if you would like to read and sign it.

SES – Questions

- Name, Age, Gender, Education, Ethnicity
- Could you briefly introduce yourself?
- How did art play a role in your upbringing?
- What artists have inspired you?
- Could you give me an overview of the exhibitions you have participated in?

Migratory Aesthetics

- How do you feel your cultural background informs the themes you explore in your practice?
 - Situate cultural identity
- What motivates you to explore your cultural background in your artmaking?

- How do you perceive the role of art in society?
- How would you describe the relationship between arts and activism?

Representing Marginalized Identities

- Have you ever tried to challenge people’s ideas about your cultural background through art?
- When seeing your art being described, what words are often used?
- How do you feel the art sector perceives artworks that address cultural identity?
- Do you ever feel like there is a difference in perception compared to artworks from European artists?

The Surveyed Artist and Glass Ceilings

- Have you experienced challenges in your professional trajectory in the Northern European art sector?
 - o Had any of these challenges to do with your cultural background?
- Have you felt pressured to conform to certain artistic styles or themes associated with your cultural identity?

Appendix B – Demographic of Participants

| Name/Pseudonym | Gender | Age | Ethnicity | Education | Came to the Netherlands | Wanted to work with Culture | Solo or Selected |
|----------------|--------|-----|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cahya | Female | 34 | Indonesian | BFA Bandung | For postgraduate (Rijksacademie) | Yes | Solo and Selected |
| Borimir | Male | 40 | Former Yugoslavia | Zuyd Hogeschool | As a child | Yes | Selected |
| Azadeh | Female | 3.. | Iranian | St Joost | As a child | No | Selected |
| Louella | Female | 26 | Arubian | HKU | For HKU | No | None |
| Yezda | Female | 28 | Dutch/Kurdish | Rietveld | Born / Bicultural | Yes | Solo and Selected |
| Jovana | Female | 29 | Yugoslavian | WdKA | As a child | Yes | None |
| Tom | Male | 25 | Ecuadorian Dutch | HKU | For education | No | Selected |
| Farhad | Male | 27 | Iranian | MA photography London | For Foam Talent (BFA in Isfahan) | Yes | Solo and Selected |
| Noura | Female | 27 | Moroccan | KABK | Third generation | No | Selected |
| Hasan | Male | xx | Iraqi | KASK | As an artist | Yes | Selected |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | | | (Came to Belgium as a teenager) | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------|--|--|

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Title and version | Master Thesis Research Project |
| Name of Principal Investigator | Arsalan Ishaqzai |
| Name of Organisation | Erasmus University Rotterdam – Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication. |
| Purpose of the Study | The purpose of this study is to research how artists with a bicultural background try to challenge Eurocentrism within the cultural sector and how these prejudices can influence artistic expression. |
| Procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You will participate in an interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. You will be asked questions about your experiences, and opinions about your art practice. Sample questions include: “How do you feel your cultural background influences the themes you explore in your practice?” - You must be at least 18 years old. |
| Potential and anticipated Risks and Discomforts | There are no obvious physical, legal, or economic risks associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time. |
| Potential Benefits | Participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. A potential benefit could be that similar patterns in experiences becomes visible and patterns could indicate structural challenges. |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Sharing the results | The final product will be shared with you via mail. There is no plan for publishing the findings of this study yet. If the project gets published, the participants remain anonymous. |
| Confidentiality | <p>If preferred, your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. Moreover, only trained research staff will have access to your responses. Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to you upon request. The Institutions mentioned within the interview will remain anonymous. However, the size of the institution or the type of exhibition (i.e. solo, group etc.) is important for the findings of this study.</p> <p>This research project involves making audio recordings of interviews with you. Transcribed segments from the audio recordings may be used in published forms (e.g., journal articles and book chapters). In the case of publication, pseudonyms will be used. The audio recordings, forms, and other documents created or collected as part of this study will be stored in a secure location in the researchers' offices or on the researchers password-protected computers and will be destroyed within ten years of the initiation of the study.</p> |
| Right to Withdraw and Questions | <p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the primary investigator:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arsalan Ishaqzai 662891ai@eur.nl +31623401990 Linkedin: Arsalan Ishaqzai</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <p>Statement of Consent</p> | <p>You are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree that you will participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>For research problems or any other question regarding the research project, please contact Arsalan Ishaqzai.</p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p> | |
| <p>Audio recording (if applicable)</p> | <p>I consent to have my interview audio recorded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> no</p> | |
| <p>Secondary use (if applicable)</p> | <p>I consent to have the anonymised data be used for secondary analysis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> no</p> | |
| <p>Signature and Date</p> | <p>NAME PARTICIPANT</p> | <p>NAME PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</p> |
| | | <p>Arsalan Ishaqzai</p> |
| | <p>DATE</p> | <p>DATE</p> <p>10-04-24</p> |

