

PgCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication

Action Research Project Ethical Enquiry Form

Applicant name: Dr Francesco Mazzarella

Cohort: A

Tutor name: Frederico Matos

1. What is your research question?

This Action Research Project is part of a larger project with the overall aim to develop a framework for decolonising fashion design practice and advance a cultural sustainability agenda. Within this broader context, the project intends to answer the following research question:

In what ways can design lecturers create safe spaces and ethical cross-cultural connections between students and refugees?

2. Who will be providing you with information to help you answer your question, and how will you approach and/or select them?

This study will involve 30 MA students from LCF who have chosen to participate in the Collaborative Challenge brief 'Decolonising Fashion and Textiles' which I have set up. This is a mandatory unit for MA students, and 30 students have selected my brief out of 17 available to them. The Unit Coordinator will put the students in touch with me, and I will invite the students to attend the sessions which I have designed for them.

I also aim to collect data from 6-12 refugees living in London who are currently participating in my AHRC-funded 'Decolonising Fashion and Textiles' research project, and who have accepted to join this Collaborative Challenge brief upon being invited by me via email. Participants will be recruited in light of previous experience in the textiles and fashion industry in their home countries, or their interest in enhancing their making skills and applying them to co-create artefacts that embed their cultural heritage. I have been collaborating with them through my research project, and will continue to approach them via email for this educational project.

In order to prepare the students to sensibly engage in cross-cultural collaboration with vulnerable people, I included in the brief two workshops on intercultural communication to be delivered by Adam Ramejkis, besides 5 lectures/workshops on relevant topics.

3. What will you be asking participants to do?

I will ask the participants (both students and refugees) to:

- Agree to their participation in 5 lectures/workshops being observed and documented as a source of data.
- Fill in one questionnaire at the end of the project, to comment on their overall experience in the Collaborative Challenge; sharing insights about: their change in skills and knowledge related to decolonising fashion, design activism, cultural sustainability, community resilience; their main take-away from the project; their feedback on what worked well; what could be improved, etc.
- Participate in an online focus group for the duration of 1.5 hour at the end of the project to share further insights on the project.

4. How will you get informed consent from these participants?

At the beginning of the project, I will provide the participants with an Information Sheet and will ask them to fill in a printed Informed Consent Form (here reframed as Participation Agreement).

5. What potential risks to the interests of participants do you foresee and what steps will you take to minimise those risks? A participant's interests include their physical and psychological wellbeing; their commercial interests; and their rights of privacy and reputation.

Since the research involves the collection of data about individuals, I will keep participants informed about the use of such data, and will be sensitive to the participants' rights to privacy. The participants will be free to share only the information they wish to, and may decide not to disclose any sensitive or uncomfortable information.

Findings from the research will be anonymised and quotes from the participants will be used for research purposes only, after the participants agree (in the Participation Agreement) that their contribution to the research can be used for the purpose of this Action Research Unit as part of my PgCert. The participants will be given a chance to view a copy of their contribution and to redact any statements they feel create any risks. The participants will be given the option (in the Participation Agreement) to choose whether to be acknowledged as contributors to the research or remain anonymous.

Potential risks will also be minimised by:

- Following GDPR/DPA 2018 policy;
- Following UAL Code of Practice for Educational Ethics;
- Ensuring care, respect, social justice, and beneficence for all participants at all stages of the project;
- In case the project triggers unpleasant emotions, pointing students to UAL counselling services and the refugee collaborators to free confidential psychological support available to them through the Local Council (i.e. project partners in the larger AHRC-funded research project);
- Ensuring the participants are aware that taking part in the project is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project;
- Not seeking to commercialise any of their contributions.
- Ensuring the health and safety of the participants are a priority.

6. What potential risks to yourself as the practitioner do you foresee and what steps will you take to minimise those risks?

I will avoid any situation that may seem compromising, and will not respond to verbal threats that could be interpreted as confrontational. I will engage with the counselling service available at UAL if the project triggers any negative emotions to me. If an incident does occur during the research due to eliciting unpleasant or harmful memories of the participating refugees, then I will access Occupational Therapy via my Line Manager. I will not conduct data collection involving other human participants outside contracted working hours (from 9.30 to 17.30, from Monday to Friday).

7. Does your project involve children or vulnerable adults e.g. a person with a learning disability?

NO – Anyway, I confirm that I have obtained a DBS check.

8. How will you store the information you gather from participants?

For the purpose of the research project, contact details (such as email address) of students and refugee collaborators will be collected. Such data will be kept as strictly confidential and will not be shared with any other party. The Participation Agreement Form gives the participant the option of anonymising personal information. Data collected throughout the project (i.e.

photographs, audio recordings, visual and textual notes) will be used to comment on the project for the ARP unit of my PgCert and future publications (e.g. conference papers, journal articles, blog posts). The data will be stored securely and saved electronically on a computer only accessible by me at London College of Fashion, UAL. The data will be stored for five years after the end of the project before being destroyed.

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the project in accordance with the Code of Practice on Research Ethics of the University of the Arts London (the University). In signing this form I am also confirming that:

- a) The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- b) I understand and accept that the ethical propriety of this project may be monitored by the relevant College Research body and/or the University's Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Signed:



Date: 09/10/2023

I support this project and have reviewed it with the participant:

Signed: .



Date: 10/10/2023