

Power Refugee

A contextual analysis of refugee art: the case of Humanity House, The Hague



Name: Laurens van der Laan

Student ID: s1048464

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Professor Henk van Houtum

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Executive Summary

In this Master Thesis an artwork, in which the writer was personally involved in, will be deconstructed. The artwork is named Power Refugee and can be observed on the front page. At first glance, the artwork might not seem complex, but during my research it has been proven to be both complicated in meaning and appearance. This will be symbolized in the analysis, which will deal with both the creative process, production and eventual display of the artwork at a museum.

The Master Thesis will argue that the artwork Power Refugee has proven to be an empowering example of storytelling and a multifaceted approach in which prevalent stereotypes of refugees were either left out or subverted. Furthermore, the intricacies of displaying two refugees in a museum will be exemplified. The Master Thesis will demonstrate the importance of an inclusivity-focused museum in which the ideal conditions can be created to conceive an artwork and by which both the location, artist and individuals portrayed are represented equally and successfully.

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Lastly, I want to give thanks to Humanity House for truly creating a pleasant location in which young people can grow and develop themselves. During the first few weeks of interning at Humanity House I was continuously on edge. I was desperately trying to do good, while not very sure if I was actually doing so. However, my two colleagues in the programming department, Sahar Shirzad & Frederiek Biemans, were a constant help and really created an environment in which I was able to prosper. After a couple of weeks I started to become more involved and my responsibilities started to grow. At the end of this internship this culminated in the conceptualization of an outdoor cinema (*Cinema in the Garden*¹) during the Covid-19 pandemic and the co-production of the artwork called Power Refugee in Humanity House's display window seen on the front page.

¹ : <https://humanityhouse.org/series/cinema-in-the-garden/>

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1. Introduction

The displacement and migration of peoples has occurred since the beginning of time and for fluctuating sets of causes and reasons. In our day and age climate change, the consequences of war, famine, to name just a few, has led to the forced migration of large groups of people and thence have become increasingly politicized. Anti-immigration ideology has spread like a wildfire through the media and has been adopted by political parties repeatedly. Sadly, this is able to manifest itself in what I think is a lack of empathy for those individuals who already suffered tremendously all the while risking their livelihoods for a journey seeking a better world. Still, there are various courageous organizations and artists who bear witness to the experiences of these individuals. Who dare to raise questions regarding their humanity, global justice and engage with this topic through the creation of art projects and counter stereotypes through their achievements. In my Master Thesis I want to reflect on one artwork that I have been personally engaged with, based on such a fascinating, notwithstanding tragic, story of migration.

During my internship at Humanity House one of my final assignments was exactly that, (co-)producing an artwork which would portray two refugees and tell the narratives of their journey. Humanity House was an organization which focused on telling the personal stories of people affected by conflict and tried to collect and share these with the general public. The institution Humanity House functioned as a museum, platform, exhibition space and educational center. From its onset, one of the pillars of the organization has been storytelling. For the organization, many stories are extremely special, fragile and so powerful that they should be heard more often. One of its final exhibitions was therefore using a display window in which the personal memoirs of two refugees would be put on display. By integrating it into a work of art and exhibiting the artwork in the building's display window, the stories would be shared for a period of approximately 6 months. By organizing a 'Makerslab'², in which 2 local street art-artists from The Hague would translate the two stories into one composition, the narratives were given a larger audience, a second life. By presenting an

² Direct link to a Makerslab blog: <https://humanityhouse.org/blog-makerslab/>

artwork in the display window, Makerslab in Humanity House informally tried to activate residents of The Hague together around shared interests of popular street art and storytelling. Complex stories about conflicts and struggles that seem to take place far away, actually manifest themselves very closely among peers who you encounter in your daily life at school, sports or in the supermarket. Citizens of The Hague, with completely different sets of histories, are actually interconnected. Makerslab, Humanity House and the artwork itself tries to encourage young people to think about the individual and personal backgrounds of their co-residents and how they each relate to it. In fact, how much do you know about one another and how often do you really immerse yourself in the 'other'? By showing the artwork, the visitors of Humanity House and residents of The Hague would hopefully see the intercultural richness of this beautiful city. As this vibrant city has over 180 different nationalities (DSO, 2012) and includes people from an increasingly diverse background who in general know little about each other. In the Makerslab artist(s) from The Hague Street Art were linked to two residents of The Hague with a refugee background. They both agreed to share their story in Humanity House and the artist would try to translate their stories into a design that was exhibited at Humanity House's display window until the beginning of 2021.

My internship at Humanity House lasted for a period of approximately 6 months until September/October 2020. During this internship I was part of the programming department and have been involved in organizing events and keeping in close contact with partners or other relevant parties. My ambition for this internship was to finally have an active involvement in a company that I personally respected and have my first true experience in a workplace. I felt that an internship would be very important for my personal development, as the idea of working for the next 50 years of my life is still something I have to come to terms with. However, the feeling of moving to a novel situation, like Humanity House, would definitely help me grow and broaden my competency. Furthermore, Humanity House's imminent closure due to the Corona pandemic's financial blowback helped me decide to finalize this chapter of my life by relating my Master Thesis to an organization that brought me so much. For exactly that reason, I have decided to write this thesis on my final assignment there.

For my Master Thesis I want to essentially deconstruct the artwork, and dissect its various characteristics. One of the primary reasons for the academic side of the thesis is that the internship was mostly practical, while I now want to analyze it academically. First proposed by Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, it presents the denial of the existence of fixed stable systems that are able to forecast meanings or rules within art (Anushiravani & Foroozani, 2015). Preferably, deconstruction argues that in the discussion and for the interpretation of art there is a flexibility and infinity in the production of meanings and understandings of it. Deconstruction allows an active role for the researcher in the examination and the taking apart of the artwork to formulate his own understanding (Anushiravani & Foroozani, 2015). So for me personally, a political researcher lacking actual art expertise, it is possible to have an active role in formulating an understanding and appreciation of art, while applying the theories and knowledge of the academic field in which I have been brought up. The term deconstruction here then refers to breaking the artwork down in various parts, almost anatomically. The multifacetedness of the artwork makes it a very interesting case of refugee art and attainable to analyze its facets academically and provide criticism on its creation. Hence, you can see this Master Thesis as the anatomy of the artwork - a thorough evaluation - in which I will be dividing the production of Power Refugee into three components. Thereby I will try to discover, recognize and understand the varying ideas, assumptions, cultural parameters and frameworks surrounding the creation and positioning of Power Refugee. Ultimately, I want to demonstrate to the reader that from something as modest and small-scale as this artwork a researcher is able to contrive an entire study.

The relevance of the thesis will be both academically and societal. For in my academic experience of International Studies at Leiden University and currently Conflict, Territories and Identities at Radboud University, recognizing persisting tropes and stereotypes in the portrayals of minority groups has been a regular occurrence. Especially in my bachelor's in International Studies it was mostly recognizing what is the wrong way to portray subjects like minority groups in media and the arts, and perhaps not as much a right depiction. For me, it is personally interesting that the public organization Humanity House tries to do quite the opposite. With Power Refugee it creates an artwork which effectively

declares that this is a right way to represent these individuals. It did so by placing the artwork in their display-window for the entire population of The Hague to see. So did this happen? Or as many times before, did all the well-known stereotypes and categorizations reoccur? On the other hand, I will be also using a variety of theories and scholarly literature to review the entire production process, interrelationships and placement of art academically.

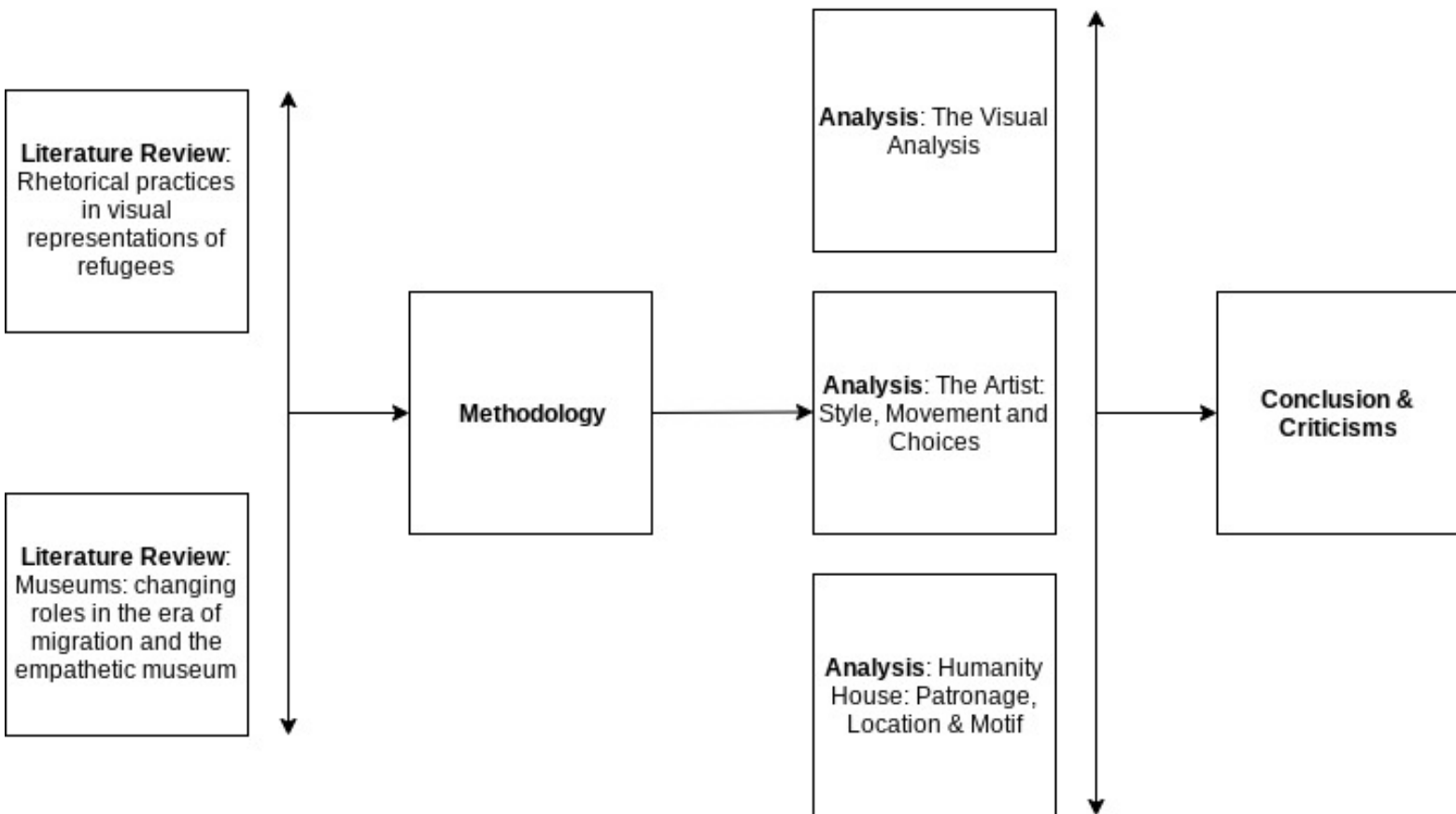
The ambition of this Master Thesis will be to deconstruct the artwork. The research can be outlined as a qualitative analysis covering three separate components (chapters) with its purpose to aid in an overall deeper understanding of the various features and frameworks located in the artwork Power Refugee. The research question of the Master Thesis can be formulated as:

What are the conditions and motifs surrounding the creation and placement of the artwork Power Refugee?

The Master Thesis will first start with a literature review reviewing the state of the debate for the visual representation of refugees and the shape of museums in the age of migration. This will be followed by the methodology in which I will discuss the research design and my analysis of the artwork. The first chapter of the analysis will be the performance of a visual analysis of said artwork. This is the foundation to formally understand the elements and principles used in Power Refugee. The second chapter examines the artist and his style, herein I will also be discussing certain motifs or values which pertain throughout the creation and espoused by the artist or the portrayed refugees. Besides my personal obligation as a co-producer of Power Refugee I have performed an interview of both the artist for and the refugees for Humanity House which provides further insight in the creative process and final assessment. In the third chapter I will be discussing the function and motif of Humanity House as a museum and as the central location of Power Refugee. As a former member of the team I hope to shine a light on both the creative process and the organization itself. The final chapter will take a step back and provide a conclusion on the whole master thesis and what I have been discussing from start to finish. Furthermore, I will provide remarks on the overall research objective and recapitulate parts of the

chapters in the analysis. To help visualize the research process the adjoining paragraph discloses a model.

The outline of the different steps taken in my research process are shown in the model below. The model consists of 4 different stages exhibiting the general process discussed previously:



(Figure 1)

2. Literature Review

Background

The many ways refugees are represented in media and arts form the backbone of this Master Thesis. At this very moment, we are facing one the worst displacement crises since WWII. According to Medecins Sans Frontieres there are as of now approximately 82 million individuals displaced and/or fleeing their native countries due to persecution, conflict and poverty (Van Wessel, 2017). A comparatively small number, 10%, are living in Europe, being a 0,6% share in comparison to the entire population of Europe (UNHCR, 2019). Almost instantly connotations were constructed surrounding the depiction of these large groups of people. From popular media and the press, to artists and museums, the refugee crisis triggered action across the board. As refugees have mostly been in a subdued position that rendered it impossible for them to have an impact on narratives, the visual representations made by *non-refugees* have consequently influenced audiences. The literature review of the Master Thesis is divided into two subchapters which provide context on topics and issues surrounding the paper. The first subchapter will elaborate on theories that discuss the visual representation of refugees in modern art, press and media which includes key theoreticians such as Spivak, Edward Said and Malkki. The second subchapter reviews academic literature on museum theory and their dealings with minority groups, including key theoreticians such as Vergo and Jennings. These separate subchapters will function as the two fundamental pillars on which the Master Thesis is built. Through reviewing past studies, numerous theoretical approaches to the representation of refugees and the inclusivity of museums will be discussed and will later serve the chapters of the analysis.

2.1 Rhetorical Practices in Visual Representations of Refugees

A widely discussed subject, but not less important in understanding the representation of refugees in media and art, is the concept of Othering. The phenomenon of Othering influences how groups of individuals treat and perceive those who are part of the out-group versus those part of the in-group. Jensen discussed Spivak's argument that Othering is the "symbolic degradation as well as the processes of identity formation related to this degradation" (Jensen,

2011, p.65). Perhaps one of the best-known conceptualizations of this Othering is Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1985). Said discussed - through Michel Foucault's concept of discourse which analyzes the power relationships in a society through its social practices - that Orientalism refers to the Occident (e.g. the West) habit of having authority over the Orient through restructuring, prejudice and domination. This contrast between the Orient and the Occident is functionalized through persistent western-centric prejudices derived from cultural representations (i.e. images) diminishing the Orient to imagined essences inferior to the West (Said, 1985). Examples of these cultural representations were discussed during my bachelor International Studies, such as Aladdin or 19th century paintings romanticizing the Near-East and Oriental Studies. In addition, Said argued that the creation of Orient identities by the West is essentially a social construction in opposition to itself (Said, 1985). Through these actions we not merely create the 'other' but also construct our own identities. This binary thinking of Orient vs. Occident or West vs. East is described by Chakrabarti as defining the in-group to a far greater extent, instead of the out-group which it actually tries to construe (Chakrabarti, 2012). Othering is thus a projection of characteristics on the non-western out-group and this evidently invokes Foucault's description that "relations with others in turn always entails relations with oneself, and vice versa" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 28). Interestingly, Van Houtum & Van Naerssen (2002) relate the practices of bordering, "the exclusionary consequences of the governing and securing of one's identity and economic welfare" (p.125), to othering. In this influential article the pair navigate the geographical landscape of difference, which includes migration politics, identifying and (b)ordering to name a few. All things considered, the authors argue that in order to maintain cohesion in the formatted order in a territorially demarcated society we do need this 'other', and is therefore continually produced and reproduced (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002). The construction of a notion of belonging to the common 'us', and in turn referring to others who do not belong to this group as 'them', is particularly interesting in the context of the visual representation of refugees (Butler & Spivak, 2007). Tajfel and Wilke (1963) assert that by scrutinizing and simplifying the people and environment of the out-group induces stereotyping. The in-group interpretations of the out-group can result in bigotry and prejudice. By way of explanation, the image is able to create a feeling of belonging and allow

spectators to feel if they belong, or do not (Tajfel & Wilke, 1963). Moreover, Stuart Hall's 2000 essay *Who Needs 'Identity'?* elaborates that the media is able to play an extensive role in forming the opinion of the population. For Hall, the regime of representation is the way difference is used to create meaning. (Hall, 2000). This is exemplified by Hall's quote appealing that "identity is never singular but regularly constructed across intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions" (Hall, 2000, p.19). We need the difference between 'us' and 'them' to create that representation.

Visual representations of refugees in media and the arts reverberate the above-named Othering. Created content is never entirely free from ideological influence. It emphasizes specific attributes and characteristics, dramatizes particular events and prefers certain actors or events over others (Fahmy, 2010). The emphasizing and selection of these particular elements of a perceived reality is what Entman (1993) describes as Framing: "selected aspects of a perceived reality and to make them more noticeable in a communicating text to causally promote a particular problem definition" (p.52). To discuss and interpret events, individuals use frames of reference to better understand them. However, our frames of reference are constantly influenced and thereby accentuate particular aspects while omitting others (de Vreese, 2005). As de Vreese (2005) mentions in her article discussing the news framing by media outlets, they "employ a particular interpretational lens in reporting" (p.52) and this depends on two important categories, frame-setting and frame-building. Frame-setting refers to the interaction between the receivers' prior knowledge and understanding versus the frames created (by media, artists or others) (Kuttschreutel, Gutteling & de Hond, 2011). On the other hand, frame-building refers to the synergy between the creator and contemporary societal issues (de Vreese, 2005). This combination between frame-setting and framebuilding essentially enacts framing and explains why individuals receive and interpret their acquired information differently.

Considering framing, images in particular, have a far greater expressive, iconic and symbolic influence over written text (Mandell & Shaw, 1973). For instance, Abraham and Messaris (2001) convince the reader that the image usually wins if there is an encounter between text and photography. For audiences, images seem closer to the truth and due to its iconic nature, viewers tend to ignore that there are possible artificial constructions at hand. These

constructions are able to accentuate or ignore particular components, or create new ones, and so imbue the image with symbolism or ideologies. Sargent, Gibson and Zillman (1990) likewise argue that images are the ideal instrument for transmitting and framing perceptions and ideas to a spectator. Images are more accessible, enjoyable and attract far more attention to discourse than text will ever do. Moreover, Coleman (2010) recognizes that in news segments images are far more effective. In comparison to texts, visual media are able to produce emotional and cognitive results immediately, which texts never will or can. This is a result of the mental efforts of spectators, as visual frames are inclined to be accepted without too much questioning. However, he does note that this does depend on prior awareness, knowledge and emotional attachment of the spectator to the subject the image portrays (Coleman, 2010). In addition to the effects produced, recognizing and interpreting images requires less knowledge beforehand and are easier remembered by the observer (Rodriguez and Dimitrova, 2011).

Framing asserts itself in the representations of refugees in the media. In the European press images of immigrants arriving on Europe's shore since 2014 have been covered instantly. The press coverage of the European refugee crisis is a well-studied and discussed subject. A report by an advocacy and research project called Refugees Reporting studied the media representation of refugees and migrants in Europe from 2015-2017. It has shown that media outlets in European countries emphasize quite different themes in their coverage. Their key findings were that only 21% of the topics on asylum and migration refer to a refugee, refugees are often only identified by their displacement and terminology and less than 40% of the items quote them directly (Pierigh, 2017). A study performed by Berry et al. titled the *Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU from 2015* (2015) can be firmly related to refugee thematics. The study focused on the written press and online media in 5 countries in this tumultuous year. The analysis elaborated upon the terms and language used in the media, while also on more general topics of interest like humanitarian issues versus terrorism or the alleged 'threat' of refugees towards native society. The report concluded that media coverage is predominantly biased towards negativity and has mostly an unfavourable stance on the topics covered in press releases (Berry et al., 2015). For instance, this ranged from language, visual

appearances and terminology, but also showing that reporting on immigration and asylum varied widely from region to region. An interesting example is that in Britain and Spain risk themes like cultural and welfare threats are common. In comparison to Italy, where the media covers humanitarian issues far more often (ibid, 2015).

Especially the British press' framing of Syria's Refugee crisis has been widely discussed. In the book *Critical Perspectives on Migration in the Twenty-First Century*, Nicola Langdon (2018) uses the universally debated picture of Aylan Kurdi, the drowned Syrian toddler on the beaches of Turkey, to demonstrate counter poles in British press (Langdon, 2018) (Appendix A). She demonstrated that on the one side a cosmopolitan outlook was constructed, which accentuated the universality of humanity and emphasized a shared understanding of morality, which is contrasted to a threat frame. The cosmopolitan outlook draws the event closer to our consciousness by identifying with the vulnerabilities of the displaced refugees and evokes calls to alleviate the suffering of these people by signalling for aid (Agha, 2015). This outlook contemplates displacement as part of our shared humanity by highlighting human-interest perceived from a position of empathy (Langdon, 2018). However, there is undoubtable a fickleness in the representation of human interest stories in the media, as genuine stories and more people suffer without a voice or attention of the media (Agha, 2015).

Furthermore, it is necessary to note what Malkki (1996) and Prem Kumar Rajaram (2002) both refer to as the objectification of the refugee or the refugee experience. Simultaneously their papers echo the notion that refugees lack agency and are often placed in a position that prevents them from presenting narratives leading to the general audience perceiving refugees as the 'Other' (Malkki, 1996 & Rajaram, 2002). Rajaram (2002) discusses the representations of refugees by media and found that they are overtly consigned as "a mute and faceless physical mass" (p.247). Being consigned to their bodies and the abstraction of refugees and their individual experiences of displacement leads to a speechlessness of the refugee. Malkki (2006) delineates this as the creation of refugees as mute victims; depoliticized and universalized figurations lacking any historical, social and political context. The formation of visual narratives by the media leads to and promotes the 'Othering' (Malkki, 2006). Isabel Blomfield (2008) reaffirms this by articulating that refugees are reduced and essentialized

to masses of people sensationalized through visceral visualizations. As mentioned before, these images indirectly shape how we see and think (Blomfield, 2008). The ostensibly lack of voice or agency given to refugees in images creates a static visuality permeated by particular meanings and connotations created by the media that is able to strengthen stereotypes of refugees and influence the public opinion (Rajaram, 2002 & Malkki, 1996). Moreover, by not looking at the refugees case by case and omitting individual stories the refugee becomes part of a group whose "boundaries are removed from historical context and reduced to terms and norms relevant to a state-centric perspective" (Rajaram, 2002, p. 251). The 'Other' eventually loses its power to establish their own oppositional and institutional discourse or narrative. Leading to a reinforcement of the visual politics and framing of 'othering' in their representations of refugees.

The previous paragraphs discuss the representation in predominantly the written press. This can be used in the MA thesis when analyzing the work of art at Humanity House and will further be elaborated upon in the paper. However, it is important to adjoin a critical theory that can be connected to the issues of representation within art and culture. For that reason the postcolonial perspective on representing refugees will be used as the theory to help grasp and critically read visual art. This reiterates the Othering and Orientalism by Spivak and Said at the start of the chapter which already hint at post-colonial theory, while also being beneficial in understanding the cultural production generated in the visual arts. For instance, Mercer (2008), in *Black Art and the Burden of Representation* argues that artworks dealing with 'otherness' are ultimately expected to be representative of the whole story of the 'other'. Meaning, one created artwork of this 'other' immediately stands for all the subjects, themes and meanings pertaining to the represented 'other' (Mercer, 2008). This creates a tremendous pressure on artists and the presented subject alike, which can be designated as the burden of representation.

Returning to Spivak, who has a central position in postcolonial theory, in her seminal *Can the Subaltern Speak* (2008) she presents populations socially and politically excluded from the hierarchy of power and tries to overcome the binary opposition between center and marginal; the Orient and Occident (Spivak, 2008). The concept foreshadows a paradoxical situation in which lower

social classes displaced to the margins of society lack human agency and are in turn represented by others; the media or academic scholars from the west, and are unable to speak up or stand in unity (Spivak, 1988). Spivak (1988) provides a space and voice to displaced and silenced Indian female subalterns. An interesting quote comes up when writing about the subaltern in colonial India: "white men are saving brown women from brown men" (p.93). The quote refers to the individuals acting and taking up the roles of representing the downtrodden and all the while not necessarily being a part of that specific society. This characterization can be used for understanding and analyzing the representation of refugees which are mostly done by scholars and journalists, leading to the noticeable absence of the careful delineation of the hopes, fears and experiences of refugees (Spivak, 1988). We need these to actually fully understand these groups of people. Knowledge is never innocent, it expresses the interest of its producer (Harindranath, 2007).

The analyzing of refugee art and representations in the media through Spivak's conceptualization of the subaltern assert that they are often not the active agents calling for change to their dire circumstances. Oftentimes, refugees are not even visible in the artwork themselves. Who is the one talking for the oppressed and why are they sometimes left out of the discussion? Furthermore, artworks every now and then depict refugees surviving in shaky shelters at refugee camps, living in poverty and violence or crying out for help. Descriptions like these create the marginalization and stereotyping leading to narrow definitions of what refugees entail. For most, it led to the understanding of a one-dimensional being, begging for Western salvation, dismissing the possibility of individuals and the complex multidimensional individuals arriving on European shores. These implications towards issues of identity formation and representations lead us to the questions and epistemic issues of Spivak for the thesis and come to the fore here: Who speaks for whom? Whose voice is spoken? Or who lacks a voice? (Harindranath, 2007)

2.2 Museums: Changing Roles in the Era of Migration and the Empathetic Museum

The European Migrant Crisis' onset in 2015 and discussions surrounding migration became important themes in Europe's political and public sphere, which were soon reflected in cultural institutions. For museums, the

representation of migrants and their heritage has been on the agenda for a longer time, but due to the polarized political and public debates about the aforementioned crisis, the large numbers of migrants arriving in Europe have made it all the more urgent. Due to these rising tensions, museums saw it as their job to nuance this image (Janes, 2007).

Tony Bennett (1995) established that museums were designed in the 19th century as cultural institutions to help create and foster a certain shared identity of the nation-state. The museum, and the narratives it aimed to represent, were presented as natural and neutral. As one can already guess, these were shaped and configured by the ideological and the political context they were nurtured in and partake with clear and predetermined principles and values (Bennett, 1995). The museum was to be designated as an apparatus of the state and an institution where exclusion and social differentiation is envisioned (Bennett, 1995).

Beyond the historical patronizing role that drove exhibitions and collections, museums now bear the responsibility to respond proactive to current social and political issues (Janes, 2007). For now, we have entered into a period christened the postmodern era for museums and cultural institutions. Along these lines their function and relation to the public has changed dramatically. Huyssen (1995) analyzes the museum becoming a nondescript, broad phenomenon without a consensus on what really belongs in museums. Hence, the museum is no longer "a single institution with stable and well-drawn boundaries" (Huyssen, 1995, p.14). The author continues by discussing the concept of musealization: the way "how museum practices have become inextricably linked to everyday life and culture" (Huyssen, 1995, p.14). Contemporary museums have come underpinned by ethical imperatives and are driven by the optimistic hope that visitors will acquire a better understanding of history. Exhibitions themselves have become immersive in multiple ways; like digital exhibitions and interactive gatherings (de-Sinine, 2013). It is a huge step from the historical environment of the 19th century in which museums were assumed natural and neutral, while clearly connected to the nation-state. The institutions now provide a terrain that can offer multiple narratives of meaning, in which problems of representation and identity can be overcome and discussed in an increasingly diverse audience (Huyssen, 1995).

New approaches to critically assess the practices of museums emerged in the 1980s. In this specific period in time, museum critique emerged due to the publication of numerous academic collections. These aimed to define the expansion and diversification of the museum, thus essentially analyzing the institution (Macdonald, 1995). This dissimilar critical analysis of museums was linked to post-colonialism and the need to hear, understand and listen to minority voices. Museums especially, were deemed significant and now criticized for their roles in the unequal representations of colonized peoples and cultures (ibid, 1996). Peter Vergo (1989) established New Museology in 1989 and coined it as the 'first' critical analysis of museums. By changing the relationship between the community and museums, new museology tries to introduce a new philosophy to the essence of museum policy and the growing awareness of wider social/political issues in museums (dos Santos, 2010). Vergo's argument contends that museums functioned in exactly the same way they had for centuries. This traditional type of museology had a disciplining function and ascribed itself a civilizing and patronizing elitist sense. Moreover, museums in the traditional sense would privilege the cultural tastes of certain social groups and their collection-based functions (McCall & Gray, 2014). Museum awareness has become an important theme in the conceptualization of new museology. It aims for social inclusion, visitor participation and opening up to broader audiences (Wilke Heijnen, 2010). Furthermore, Vergo aimed to challenge the traditional authority and status of a curator. The displaying of objects or artefacts in museums is therefore never neutral. As the traditional curator would try to create neutral and safe environments for artefacts, it would lead to a transformation and decay on their physical appearance but also their epistemological meanings would change (Vergo, 1989). However, in New Museology visitors acquire a prominent position in the museum. They are no longer merely visiting the museum's collection, curated by a specialist. Presently, the visitor is a subject with certain interpretations, attitudes and experiences which would also mean that the artefacts' purpose or positioning in the museum would change. Now, "from day to day different people view and subject them to their own interpretation" which will only be guided and partly interpreted by a curator (Wilke Heijnen, 2010, p.15).

However, it is important to share the subjectivity of the New Museology movement. Generalizing terms like old/traditional museology or new museology

make museums seem static but in reality are not. Curators, for instance, perceive certain museum artifacts differently than its purported audience would. This leads to a situation in which multiple interpretations prevail (Vergo, 1989). Moreover, social awareness is not merely rising in museums, but in all branches of society. From interactive techniques to social media, an abundance of ideas have been created that are able to challenge the authority of museums and their incorporation of 'master' narratives (Heijnen, 2010). Especially the experience itself has become a hot topic of debate for museums. Currently, they have to compete with several other leisure facilities. Sharon Macdonald (1995) boldly claims: "they have more in common with the theatre or funfair than the traditional museums" (Macdonald, 1995, p.2). However, the statement that all museums are equally recreational is a brazen allegation, but it is definitely the case in the number of festive openings, shows, workshops and activities that happen on a weekly basis.

Yet, the modern framework of museums supports a visitor-focus; the important place visitors will take in the interpretation of and curatorial functions for the museum, as a core value (Vergo, 1989). Social issues like inequality and discrimination will be shared more feverously with museums who will now be playing an active role in contemporary societal debates. Moreover, it means that museums will cater to an increasing number of diverse groups and attract or provide a voice to minority groups (McCall and Gray, 2014). The sad fact is, as Giménez-Cassina (2010) shows, that in the 1990s museums failed to attract minorities to their institutions. Along with crowded storage rooms, fierce competition, and the number of visitors dropping, living in the multicultural society meant that communities would hold onto their identities, as they were not represented in the museums themselves (Giménez-Cassina, 2010). It would therefore be necessary for the museum and its curator to open up to a far more diverse public. The design of the collections was now specifically to appeal to new groups of people, with collections normally not deemed museum-worthy (MacDonald, 1995). As Philip Wright claims: "there is no such thing as the typical visitor, and there would be no single level which can be either addressed or expected", as visitors are as diverse as society (Wright, 1989, p.119).

This is also able to bring us back to the critical theory mentioned in the previous chapter: post-colonial theory. Hooper-Greenhill (2002), in her

systematic study of museums, mentions this changing attitude by stating that “postcolonial approaches have demonstrated the Eurocentric core of much of culture and history that we take for granted in the West” (p.2). Inclusion and diversity between cultural groups, especially for minorities and refugees, instantly relate to analogous issues like cultural heritage, national identity or the suppression of narratives and histories. With museums establishing themselves as important agents in creating meaning, exhibitions try to show a multiplicity of voices and representations of these unique groups (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002). Italian author Alessandra De Angelis (2014) reflects this notion very well in the book *The Postcolonial Museum*. She argues that it is not the integration of excluded and subaltern voices into already existing museum tropes, but a complete rewriting and deconstruction of those narratives (De Angelis, 2014). Moreover she concurs that, “it helps disengage the relationship between contemporary art, global reality and cultural difference from the exclusive politics of museology” (De Angelis, 2014, p.3).

Post-colonialism is an extremely potent force and does overlap with Peter Vergo’s New Museology. By coming from the era of colonial hegemony, social and economic inequality and racism, museums are now moving into an era of large technologization, extreme globalization and more importantly, the era of migration (De Angelis, 2014). Museums themselves traverse between eras and have to change with the times accordingly. Like New Museology, post-colonialism questions the dominant authorities within the museum, analyzes its collections and assesses the narratives in use. As society has become increasingly more multicultural, multiethnic and global, this beckons a new critical review of the cultural role played by museums and the forces at play within its walls. Museums try to reinvent themselves and critically assess their own conduct by changing centuries-old narratives, taking in mind historical collections in relation to the colonial era, and divulge opinions towards visitors and communities (Parati, 2014). Especially the community-based museum policy is shared between New Museology and the post-colonial view on museums. As the public visiting museums has changed drastically, issues of representation, identity and creation of narrative have become at the forefront of the discussion on what a museum entails and the relationship of the museum and its diverse public (Jennings, 2019). Finally, for change to truly happen within the museum external processes and internal culture of the institution must be assessed. For institutions founded

on roots of colonialism and histories of imperialism processes of decolonization and deconstruction, rejection of systemic white supremacy, and community-based policies should be executed effectively (Jennings, 2019).

To exemplify New Museology and related post-colonial or inclusivity aspects in a practical sense it helps to articulate the framework of institutional empathy for museums. As the previous sections discuss the need for museums to change according to the era we now live in, museums need to actively envision themselves towards more accessibility and inclusion within their compounds. The concept of the empathetic museum by Gretchen Jennings (2015) provides a theoretical scheme for this. Essentially, the basis of the empathetic museum is one in which all its manifestations - inward and outward - resonate closely with the people it serves. The empathy framework by Gretchen Jennings stipulates 5 characteristics by which cultural institutions should in essence 'listen' to the public; leading to instead feeling for others, they should experience feeling with others (Jennings, 2015). These characteristics shape both external relations with the public and the internal organization. The empathetic museum's characteristics are community resonance, civic vision, timelessness, institutional body language and overarching performance measures (Jennings, 2019). The paradigm shift's intent is to lead to an empathetic museum in which these characteristics bring about a democratic and socially conscious institution. Under this framework museums should become open forums and develop new understandings of stigmatized experiences and democratic authority. Thereby, the institution supports inclusion and through partnerships and specific collaborations create renewed support for diversity and the development of (new) narratives (Jennings, 2015). So what then are these five characteristics? The list below accounts for the five characteristics of the empathetic museum and these will return in the analysis.

1. The first element is *community resonance* and it guarantees that an empathetic museum is keenly aware of the challenges, needs and values of its audience. Moreover, this also resonates to its staff and board which accurately reflects the diverse community (Jennings, 2019).
2. *Civic vision* is the second element of the empathetic museum. Here Jennings uses an argument by Lord and Blankenberg who argue

that as 'anchor' institutions of the civic infrastructure of a community should promote social justice and influence and shape the quality of life there (Lord & Blankenberg, 2015).

3. As the empathetic museum is an institution which connects to its public, it therefore also responds to particular events or crises that might affect the community, and it responds through sustainable and enduring manners (Jennings, 2019). Jennings identifies this as *timelessness*. Truly, sustainable awareness and a strong relationship with the community will lead to collaborative efforts for the betterment of a diverse community (Jennings, 2019).
4. *Institutional body language* is the fourth characteristic of the empathetic museum. It in a way resembles personal body language as it observes the unspoken and unwritten manifestations of the institution. Moreover, this encompasses the in/outside design of the building, its exhibitions and collections, to the demographics and behavior of the museum staff (Jennings, 2019 & Kinsley, 2016).
5. Finally, *performance measures* complete the five characteristics of the empathetic museum. Jennings thereby states that the museum as an institution should create tools to assess if the museum is working to develop and incorporate the aforementioned characteristics. Museums must entrust the necessary funds to determine if it attained its public and social impact, not merely revenues and attendance (Jennings, 2019 & Korn, 2013).

Conclusion of the Literature Review

What does it mean that some refugees are considered illicit, criminal travellers to Europe and not worthy of our assistance? While others are valued, legitimate and deserving of our goodwill and receive a place in society? Our perceptions and understanding of events are shaped by the frames we are instilled with by media and artists alike. Othering, framing the refugees as a threat, permits us to perhaps distance ourselves cognitively and geographically from these events. Thereby, through these actions we not only create this 'other' but also shape ourselves. Stereotyping, incited by nationalist politics and threat fabrications, prime cultural and social boundaries for refugees in society. Also, it is able to bring about a re-victimisation, as people are unable to understand that the

individuals seeking asylum on far away shores are desperately fleeing external intervention, war and more (Bleiker, 2013). Part of the solution to othering must come from the stories we show and tell. Visuals, for instance, can compel us to reconsider these events as humanitarian issues and require us to assist in the mitigation of suffering. The symbolism of images is also able to encourage us to strengthen our moral bonds and coerce our shared humanity to mitigate the perpetuation of difference or indifference, and alleviate against the suffering of others, which can contribute to responses of fear and the construction of the refugee as threats. Still, of major concern are the issues of representation resonated through Spivak's (1988) concept of the subaltern. As the question then continues to beckon: Who speaks for whom? Whose voice is spoken for and whose voice is spoken for? (Spivak, 1988).

Finally, museums are momentarily expected to balance commercial, emotional, ideological, and political narratives. For this to happen, the institution needs to provide a consensus between diverse political and social themes, while also taking into account the foundation and history on which the museum is built upon. As funded by donors, ranging from the state, to corporations and prominent citizens, one must take into account the conflicting views and voices while trying to be of assistance to the community in which it is situated. (de-Simine, 2013 & Huyssen, 1995). The discussion of the museum's agency is continuously at play and remains a hot topic of debate. Orhan Pamuk is able to further elaborate our understanding of this notion. His novel *The Museum of Innocence* presents the museum as a location where the humanity of individuals is revealed, instead of corporations, states and nations having their say (Pamuk, 2013). To accurately represent humanity as a whole, museums need to look for different representations grounded in the everyday and individual, as these narratives can truly and imaginatively explore alternative viewpoints (ibid). Furthermore, I discussed a model which resonates with the practical elements of New Museology and the post-colonial critique of museums. This empathetic museum tries to be aware of the exclusivity and privilege it communicates. Therefore, it embraces its role as an anchor institution, acknowledges its complicity in a legacy of colonialism and white privilege, and develops sustainable strategic plans, narratives and resources to mitigate it (Jennings, 2019).

3. Methodology

The Contextual Analysis

Following the literature review I will explain the analysis chosen for this Master Thesis. For me, writing about art was something extremely challenging but also very captivating. Personally, I am a political scientist, not an art-related critic or historian. So when visiting museums or galleries I have never been able to analyze its characteristics or had the lexicon to truly put my thoughts to words. The first chapter of the analysis will directly deal with the formal elements and principles of art, and so culminate in me immediately stepping outside of my comfort zone and to actually start deliberating about the visual characteristics of Power Refugee. This part of the thesis will be far more descriptive for it discerns the different features and elements of Power Refugee.

So while the first chapter will be quite pictorial, in order to discuss the position of the artwork Power Refugee in The Hague's museum Humanity House, the continuance of the contextual analysis will take a more analytical look at the case at hand. Professional practitioners from all visual fields, ranging from artists to curators, have all been influenced by different ways of contemporary and historical understandings. For an individual working with visuals, the knowledge and perception of past and present is quite relevant to the specialist's pathway. The contextual analysis will guide me comprehending the context and different elements that were at work during the construction and release of Power Refugee. By doing so, I hope to grasp a better understanding of the interplay between the artist, museum and the individuals portrayed. By means of the MA thesis I aim to analyze aspects of the art design and consider how this professional body of work relates to my own specialist practice and personal relationship to the museum Humanity House.

All in all, the success of the contextual analysis will be based on the incorporation of a formal analysis, discussing who made it and how, its social purpose & patronage and the cultural meaning & theoretical significance.

The basic understanding of context in the humanities is to dissect the circumstance and elements surrounding a piece (be it literature or art), which may, or may not, be seen at first glance and it will therefore go deeper, much

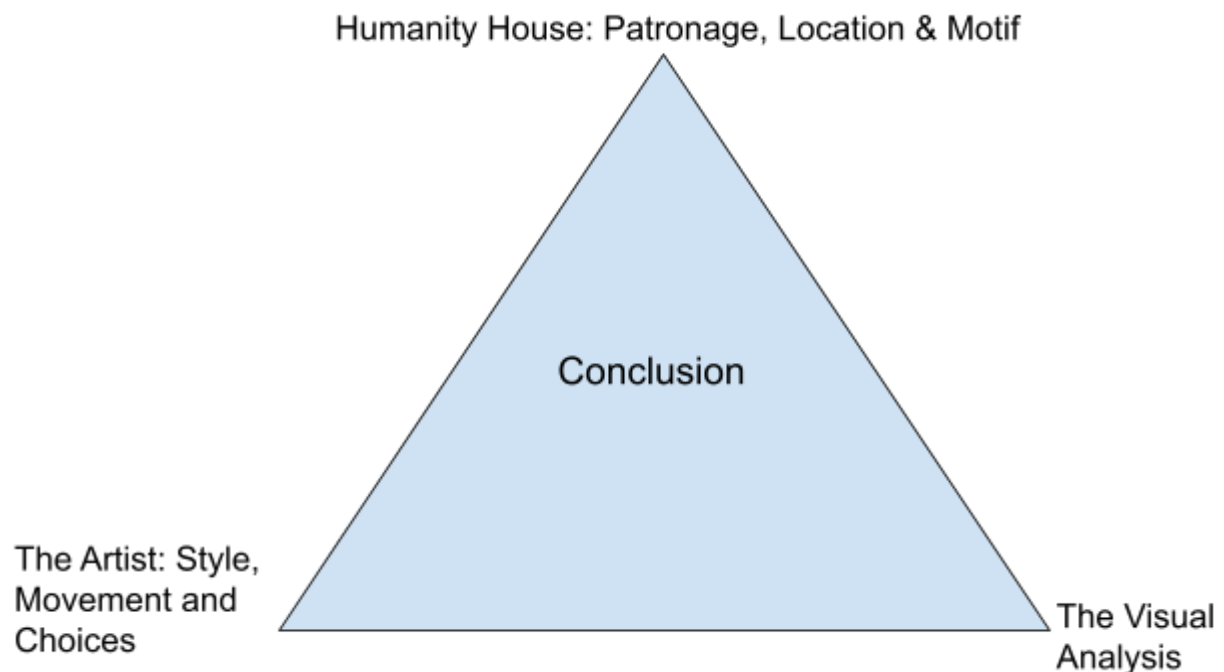
deeper. Fundamentally, the ambition of this contextual analysis will be to consider how Power Refugee fits into and impacts the world around it. Power Refugee is a historically embedded object and a product of human invention at a particular time and place. It is therefore also necessary to have an observation of its key formal elements and analyze the visual characteristics. However, this only forms the basis of the contextual analysis. The primary effort will be to extend it to the realm of research. Thereby, we will look at the social context in which it was created, as in works of art it is evident that they are mutually constituting (D'Alleva, 2004). In the contextual analysis I will evaluate and discuss a number of components surrounding - and factors involved in - the association and origin of the work of Power Refugee. The disintegration of the piece into small parts, and analyzing each one separately, will help to develop a critical understanding of the artwork and the parts involved. The contextual analysis is multivariable, which means it will take into account a broad scope of conditions in which the artwork was created and located. The analysis consequently tries to assess a number of disparate elements and thus lacks a specific sector-focus. These elements will come together in the final chapter which essentially reminisces on the MA thesis and uses the theoretical groundwork discussed in the literature review and my personal views.

The contextual analysis will be divided into 3 separate chapters which will help me to formulate a critical understanding of Power Refugee at Humanity House. Some subjects will be used interchangeably or be reiterated in different chapters. The contextual analysis' 3 chapters are:

1. The Visual Analysis
2. The Artist: Style, Movement & Choices
3. Humanity House: Patronage, Location & Motif

Images of the artwork and its assets will be used in the analysis frequently to further enhance the debate. The images used were either made during the production process or pictures taken concurrently with Power Refugee's opening day. The photographer was hired by Humanity House's Marketing and Communication department while the sketches and designs were provided by the artist. Furthermore, the analysis will be backed by my interviews with both artists and refugees which I did prior to Power Refugee's opening and was released on the Humanity House webpage. As you can see in the triangle here,

the first three chapters are the building blocks which will coalesce in the fourth and final chapter. The following paragraphs will further explain the chapters' purposes and content.



(Figure 2)

The Visual Analysis

In a way, performing a visual analysis is the basis of writing about art. Basically, through this specific inquiry I will be able to recognize the visual assets used by the artist when creating the artwork. For art-historical students the visual analysis is an essential roadblock in finalizing part of their program. However, for me as a political researcher, it will help explain the decisions of the artist while also providing me with the accurate lexicon to put this into words. The outcomes of the visual analysis help me in formulating artistic claims in the consecutive chapters. This is one of the reasons that I have chosen to use two textbooks used in art-departments when fulfilling this visual analysis:

1. Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*
2. Anne D'Alleva's *LOOK!: The Fundamentals of Art History*

The visual analysis will start by presenting the artwork's features and will further address the formal attributes of Power Refugee alongside images of it. The discussion of these elements and principles will be done in a clear and concise manner. Because of this chapter, I will fully understand the foundations on which

Power Refugee is built and be able to translate what I have seen into the right vocabulary. The chapter will first be divided in a general presentation of the artwork followed by two separate subjects to organize the visual information and comment on the overall composition. These separate subjects are the following:

The Elements of Art

Colour. While certainly explanatory for the layman, in this section I will analyze the different types of hues that are used in the artwork, whether particular colours are used (primary/secondary colours), and the level of saturation (intensity, which gives the strengthenedness or brightness of a colour) is. Value will be discussed in this section also. This is the amount of dark and light in the artwork and contrast is the change between these tones of black and white. Moreover, colour is used to define and differentiate the lines, space, shapes and forms (D'Alleva, 2004) (Barnet, 2015).

Lines. A line is essentially a one-dimensional path created by a point moving in space (Barnet, 2015). The lines are able to communicate information through their character and direction, but also to direct your eyes around the compositions. Therefore, I might ask myself whether the lines in use are continuous and strong, or perhaps broken and blurred. However, we can also discuss the thickness, its colour and whether perhaps the viewer's eyes are expected to move towards something.

Space and scale. When using the term space we discuss whether the artwork expresses the sense of three-dimensional space for instance. So is Power Refugee entirely flat in its creation? However, this also describes the area around the artwork as this can affect the way the audience views Power Refugee and as it shapes the object itself. The scale of the artwork will also come into play here and the viewer's position in relation to the artwork (D'Alleva, 2004).

Furthermore, the artist might try to create an illusion of depth to further accentuate this effect. Space on the other hand, is the area surrounding implied or real objects.

Texture. When looking at Power Refugee is the texture of the artwork smooth or rough? Texture also provides an illusion of reality or tries to do the opposite. Moreover, can we for instance see marks of the tools used by the artists? In this section I will also provide comments on the material used in the artwork and describe the difference of visual and actual texture.

The Principles of Art

Balance. When analyzing Power Refugee I will deliberate whether or not the elements in the aforementioned paragraph provide visual balance. So are the elements and features etc. used in a harmonious way leading to symmetry, or doing the opposite to asymmetry? (Barnet, 2015 & D'Alleva, 2004).

Contrast, Emphasis and Movement. By examining the colours of Power Refugee we can make conclusions based on the different ways they are used in creating the artwork. For instance, by using markedly different colours the artist can bring vitality to the art while monochromatic colours can bring stability. The principles of emphasis and movement are closely related to contrast and will be examined in the same section. By using specific elements the artist might be able to create a focal point to which the viewer might be led. So is there a part which has a specific visual importance? This can mean that certain parts of the composition are of lesser concern to the viewer, which essentially leads to a sort of hierarchy in the entire composition (D'Alleva, 2004 & Barnet, 2015).

Movement then is the direction to the focal point to which the artwork/artist tries to lead the audience or general directional brushwork providing movement in Power Refugee (Barnet, 2015).

Repetition and Pattern. Is there a certain repetition of elements used in Power Refugee? Systematic repetition of certain shapes or forms can create a pattern in an artwork or a certain rhythm to it. This visual effect can carry the artist's intention and ideas throughout the artwork. (D'Alleva, 2004)

Variety and Unity. Fundamentally, we will here discuss if the elements and principles discussed in the previous sections fit together. So does Power Refugee provide a sense of harmony and cohesiveness to the viewer? However, it is possible that the artist deliberately tries to escape unity in his art to create a sense of disharmony for its audience. Furthermore, the variety of elements and principles can try to provide a feeling of conceptual unity with Power Refugee's central theme and structure. The artist then, is like a conductor of an orchestra (directing a plethora of principles and elements) providing either unity or discord. A central question does remain here: is the complete artwork greater than all its parts combined?

The Artist: Style, Movement and Choices

In this chapter I will characterize the maker(s) of Power Refugee and the style used in the artwork, while also taking into account the theoretical background on the representation of refugees discussed in the literature review. The concept of artistic style is an important one in art history and combines the visual elements with the appropriate contexts. Through the style used in Power Refugee by the artist I will try to scrutinize how it shapes and reflects on the world around it, is grounded theoretically and the interpretations of it. At the start a number of questions can be envisioned which this chapter will try to answer:

- Who is/are the maker(s) of Power Refugee and what can we say about his or her life, or ideas/intentions/power-dynamics/values that we can use or see to fully understand the work that is analyzed?
- Can the visual elements identified in the previous chapter be related to the style, movement or genre associated with the artwork?
- What can we learn from the relationship between the artist and his subjects?
- Do key images or objects have symbolic value or provide a cue to meaning or motif?

So in this chapter I will also be referring to elements and principles to describe the style in which the artwork was created and the artist's overall motif. In addition, this will take into account the individuals portrayed and I will also critically analyze symbols seen in the artwork. To further help me answer these questions, and discuss the aforementioned elements and principles, I have performed a combined interview with both the artists and the portrayed refugees for Humanity House and will help provide insight. This will help the debate on semantics, symbolism, style and the creative process.

Discussing the creative process is an important part of this chapter and the next, because both the artist(s) and the refugees were working very closely together in telling very personal stories. This chapter will resonate Spivak's subaltern, othering and elements of the visual representations and rhetorical practices in the portraying of refugees discussed in the literature review.

Humanity House: Patronage, Location & Motif

In this chapter I will characterize the cultural institution which commissioned Power Refugee. Our understanding of art is shaped by museums, patrons, artists

and other residences in which art might be located. The chapter will discuss the function of Humanity House as a museum and as the primary location of Power Refugee. Humanity House always had a clear ambition and assured intentions in its core values and these can be closely related to the second part of the literature review. But what is this motif of Humanity House and did Power Refugee fit within this structure? For this chapter I have also envisioned a set of question which I would like to see answered:

- Why was Power Refugee made/commissioned?
- Where could one see this artwork and who would have seen it or was the targeted audience?
- What was the purpose or intention of Power Refugee? And were these goals reached?

An essential part of this chapter is the incorporation of the project plans, creative process and other vital paperwork to the analysis. As an intern I was able to acquire and/or partly co-write parts of the necessary paperwork for the creation of Power Refugee. It is important to mention that as a previous active member of the programming department at Humanity House my supervisors permitted me to use these documents. With the acquired paperwork I can make deliberations if goals stipulated in the documents were reached and mull over the creative process of Humanity House as a location to the artwork and artist. Still, Humanity House made it clear that this does not want included the sharing of explicit financial statements of the project. Next, the concept of the empathetic museum will be scrutinized based on the documents, Humanity House's motif and my personal experiences. Furthermore, as a member of the team, I have been present at times during the creative process and the placement at Humanity House. Finally, the second part of the literature review is used to discuss the changing roles of museums in the era of migration and the close relationship of Power Refugee to this.

Conclusion

In this chapter I want to take a step back and provide a conclusion on the entire scope of factors discussed in relation to Power Refugee, the museum and the artist in a more unitary sense. With the analysis now finished I want to use the acquired knowledge in reviewing the interrelationship of Humanity House as Power Refugees' location related to the artistic creative process of the artwork.

Essentially, I want to use this chapter to conclude the broader (theoretical) discussion of Humanity House's functioning (taking into account its museology and the empathetic museum) and part in servicing refugees their voice through an artwork like Power Refugee. Furthermore, I want to ethically consider if in a collaborative artwork like Power Refugee, and in a museum, existing tropes might actually have been perpetuated. Therefore, it is important that I want to confront my own assumptions and provide criticism to the creative process of the artwork and my own perspective on this.

Concluding Remarks

On completion of the master thesis I will:

1. Understand the historical and contemporary practitioners' influences
2. Understand the context in which the artwork was produced
3. Understand the purpose, function and its location in relationship to the artwork
4. Be able to critically evaluate a work of art and relate it to the theoretical body provided and my personal experiences

4. The Visual Analysis



(Figure 3)

Name: Power Refugee

Artists: Jochem van Aller - JAWGEM <https://www.instagram.com/jawgem/>

Artistic Director: Richard Sluijs - Richlab www.richlab.nl

Date: 20th of June 2020

Location: Humanity House, Prinsegracht 8 Den Haag www.humanityhouse.org

4. 1 Introducing Power Refugee at Humanity House

In this part of the contextual analysis I will take a closer look at the artwork Power Refugee previously located at Humanity House. Power Refugee was placed in an *etalage* or display window, right across de Grote Markt at Prinsegracht 8, Den Haag. Presenting Power Refugee in an appropriate way to the reader is essential for the thesis. As of a couple of months ago, the artwork was removed from its current location because of Humanity House's closure at the beginning of 2021.

What immediately grasps our attention is the artwork's placement at a height of approximately 1,6 meters and directly to the right of the museum's

entrance. As you can see in the picture on the previous page, the entrance to Humanity House is slightly to the left, while the window beyond beholds the museum's café. The height of the window demonstrates the proportion of the artwork to the viewer standing on the outside. The elevation and stature of the artwork compared to onlookers is best shown by looking at the front page of the thesis. This specific image demonstrates the portrayed individuals, myself and two of my colleagues standing in front of the display window. So to visually examine Power Refugee, pedestrians have to really stand still and look up. For individuals travelling on foot or by car, merely having a quick peek while moving onwards to their destination is not enough for comprehending the artwork aptly. By virtue of this fact, I created a list of the layers of design effectively at play in Power Refugee.

Power Refugee is fundamentally an installation in which multiple dimensions are at play and those can be divided into 3 different layers of design. Throughout the master thesis the layers of design will be evoked to guide parts of my argument and to communicate knowledge of the artwork. They are as follows:

1. The first tier is the window itself displaying five essential features.
 - a. In the upper center of the window the title *Power Refugee*.
 - b. In the lower center of the window are two words: *Grenzeloos & Statenloos*. A dividing border is between them.
 - c. Two rows of flags are rising up from the lower-left of the window and lower-right. The two rows converge in the center of the window. These flags are the countries through which the refugees' family have travelled to reach the Netherlands.
 - d. On the bottom of the window the names of the artist (*JAWGEM*) and artistic director (*Richlab*) are displayed.
 - e. A QR-code slightly above the previously mentioned names, leading to my interview with both the artist, artistic director and the refugees.
2. The second tier featuring two panels hanging slightly in front of the third tier:
 - a. The panel to the right portraying the family of the male refugee.
 - b. The panel to the left portraying the family of the female refugee.

3. The third tier features three panels prominently placed at the display window's rear wall and slightly behind the panels of tier two.
 - a. The panel to the right portraying the male refugee Mohamad Al-Jaf. With his t-shirt stating: *Onderwijs is het belangrijkste wapen dat je kunt gebruiken om de wereld te veranderen*. Loosely translated to: education is the best tool to change the world. Furthermore, he carries a set of books in his right hand.
 - b. The panel in the center which depicts a passport. The passport features two sets of texts: *the best of both worlds* & *Our Netherlands*. Followed by a design made up of two thumbs up, a crown, and two hearts braided into one another.
 - c. The panel to the right portraying the female refugee Maria Toko in a dancer's pose.

4. 2 The Elements of Art in Power Refugee

In this subchapter we will discuss the elements of art within Power Refugee. For first time viewers the *colours* of the artwork stand out at once. Power Refugee is characterized by bright, vibrant colours. However, the colours in use are actually quite limited. The primary colours red and yellow emerge prosperously, followed by the secondary colours of orange and green. The texts displayed use predominantly a white tint while some hints of black, white and brown complete the compositions. The colour temperature can be perceived as quite warm ranging from yellow, red to orange. These colours can be understood as quite complementary to one another (Barnet, 2015). Especially, red and yellow exert strongly together through the sharing of the same relative intensity and being analogous on the colour spectrum. This peculiarity is called equiluminance and brings about a high rate of saturation - or purity - of the colours (Ibid., 2015). The colour interaction is also an important factor at play in exhibiting the artwork for the audience. During the day, sunlight shines into Power Refugee's display window while at night halogen lights inside provide the appropriate illumination. So at noon, sunlight leads to anticipating the colours as far brighter compared to the halogen lighting at nighttime, in which lighting manifests an opaque luminosity on Power Refugee's primary compositions.

The *lines* in Power Refugee have an assortment of different features. When looking at the panels in tier 3 we see lines directed towards the female

and male refugees. This is demonstrated when looking at the figure on the next page, one of Power Refugee's several concept designs. The lines used are quite hard and favored over loose or swirling ones. The boldness of the lines creates a dynamic effect and captures the sense of almost being in print, as if appropriated from comic books. The lines provide structure to the compositions on the panels and are able to emphasize the centerpiece in each of them; either the refugee in tier 3 or the refugees' family in tier 2. The lines in the panels are therefore also very expressive.



(Figure 4)

A clear counterpart is the passport-panel in tier 3, using swirling lines to adorn the passport. These lines suggest a kind of energy or movement, which is in stark contrast to the hard vertical dividing line at its center. Moreover, the lines in tier 2 and tier 3 are hard-edged and have a staccato visual movement, which is interestingly still able to provide a comfortable feeling for the pedestrians' gaze. This is a result of the decreasing colour intensity and value at the edges of the panel compositions, which can be perceived in figure 2 as well.

When spectators look onto Power Refugee, its multidimensional use of *space* is evident. As I have introduced at the start of this chapter, three separate tiers, or rows, can be detected. This commences at the window, followed by the second tier containing two panels of the refugees' families and the final tier including the two refugees with the passport at its center. Dimensionality is created herein by hanging the two rows of panels in front of one another and the compositions located on the window itself. The multidimensionality of Power Refugee provides a sense of visual order. The three tiers of creation cause the audience to categorize space due to the inception of depth. When moving alongside the display window the gazers' perspective changes and so does the artwork. The form and space, whether actual or implied, are markers for Power Refugee and how to perceive its constituted reality. The interrelationship of the three tiers by the artist's creative manipulation give the sense for this visual order (D'Alleva, 2004). The visual order is hierarchical because of a scalar relationship created by hanging the two panels in front of the final row of larger ones. The proportion and scale are incremental in the artwork. Relatively small

differences like hanging panels in front of one another and the general dissimilarity of panel scales are able to make a strong visual impact. As a result, the rear set of panels prevail as the focal point to the observer.

To resolve the elements of art in Power Refugee we inspect its *texture*. Again, the three tiers of the entire artwork help decide whether the texture is either smooth or rough. In Power Refugee the main difference in texture is between the first and final two tiers. Both the actual texture of the panels, perceived by running my hand over the object, and visual texture, the implication by the artist through the manipulation of material, is as smooth as possible (Barnet, 2015). The panels themselves are made off canvas and the artist adopted liquitex spray paint, paint markers and liquitex freestyle brushes made out of synthetic nylon. This induces both the visual smoothness to the viewers' eye and the real surface quality. The window's texture is of a different sort. While the double glazed glass window provides a visual sense of smoothness, the compositions' actual texture on the window is not. The rows of flags seen in figure two use a mixture of gouache and aquarel which are genuinely rough to the touch. Yet, the texts on the display window are made using vinyl as a form of typography. These are again as smooth to the touch like the window itself. To sum up, there is a lack of tactility at play in Power Refugee due to both the visual and actual smoothness in the two rows of panels and the visual smoothness of the glass window.

4. 3 The Principles of Art in Power Refugee

In this subchapter we discuss the artistic principles in Power Refugee and decide how the elements and features in the aforementioned chapter have been orchestrated and arranged. The first principle we are considering is *balance*. In Power Refugee I would like to argue that there is a clear symmetrical balance throughout the entire artwork. There is a clear symmetry provided by visually stable composition designs on both sides of the vertical axis. The axis is centered at the entwining hearts within the passport, shown to the right here. The line moves along vertically, abreast with the tier 1 words *grenzenloos* and *statenloos*.



(Figure 5)

As conferred by Barnet, symmetrical compositions are ordinarily dominated by a central anchoring point (Barnet, 2015). The passport, or in fact the entwined heart at its center, is the central anchoring point of the entire production (figure 5). Furthermore, the compositional elements of Power Refugee are clearly not offset from one another as we can ascertain a clear harmony. There is a sense of equilibrium provided by the dyadic sets of flags, portrayed refugees and their families in tier one, two and three. Yet, there is a feeling of movement due to the multidimensionality provided by the panels' depth, diminishing colour intensity at the edges (figure 5) and usage of directional lines in the artwork.

This next section then begs the question if certain areas are emphasized over other ones. Nonetheless, in Power Refugee there is an area of fundamental visual *emphasis*. Taking into account the layers of design, and the elements of art in the previous subchapter, the final tier of panels form the location where the primary visual importance is found. We can isolate this area by discerning areas of lesser importance from the hierarchy formulated by the artist. The multidimensionality of the artwork essentially provides the fundamentals for the focus on the final row of panels. By hanging the smaller panels in front of larger ones, the artist is able to devise a visual impact on the viewers' gaze.



(Figure 6)

Thereby leading them towards the focal point of his creation, the portrayal of both refugees and the passport in the center. Furthermore, colour intensity diminishing at the edges of the final row of panels, along with guiding lines, are able to direct your eyes towards both the two refugees (figure 4) and the central passport (figure 5). In the same way, the two panels portraying the refugees' families, either point or look upwards to both refugees. The colours in use are monochromatic and bring stability to the compositions. Likewise, we can deduce that *movement* is created by imbuing the portrayed subjects with a dynamic pose (figure 3 & 6). The female refugee's pose is invigorated by her dancer's stance. Her posture provides visual tension, as if time has stopped for a brief second and she is inclined to finish her move. On the other hand, the male's

demeanor is quite confident or one of strength. His posture is quite formal, standing straight and holding a set of textbooks in his right hand. Finally, it is important to mention that both sets of flags on either side of the window move and direct your eyes towards the central passport.

As can be surmised from the previous paragraph discussing the balance in Power Refugee, there is without a doubt *repetition* within the craftsmanship. As is mentioned, through the mirroring sets of panels the artist was able to create symmetrical balance. This is a result of the *patterns* - repeating shapes and forms - which have led to a certain rhythm in the entire scope of the artwork. This rhythm is created through the use of certain elements and principles repeated over and over. Stylized patterns combined with lines, colour, shape are united into a rhythmic flow from the edge towards the center of each panel (figure 4, 5 & 6). The placing of the composition within sets of diagonal lines, imbued by the colour intensity, increases the sense of movement and drama. The fairly simple patterns of lines and colour moving onwards to the center stage of the panels establish rhythmic undulations (Barnet, 2015). The contrast of the monochromatic colours, distinguished by graphic patterns and lines, are quite stunning in the design. Inherently, the visual effects provided by the elements and principles are able to effectively carry the artist's intention throughout the artwork.

To finalize this section, we finish by discussing whether *unity* and *variety* are located in Power Refugee. By looking back at the elements and principles discussed in the previous paragraphs I would argue that this is the case for both. There is a sense of unity and cohesiveness established for the audience by using a variety of art principles and elements. As is argued by D'Alleva, a work of art is the strongest when there is a visual sense that all the parts fit together and when it is able to express an overall unity in composition and form (D'Alleva, 2004). While individuals might argue against this, I concur that Power Refugee predominantly resembles an artwork with a clear structure and can overall be easily understood by first-time viewers.

Conclusion

To conclude the visual analysis I want to take into account the question I used at the end of my methodology: Is the overall piece greater than all its parts combined? My answer is grounded on that the functions of line, scale, patterns

and dimensionality yield to the more subjective view of the entire work, and that from an appreciation of the principles of art and meaning a sense of completeness resonates. The patterns used here are able to bring rhythm to the work of art. The monochromatic colours, the relatively close neighbours on the colour spectrum, are able to provide unity and for me personally a sense of warmth, but also energy and strength. The contrasting colours and multidimensionality do tend to make the art compositions burst visually. The materials used by the artist contributed to these features of the artwork as well. Moreover, the anchoring point, centered in the passport, provides a sort of equilibrium on which the dimensionality of the artwork is built and tries to lead the onlookers' eye onwards to the differing panels. Through this anchoring point and the sets of lines moving along the middle of artwork, there is a sense of interdependence between the tiers and panels. It creates organic unity; as without either one of the panels the entire artwork collapses onto itself leaving the remainder of the parts failing to function correctly, thereby also perpetuating balance. There is a great diversity of elements unified within the complex system of panels on Power Refugee. However, for its audience they are still easy to grasp. Although some parts are certainly endorsed over others, all contribute to the whole, leading to the entire artwork emanating an undeniable wholeness. In the next chapters the artwork will be deconstructed further. The information acquired from the visual analysis will help lend support for the examination.

5. The Artist: Style, Movement and Choices

In the second chapter of the analysis of Power Refugee I will be trying to characterize the maker of Power Refugee and stylistic choices made. This ranges from the style, created compositions, to the textual aspects within the artwork. Secondly, the theoretical background and the application of visual elements and principles from the previous chapter will be able to shed light on this topic. Next, what will also help me in providing an interpretation is the interview that I have performed for Humanity House during the release of Power Refugee. The interview was published on Humanity House's webpage and a smaller segment was distributed on their respective youtube channel³. The artist-subject relationship is also an important feature, which will be exemplified through the artwork's title. This discussion is important as both the artist and the two refugees were working in close proximity sharing deeply personal events. Finally, the chapter will also reminisce on the theory of the visual representations and rhetorical practices in the portraying of refugees discussed in the literature review.

5. 1 The Artist

Jochem van Aller (1989), or preferably known by his pseudonym JAWGEM, lives and works in The Hague and is closely linked to the organization The Hague Street Art (THSA). He is a graduate of the Willem De Kooning Academy for media, arts, design and leisure in Rotterdam. When Humanity House contacted The Hague Street Art for the creation of an artwork, JAWGEM was put forward by the organization to create the artwork for Humanity House, with Richard Sluis functioning as the artistic director. THSA is a platform of the foundation AIGHT promoting anything related to street -and the visual arts in The Hague and its surrounding municipalities. With a specific focus for young and talented artists, THSA is able to provide guidance and present a starting point, where talented individuals can come into contact with experienced artists, an education and perhaps interested parties or patrons (THSA, 2021). The relation between the artist and Humanity House will be discussed in the next chapter further. Richard Sluijs of Richlab worked as the artistic director on this project by which he stimulated, enabled and supervised the vision of JAWGEM and tried to further

³ Official segment of the interview on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH_8J1_NdVQ

unify his creation, while also advising the Humanity House organization (including myself).

So how should we characterize the style of JAWGEM? As was mentioned in the methodology, style is a concept formed out of the visual elements, principles and characteristics combined with the appropriate contexts. In a personal biography of Jochem on the website of THSA he explains that he is inspired by modern fashion, pop culture/movement, comics, action figures and the New Wave of the 1980s (THSA, 2021). Personally, he argues that his artforms are recognizable by clean, clear lines, an eye for detail and having somewhat of a naughty touch. Moreover, as an illustrator he has a strong ionic approach to his creations and is always able to bring interesting or alluring twists through special symbols or objects (Ibid, 2021). In the next subchapters I will present the style or art movement the artist belongs to. The visual analysis in the previous chapter and his personal biography are able to provide points for take-off. However, for the sake of the master thesis it is important to also ground this theoretically and scrutinize further characteristics inserted in the artwork. It is for that reason we will be taking a closer look at textual elements and the use of symbols or objects within his creation. It is therefore an interesting quest to discern to which artistic movement I dare to place Jawgem and his creation. Sure enough, placing an artist in one group or movement is actually closely followed by genuine narrow-minded thinking and parochialism I would argue, which is certainly not in favour of the artist and my own academic scholarship. However, there are certain factors provided by the visual analysis, notions in the words he uses, in the creation of Power Refugee and perhaps also by the overall purpose of the work.

5. 2 Artistic Movement and Style

What stands out in Power Refugee? What elements, principles and characteristics of the artwork are so clear-cut that we are able to group them together into a specific art movement? To start this exercise I would like to start by noting several principles and elements that are prominent in Power Refugee. First of all, by looking at the colours used in the composition we can discern that they are - as previously discussed - bright, quite vibrant and monochromatic. The lines used by Jawgem are hard with clear strokes, whilst almost all following straight directions; towards the center composition of the panel. As the visual analysis

shows, there is a certain rhythm due to the repeating of patterns, dimensionality of the hanging panels and use of monochromatic colours. This forms a cohesive creation with a clear structure, easily ascertained for the average passerby in The Hague or any art-layman. Furthermore, the material used for the panels is canvas, while Jawgem adopted liquitex spray paint, paint markers and liquitex freestyle brushes made of synthetic nylon to conceive a visual smoothness to the viewers' eye.

However, let us add more general observations and relate it to passages of his biography. So for this short section we use the first section of the visual analysis, specifically the 3 sets of tiers, and note what comes to mind when a typical pedestrian observes Power Refugee (see figure 7). The individual passerby first sees a woman or a man created in a relatively easy to comprehend comic book or action figure style type of iconography. Furthermore, on the cusp of the window the individual sees the sensational title *Power Refugee*, which immediately tries to fixate rather simplistically and positively on a tense social and political situation in the Netherlands.



(Figure 7)

Centered behind the title is the (shared) passport, symbolizing a common identifier among inhabitants of this country. So, when merely walking alongside the window these 3 specific aspects would definitely enter one's mind sooner or later. Thereby I want to add another important factor, an observation of the population strolling alongside the window and glancing at the work of art. These individuals could in fact be anyone, again I mean anyone, living in The Hague or visiting this city. So the art has democratic significance, meaning that it focuses on untrained viewers or the general population, rather than art connoisseurs. Moreover, Jawgem himself contemplates that he is inspired by pop culture and comic books, with a special fixation for alluring twists or distinguishable objects or symbols (THSA, 2021). These stimuli of pop culture and comic books are shown in Power Refugee through the illustrated male and female alongside the

distinct passport and header. Taking into account that these observations and visual elements are inherent to Power Refugee, and some hints in his personal biography, you might already be able to deduce which art movement I am inclined to be moving on to.

The art movement I am referring to is *Pop Art*. Pop Art is described as an art movement originating in Great Britain and the United States and so titled due to the usurpation of techniques and imagery used in the commercial and popular culture of the 1950s and 1960s (Sothebys, 2021). It is truly difficult to put a definite label on Pop Art. From Richard Hamilton's designating it as a burst of creativity and frivolous innovation either merging or contrasting to the advancing commercial and consumer society, to Tilman Osterwold simply defining it as a buzzword, "an ironic and critical art born under capitalist technological conditions of the industrial society" (Osterwold, 1999, p.6). Finally, Jamie James (1996) adds that it is in fact high art mimicking low art, thereby elevating vulgar materials and techniques to refined culture. To this very day, renowned Pop Art-artists like Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol remain extremely popular. However, there is far more to this movement than meets the eye when one only considers Lichtenstein's comic book artworks or Warhol's paintings of Marilyn Monroe and his Campbell Soup Cans.

As specified by Jawgem, it starts with the word *pop*; the clipping of the word popular (THSA, 2021). Lawrence Alloway, member of a British Pop Art precursor titled the The Independent Group, was one of the first individuals in 1958 to use it as an adjective to the concept of art itself. Alloway discusses that "we need to consider the arts of the mass media. It is impossible to see them clearly within a code of aesthetics associated with minorities with upper-class and pastoral ideas because mass art is urban and democratic" (Alloway, 2006, p.59). This popular side of the movement is also firmly democratic, as this form of art is suitable to any and all people. However, Alloway personally stressed a different type of *pop* as well: the 'popping from the ground', as more and more new artists were coming to prominence (Ibid., 2006). Richard Hamilton, anew a member of The Independent Group, dared listing the characteristics - in letter to his friend - of what Pop Art supposedly would entail. It is transient (short-term solutions), low in cost, mass produced, big business, glamorous, gimmicky, expendable, aimed at the youth, designed for a large audience and finally popular (Osterwold, 1999). Hamilton's 1956s *Just what is it that makes today's*

homes so different, so appealing? is generally seen as the start of the movement. The artwork is an interesting example of Pop Art because it spoofs and characterizes 1950s culture and society by staging multiple products of that time on canvas ((See Appendix B) (James, 1996 & Osterwold, 1999)).

Pop Art tries to subvert compositions of value, originality and refuses contemporary art standards through repetition and mass production. Chosen subjects are the portraying of all aspects of popular culture or those phenomena having an impact on contemporary life (James, 1999). All sorts of iconography, from television, comic books to movies and advertising, were used to present the art as objectively and emphatically as possible. With also a type of extreme immediacy lacking condemnation or praise, "it leads to a form of iconoclasm that rejects 'high art' and purports a democratization of art" (Shanes, 2009, p.7). Next, it is generally understood that Pop Art embraced the commercial consumer society. However, that is not entirely true. Pop Art-artists are inspired by elements of modern society that are regarded as vulgar, but these elements were often portrayed in critical and ironic ways, through which they extend criticisms on the habits of mass society (Mamiya, 1992). Mamiya (1992) asserts this appropriately: "more than a glorification of the consumer society, in Pop Art lies the ironic and humorous critique to the standards of society" (p.5). It creates a paradox; as Pop Art uses modern society for its creative and inspiratory supply, while at the same time formulating a critique on that very same society. José Pierre (1977), on discussing one of Pop Art's objectives, mentions a certain coolness in its enactment and realization. By combining elements of high-art and low-art it reconciles the general public with art, a genuine democratic process (Pierre, 1977). The legacy of Pop Art resulted in crucial innovations for art across the world. For it has tried to make art available to anyone by returning it to the tangible dimension of popular culture and modern society. It disqualifies the discrepancies of high- and low art, what is in good or bad taste, and condemns the so-called "noble artistic traditions of the past" (Pierre, 1977, p.12). Christin Mamiya (1992) therefore also sees the immediacy of referencing contemporary events in their art as an important feature of the movement. She alludes to the relationship of modern society and consumer culture to Pop Art. To this very day the movement enjoys continuous periods of prosperity (Mamiya, 1992). Likewise, she argues that it is not about the significance of Pop Art as an art movement, but about the profound effect it

has tried to have on the direction of culture and society as a whole (Ibid., 1992) Like Andy Warhol has profoundly put it: "everything is Pop and Pop is everything" (Osterwold, 1999, p.227).

Contemporary Pop Art remains in a continuous dialogue with consumer culture and modern society. Like its forerunners, the movement at the end of 20th century and the decades following it, have maintained a critical evaluation of (mostly) Western society's values, relationships and interactions. Essentially, it assesses present day symbols and icons, while borrowing and becoming inspired by past artistic achievements from that very same movement (Livingstone, 1990). Therefore, the movement is noted for its continuous facilitation of critical examinations of society through despised images of that same culture and society. Through the creation of dialogue it tries to challenge our assumption about the purpose and identity of certain objects or symbols, the society itself and culture as a whole. In a world accompanied by a continuous stream of images and messages, Pop Art again and again embraces ideas and beliefs that dare to provoke and challenge the supposed status-quo (Shanes, 2009).

To provide an understanding of contemporary forms of Pop Art, necessary for understanding why I dare to categorize Power Refugee as a form of Pop Art, it is compelling and quite interesting to introduce an artist of current acclaim. Therefore, I am introducing Jeff Koons, a divisive American contemporary (pop)-artist. In his numerous creations he tries to counteract the division between reality and appearance, art as a commodity and society's fixation with Pop culture through sculptures, paintings and everyday objects. In order to test the boundaries of acceptable taste, Koons emphasizes and manipulates mass-produced cultural objects and themes - including pornography - to push the limits of 20th century censorship (Tate, 2021). Interestingly, he also tries to uncover the nuances of marketing; to remark on our psychological investment in consumerism and how these consumer products are fabricated to allure (Art Knowledge News n.d.). Specifically, his Equilibrium exhibition is quite analogous to Power Refugee (see Appendix C). Jeff Koons produced an interesting display of ingenuity. An equilibrium tank filled with three basketballs was surrounded by a series of Nike-cladded basketball players. These posters represented young, working-class and black Americans achieving fame and fortune in elevated roles of power and respect. The exhibition comments on the USA's traditional social system which omits the African-American's desire for the same power and

respect as their co-residents (Tate, 2021). On the other hand, the equilibrium bath with its suspended basketballs represented the ultimate statuses of existence: either death or fame (Tate, 2021). The exhibitions immediately generated broad responses from critics and the general public alike. It is a testament to the diversity of Pop Art, with a seemingly ambiguous character it is far more complex than some critics would accept and therefore able to communicate to the general public what few art movements or styles can.

Thereby let us return to Power Refugee and its affiliation with (contemporary) Pop Art. Actually, the recent June 15th episode of College Tour⁴ really created the backdrop for me extensively associating Jawgem's Power Refugee to the Pop Art movement. The episode partly covered Jeff Koons and focused on his art located at Het Stedelijk Museum, his dealing with criticism and possibly future cooperation with Het Rijksmuseum. Still, it made me study him and take a glance at his previous works and exhibitions. Like the painting from the Equilibrium exposition added in the Appendix (C), it can be closely related to the approach in which the refugees are portrayed in the artwork I am analyzing. Like the basketball players, both refugees are depicted in elevated roles of power and respect. Not merely latching on to society, they are depicted as models of success and achieving social equilibrium (Tate, 2021). Power Refugee is certainly not as revolutionary as the seminal pieces during the movement's heyday in the '60s, or Jeff Koon's recent exhibitions, it does try to be as noticeable I would argue. The placement of Power Refugee located at Humanity House's Prinsegracht across The Grote Markt is exemplary for trying to be iconoclastic; decreasing the gap between high art and low art, cutting through the distinction of commercial art and fine art, and essentially creating the democratic and nondiscriminatory essences of a Pop Art-artwork. To again quote Alloway, he argues that "Pop Art is able to bring back the realities and interrelationships of everyday life in which ordinary people derived most of their visual pleasure" (e.g. comics, television and magazines) (Alloway, 2006, p. 28). This is a factor at play in Jawgem's comic book-inspired depiction of both refugees Still, at the start of this subchapter I brought about the notion of particular principles and elements grouped together in a specific movement. The ones I mentioned were the artist's use of bright, vibrant and monochromatic colours, followed by hard

⁴ College Tour Season 14 Episode 6, June 15th 2021
https://www.npostart.nl/college-tour/15-06-2021/KN_1726277

and clear lines moving in straight directions towards the center compositions, all in all in a certain rhythm of repeating patterns. In essence, the principal use of bold and bright primary colours partake in their affiliation to comic books. Secondly, the typical use of thick lines is also strongly affiliated to the comic 'bookish' side of Pop Art. A good example of these two elements in a comic book-style Pop Art-artwork is Roy Lichtenstein's 1963 *In the Car* (See Appendix D). This piece clearly represents your typical comic book palette and uses bold primary colours and thick, straight and hard-edged lines. It is clear that Power Refugee's method of communicating its art is accessible and a democratic concept universally understandable, while still having several layers and components showing depth. So, as I have already argued on the bases of elements of art, Pop Art's importance also comes from the previously mentioned reutilization or altering of mundane commonplace objects and comprehensible images which oftentimes serve as subtle expressions of social criticism. The next subchapters will therefore further dissect visual and textual features of Power Refugee.

5. 3 The New Passport: the Altering of a Mundane Object

In the previous subchapter we discussed the notion of Pop Art-artists' efforts to satirise or criticise certain objects by altering them. In Power Refugee there is one object that is clearly enlarged for the audience and of crucial importance to the piece. The mundane object I am speaking about is located at the center of the third tier: the shared passport (see figure 3). Passports are official documents that identify the holder as a citizen of a particular country. In the Netherlands this document is a valid proof of identity and the government requests the authorities of other countries to permit the entry or return of its holder (Kershavarz, 2016). In my Dutch passport it is requested in a very specific way:

In the name of his majesty the King of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange-Nassau, Etc. Etc. Etc., the minister of Foreign Affairs requests all authorities of friendly powers to allow the bearer of the present passport to pass freely without let or hindrance to afford the bearer every assistance and protection which may be necessary.

Epitomized in each passport are certain privileges - and lack thereof - leading to a representation of international power structures (Bankier, 2020). A good example able to articulate this accordingly is the Henley & Partners passport index ranking each passport based on their total mobility score⁵. The organization classifies passports based on which states a holder can visit without a prior visa (H&P, 2021). At the top of the scale sits Japan, with the Netherlands sitting comfortably at rank 6, Angola ranked 90th and Iraq situated just above rock-bottom (Ibid., 2021). From this distinction comes the concept of 'passport privilege', meaning that some passports are stronger by providing access to a larger range of states, while weaker ones are denied entry without a visa (Bankier, 2020). It is not without a reason that I would mention Angola and Iraq; they are precisely the nation-states from which both refugees portrayed in the artwork hail.

A passport is internationally accepted as a normal part of transnational movement and one of the most widely recognized documents in the world. Still, the reality is that within the passport prevails a tense and complex condition. Miami University's Catherine Mazanek (2017) accurately describes this tension. She declares that the document is the representation of the push and pull capabilities that negotiate power and control in a globalized world (Mazanek, 2017). Mazanek designates these two as the cosmopolitan global existence and the nation-state. So on the one hand, the passport is able to reinforce the boundaries of the nation-state and partake in the territorial fixing of order, while also issuing - physically and ideologically - international governance and facilitating the movement of the global citizen (Mazanek, 2017 & Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002). Prior to the era of migration and the acceleration of the globalized world, it was mostly assumed that a citizen of a nation-state would remain in their country of birth and this location would function as the dominant course of identity formation for the rest of their lives (Croucher, 2009). Instead, cosmopolitanism has led to the belief that an individual is part of a global community; we do not only belong to the nation-states but are inherently citizens of society filled with individuals from different societies and cultures. Globalization has allowed for a compression of time and space leading to one's identity no longer being defined by the one single nation-state, instead it is a sense of belonging to a more global sense of community (Ibid., 2009). As a

⁵ To see your passport-rank: <https://www.henleyglobal.com/passport-index/ranking>

document, the passport also asserts the identity of the nation-state. Throughout its numerous pages, there is a symbolic assertion of cultural distinction by using specific imagery (Flemming, 2014). The imagery serves a plethora of purposes: from holographic images employed for security purposes to the development of aesthetics (Flemming, 2014). However, both the decorations and security images do actually serve a singular purpose: they are there to make clear that the country to which the traveler is going to, and the traveler him/herself, are affected when using the passport. Using a passport is in itself an assertion of the ideology of the nation-state, which through its usage works to reshape the loyalty and sense of belonging to the state (Mazanek, 2017).

Certainly not all the world's nation-states use the same level of extensive imagery in their respective passports. Still, it is of the utmost importance to know that a nation-state desires to differentiate its cultural identity when comparing itself to others (Erdal & Midtboen, 2021). Therefore, it frames, which as Entman (1993) describes in the literature review is the "selected aspects of a perceived reality and to make them more noticeable in a communicating text to causally promote a particular problem definition" (p.52). The imagery within the passport is used in a very selective manner as well. Specifically, by its imagery in the passport it is the nation-state's method to define one's national identity, as it is given agency to define the imagery in the holder's passport. As an individual crosses the borders of a state it is the passport to remind the weary traveler that they are not, as Salter coins, 'denationalized' (Salter, 2006). Like its function and national imagery, the passport defines to which nation an individual belongs. In the age of migration and globalization this leads to a paradox. The nation-state fears the challenges to its identity in a globalized world, with one of its actions being the reasserting of ideological bases of belonging to the nation through their passport, which actually in way also muddles the individual's belonging, as it allows them to travel across borders and partaking in this globalized world (Mazanek, 2017).

The recent inflow of migration, our contemporary accelerated globalization and the expanding digital world has for many, including the refugees portrayed here, led to tension between belonging to a larger - or different - world community and adhering to the identity of the nation-state in which one lives (Roshwald, 2015). Therefore, in the artwork *Power Refugee* the passport symbolizes thinking beyond the cultural differentialism of belonging to a specific

(Dutch) nation-state and surpassing it by promoting a passport shared by both individuals. The new passport promotes the cosmopolitan ideal of sharing the nation (*our Netherlands*) and by even stating: *the best of both worlds*. It still resembles that same document which supposedly facilitates physical movement across borders of nation-states while having been altered. As a result, it also reflects the idea of a holder who is no longer stringent to the Netherlands, with both refugees' migratory identity encapsulated in the shared passport. The 'migratory identity' I refer to is the symbolic value of the flags placed on the display window, showing the route each refugee has travelled until reaching his or her final destination: the Netherlands, our Netherlands. Thereby manifesting the physical movements each individual has made and evidently showing the belonging to something larger than just the one world. Interestingly, Beck and Levy (2013) demonstrated the hypothesis that cosmopolitanism and nationalism are not the antithesis of one another: 'national attachments are potential mediators between cosmopolitan and individual horizons along which fresh identifications unfold' (Beck & Levy, 2013). Power Refugee's passport is an example of a possible new identification; one demonstrating cultural distinction by belonging to the nation-state and the cosmopolitan idea of relating it to globality, to something shared between individuals across our globe. The new passport is not merely a political document for travelling to another state, it is an altered object to help understand and satirise our globalizing society. For Muhammad and Maria, the refugees of Power Refugee, it is interpreted as the need of belonging to both the Netherlands, and having all those different worlds and histories assembled in one single passport.

5. 4 The Title: Problematic Terminology and Artist-Subject Interplay

The previous subchapter examined one of the primary compositions in the artwork. This subchapter, on the other hand, will discuss the artist-subject relationship alongside the title of the artwork. For the artist, especially one who is employed by an organization like Humanity House, there are critical and ethical challenges when devising a collaborative project with refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and anything in between. An artist, like Jawgem, has to understand that there are considerations to be made when creating a representation of these individuals. There is a constant tension or fear that the agenda of the artist is able to lead towards dynamics of othering, which was

understood by both him, the organization and refugees alike. This subchapter will first start by elaborating upon the title of the artwork and then a more general discussion of the representation of refugees in our artwork of analysis.

The phrasing of Power Refugee is a great way to start off discussing this relationship between those portrayed, the artist and the ethical considerations when creating such a piece. Hereby, we first have a special focus on the terminology of 'refugee' itself. It might seem strange to the reader that in the thesis the quite constrained term of refugee is in use continuously. The public and academic debate is conflicted about the use of certain terminology when discussing and assessing migration since the 2015 European Migrant Crisis (Steinhilper, 2021). The fact is that failing to employ the correct terminology has enormous consequences, more than just semantic ones. Pace and Severance (2016) mention that the debate over terminology has been overabundantly characterized as one of political correctness. However, they articulate that the terminology has "real implications for real people" (Pace & Severance, 2016, p. 69). We often see in the media and politics that the wider group of migrant population is categorized in two false dichotomous categories. These two categories are the arrangement of those who are deemed illegal and those identified as legal. Individuals themselves however, are never illegal, only their acts can be. In court decisions, media and politics the term illegal is oftentimes employed, even though this term implies a juridical conclusion without the individual having the chance of pleading their case (Pierigh, 2017). So before there is a true finding of guilt, the person is already referred to as felonious. The lack of having a valid status in the migration context describes an individual who is 'illegal'. Still, the usage of this term disproportionately focuses on those people who enter a nation-state surreptitiously. Overstayers, those individuals who entered a state through legal means and protracted their stay longer than authorized, are actually the majority of the 'illegal' side of the migrant population (Pace & Severance, 2016). Nevertheless, in a 1975 plenary meeting the UN Special Rapporteur requested that the United Nations would utilize the term irregular or non-documented to define individuals entering a state surreptitiously or illegally whilst trying to obtain a better life for themselves (General Assembly, 1975).

For politicians the legal migrant, the good one, is someone perceived by the 1951 UN Refugee Convention - the international treaty concerning the

protection of refugees - setting out his or her rights for protection (Andrew & Renata Kaldor, 2018). Under the aforementioned convention the legal definition of a refugee is a person who:

- "has the fear of being persecuted for reasons of nationality, membership of a particular political opinion or social group, race and religion;
- is located outside their country of nationality;
- is unwilling to avail themselves, is unable or, owing to such, the protection of that same country" (Refugee Convention, 1951, Article 1A).

This contrasts with asylum seekers who - in fear of violence, human rights violations or persecution - are seeking international protection. However, their claim has not yet been decided upon by the state in which he/she arrived and submitted their demands (Kaldor, 2018). While an asylum seeker has its specific legal definition, the asylum seeker is looked upon as quite skeptical by the general public, politicians and press. Which is prejudiced, because whether or not asylum is granted to the asylum seeker, the decision on the migrant's case is distinct from his or her's asylum requests (Pace & Severance, 2016). As a result, we tend to categorize all other migrants as those motivated by self-interest and with inherently bad egotistical characteristics, notoriously referred to as the economic migrant. This imprecise and exceedingly broad categorization is unable to grasp the personal circumstances of the migrant, whose motivations can be numerous (Pierigh, 2017).

All in all, even in our current climate the term refugee does not forego the undertone or categorization of those individuals located in the Netherlands being here primarily for their self-interest and supposedly living off our financial means. The juxtaposition of legal-illegal and refugee-asylum seeker is an example of one of the complex considerations needed to be made by both the artist, refugees and cultural institution. This frustration with apathetic terminology, alongside numerous ethical considerations, is inherent to the captioning of the artwork *Power Refugee*. It was chosen by the artist, Maria and Mohammad because of the lack of understanding of the general public discourse with what the meaning of terms can do to an individual targeted by harsh words or terminology. However, their dissatisfaction with the lack of reasonable and respectful discussions which lead to increasing polarizations in the general public debate has contributed to them fixating on that specific controversial terminology. So by using the term refugee, in association with the noun power,

they tried to alter this wording into something far more positive and strong, while trying to avoid the bothersome tropes accompanied by it. In fact, it is a counter-narrative which actually values the refugees' voice and perception. So the noun power - referring to the ability to do, act or influence the beliefs and actions of other people - is utilized with the term refugee. Mohammad announces that (translated) intention in my interview with him in Dutch⁶ quite firmly at min. 3:47:

"Power Refugee is the powerful formulation of my own passion and dreams. Of course, that applies to the many more migrants coming to the Netherlands, who all have those passions and dreams. The Power Refugee stands for what we are all capable of". - Mohammad Al-Jaf

Moving on, it is important to know that there are constant tensions and problems on the horizon when trying to create representations of such sensitive groups of people in this hypersensitive public debate. The first example was provided by discussing the complex reciprocity of words in the artwork's title, which can already create some tension. Personally, there is an often interesting claim made by artists trying to challenge the negative perceptions surrounding people from refugee backgrounds by depicting a supposedly 'human' story in their respective artistic expressions of displacement, conflict and exile (Blomfield & Lenette, 2018). This innately means that the artist thinks he is immune from enacting persistent tropes (othering) in his creations that are detrimental to the people he is so eager to present. One of those tropes is what Feldman (1994) hails as "anonymous corporeality" (p.407). These are visceral visualizations of the refugees' experience sensationalized and rendering them to a faceless and silenced mass (Feldman, 1994). Consequently, this trope leads to individuals portrayed in the popular conventional ways: the emotional pictures triggering action and empathy for humanitarian organizations, synonymous to the widely observed destitute African woman with child and the large, crammed together groups of people fleeing violence. Hence, this channels the embodiment of the

⁶ The Interview was released on the Humanity House webpage and Youtube channel : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH_8J1_NdVQ&t=1s&ab_channel=HumanityHouse

helpless and mute victim, whereby stereotypes are reinforced and the agency of those depicted are not honoured (Malkki, 1996).

So what we need is a visual representation of the refugees in which the audience is engaged, pays attention and truly listens to the voices of those who are portrayed. Without focusing on themes of suffering, the artist should present an empowering narrative and multifaceted approach (Blomfield & Lenette, 2018). The artist needs to understand his positionality and that through his creation of art he partakes in the forming of a narrative towards a wider audience. Andrijasevic (2007) compellingly argues that empowerment is inherently linked to challenge common tropes of victimization and suffering, while it is also able to object to dominant narratives and prevalent stereotypes. Interestingly, Blomfield & Lenette (2018) suggest that one way such a thing can exist is by “presenting counter narratives that provide a holistic construction of the refugees’ individual historical, cultural, gender and political circumstances and background” (p.325). Thereby we sincerely must consult with individuals who are able to share their lived experiences and have them present their perspectives and singular narratives. These ongoing conversations will help combat the standard narrative of victimhood and really work towards storytelling, driven by the people who went through these experiences (Szörenyi, 2006 & Nunn, 2010). As such, the artist extends a voice to the individuals depicted and offers them agency for fear of simplifying or stereotyping the experiences the refugees have lived through. Besides simplifying and stereotyping, there is always a risk of retracting towards existing tropes and othering in the creation of this type of art (Rajaram, 2002). So what actually happens is that, instead of providing an empowering narrative or a multifaceted concept, we resort to focus on sensationalized themes such as misfortune, loss or agony (Malkki, 1996). Moreover, Rajaram (2002) contends that a lack of agency for subjects of refugee backgrounds tends to result in a “dehistoricized and depoliticized image” of them (p.248). One of the artist’s goals is definitely to present and create a multifaceted approach of the refugees’ circumstances, stories and individuality; countering existing tropes and engaging in storytelling.

It then begs the question, did this, or at least part of it, occur during the creation of *Power Refugee*? Or have we resorted to existing dominant narratives and tropes of suffering and loss? Sadly, we miss a true directory. One in which I

am doubtlessly guided toward the actual multifaceted approach and narrative in which the refugee is ethically portrayed. Still, there are key characteristics in the creative process of Power Refugee which helps me make part of an argument. When we try to grasp the empowering aspect of our artwork we are immediately drawn to its title which I have discussed previously, Power Refugee, and perhaps also by what Mohammad referred to. Mohammad's statement not only concerns the title, but far more, and can be paraphrased as the Power of Refugees signifying more than only his passions and dreams, but for what all refugees are capable of when they get the chance. The refugee is thereby placed in a position of strength, countering the dominant narratives of individuals of suffering and loss. The artwork's multifacetedness and engagement with storytelling is also shown in a different part of the interview. The following (translated) quote by the artistic director's in my interview:

"They travelled far and wide until they reached the Netherlands. In our conversations we immediately noticed how important their parents were and their decision to leave. In our composition for the etalage we really wanted to show this route and the fact they are here because of their parents and are now able to stand on their shoulders". - Richard Sluijs

The route, illustrated by using the flags of the countries travelled through, and the parents looking upwards to their children is a thought-provoking example of the multifaceted artwork. It also perfectly exemplifies storytelling, as we see a layered approach to a route travelled by both refugees towards the passport of our Netherlands. The Pop Art compositions of both refugees portray them as uplifted superheroes, in the respective comic-book style by Jawgem. This demonstrates that the artist did not retract towards tropes of victimization and suffering. In fact, the art shows both refugees in a position of power reneging on the prevalent narratives and stereotypes. Finally, to end this chapter I would like to end with a (translated) quote by Maria which accurately discloses the importance of a holistic artwork like Power Refugee. This quote shows the necessity of providing a voice and telling a story ethically and accurately. Furthermore, it exemplifies the importance of consulting the individuals we want to portray:

"This project has made me more open to tell my story as a refugee. It is not something that I have tried to hide, but it is complex, it is a part I do not often talk about. It is a story of mine that I do not have regular conversations about. But I see that it is important in the times we live in to let such stories resonate even more in society". - Maria Toko

6. Humanity House: Patronage, Location & Motif

In the third chapter of the analysis I will characterize the organization that commissioned Power Refugee. The goal of this chapter is to conceptualize the artwork's primary location: Humanity House. What does it mean that an organization like Humanity House commissions an artwork concerning the tense topic of refugees and how can we describe its role in facilitating that? For most museums it is presently of the utmost importance to be relevant for minority communities and to be a socially inclusive institution. The chapter will acknowledge that Humanity House is an organization concerned with the inclusive representations of such communities and actively partakes and positions itself in the tense debates concerning these topics. As a matter of fact, I will argue that one of the very means to accomplish this was by the exhibition-making of these two individuals. This third chapter will again identify the dynamics between the makers, Humanity House and those who are portrayed in the artwork and evaluate this creative process. Still, the organization is one in which I am/was invested in personally. As the final programming intern for a period of approximately 6-7 months, it is interesting for me to take a more objective position to appraise its function and regarding the kind of influence Covid-19 had on the project. So in this chapter I want to evaluate Humanity House's role as commissioner of art and its role as the exhibition space for the artwork. As was mentioned in the methodology, the project plans created for this undertaking will hopefully assist me in assessing the process critically. For this chapter I will also refer to the second part of the literature review discussing the role of museums in the age of migration, especially the empathetic museum and how Humanity House can be assessed herof. The interview with both the refugees and artists will again be used to facilitate sections of the discussion.

6. 1 Humanity House

Humanity House was established in the Dutch capital of The Hague in 2010. Started at the initiative of the Dutch Red Cross, it was accompanied by The Hague's municipality and by funding from the EFRO, the European Commission's Regional Development Fund (Humanity House, 2021). The name refers to a 'house of humanity': a location offering space where visitors could hear, see and

experience the human story behind disasters and conflicts around the world (Zlatkou, 2017). Not only at its physical location on the Prinsegracht in The Hague, but also - especially during the Covid-19 pandemic - online. Humanity House's museum offered the possibility of experiencing a conflict directly and highlighted related themes through temporary and permanent exhibitions. Humanity House was also a platform, a place for people to meet, and where institutions and organizations involved in humanitarian subject matters could reach out and deliberate around common causes (Humanity House, 2021). The vision of the organization was to aspire to be inclusive, inspiring and a polyphonic space where, together with others, new insights relating to global challenges of peace and conflict were sought. Humanity House tried to pursue this by touching the hearts and minds of individuals through personal stories, artistic approaches and by providing information and knowledge. The organization intended to bring contemporary and historical events happening across the globe closer to the audience's doorstep (Humanity House, 2021). By having people become aware of global humanitarian issues and the refugees' experience, Humanity House aimed for its audience to actually do something. Meaning, to have audiences and visitors make a positive contribution or resort to action, directly or indirectly. The organization's target audience was therefore quite diverse, appealing to the widest possible audience, ranging from high school students to young professionals from all backgrounds and preferences (Zlatkou, 2017 & Humanity House, 2021).

The museum's permanent exhibition was called *de Ervaringsreis*⁷, a demonstration of a family's journey and evacuation from the safety of their homes following a sudden emergency broadcast. Through multiple scenes, the visitors immerse themselves in the claustrophobic path of a family escaping to the border of an European country. Thither, the disorienting journey ends with an emblematic interrogation by a border officer and the analogous refugee procedures. The final room is symbolic to what Humanity House entails. In this larger room various personal stories are recounted through recorded interviews and sentimental objects related to their journey (Humanity House, 2021 & Zlatkou, 2017). Humanity House's education department tried to make themes such as emergency relief, disasters, war and refugees tangible and discussable.

⁷ An impression of the museum's final permanent exhibition:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8wxT86PqGU&ab_channel=HumanityHouse

One of its finest educators was Mohammad, the refugee portrayed in Power Refugee. Humanity House had strong ties with refugees who visited the museum on a weekly basis and told their stories, of course prior to Covid-19. All in all, Humanity House was an organization that tried to provide a place to hear, see and experience the human story behind global challenges surrounding peace and conflict (Humanity House, 2021). The organization therefore concentrated on humanitarian issues and migration as primary matters of contention and tried to represent refugees inside curated environments of shared experiences and story-telling. A visit supposedly provided knowledge, inspiration, new perspectives and drew individuals to think of their own part and responsibility for a peaceful coexistence.

Humanity House closed its doors at the end of 2020. Financial struggles following the Covid-19 pandemic and a negative advice of the Raad voor Cultuur for subsidy of the Kunstenplan formed the tipping point. Waiting for a final decision on the subsidy would take too long for Humanity House. It was unable to fulfill all its contractual obligations and effectively closed its operations on November 1st (Propitius, 2021). Still, in its final summer we were able to create one final exhibition.

6. 2 Project Plans, Pandemic and the Creative Process

As is expected for an organization like Humanity House, it is necessary for any new project that subsequently a plan is written. The purpose of the project plan was to define and set goals and objectives, how those could be achieved, and specify the tasks for my colleagues and to myself. Moreover, it would identify the resources necessary, declare timelines and budgets for completing the project. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic hitting the organization two plans were formulated. The 'first' project plan formulated the basis for the project that would eventually become Power Refugee. It was actually started before my internship, mostly due reasons of fundraising and the organization's annual planning. Yet, the plan itself was finalized during my internship, and presented on the 5th of February 2020 several weeks prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The second one was created during the pandemic, as a change of direction was needed to realize any type of project in such a crisis. Essentially, the plans were written in a way to define all the work in the project for the Humanity House organization, board, (financial) partners of the project and other interested

parties. My primary tasks were developing and enacting the production process in a clear manner and communicating the project alongside the Marketing and Communication department for press and relations. Thereby I co-wrote several parts describing the organization and general design of the project and implementation. Both the first project plan and the revised one are added to the appendix (Appendix: E & F).

The project plan (see Appendix E, pages: 1-3) started with a general introduction to Humanity House organization and Makerslab concept. In the Makerslab three street art-artists would be linked to three residents of The Hague. The artists would translate their stories into a design that would be exhibited in Humanity House for a period of approximately 6 months. The Makerslab would informally bring together young residents of The Hague around shared interests of street art and Humanity House's specialty of storytelling. The designs would be used to show and experience the intercultural richness of The Hague. Originally, the three artists (two of which were Jawgem and Richlab) would have access to Humanity House on the weekend of the fourth and fifth of April 2020. Prior to the weekend, we would set up meetings between the artists and the individuals (1 on of which was Muhammad) whose story they would portray. This was deemed necessary so that the design would be toned well and represented the story respectfully and was suitable for the display window. During the weekend, the doors of the museum would be opened to the general public where, at specified times, they would be able to ask questions and delve into the personal stories further. Moreover, multiple videos and content would be created for social media to reach a large enough audience and be shared with Humanity House's marketing partnerships and emailings; including We Are Public, CJP & OneWorld to name a few. The weekend would close with an informal opening program where the artists would finalize the artwork; joined by the audience and the people whose stories they have shared. In a nutshell, the opening weekend would bring young creatives together and establish an open discussion followed by a presentation and the official opening of the exhibition.

Next, in the project plan (see Appendix E, pages: 4-9) we devised the objectives, proposed impact and the budget coverage of the Makerslab. The objectives can be surmised as:

- The stories of refugees will be designed in an artistic way so that they are able to touch and involve young people in new and surprising ways;
- To enrich and inspire artists with the stories of refugees with completely different backgrounds and their ability to incorporate this enrichment into their work and pass it on;
- To make young residents of The Hague pause for thought on how much they actually know about their fellow residents in The Hague and what the possibilities of what they can do with that knowledge.

As was previously mentioned, the paintings were displayed for a period of approximately six months in Humanity House. At the moment of writing the first project plan, the dates of exposure were established for the fourth of April until at least mid-September. The projected number of visitors was set to a minimum of some 10,500 persons. This is based on the visitors of the opening weekend itself (100 ps.), regular museum visitors from April to mid-September (3500 ps.), event attendees (500 ps.) & programs + the rental of meeting space (5000 ps.). The primary target group of the exhibition would be young residents of The Hague between the ages of 18-35. Secondary target groups are:

- Professionals working at NGOs and other international organizations based in The Hague;
- Socially engaged individuals living in The Hague and its surroundings, between the ages of 20 and 40 years;
- Students participating in Humanity House's educational programs between the ages of 10 to 25 years.

The final section of the first project plan itemizes the financial aspects of the project. Specific financial accounts will not be shared in the MA thesis as was stipulated by Humanity House. Likewise, it is important to mention that as an intern I was not involved in the financial handling of the project; as they were simultaneously done before the start of my internship and as the programming department intern finances were not my responsibility. However, for the project I do want to concede that half was covered by an inhouse contribution, while the other half was covered through a subsidy provided by Fonds1818. The latter was an important partner for Humanity House.

All seemed ready for the imminent process in what would later become Power Refugee. What happened next was a phenomenon no one would dare to

imagine: the Covid-19 Pandemic struck the Netherlands. Due to the virus and subsequent policies of the government, the museum and all related programs/exhibitions would be closed until May 31st, 2020 (Humanity House, 2020). As a result of the Covid-measures, a change in the project was necessary to adapt it to the new reality. The original Makerslab itself would need to be cancelled, because it was impossible to have a steady stream of visitors inside Humanity House alongside the artists during the week. As the world turned upside down the financial situation of Humanity House itself turned sour as well (Propitius, 2020). As every department of Humanity House was struck badly, I would argue that the programming department was hurt the most. For what is a programming department without the possibility to arrange and present any programs?

The Covid-19 Pandemic culminated in an agenda crammed with cancelled exhibitions and programs, but more importantly, a closed museum. Still, even without a pandemic the year would be defining one for Humanity House. One of Humanity House's main matters of contention was that it only received temporary subsidies for single exhibitions or programs. Ergo, for each project Humanity House was dependent on whether or not a subsidy/fund was allocated, or if the necessary in-house budget was there, and in the end that seemed impracticable (Tangel, 2020). It was extremely difficult for the organization to look into the future in a structural manner. Instead, short-term thinking seemed a core pursuit in the years since its erection. Humanity House aspired to adjust that by applying for a structural multi-year arts endowment through The Hague's municipality: the Kunstenplan. However, as was mentioned at the end of the previous subchapter, that chase failed horribly. The advisory committee for the multi-year endowment "recognized the socially relevant themes and valued the attitude of the organization towards diversity and inclusion" (van Asten et al, 2020). However, the committee found "Humanity House's artistic profile and content as an independent museum and platform too limited and insufficiently defined" (van Asten et al, 2020, p.216). With just a short paragraph in the Kunstenplan and a looming pandemic, the future was not only uncertain, it was out of the question. With budgetary concerns in mind and trying to at least survive until the summer, one of the first steps the board took was discharging a number of employees. This included my internship supervisor and so in turn drastically changing my position at the organization. Instead of working

predominantly with and for Sahar Shirzad, now Frederiek Biemans became my supervisor in a very complex and tense situation at Humanity House. Hanneke Propitius, director of Humanity House, rightly declared: “because of Corona our income completely dried up and without the institutional subsidy there is no longer a financial perspective” (Tangel, 2020). On the 1st of november 2020 Humanity House effectively closed its doors.

From the 1st of June 2020 onwards, small gatherings with up to +-30 visitors were again possible. As expected, they would need to take into account the RIVM guidelines for museums and cultural platforms (Humanity House, 2020). My supervisor Frederiek Biemans therefore argued (see Appendix F, pages 1-2) that because we already received the subsidy from Fonds1818 for the proposed Makerslab, we should create something similar, although more limited in size. In this newly revised project plan written in May in just a couple of pages, the Makerslab was reconceptualized for an opening exhibition on June, 20th.

The previously mentioned goals would remain the same, but the functional implementation changed extensively. The concept was now principally having an artwork made for the display window through the conversations between two refugees and two artists, counseled and produced by Frederieke Biemans and myself. The conversations would deal with the comprehensive experiences of these two individuals and how this process could lead to an artwork. The meetings would be strictly informal and took place at Humanity House. The informality of the meeting meant zero notes were taken and no clear goals were set before. This is a shame for the thesis, although I did try to capture a glance of these meetings on one of the project’s various blog posts⁸. On the other hand, because of meetings’ casualness it definitely led to a certain openness for both the artists and refugees alike. Consequently, the conversations were directed towards trying to see how the refugees’ background shaped them, how they looked back at their country of origin and how they viewed their future in the country they now live in. Afterwards, Jawgem and Richard were given time to come up with their first sets of sketches for the artwork. This creative process would be shared online through the various forms of social media and Humanity House’s website itself. The online component suddenly became far more important as the projected number of visitors was

⁸ <https://humanityhouse.org/blog-makerslab/>

chiefly based on pre-Covid-19 estimations of visitors going to Humanity House itself. As for the revised project, connecting young residents of The Hague through the online channels was the project's ambition, as well as reaching the more general population through a display window on which a QR-code would lead to the Makerslab socials. It is typical of the organization how easily and informally a solution was sought for the near unworkable conditions set by the Dutch government and the tense financial situation. This resurgence of creative spirit in spite of the crisis within the organization fascinated me tremendously.

A great example of the aforementioned creative process was the discussion regarding one of the sketches shown below.



(Figure 8)

Muhammad and Maria were immediately excited about their portraits portraying them both from a position of strength/power and the artists able to take into account their perspective. Also, the suggestion that they unite both worlds, by speaking both to where they come from and where they are now enamored them. However, the design of Angola and Iraq portrayed both nations as a sea of flames (figure 8). This depiction of death and danger was further illustrated by the shark fins adorned with skulls clearly failing to symbolize their feelings towards their country of origin accurately. They both cherished their origins and argued that it was as much a part of them as the Netherlands currently is; for their roots lay there. Jawgem and Richard returned to the drawing board imminently and soon returned with new sketches. The new design would question the concepts of borderlessness and statelessness shown to the right here (Figure 9) and situated on the artwork directly below the



passport. The two concepts are closely related to each other while still one's antithesis.

Statelessness refers to a person not recognized as a citizen by any state, absent of a nationality as they lack any sorts of legal commitment to a country (Waas, 2011). The borderlessness part indicates a world without boundaries between nations, a world we all share and not limited by the abundance of borders (Casier, 2008). Again, this marks how relatively easy and informally a solution was sought for what could in fact be a complex issue, namely a disagreement between the artist portraying or speaking for the refugee. Instead, a design was created by which both the artist and the refugees were content. No tears were lost when the sea of flames perished in setting up the final design.

6. 3 Humanity House and the Representation of Refugees

The focus on refugee related themes has increased dramatically in the years starting with the migrant crisis of 2015 (Stilhilper, 2021). It is also one of the very reasons Humanity House was established in the first place. Undoubtedly, organizations and museums across the globe work with, or have at least started to try to, represent refugees in differing ways. Some institutions try to counteract stereotypes associated with refugees by enrolling them as tour guides for visitors to genuinely connect with their collections. Others, for instance, collaborate with refugees by counteracting various stigmas associated with them and have visitors gain insight from their experiences. Some are able to highlight personal stories and narratives by providing refugees with their own platform in which their voice has an actual place. Museums explore the experiences of migrants throughout world history, lend historical perspectives and try to explain a wide array of issues involved (Coates, 2019). Thereby it seems that for the first time exhibitions are able to truly showcase artistic pieces of and with refugees. However, as possibilities are endless, challenges are on the horizon as well.

For museums, the 'correct' representation of refugees has become more urgent. Migrant policies and the rising numbers of refugees have led to diverging political and public debates (Boersma, 2021). As tensions were rising, museums and cultural institutions saw fit their role to nuance the antagonistic discussions surrounding refugees. Janes (2007) argued that organizations like Humanity House should, instead of the historical pedantic role of museums, now

proactively address current social and environmental issues (Janes, 2007). Acting for social justice and change should be fundamental to the museum's mission (Vlachou, 2019). However, one could argue that organizations should not align with specific ideas and values and take a more intellectually neutral position. This oppositional argument against activist and public engagement of museums, stems from the notion that the visitors themselves should form opinions thither or a presupposed fear that museums would otherwise abandon their subject-area obligations of art and science (Orloff, 2017). The museum or cultural institution should therefore be value-free and not appear as a source of truth (Ibid., 2017). To counter that opinion Janes argues that these types of organizations are ideal for participation in wider social debates due to the fact that they are untapped sources of ideas and knowledge, while also able to formulate solutions and awareness of current global concerns (Janes, 2007). From this perspective, contemporary projects like Power Refugee attempt to collaborate with refugees fairly and accurately, by visualizing storytelling. To again refer to Janes (2007), by creating Power Refugee it proactively tries to address current global concerns and take a position towards their view of social justice. So Humanity House took this opportunity to museumify their perspective on a contemporary issue in society and showcase this in the display window. Drawing on something which surrounds us, it exhibits a fluid image, meaning that the organization hopes its audience will resort to action. By museumifying this issue through the creation of Power Refugee, it tried to tamper or question normality, and evoke a discussion appropriate for a platform such as Humanity House.

Cultural institutions and museums have indeed become far more socially aware in recent decades and decidedly no longer proclaim one 'authentic' version of the truth, but sometimes several, a fluidity (Boersma, 2021). As was mentioned in the literature review discussing Vergo's (1989) *New Museology*, visitors themselves have now acquired a prominent position in the museum. Locations thereby oftentimes able to offer space in which differing opinions and understandings can be heard and discussed (Vergo, 1989). Humanity House is an ideal example of such a place where actual discussions were able to take place in which the audience was able to join in, resulting in a fluidity of opinions shared with the audience. Thereby, in the course of the first few months of my internship in the organization's programming department I was able to host

corresponding events during which several thought-provoking debates and compelling conversations took place. Two events exemplifying this and embodying Humanity House's relationship to issues encircling migration were Sahar Shirzad's Refugee Millennial⁹ and the Plan Einstein¹⁰ documentary-screening. The first embodied a series of evenings in which millennials, with differing refugee backgrounds, would take the floor. In these evenings filled by laughter, music, stories and dialogues the floor was open to any and all to share their respective insights and personal experiences. This culminated in candid, although sometimes difficult debates, resulting in discussions on challenges like: 'what is it like to be constantly measured and compared to natives?' and 'to what extent do you feel different from the millennials with Dutch roots?'. The Plan Einstein documentary on the other hand was the screening of a film in which two filmmakers show how an asylum seekers' center is able to add something to a Dutch neighborhood. Afterwards, a conversation took place in which both the filmmakers and associated policy-makers were present to partake in a conversation with the audience. This evening was especially interesting because of the several NGOs participating in the discussion and the exchanging of knowledge that followed soon after.

The empathetic museum by Gretchen Jennings (2019) is able to exemplify Humanity House's social awareness and inclusivity in this respect as well. In Jennings' empathy framework she provides five characteristics through which cultural institutions like museums shape both external relations between the internal organization and the public or wider community. These characteristics are community resonance, civic vision, timelessness, institutional body language and overarching performance measures (Jennings, 2019). It intends to provide a foundation for a democratic and socially conscious institution. So let us look according to the characteristics of the Empathetic Museum and whether or not Humanity House is in fact deeply connected with and takes in mind its community.

⁹ <https://humanityhouse.org/agenda/the-refugee-millennial/>

¹⁰ <https://humanityhouse.org/agenda/plan-einstein-de-verbindende-factor-tussen-buurtbewoners-en-asie-lzoekers-in-overvecht/>

Community resonance (1) refers to the museum having strong and trusted connections with all the aspects of the community, in terms of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status (Jennings, 2015). Humanity House's policy of hiring accurately resembled the larger community. In fact, from its creation in 2010 until 2019 each year's annual report prepares an entire section on diversion & inclusion (Humanity House, 2019). The board and workforce has become more diverse since its first report by actively pursuing set policies leading to employment equity. Furthermore, within the organization has always grown a certain awareness of multiperspectivity, enhanced through its various programs, exhibitions and workforce. Interestingly, when referring to disability the organization actually argues it sees areas for improvement in aligning with the needs and preferences of individuals with physical or mental disabilities (Humanity House, 2019). The partners with which Humanity House worked regularly also reflected the diversity of the community (from NGOs, student associations to the municipality).

Civic vision (2) refers to a persistent orientation to its community and taking what is happening or of interest to it into consideration in its activities and schedule (Jennings, 2015). As the intern to the programming department and discussing matters of policy and planning, concerns to the community and society at large were discussed on a daily basis. For instance, when discussing Power Refugee this meant a focus on the online aspects of the exhibition, as visitors could no longer enter the museum for a period of almost three months. Moreover, Humanity House promoted social justice through its diversity and inclusion policies, as well as having a staff that was constantly on top of economic, social and other concerns to the community. Finally, I would argue that Humanity House tried to be an anchor institution in its community. For Humanity House, it means trying to position itself as a key institution of civil society and the education system. For within the organization there was always a sense of the need to matter, to influence and to shape, by promoting social justice within The Hague's municipality (Jennings, 2019 & Humanity House, 2019).

Timelessness (3) is the response to particular events or crises affecting the community through enduring and sustainable matters (Jennings, 2015 & Jennings, 2019). As a member of the staff and programming department during

the Covid-19 pandemic, Humanity House immediately followed the government's stipulations and RIVM regulations. The policy within the building for both museums and programs were updated regularly (Humanity House, 2020). Sustainability mattered tremendously for Humanity House as well. Their supplier of food was Juni, an organization that strives for a world without food wastage (Humanity House, 2019).

Institutional body language (4) refers to the unwritten and unspoken manifestations of the institution. This concerns in/outside design of the building, collection and behavior of the museum staff (Jennings, 2019 & Kinsley, 2016). Interestingly, the entire topic of the Master Thesis is involved in the institutional body language of Humanity House. Power Refugee essentially is one of the organization's ways to communicate to the public by images and symbols that convey meaning. Power Refugee also shows the organization is to be aware of issues like tokenism and has an open door policy to any individual (Jennings, 2019). The Marketing and Communication team is also careful to include individuals and take into mind cultural symbols in the areas of programming, exhibitions and marketing.

Lastly, *performance measures* (5) are the tools by which the museum assesses if it is able to develop and incorporate the aforementioned characteristics. Therefore, the organization should entrust the necessary funds to determine if it attained its social and public impact, not merely weighing revenues and attendance (Jennings, 2019 & Korn, 2013). On a monthly basis, traditional measures like outputs, attendance and revenues were observed. These metrics were reported monthly to internal and external stakeholders and the local community transparently and widespread (Humanity House, 2019). What mattered more, was that visitors were digitized as well, to attempt to assess and redefine its public value impact by having to send questionnaires after a visit. Humanity House gauges community collaboration and impact through social media and mailings on a weekly basis. Humanity House's annual report also expressed yearly resource commitment to the continued impact and community value impact, along with attendance and revenue reporting (Humanity House, 2019).

All in all, it is safe to say that Humanity House was exactly the type of museum that breathed empathy. Like Mirram-Webster defines empathy: "the action of

being aware of, understanding, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, experience of another, thoughts of either the past or present. without having thoughts, feeling and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner (Mirriam-Webster, 2013). Humanity House tried to become truly inclusive and resonant to their community with a multinational, multi-ethnic and cross generational group of colleagues. This sense of empathy is emblematic in how the organization was able to represent two refugees through the hitherto discussed creative process of the artwork. The conversations alongside the process towards Power Refugee's design effectively tried to provide a voice and create a safe space for the two refugees (Spivak, 2008). In this process, queries like the following were addressed: who speaks for whom? Or who is the one representing and are some voices silenced or spoken for? (Harindranath, 2008 & Spivak, 1988) Through its various conversations inherent to the creative process we were able to create a space in Humanity House where Maria and Muhammad were able to represent their own identities and experiences fully. Labels like the term refugee and designs such as the sea of flames were discussed candidly, as we feared to make any essentialist claim about any of the individuals portrayed and the content of the artwork. Moreover, through this process the exhibition and artwork created a context for voices silenced in the politics, media and humanitarian sector. In essence, it is a form of self-representation, as the artists connected to the agents who provided testimony of their own experiences. This idea of self-representation is appropriated from Alcoff (1991) who argued that, "self-representation constitutes a subject in a way that subverts the construction of refugees: from objects to a knowing agent" (p.16). In this process we were able to *not* speak for or speak about, instead we had them speak themselves. We refused to resort to the age-old construction of the silenced victim or speak for those who have been nearly rendered voiceless (Spivak, 2008). In that regard, Humanity House was able to counter this by authorizing Muhammad and Maria as audible speakers for their community and provide a bridge between the artists and refugees. Lastly, Azoulay stresses that when we engage with refugee art at cultural institutions there is always a need to be aware of the social relations which made it possible (Azoulay, 2008). The creative process led to exactly that, we recognized the need to defy the commonplace negative identity constructions

of refugees, and were engaged in the act of accurately representing and humanizing a pair of incredibly interesting individuals.

In the interview Maria and Mohammad were also able to illustrate the important role Humanity House took in the process:

"Humanity House continues to be very special to me. For me, Humanity House has brought me much closer to the actual reality of refugees." - Maria Toko

"Humanity House is an important museum because it provides a platform for people who entered our country, provides a platform to share their story, a platform to really get to know these people and I really like that. Humanity House is able to show the human side of a refugee, which is not a term from a dictionary. You know, they are just people. humanity House is able to contribute to that by saying 'come and have a cup of coffee' so you can learn something of that person" - Mohammad Al-Jaf

7. Conclusion

As the Master Thesis has come to an end I want to zoom out and provide final insight and comments on the scope of factors discussed in relation to the artwork Power Refugee, the location Humanity House and the artist Jawgem. Essentially, I want to use this closing chapter to conclude my broad study of Power Refugee's placement in Humanity House's part in utilizing a duo of refugees by way of the work of an artist. For that same reason it is also important to consider if in such a collaborative artwork existing tropes actually have sustained. The same counts for my personal involvement in the project and its creative process. Nevertheless, the research question by which I started my research was: *What are the conditions and motifs surrounding the creation and placement of the artwork Power Refugee?* In this Master Thesis I answered this overarching research question by demonstrating the complexity of the artwork Power Refugee. At first, the artwork might not seem as intricate. But during my research Power Refugee has been proven to be both complicated in meaning and appearance. Throughout the literature review and analysis, I analyzed and deconstructed the elaborateness of Power Refugee from start to finish. In reality, this signified the production to its final installation at the Prinsegracht in The Hague. The deconstruction of the artwork was threefold, ranging from the visual analysis, the artist and Humanity House itself.

From the literature review's outset my focus was immediately set on the representation of refugees parallel to the museum's changing role in the context of, and discussions surrounding, migration. A particular spotlight was placed on Othering, as exemplified by Saïd and Spivak, regarding visuals. As they can compel us to reconsider, stereotype and frame particular events. In the second part of the literature review, I was to be definitely captivated by the empathetic museum and how museums in present times have to personify humanity as a whole. Museums thereby need to look at narratives grounded in the everyday and have to provide consensus between diverse political and social themes. The empathetic museum was particularly helpful in exemplifying how a museum is aware of themes such as exclusivity and forms of privilege it is able to communicate (Jennings, 2015). In response, they attempt to develop strategic plans and resources to mitigate these from happening.

With the visual analysis I tried to provide a stable foundation - besides the literature review - on which I could ground my research. Presenting Power Refugee in an accurate manner was necessary for the reader as the artwork was removed from display following Humanity House's closure. The purpose of the visual analysis was to recognize and understand the visual choices made in creating the artwork by the artist. Thereby, I have observed and written about the artwork's layeredness and the elements and principles of art within. The information acquired in the visual analysis was used to kickstart my research into the artistic style utilized by Jawgem. Through Pop Art and Jawgem's personal style, the artwork has shown to be an increasingly multifaceted approach to the circumstances, stories and individuality of both Maria and Mohammad. From the title to the shared passport, the style of Pop Art was able to subvert common themes of victimization and suffering: the prevalent visceral visualizations of refugees. Instead, it chartered several counter-narratives within the compositions, valuing the refugees' perceptions and experiences. Like in Jeff Koons' Equilibrium exhibition of basketball players (Appendix C), Power Refugee has placed individuals in elevated positions of power and respect, thereby criticizing prevalent narratives and stereotypes. Power Refugee proved to present an empowering example of storytelling and a multifaceted approach in which common tropes of victimization, suffering and prevalent stereotypes were left out or subverted. In that same manner, Jawgem was able to understand his own positionality and the importance of consulting the individuals who were sharing their personal histories.

The Master Thesis studied the intricacies of displaying two refugees in The Hague's Humanity House museum. For a decade, the museum has proven to be an institution that dealt on a regular basis with migration-related themes and tried to use a variety of approaches to have these topics remain relevant for society. The artwork Power Refugee demonstrates the complexity and dynamic nature of an inclusivity-focused museum, which on a constant basis takes in mind its curatorial practices. The setting of the production process was able to create conditions in which the personal histories of Maria and Mohammad were able to thrive and be represented adequately. This was exemplified by the informal meetings set between the programming department, artists and both refugees. However, a set of criticisms can be made regarding the Power Refugee

project. First off, due to the organization's cessation, no final verdicts were made on the success or lack thereof of the project. This includes, for instance, the number of visitors or community impact designated in the project plans. Secondly, the informality of most of the decision-making for the project has led to the artwork becoming this special. However, it has made researching it far more difficult due to a lack of official records and minutes. Finally, being a deeply invested (ex-) intern at the organization might have clouded my judgement in reviewing Humanity House's social awareness and inclusivity. Still, from my personal experiences and analyzing the organization through Jennings' empathetic museum, I would argue that Humanity House in fact tried to be as resonant and inclusive as possible to their community and visitors as a whole (2019). The organization truly breathed empathy and created conditions to withstand antiquated tropes, prejudices and stereotypes. Instead, a safe space was created in which Mohammad and Maria were able to truly speak themselves, through one artist's mind and later displayed in an *et/age*. Their empowering messages were personified beautifully, in artwork emblematic for what refugee art could be, and should be.

On a final note, the closure of Humanity House was painful for an array of reasons. From the numerous (ex-)colleagues losing their job, to the hundreds of stories, exhibitions and events now lost to memory. Therefore, I wholeheartedly agree with the statement provided by former-director Hanneke Propitius in an interview with the *Algemeen Dagblad*: "it is incredibly deplorable that in this time of polarization in the city of Peace and Justice there is no room for a place like Humanity House" (Tangel, 2020).

For me personally, there was no organization quite like Humanity House. Their primary mission was to collect and present the personal stories of individuals experiencing conflict or trauma, thereby raising awareness to challenges related to conflict and peace in society. Humanity House inspired people - including myself - and had them reflect on their own positionality and responsibility. All in all, it was my first introduction to a company and one I will not soon lose sight of. For it was truly an inclusive, pluralist and inspiring location. From the variety of artforms and events, the organization sought to deepen understanding and speak to the hearts of its visitors through personal stories. Humanity House will be sorely missed.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Picture of Aylan Kurdi, the 3 year old refugee from Syria who washed up near Bodrum, Turkey. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/shocking-image-of-drowned-syrian-boy-shows-tragic-plight-of-refugees>



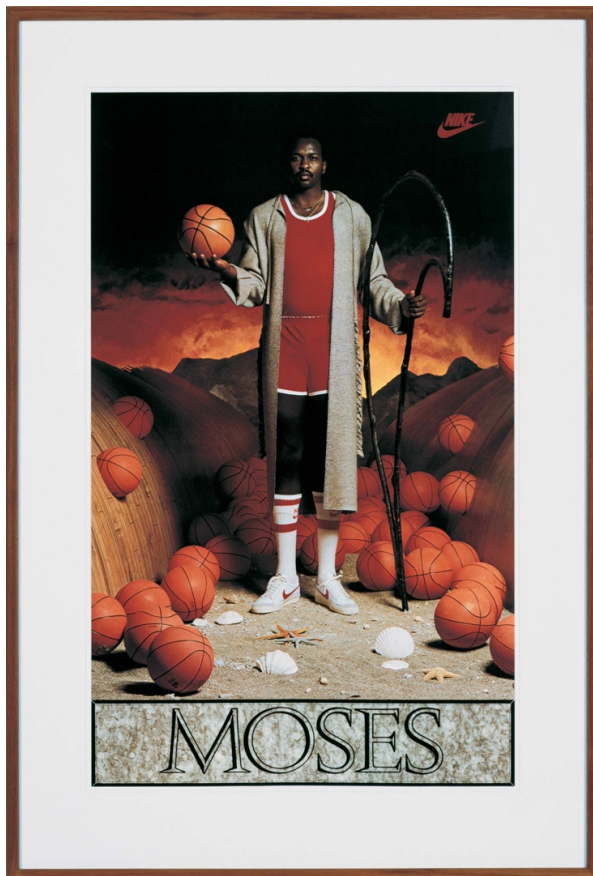
Appendix B. Image of Richard Hamilton's 1956s *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* Retrieved from:

<https://www.artsalontholland.nl/meesterwerken/just-what-is-it-that-makes-today-s-homes-so-different-so-appealing-richard-hamilton>



Appendix C. Image of Jeff Koons' portrait in his 1985 Equilibrium exhibition called *Moses*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.juliet-artmagazine.com/en/the-postmodernist-philosophy-of-art-equilibrium-by-jeff-koons/>



Appendix D. Image of Roy Lichtenstein's 1963 Pop Art painting *In the Car*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/664/car>



Appendix E. MAKERSLAB Projectplan, 5 februari 2020. Retrieved from Humanity House server.

MAKERSLAB

1. Inleiding

In het Humanity House worden de persoonlijke verhalen van mensen die geraakt zijn door conflict verzameld en gedeeld met het publiek. Op het podium, in het museum, in tentoonstellingen en in de educatieve activiteiten. Veel van deze verhalen zijn eigenlijk zo bijzonder, kwetsbaar en krachtig dat ze vaker gehoord moeten worden. Door het organiseren van een Makerslab, waarin lokale Haagse street-art kunstenaars de verhalen vertalen naar een muurschildering, geven we deze verhalen een groter publiek en een tweede leven.

Den Haag is een stad met 180 verschillende nationaliteiten. Mensen van verschillende achtergronden die eigenlijk maar weinig van elkaar weten. In het Makerslab worden drie Haagse street-art kunstenaars van The Hague Street Art gekoppeld aan drie inwoners van Den Haag, jonge mensen met een vluchtelingen achtergrond die hun verhaal al eens eerder in Humanity House hebben gedeeld. De kunstenaars zetten hun verhaal om in een ontwerp dat tentoongesteld wordt in het Humanity House.

Het Makerslab brengt zo op informele wijze jonge Hagenaren bij elkaar rondom gedeelde interesses van street-art en storytelling. Zo laten we hen kennismaken met elkaar en elkaars achtergronden. Met de muurschilderingen laten we vervolgens een half jaar lang aan alle bezoekers van Humanity House de interculturele rijkheid van Den Haag zien en ervaren. De complexe verhalen over conflict en vluchten die zich ver weg lijken af te spelen, manifesteren zich eigenlijk ook heel dichtbij onder leeftijdgenoten die je in je dagelijks leven tegen kan komen op de Hogeschool, in je sportclub, in het uitgaansleven. Stadgenoten met een heel andere geschiedenis dan je in eerste instantie zou vermoeden, worden zo met elkaar verbonden.

Omdat het Makerslab bijdraagt aan het bij elkaar brengen van verschillende (sub)culturen in Den Haag en onderlinge kennis en begrip in de stad bevordert, sluit het makerslab goed aan bij de doelstellingen van Fonds1818. Het Makerslab in april is een eerste van twee Makerslabs in 2020. De tweede zal plaatsvinden in de aanloop naar de viering van 75 jaar VN in Den Haag en met andere kunstenaars worden ingevuld rondom het thema solidariteit.

Over het Humanity House

In Humanity House hoor, zie en ervaar je het menselijke verhaal achter wereldwijde uitdagingen rond vrede en conflict. Deze verhalen worden gedeeld in het museum, waar je ervaart hoe het is om een

conflict mee te maken en te moeten vluchten, door middel van tijdelijke exposities, op het podium met randprogrammering en door educatieve activiteiten. Een bezoek aan het Humanity House levert een schat aan kennis, inspiratie en nieuwe perspectieven op en zet aan tot denken over je eigen rol en verantwoordelijkheid in vreedzaam samenleven.

Het makerslab

Drie street-art kunstenaars krijgen in het weekeinde van 4 en 5 april toegang tot Humanity House om de verhalen op de muren te schilderen. Voorafgaand aan het weekeinde zal iedere kunstenaar in gesprek gaan met de persoon wiens verhaal ze zullen schilderen om zo tot een passend ontwerp voor de schildering te komen die het verhaal goed en respectvol representeert. Tijdens het weekeinde zijn de deuren van het museum geopend en kan het publiek op gezette tijden met het maakproces meekijken, vragen stellen en zich verdiepen in de persoonlijke verhalen.

Het weekeind sluit af met een informeel openingsprogramma. Samen met het publiek wordt er een laatste hand gelegd aan de schildering, de mensen wiens verhalen geschilderd zijn delen hun verhaal met publiek, de kunstenaar delen hun artistieke vertaling en proces en het publiek praat mee. In een informele setting met muziek verzorgd door de Haagse muzikanten van Popradar, geselecteerd en passend bij de verschillende verhalen. Het openingsprogramma brengt jonge, creatieve, mensen bij elkaar en laat hen met elkaar in gesprek gaan.

Doelstellingen

Met het Makerslab stimuleren we (Haagse) jongeren om na te denken over alle individuele en persoonlijke achtergronden van hun (Haagse) medebewoners en hoe zij zich daar toe verhouden. Want hoeveel weet je nou eigenlijk van elkaar en hoe vaak verdiep je je echt in de ander? Zo dragen we bij aan meer inzicht en empathie voor elkaar en de verschillende werelden die wij vertegenwoordigen.

Met het Makerslab willen we:

Verhalen van vluchtelingen op een artistieke wijze vormgeven waardoor het op een nieuwe en verrassende manier jonge mensen raakt en betreft;

Jonge inwoners van Den Haag aan het denken zetten over hoeveel ze nu eigenlijk weten van hun Haagse medebewoners en wat ze met die wetenschap doen;

Kunstenaars verrijken en inspireren met de verhalen van leeftijdgenoten met een andere achtergrond zodat zij deze verrijking meenemen in hun werk en kunnen doorgeven.

Verhalen en kunstenaars:

Onder voorbehoud zullen de verhalen van de volgende personen omgezet worden in een muurschildering:

Anya Karakozova, (Armeens, staatloos)

Mohammad Al-Jaf, (Irak)

Sahar Hossini, (Iran)

De volgende drie kunstenaars zullen tijdens het Makerslab aan het werk gaan :

Richard Sluijs; grafisch- & ruimtelijk ontwerper / illustrator / schilder en plannenmaker met eigen studio in Den Haag.

Sophia den Breems (1990) woont en werkt in Den Haag. Ze studeerde af als grafisch ontwerper, en werkt voornamelijk als illustrator.

Jawgem: Jochem van Aller (1989) woont en werkt vanuit Den Haag. Hij is afgestudeerd als illustrator van de Willem de Kooning Academie.

Duur en impact:

De muurschilderingen zijn voor een duur van 6 maanden, van 15 maart tot tenminste half september, zichtbaar in Humanity House. De drie verhalen van makerslab 1 komen uit het ontmoetingsprogramma van Humanity House. Daarin maken scholieren na een bezoek aan het museum kennis met Sahar, Mohammad en Anya, die hun vluchtverhalen delen met de klas. De verhalen zullen daardoor in deze periode extra tot leven komen. In dit tijdsbestek vallen ook twee evenementen: de jaarlijkse buitenbios (tenminste 400 bezoekers) en de internationale dag van de vluchteling (tenminste 120 bezoekers). Daarnaast is het één van de openbare expositieruimtes waar in die maanden tenminste 3500 bezoekers van Humanity House passeren.

In totaal worden er tenminste 10.500 bezoekers verwacht:

Bezoekers Makerslab weekeinde: 100

Reguliere museum bezoekers Humanity House half maart t/m half september: 3.500

Bezoekers evenementen: 520

Scholieren educatieprogramma's: 1.500

Overige bezoekers programma's, zaalhuur en educatie: 5.000

Doelgroep en Communicatie

De belangrijkste doelgroep zijn jonge Hagenaren tussen de 18 en de 35 jaar (young creatives).

Daarnaast bereikt de tentoonstelling de volgende doelgroepen:

professionals van Ngo's en (inter-)nationale organisaties uit Den Haag;

maatschappelijk geëngageerd publiek uit omgeving Den Haag, voornamelijk tussen 20-40 jaar;

scholieren en jongeren die deelnemen aan de educatieve programma's (10-25).

Free Publicity

We zoeken actief de pers op om het Makerslab onder de aandacht te brengen. We gebruiken hierbij verschillende 'haakjes' voor persbewerking, zoals het persoonlijke verhaal van de gevluchte jongere, de jonge urban artist en zijn/haar makersproces, een persuitnodiging voor het eindevent en de tentoonstelling. Een lokale mediapartner zoals AD / Haagse Courant, omroep West of Den Haag Centraal wordt een exclusieve reportage aangeboden met de verhalen van de drie gevluchte mensen en de kunstenaars.

Marketingpartnerships

We hebben marketingpartnerships met We Are Public, CJP, OneWorld, Haagse Schatten en The Hague Marketing. Dit verzekert plaatsing op websites en socials van Den Haag.com, OneWorld, en Haagse schatten, hetgeen voor een groot bereik zorgt. De tentoonstelling wordt opgenomen als programma in de Haagse Vrijheidsweken, en meegenomen in het programmaboekje van de Vrijheidsweken (oplage 40.000) en de website van de Haagse vrijheidsweken

Daarnaast biedt het partnership met The Hague Marketing kansen om een plekje veroveren als 'Haagse Highlight' op het digitale scherm op NS Station Den Haag Centraal, en op digitale reclamezuilen in de stad.

Emailings

De aankondiging van het Makerslab gaat mee in de Humanity House nieuwsbrief (9.000 ontvangers). Daarnaast worden er gerichte uitnodigingen gestuurd voor het openingsevent naar culturele instellingen in Den Haag, kunstopleidingen (bijvoorbeeld de KABK) en partnerorganisaties en contacten van zowel Humanity House als The Hague Street Art.

Website en socials

Op de website van Humanity House wordt zowel het Makerslabweekeind als event gecommuniceerd in de agenda, op de Humanity Blog worden achtergronden en andere verdiepende content geplaatst.

Al het werk en video's zullen via social media gedeeld worden: Humanity House 12.000 Facebook-volgers, 4.200 Twitter-volgers en 1.600 Instagram-volgers. The Hague Street Art: 3.369 volgers Instagram, 6.651 volgers op Facebook. Ook de kunstenaars zullen de content via hun eigen netwerken delen. We zetten Facebook en Instagram advertenties in om gericht jonge, cultuur geïnteresseerde Hagenaren te bereiken.

Video

Voor elk verhaal maken we een kort videoportret: verhaal van de gevluchte jongere, verhaal van de kunstenaar, de ontmoeting, het resultaat. Deze wordt gedeeld op socials en in een meer uitgebreide versie ook getoond op een scherm in de tentoonstelling.

Ook maken we een timelapse van het maakproces, die we daarna delen via socials, en via het tv-scherm op het raam van Humanity House, zodat voorbij lopende mensen getriggerd worden om naar binnen te lopen.

Zichtbaarheid Fondsen

Fondsen die het Makerslab mogelijk hebben gemaakt, zijn zichtbaar op al de communicatiemiddelen met tenminste het logo. Ook zal de steun van fondsen uitgedragen worden in de ruimte zelf, door het de fondsen te benoemen in het colofon welke in de ruimte zichtbaar opgehangen zal worden.

Begroting & dekking

Planning

Januari/ februari: fondsenwerving, benaderen kunstenaars en verhalen vertellers

maart: bij elkaar brengen kunstenaars + verhalen vertellers
 schetsontwerp muurschildering
 uitslag fondsen
 definitief ontwerp
April: organisatie weekeinde

Organisatie Makerslab

Makerslab wordt georganiseerd door Humanity House in samenwerking met The Hague Street Art. Zij selecteren en begeleiden de Haagse kunstenaars. Voor de muzikale intermezzo's bij het afsluitende programma werken we samen met Popradar die de jonge muzikant(en) selecteert. Voor marketing en communicatie wordt samengewerkt met bovengenoemde (media) partners. Bij het project zijn geen vrijwilligers betrokken.

Sterke en zwakke punten project

Sterke punten

Makerslab brengt op een laagdrempelige, originele manier een breed publiek in aanraking met mondiale thema's rond migratie, vrede en conflict.

Makerslab wordt georganiseerd in co-creatie met jonge kunstenaars en jongeren met een migratie achtergrond.

Makerslab en het Makerslabweekeinde zijn nieuw en onbekend en kunnen daardoor een nieuwe jonge doelgroep aanspreken.

De resultaten van het Makerslab zijn voor langere tijd zichtbaar en toegankelijk en weten zo een groot bereik te genereren.

Zwakke punten

Makerslab en Makerslabweekeinde zijn nieuw en onbekend en hebben daarmee nog niet automatisch een eigen achterban maar we zullen gericht uitnodigen en de kunstenaars en verhalenvertellers nodigen hun achterban uit. (Wel zetten we het Lab door in een conceptformat, waardoor de bekendheid en achterban groeit).

Na een half jaar worden de verhalen vervangen. De verhalen blijven wel online beschikbaar.

Contactgegevens Humanity House

Humanity House

Prinsegracht 8

2512 GA Den Haag

070 – 31 000 50

www.humanityhouse.org

IBAN: NL50RABO0122619765

Directeur: Hanneke Propitius

Contactpersoon: Frederiek Biemans (hoofd programma's en tentoonstellingen)

Mail: frederiek.biemans@humanityhouse.org

Telefoon: 070 – 310 000 55/ 06-41430881

Appendix F. Project Plan Makerslab online 5-05-2020. Retrieved from:
Humanity House server.

Betreft: Makerslab online

Datum en tijd: 5 mei online

Organiserende partijen: Humanity House & Aight

Aanleiding

Het makerslab in Humanity House is *gecancelled* door de coronacrisis maar we hebben wel geld gekregen van fonds1818 om deze te bekostigen. We hebben de optie om dat geld te reserveren voor het makerslab in het najaar (waar nog geen fondsen voor zijn toegezegd).

Maar we kunnen ook in overleg met de staf een online versie en een tentoonstelling in de etalage maken. We brengen het plan terug tot twee kunstenaars en vragen hen in gesprek te gaan met de Mohammad en Maria over hun vluchtverhaal en hun beleving van vrijheid anno nu.

We vragen de kunstenaars hun ontwerp op onze muur in de etalage te tekenen, met een digitale component, en als ze dat kunnen het maak-proces in een animatie te gieten. Het ontwerp moet in een later stadium alsnog vertaalbaar zijn naar een live tentoonstelling.

Na afloop interviewen we de kunstenaars. Van de deelnemers nemen we ook hun verhaal op. We schrijven hier een korte blog bij.

Doel

Via onze online kanalen alsnog jonge Hagenaren met elkaar in contact brengen en hun verhalen over vrijheid met elkaar delen.

Resultaat:

- 2x kunstwerk van tekening van verhaal
- 2x interview kunstenaar
- 2x verhaal (Maria & Mohammad)
- 1x blog

Doelgroep

Jonge Hagenaren- zelfde als makerslab 1

Comm/ media

zelfde als makerslab 1

Kosten

Taakverdeling productie

- aanschrijven fonds1818 met voorstel	FB
- checken bij Aight kosten en mogelijkheden	FB
- benaderen deelnemers + kunstenaars met nwe vraag	LvdL
- inplannen interviews deelnemers met FB	LvdL
- contact opnemen editor + offerte opvragen	LvdL
- interviews deelnemers afnemen	FB
- interviews uitschrijven (transcriptie)	LvdL
- interviews deelnemers naar editor	LvdL
- interviews editen	editor
- deelnemers en kunstenaars aan elkaar koppelen	AIGHT/ LvdL
- contact onderhouden kunstenaars/ deadline	LvdL
deadline aanleveren werk kunstenaars	26 april
- materiaal delen met communicatie	LvdL
- interviews kunstenaars	FB
- interviews uitschrijven (transcriptie)	LvdL
- interviews kunstenaars naar editor	LvdL
- interviews editen	editor

2 (3)

- blog schrijven	FB
- alles online zetten + campagne	comm