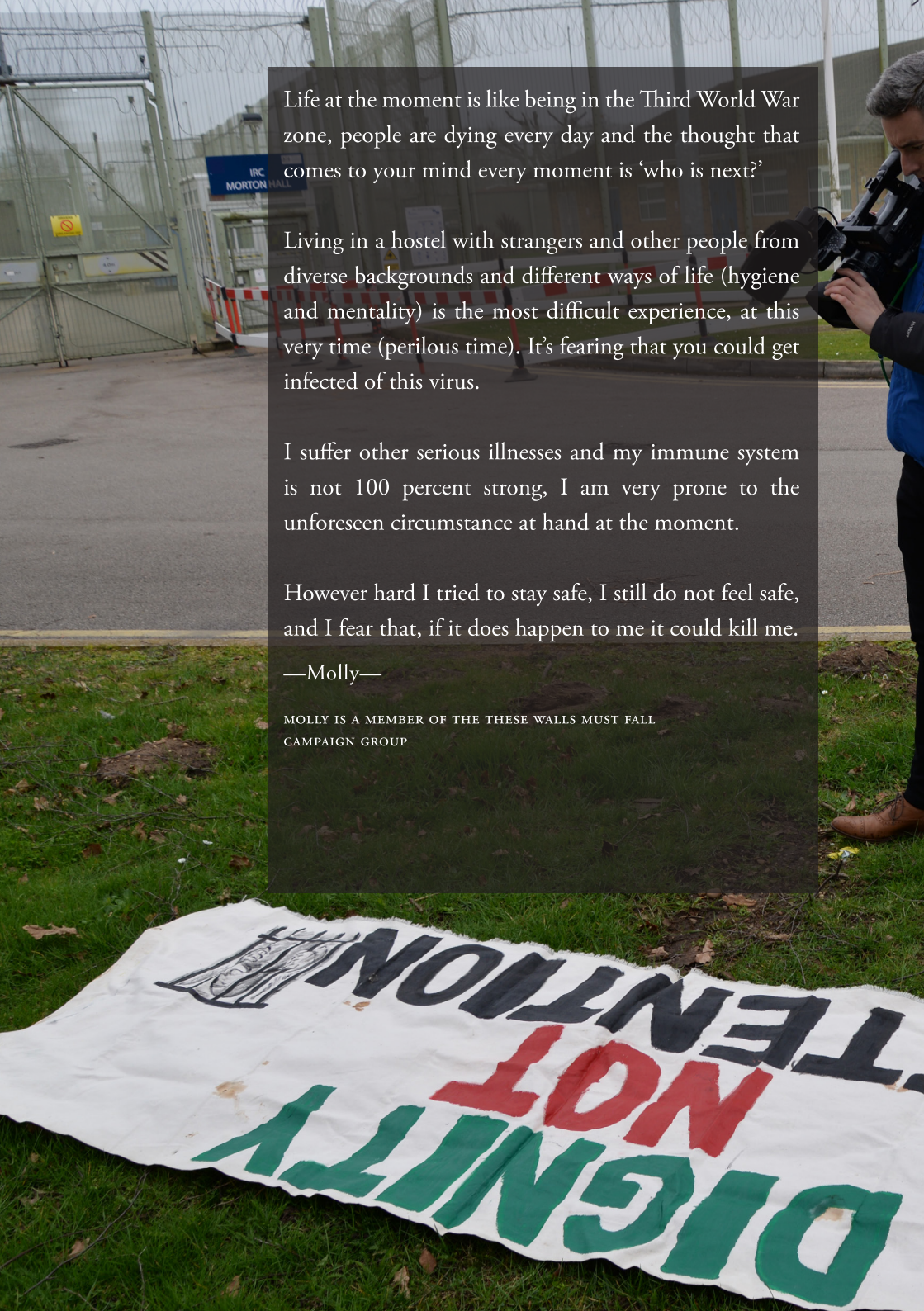


The Justice, Arts, and  
Migration Network

THE  
**BIG**  
**walk**

IT TAKES A DECADE





Life at the moment is like being in the Third World War zone, people are dying every day and the thought that comes to your mind every moment is ‘who is next?’

Living in a hostel with strangers and other people from diverse backgrounds and different ways of life (hygiene and mentality) is the most difficult experience, at this very time (perilous time). It’s fearing that you could get infected of this virus.

I suffer other serious illnesses and my immune system is not 100 percent strong, I am very prone to the unforeseen circumstance at hand at the moment.

However hard I tried to stay safe, I still do not feel safe, and I fear that, if it does happen to me it could kill me.

—Molly—

MOLLY IS A MEMBER OF THE THESE WALLS MUST FALL  
CAMPAIGN GROUP



# THE BIG walk

It Takes a Decade

Edited by  
Alison Smith



Small things can throb in our insides for a long time, like a living scratching creature, or a rotten piece of meat, playing dark arpeggios against memory through time.

—Natasha Davis

Justice, Arts, and Migration Network



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mansion  
of the future



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The text running throughout the book at the foot of the page is *The Meaning of Migration in Contemporary Politics* by Sureyya Sonmez Efe.

Statements from Molly and Boucka Koffi represent the voices of those who have experienced indefinite detention, and who are now campaigners for These Walls Must Fall.





Hoda Afshar with her work at *There's No Place Like Home*, April 2019 © Matt Snellin

My name is Boucka. I am with These Walls Must Fall. I want to end Immigration Detention and for everybody to be released under the Coronavirus pandemic. It is very difficult to implement any form of social distancing in detention. Testing is not happening and I'm asking the government to take action to ensure everyone is released into society.<sup>1</sup>

—Boucka—

Stephanie Hemelryk Donald

## FOREWORD

In May 2019, the Justice, Arts, and Migration Network<sup>2</sup> and Mansions of the Future convened a public panel on the detention of refugees in the UK. The panel was a response to the work of Kurdish photographer, Manuchehr, whose images of demonstrations and protests at Her Majesty's Immigration Removal Centre Morton Hall in Lincolnshire formed part of an exhibition focused on the works of photographer and film-maker Hoda Afshar, poet, writer, and journalist Behrouz Boochani, and composer Simon LeBoggit (Mansions of the Future, April–June 2019). At the panel, an activist and refugee support worker, Rosie, asked how



Ex-detainee and activist Narumar protesting outside Morton Hall © Manuchehr / SYMAAG

many people in the room had actually been to the Immigration Removal Centre (IRC). Very few of us had, partly because we were new to the city, but also because it isn't anywhere one would go without

## WE DECIDED THAT DAY TO MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO THE IRC

deciding very deliberately to do so. We made the decision that day to make a pilgrimage to the IRC, and thus Rosie's pertinent intervention became the seed of *The Big Walk*.



### Walking (after Thoreau, and Solnit)

I wrote this first in late May 2020, nine weeks into a lockdown to protect the public and the National Health Service in the UK against the impact of Covid-19. My daily walk in Liverpool was an hour long. I saw spring arrive and pass, flower by flower, bush by bush. I recognised birdsong and I discovered where teenagers hide in Festival Gardens to have some illicit time as a group. How can one blame them? Everything is postponed and yet,

everything continues.

People are still in detention, although many were released as a response to the pandemic, activists still work to support those detained and those in poor living conditions on the

outside, politicians still say “we are all in this together”, artists still prepare their work, academics still tread a line between the emotional, the theoretical, and the observed.

Many activists have gone to Morton Hall to protest against immigration removal, indeterminate detention, deaths in custody, and a system that creates the conditions for self-harm amongst detainees. The protestors arrive in buses from Sheffield, Leeds, and Nottingham, and they drum their heels against the green metal perimeter fence to let the inmates know that they are there. In October 2019 at one such

## PROTEST AGAINST IMMIGRATION REMOVAL, INDETERMINATE DETENTION, DEATHS IN CUSTODY, AND A SYSTEM THAT CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR SELF-HARM

demonstration it was cold and wet; people were coughing, and someone offered hot chocolate. There was a strong sense of comradely purpose. Ex-detainees, students, activists and their

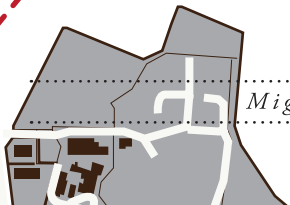
leaders sang, and shouted, and gave speeches. The police stood a few metres away and watched. It is powerful to be in proximity to people who routinely take risks for the welfare of others. I also learnt a song: *Get Up! Get Up! We want freedom, freedom. All your racist, sexist borders. We don't need 'em, need 'em.* It sounds best coming from the lungs of the young; no caveats, no what-ifs, no hindsight, no complex contextualisation and history lectures, no guilt. Its unapologetic resonance stuck in my head, and a few weeks later as I was walking through a park in London (in very early 2020, when walking through a park in London was still an ordinary thing to do), and was feeling sad about the UK's imminent departure from the EU, I sang the song. Not loudly, and I did not think there was anyone about, but a man appeared at my shoulder, walked past me, and then turned with a grin and lifted his thumbs. Writing today, 23 July 2020, there is a reason for the thumbs up. The

IRC at Morton Hall is to be closed for detention purposes from January 2021. Hooray. So now let us all remember everyone who has experienced the trauma of indeterminate detention, and the ongoing harm it causes.

*The Big Walk* was never intended to recreate demonstrations, although there was and is solidarity with their commitment. It is an intervention informed by art and led by artists, and founded on the concept of pilgrimage. It is motivated by three ideas. First, a walk grounds us in place, reminds us that as we stride along a path, or stop to look at a bird, or cross a road, we are simultaneously enacting the actual physical proximity and radical distance of one place (in this case, Lincoln) with another (Morton Hall). Second, a walker who is also a pilgrim sets out to discover things not just about the external world, but crucially about herself. A long-distance pilgrim spends long days on the road, away from

Migration can be defined as internal or international

movement of individuals within or across a state's territorial borders.





home. She will be religious, perhaps, or a certain kind of anthropologist, or an ecologist. She will gain a certain public as well as private solidity from the endeavour, and she will contribute to our shared histories of being human on this planet. The final paragraph in Rebecca Solnit's history of walking, *Wanderlust*, reminds us that walking – and therefore art, and therefore humanity – persists through the crossing of 'connecting paths',<sup>3</sup> and the stories we tell afterwards. This book is about those stories, and about memory, about knowledge and watchfulness. What has happened in this place has happened, and the systems that allow borders to close down lives remain.

The third idea is that art works *with us* to interpret experience, and to connect our internal narratives to shared objectives. The late, wonderful, critic Couze Venn wrote in 2010, 'art

is the incision in the real which allows something unexpected to emerge or erupt, it lets us glimpse or guess what lies beneath the surface of things'.<sup>4</sup> Without the probing eyes and voice of the artist we may (or may not) struggle to recognise and enunciate what we see and hear and feel as we make our way across this flat agricultural landscape towards a prison fence surrounded by

## ART EXCLAIMS AT AND INSISTS, NOT JUST ON THE FACT OF THE GROUND BENEATH OUR FEET AND THE SKY ABOVE OUR HEADS, BUT WHAT IS HIDDEN AND HOW WE MIGHT MAKE IT VISIBLE

trees, like the witch's hut in a dangerous fairytale. Art exclaims at and insists, not just on the fact of the ground beneath our feet and the sky above our heads, but what is hidden and how we might make

it visible – here, the mean politics of imprisonment. Henry David Thoreau was a walker, and writer on walking, who nonetheless never strayed far from home. Twelve miles sounds about right for his long, solitary afternoons. At the end of his essay 'Walking' he makes a surprising and trenchant observation, inspired by the regular sound of a cock crowing, that, just as the crow of the cock is an expression of Nature's health, so man's wickedness sits outside that 'brag for all the world', 'where he lives no fugitive slave laws are passed'.<sup>5</sup> What crow of the cock between Lincoln and Morton sounds the futility of laws that set out to harm?

*Twelve miles, less than half a marathon, is not very far, but the radical distance it represents between the security of home and the precarity of removal is at once banal and extreme.*

### Countrylines

A group of pilgrims walk twelve miles in a day to move widdershins from the heart of a mediaeval city to the hidden

tragedy of a twenty-first-century immigration removal centre, walking through time to honour those who suffer amongst us. As pilgrims they seek not just a demonstration of belief, but a will to change the substance of their spirit through physicality. You may not know entirely what you think about your relationship with those who are held at Her Majesty's Pleasure without trial, but taking time to walk towards that bleak structure requires a relationship of some sort, if only of acknowledging one's own relative safety, one's relief at being outside. If you are certain that immigration removal is a cloak for multiple layers of injustice, racism, and global blindness, then maybe your pilgrimage is a journey of somatic confirmation. If you have ambivalent feelings about taking action, then walking may be a way to know yourself better, to understand your pace, and what holds good for you. Walking, says the French philosopher, Frédéric Gros, marks one's reality and relationship with the earth, 'not reality as pure physical exteriority or what

*The act of migration transcends this simple definition*

*and becomes a part of the political debate within a state's jurisdiction.*



might count as a subject, but reality as what holds good: the principle of solidity, of resistance'.<sup>6</sup> Solidity is the foundations of resistance, solidarity is a solid emotional graft.

Lincoln is a quiet, tidy kind of English place, albeit with a significant, and sometimes rebellious, early history. The Cathedral was once the highest building in Europe (1311-1548), and the Castle (built in 1068) houses one of four copies of Magna Carta (1215).<sup>7</sup> Magna Carta offers a magnificent statement of the possibility of sharing power (at least between landowners and the King), and lays the foundations for the system of justice pursued at the Crown Court housed in the Castle grounds. That said, it was the Charter of the Forest (1217) that I fell in love with when I arrived in Lincoln in 2018. It is a supplementary text that codifies access to forests for free men. It strikes at the occupation of the land by the powerful. It suggests we all deserve access to a living and a life. It raises a clenched fist against putting a prison in the woods.

There are many points of connection with uncertainty, rebellion, migration, and pilgrimage in Lincolnshire. In 1536, Louth was the site of a Catholic uprising against the dissolution of the Monasteries and England's turn from Rome. One might say that Lincoln was proximate to the site of another uprising in 2016, when the Lincolnshire town of Boston became known as the place with the highest percentage of votes in the UK in favour of Brexit, the populist term for leaving the European Union. Is it ironic that in the early seventeenth century one in ten of Boston's citizens left England for the New World, encouraged by Bostonian cleric, John Cotton, to be 'trees of righteousness'?<sup>8</sup> In the Brexit uproars of 2016-2019, who was remembering that Lincolnshire was a county of emigrants, economic migrants, and refugees from religious persecution? Who was suggesting that uproar was a long-standing county habit, and that the promises of liberty in Magna Carta had been taken seriously here?

History casts us in different roles in different contingencies. *The Big Walk* is then also testament to Lincoln residents who bring that uproar into the present day, and recognise the local injustices of detention and forced removal as part of a global story of violence towards migrants (including members of the Windrush generation). Yet we must recognise that the people who have worked at Morton Hall are also Lincolnshire residents. How do we reconcile a political and social relationship between our free neighbours whose livelihoods depend on the detention of others, and those who are detained, and have likewise become near neighbours? In the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, as we all went quiet, new risks to staff and inmates enforced a new definition of sharing borders.

Now let me recall the Walks that we did undertake before March 23 2020. It is the end of November, 2019. Five

of us are walking to Morton Hall from a starting point outside Lincoln Castle.

## I WONDER WHAT THESE WALKERS THINK ABOUT MORTON HALL

We are checking the route. We pass down the back hill to the city, along the Brayford towpath, past a popular country pub, and through villages: Skellingthorpe, Doddington, and Eagle. Where possible we use public footpaths, but there is a short stretch on a busy road. The speed of the cars reminds us why it is better to walk. When you walk you pay a different kind of attention to where you are. On that misty day the walk is very beautiful. On paths near Doddington Hall, there are people out with their dogs. My colleague's whippet has a brief encounter with a dog that reminds me of a children's book character. The owners exchange pleasantries, the story-book dog is called Jeremiah Scragglepants apparently, and he has an Instagram account. I wonder

*It is the state's laws that attribute legal, social and*

*cultural meanings to this act which decides on the status and rights of*

what these walkers think about Morton Hall. At Doddington itself there are cyclists, visitors in implausible tweed breeches and jackets, the promise of artisan bread, spices, chocolate, cheese, and oranges in the farm shop. On a wet day a month earlier, when I walked the route with another friend on a day of drenching rain, it was still beautiful but much quieter, and exhausting to walk against the downpour. Maybe when a warm day comes and we can walk together, we will see more children

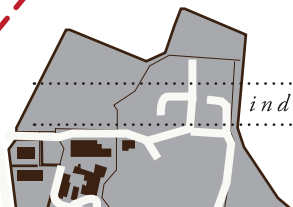
playing in the parklands and in the playground. We will be physically distanced, and perhaps that will make the meaning of this route even more plangent. Maybe one day we will walk with Natasha at our helm. Maybe the cyclists and the people with dogs and flasks of tea will ask us, from a two metre distance, where we are going, and we can respond that we are pilgrims out for the day, trying to remember and to honour our neighbours.



*individuals on the move. The root cause of migration,*



**IT TAKES A DECADE  
IS STAGED THROUGH  
TEN INTERVENTIONS,  
MIRRORING THE NUMBER  
OF YEARS ON AVERAGE  
THAT A MIGRANT'S  
LIFE IS IMPACTED UPON  
FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF  
INVOLUNTARY DETENTION  
OR DISPLACEMENT.**





Colette Griffin

## ACTING TOGETHER

### Standing Against Involuntary Institutional Detention and Structural Violence

In late 2019 Mansions of the Future, in partnership with the Justice, Arts, and Migration Network, approached artist Natasha Davis to develop and lead a public walk: a performative act punctuated with movements, text and gestures which would remind us of why we were walking. Mansions of the Future is an arts and cultural hub in Lincoln privileging social, site-specific and collaborative ways of working. Since early 2019 Mansions of the Future has collaborated with the Justice, Arts, and Migration Network to develop and present articulations of the migrant condition. In a climate statistically defined by structural inequality the partnership has looked to address involuntary institutional detention, structural violence and immigration, through

discussion and arts-based interventions, including *There's No Place Like Home* and now *The Big Walk*.

*There's No Place Like Home* brought together international artists and activists who have experienced and documented their own journey

SINCE EARLY 2019 MANSIONS OF THE FUTURE HAS COLLABORATED WITH THE JUSTICE, ARTS, AND MIGRATION NETWORK TO DEVELOP AND PRESENT ARTICULATIONS OF THE MIGRANT CONDITION.

through creative practice and text, with academics who have worked with broad narratives of global migration. Following the event, conversations continued, and through the lens of the global collaborators, expressed

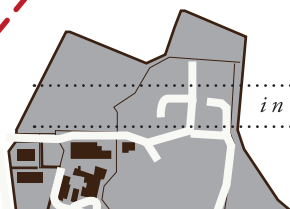
an associated urgency to look more closely at the local migrant reality. Attention turned to Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre in Swinderby, Lincolnshire.<sup>9</sup> Mansions of the Future is a three-year Arts Council Ambition for Excellence funded project, the structure of which allows for a responsive and collaborative approach to programming. The project is reflective of Lincoln's present-day reality, but is rooted in the history of this ancient city which holds manuscripts of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest, key texts in the articulation of human rights. As such, through a public programme of talks, workshops, communal lunches, family activities and national and international artistic commissions, the project looks to address the relationship between art, culture and democracy.

Artist Natasha Davis' work is regularly made in collaboration and is often site-specific; she explores body, memory, identity, migration and displacement, working across performance, installation, film and publication. During Refugee Week in June 2019

she delivered her first project in Lincoln. Following a period of working alongside migrant and refugee groups and communities in the locality, she created *Welcome Town*,<sup>10</sup> a Future Arts Centres commission, developed in collaboration with Live Collision, Dublin; ARC Stockton and Lincoln Drill Hall. In Lincoln, *Welcome Town* took the shape of a playful interactive installation located outside the city's Bus Station. Here Davis attempted to re-imagine how towns could provide truly humane care for displaced individuals. In the lead up to this public event Natasha took part in the *There's No Place Like Home* panel discussion, generously speaking about her work and her own migrant experience, having been displaced herself by the civil war in the former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1999. Natasha was approached following conversations between the small network of like-minded individuals that had organically formed as a result of *There's No Place Like Home*. *Welcome Town* had evolved over a number of reiterations, taking the form of a walk in Dublin which was delivered in partnership with Live

in particular, is crucial for policymakers in the

context of decision-making processes on the determination of the



Collision. A 'personal walk' was led by Natasha – a vehicle for conversation about resilient towns and their migrant identities. Developed in partnership with Mansions of the Future and the Justice, Arts, and Migration Network, Natasha's commission for *The Big Walk*, titled *It Takes a Decade* is staged through ten interventions, mirroring the number of years on average that a migrant's life is impacted upon following a period of involuntary detention or displacement.

Natasha's commission was supported by Newark-based sound artist Jane Olson, who answered an open call inviting artists to respond to the project themes. *It Takes a Decade* and the wider *The Big Walk* project formed part of Mansions of the Future's *Lincoln Live* season. *Lincoln Live* featured new commissions which exist at the intersections of disciplinary

THE SHARED  
EXPERIENCE OF  
WALKING CAN CHANGE  
PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS  
OF THEIR PLACE IN  
A LANDSCAPE...OR  
INDEED THEIR PLACE IN  
THE WORLD.

boundaries. The programme was a celebration of performative ventures that stand resolutely marginal to both the history of English theatre and the often exclusive, disciplinary rhetoric of contemporary performance art. The simple act of walking is seldom considered to be performative, but is always performed. Walking artist Alison Lloyd believes that 'the shared experience of walking can change people's perceptions of their place in a landscape...Or indeed their place in the world'.<sup>11</sup> In the wake of the current Covid-19 global crisis, *It Takes a Decade* was reimagined as a piece of film. Still, we hope to come together in the not too distant future to walk freely, in solidarity with those who are denied this right.

Natasha Davis

## IT TAKES A DECADE

### A Few Backstage Thoughts

I first visited the carefully curated Mansions of the Future space in spring 2019, as I was collaborating with Lincoln Drill Hall and a group of local citizens on my large-scale performance installation *Welcome Town*, to mark Refugee Week in June 2019. I got to know Mansions of the Future's local network of artists and activists, as well as Lincoln's newly-founded City of Sanctuary team. We were all involved one way or another in local events, including the public panel *There's No Place Like Home: Detention, Activism and Art*, curated by Mansions of the Future and the Justice, Arts, and Migration Network, and the various exchanges that followed. So I was really pleased when Mansions of the Future approached me again to create a performance walk in collaboration

with them and composer Jane Olson between Lincoln Castle and Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre.

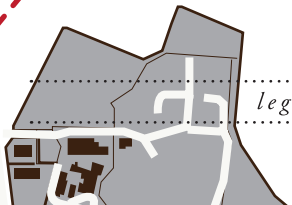
The title *It Takes a Decade* resonates with my own migratory past (I was born in

REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND,  
AGE, PLANS OR MEANS...  
DISPLACEMENT WILL PUT  
AMBITIONS ON HOLD FOR A  
NUMBER OF YEARS.

former Yugoslavia and displaced by the civil war in the early 1990s), the current moment in my artistic career, and something I have often heard from refugee friends – that after being uprooted, a decade is easily wiped from life, and it takes that long to pick up

legitimacy of this act within a state's policies. In

contemporary politics, the act of migration is legally meaningful when





from where life was halted. The research for one of my previous performances, *Internal Terrains* (2013),<sup>12</sup> was inspired by this poetic truth, and working with various groups of participants often confirmed that regardless of background, age, plans or the means we have, displacement will put ambitions on hold for a number of years.

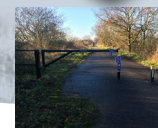
This concept also resonated well with the fact that in the ten years prior to this commission I mainly created work exploring crossing borders, body and memory, in various forms (live performances, installations, film and writing). As I began to curate, in sketches and conversations, a retrospective of my own artistic decade of exploring displacement – via metaphors of breathing, ruptures, suspensions, decays of the body and land, stem cells, martial arts, items we deem necessary to take with us on a journey of escape, and so on – autobiographical moments started aligning with this new performance walk, but also with fantasy, research, conversations with friends who were in

need of international protection, and what I heard from volunteers who visit Morton Hall detainees.

The idea of a decade along with a mix of the above thoughts and references accompanied me on the twelve-mile research walks, following the Lincolnshire country trails between our elected start and end points, occasionally clashing with or meandering amongst and under urban roaring pathways. These were then counterpointed into ten episodes by natural changes of the landscape and its interaction with human life: suburban exits out of Lincoln, paths behind peaceful family homes, rising waters in the local river, playgrounds, cornfields, electricity pylons, horse farms, plant nurseries, forests in the dusk, and finally HMIRC Morton Hall with its Kafkaesque high metal fences, barbed wires, 'no cameras', move-away-from-the-private-property strict orders.

The quiet beauty of the Lincolnshire countryside, the setting for Morton

*the entry of migrants across a state's territorial borders*



HMIRC MORTON HALL  
MAIN ENTRANCE

Hall IRC, is in such contrast with the purpose of the prison building itself, that it is hard, while facing it, not to consider the lives trapped and in distress behind its walls. The building itself is ominously hidden from view and from ordinary people's thoughts, unmarked but for the sign just in front of it – missing from all the local signposting directing the walker to other local sites such as Eagle Hall, North Scarle, Public Bridleway or the Giant bike shop at Doddington Hall. Does its absence from sight, its air of limbo, a placelessness, make it more acceptable, as we all go by with our busy lives, on the way to something more important or just something fun?

There is a certain musicality to the walking route, synchronising with the hours of the day, just barely fitting into a slow winter walk between the freshness of the morning and the bite of the air at dusk, which made collaborating with the composer Jane Olson, based in the area, who sits in local restaurants and

pubs, hears local conversations, walks the local paths, records the local sounds, ever more poignant.

Then of course Covid-19 arrived, and gradually, as we stopped being able to gather, we realised that a physical walk might no longer be possible in the way we had imagined it.

## THE BUILDING ITSELF IS OMINOUSLY HIDDEN FROM VIEW

Collectively, as an artistic, academic and production team we decided to create a film instead, and thus try to guide you, our fellow walker, along the paths we walked, and hopefully in this way spare a moment together to reflect on the same thoughts, in the same places, but in different moments in time.

As I am going through my images, mini films, footage, notes, as well as the sounds and clips that Jane keeps sending me, zooming the ideas with the team, walking other countryside paths, and editing the film I do not yet know the length of, I am imagining you, our walker-to-be, in isolation, perhaps shopping with a mask and maybe even plastic gloves, at a two-metre distance from everyone else, not knowing, but hopefully well and healthy. And I am also thinking how, in a very dystopian, anxious and uncertain way, this has somehow brought us closer to the lives in Morton Hall, where the fear of getting infected is at least mixed with the relief that the danger of being imminently deported, sometimes to a place where a much bigger danger than the virus awaits, has been temporarily suspended.

For me this situation is intertwined not just with concerns about life put on hold by the pandemic, but also with the impact on the already vulnerable

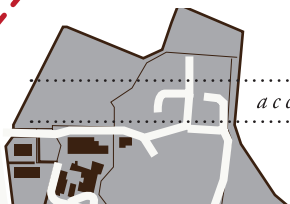
art sector to which I belong, wondering how many in it, after a decade of recession, on top of Brexit and now the virus, will survive, and what its future will be. Are there possibilities for some positive changes, such as letting go of the destructive, hostile and self-oriented policies and building on what is important and meaningful, in order to preserve lives and the nature our lives thrive in and depend on?

In the meantime, distancing, hostile environment, involuntary detention and displacement have caught up to a degree with most of us now, including those who may have not experienced it previously. We are all displaced and in transition now and the 'stable' world has discovered the feeling of not quite belonging any more. Walking and creating have definitely been my consolations through these times, and I look forward to sharing our poetic and personal interventions with you digitally, and to all the transformations, resilience, recoveries and, I hope, compassion arising from what we are living now.

June 2020

*accords with the states' immigration policies, that are*

*unique for each state, despite having many commonalities. The legal*





Natasha Davis

## WHEN I CROSS BORDERS<sup>13</sup>

When I cross borders  
on my British Davis passport,  
I get a smile, speed,  
have a good journey,  
bon voyage,  
srećan put,  
καλό ταξίδι.

When I crossed borders  
on my Croatian  
or, even worse,  
Serbian,  
Vučković, passport,  
I got questions,  
firmness  
and often I held my breath  
until I reached the other side.

Why is that the case?

I am exactly the same person.



*statuses of migrants take shape by an assessment of the*

*root cause of migration coupled with the legal meanings attributed to*



Jane Olson

## OUTSIDE IN

The initial excitement of being invited to provide the sound and word elements for my first

collaborative foray into performance art quickly faded once the weight of the task in hand became apparent. My ideas of using a collage of sounds recorded inside Morton

Hall with segmented conversations of detainees were soon scrapped. A contact from a volunteer visitor group advised against using people's stories as commodities. Morton Hall didn't return my emails or telephone calls.

Instead, I immersed myself in news of detention centres, listened to podcasts of interviews with detainees, reading accounts from those who had been detained and removed; others who had been detained, released and who had stayed. My part of this journey couldn't be a naïve account of a warped perspective. But how could I retell or re-imagine these stories with any level

of authenticity, of those living out their lives inside; those who had suffered myriad tribulations, are still suffering

### THE VIEW FROM THE OUTSIDE IS TOLD IN A LAYERED TAPESTRY OF SOUND AND WORDS.

uncertainties of a limitless incarceration and separation from loved ones, life prospects now defined by lines on a page or lost pieces of paper? The answer is simple: I can't. What I *can* do is to document *my* journey, through sounds and words. Just instead of attempting to tell the "inside out" I would recount the "outside in".

The view from the outside is told in a layered tapestry of sound and words. Sounds both pre-recorded and performed, played on acoustic instruments and taken from nature; spoken words taken from traditional folk songs, telephone conversations

and overheard conversations in public spaces of perspectives filtered by mass media. Heavy steps mark time. All highlight the contradictions of our ideals. Working together with Natasha, certain words seemed more important than others and these took on recurring themes, particularly those of water (being fluid), lines (being solid), marks on paper and marks made in time which are all explored together in the work.

I loved the idea that the same word for the frontier separating political divisions or geographical regions is used to describe a colourful ornamental planted edge to your garden. Just what is it that some seem so anxious to protect? Perhaps it is the idea of our beautiful English Country Garden. Most of the flowers that we consider such traditional favourites of the border are a result of procurement by seed hunters after decades of exploration into Asia, Africa

and the Middle East. These bright ornamental flowers, so familiar to us

### "BEATING THE BOUNDS" OF OUR HUMANITY

now, along with the birds of passage who fill our skies are all welcome signs of the changing of the seasons. Human beings, it seems, not so.

On the outside we all put up boundaries to protect our possessions, our identities, gardens, families... Some of these may only be perceived. Others are more visible, such as the walls we build, or the clothing that we choose to wear, but they all colour our interactions and the potential connections we make as human beings. It is my hope that this work challenges our self-imposed edges, "beating the bounds" of our humanity.

*this act.// The contemporary political debates increasingly put more*

*emphasis on the "criminality" of this act where the moral meaning of*

# Ten Thousand Miles Away

Trad. English Folk Song

Arr. Jane Olson

Sing Oh! for a brave and va - li - ant barque, A brisk and a live - ly breeze, A

5  
cap - tain, too, and a bul - ly crew, To car - ry me o - ver the seas. To car - ry me o - ver the

10  
seas, me boys, to my true love so gay: She has tak - en a trip in a

14  
Gov - ern ment ship Ten thou - sand miles a - way. So blow ye winds, I Oh! A

19  
rov - ing I will go, I'll stay no more on En - gland's shore, So let the mu - sic

24  
play; I'll start by the morn - ing train To cross the rag - ing

28  
main, For I'm on the move to my own true love Ten thou - sand miles a - way.

Sing Oh! for a brave and valiant barque,  
A brisk and a lively breeze,  
A captain, too, and a bully crew,  
To carry me over the seas.  
To carry me over the seas, my boys,  
To my true love so gay;  
She has taken a trip in a Government ship  
Ten thousand miles away.

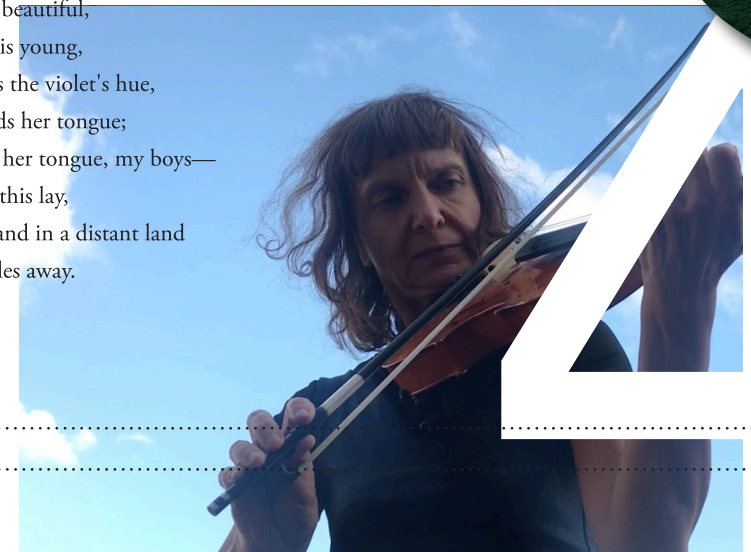
## CHORUS

So, blow ye winds, I oh!  
A roving I will go.  
I'll stay no more on England's shore,  
So let the music play;  
I'll start by the morning train  
To cross the raging main,  
For I'm on the move to my own true love,  
ten thousand miles away.

My true love she is beautiful,  
My true love she is young,  
Her eyes are blue as the violet's hue,  
And silvery sounds her tongue;  
And silvery sounds her tongue, my boys—  
But, while I sing this lay,  
She is doing the grand in a distant land  
Ten thousand miles away.

Oh! that was a dark and a dismal day  
When last I saw my Peg,  
She had a Government band around each arm,  
Another one round each leg,  
Another one round each leg, my boys,  
Togg'd in a suit of grey;  
"Goodbye," said she, "remember me,  
Ten thousand miles away."

The sun may shine through a London fog,  
The Thames run bright and clear,  
The ocean brine be turned to wine,  
I may forget my beer.  
I may forget my beer, my boys,  
Or my landlord's quarter-day,  
But I'll never part from my own sweetheart,  
Ten thousand miles away.<sup>14</sup>



.....  
migration as being one of the "fundamental freedoms" fades away.  
.....

Victor Mujakachi

## INSIDE VULCAN HOUSE

Inside the building, as usual, we were searched by the security guards at the entrance.

Our pockets were emptied of all contents. Body scans were done. After the security checks I headed to the front desk where an immigration official asked me to confirm my date of birth and the address where I was staying. He told me that another immigration official would be coming to collect me and take me into an interview room. I knew then that this was it.

I was quite calm. Everything was moving so fast. I stood up to wait for the second immigration official and

was very surprised when I looked back to see that he was already right behind me wearing a black uniform in military style. If the design of the black uniform is intended to intimidate and psychologically subdue people then the immigration authorities got that aspect of things right.

I WAS THE WRONG  
COLOUR, WRONG  
RACE, BORN IN THE  
WRONG PART OF THE  
WORLD AND LARGELY  
DUE TO THE 'HOSTILE  
ENVIRONMENT' POLICY  
BROUGHT IN BY  
THERESA MAY, DIDN'T  
DESERVE TO LIVE IN  
THIS PART OF  
THE WORLD

The black-attired immigration official led me to a back room where I saw Kombo. Before joining him, I was subjected to another body search. I was asked to take off my shoes. It so happened that I was wearing a pair of socks that had a colourful Union Jack design on them. The immigration official searching

me remarked that he liked them. The irony of that remark was that here I was, wearing a pair of socks with the British flag at the same time that the authorities were making arrangements to remove me from the country that I wanted to call home. It was like having a rotten egg smashed right into my face for daring to want to become a British citizen.

I was the wrong colour, wrong race, born in the wrong part of the

IT WAS AS IF I DIDN'T  
DESERVE TO BREATHE  
THE SAME AIR AS  
BRITISH PEOPLE

world and largely due to the 'hostile environment' policy brought in by Theresa May, didn't deserve to live in this part of the world because of immigration laws, rules, controls, regulations and the obsession with driving down the net migration numbers. It was as if I didn't deserve to breathe the same air as British people. Yet my country Zimbabwe has the second largest white, European-origin population in Africa, after South Africa.

*The security approach seems to be entrenched in states' immigration*

*policies which is marked by "detention centres" inside*





I STAND IN SOLIDARITY

with the souls that have departed.

AND I STAND IN SOLIDARITY

with those of us that are still striving,  
with those of us that are still suffering,  
with those of us that you have left with a scar.

You locked me up. Three times.  
Life in Yarl's Wood was mean. Was ruthless.  
Physical attack, physical abuse, emotional abuse.

**DEPRIVATION.**

And nobody did anything about it.  
At the end of the day they all went scot-free just because of their colour.

You took my life away from me.

You took my dreams away from me.  
You took my aspirations away from me.  
You destroyed my life as you have done to so many.

What gives you the right to snatch people's life away from them?  
To take all that we ever hoped for.  
All we ever hoped of.

You take it all away.

*and outside of the state borders. The securitisation of migration further*

I STAND IN SOLIDARITY

with the dead, and the living today.

To fight against you,  
to tell you,  
to kick these walls down, completely.  
And do the rightful thing.  
Give them life.  
Give them hope.  
Give them security and safety.

THESE WALLS MUST FALL. NOW.

Kick the walls down.  
Kick the walls down.  
Kick the walls down.  
Kick the walls down.  
Kick the walls down.  
Enough is enough.

Kick the awful walls down.  
Kick the awful walls down.

KICK  
THE  
AWFUL  
WALLS  
DOWN.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

—Molly—

MOLLY IS A MEMBER OF THESE WALLS MUST FALL CAMPAIGN GROUP.



Lisa White

## CONTEXTUALISING MORTON HALL

U<sup>niversal Human Rights</sup>

The Preamble of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins:

*Whereas* recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

*Whereas* disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people...<sup>15</sup>

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) contains some thirty

provisions, including a right to life, freedom from torture, cruel and

.....  
*politicises the freedom of movement with the risk of dehumanising the*  
.....

inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and exile, and freedom of movement. Born out of the horrors of the Second World War (1939-1945) with its genocide, atomic weapons and the deaths of sixty million people, it has since formed the basis of many human rights treaties all over the world.

### Rights and Refuge

The Second World War and the actions that followed resulted in significant displacement, with at least eleven million people in Europe alone being forced to flee their homes. The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) was established as a result, and though initially focused upon European experiences of the war (until 1967), it defined a refugee as being someone that:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>16</sup>

This Convention (and the Protocol which followed in 1967) set out the rights of refugees and placed a duty upon states to protect them.<sup>17</sup> This was underpinned by a principle of 'non-refoulement', which asks states not to expel people to places where 'life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion'.<sup>18</sup> Further developments in international human rights law have also applied this to situations where a person is likely to be subjected to torture – itself a violation of customary international law and one of the most absolute and fundamental human rights found in numerous treaties across the world (see e.g. The United Nations Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984).<sup>19</sup>

### Immigration Detention

Yet despite these treaties, states retain a vast amount of power over those who find themselves within their borders. In the UK there were 70 new immigration "offences" created by various governments in the 91 years between 1905 and 1996. Within the 13-year tenure of New Labour, this increased by 84.<sup>20</sup>

IN THE UK TODAY  
THERE ARE SEVEN IRCS  
AND TWO SEPARATE  
"SHORT TERM"  
HOLDING FACILITIES.

Immigration has remained a fast-moving and politically sensitive area of law in recent years, and though freedom of movement is

technically a human right, we have seen law and policy used to make movement – including the seeking of asylum and refugee status – more difficult.<sup>21</sup>

One of the ways in which movement has been made more difficult is through the use of Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs). In the UK today there are seven IRCs and two separate "short term"

*act of migration. Rather than being "individuals" with unique stories,*



holding facilities. The majority of this estate is privately managed, with Morton Hall being the only centre remaining in public hands.

In the year ending June 2019, there were 24,052 entries into this detention estate, with 1,727 detainees being held in June 2019.<sup>22</sup> Some of those held were/are newly arrived in the UK, others will have lived lawfully here for many years. About half of those detained under immigration powers are people who have had their claim for asylum refused or are being detained whilst their claim is being processed.<sup>23</sup> Immigration detention centres also include people who have overstayed or breached the terms of their visas and “foreign nationals” who have completed a prison sentence and are intended to be deported.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike other European states, the UK does not have a statutory limit on the

length of time someone can be detained for.<sup>25</sup> About 65% of those detained are detained for up to a month, but 128 people were detained for over a year in 2019, with six people being detained for at least two years. Around 59% of those released from immigration detention in the year to June 2019 were released back into the community, which raises important questions about the necessity of their detention.<sup>26</sup>

### The Local Context

Lincoln Castle currently hosts one of four surviving copies of 1215 Magna Carta. Though its significance is sometimes disputed, this document is often thought of as asserting freedoms and a level of protection against arbitrary detention. Just ten miles from the Castle, Morton Hall IRC holds adult male detainees in immigration detention, without a time limit and

with limited access to justice. The Centre was originally a Royal Air Force base before opening as a prison in 1985. It became an IRC in 2011. Morton Hall is the only remaining IRC in public hands, being operated by HM Prison and Probation Service on behalf of the Home Office. At the time of the last HM Chief Inspector of Prisons inspection (HMIP) in late 2019, the Centre held about 240 men, with a cost to the taxpayer of around £100 per detainee, per day.<sup>27</sup>

Morton Hall holds a high number of detainees known to be extremely vulnerable, where the Home Office has evidence that detention is likely to cause further harm (including to survivors of torture). Detention Centre Rule 35 requires that the Home Office be notified if

doctors consider a detainee’s health to be injuriously affected by continued detention or the conditions of detention, or if they may have been a victim of

torture or have suicidal intentions. Despite this Rule, recent inspections of Morton Hall have found significant and ongoing problems with the way these reports were being utilised.<sup>28</sup>

Previous victimisation, ill health, uncertainty over the future and known fears around deportation are compounded by the prison-like conditions of Morton Hall, with its razor wire, early lock-downs and use of degrading strip-

searches which the HMIP found to be ‘unjustified’.<sup>29</sup> Its rural location, and its poor and costly transport links, mean that detainees are “invisibilised” and are often isolated from family and friends. 70% of those detained had not

migrants arguably turn into mere “statistics”, “numbers”

that need to be managed within policies. Migrant detention centres

been visited during the time of the last HMIP inspection.<sup>30</sup>

The “stuckness” and isolation experienced in detention has foreseeable harmful consequences. According to figures recorded by INQUEST, around one in three deaths in immigration detention are self-inflicted.<sup>31</sup> In a twelve-month period between 2016–2017, four men died at Morton Hall, including through self-inflicted death. Levels of self-harm remain high at the Centre and over forty detainees were subject to constant supervision in the six months prior to the HMIP inspection, due to imminent risks of self-harm or self-inflicted death.<sup>32</sup>

The existence of Morton Hall (and other immigration detention sites) is the outcome of political, legal, cultural and socio-economic processes through which people who move are dehumanised, reduced down to “the asylum seeker”, “the migrant” and “the foreigner”. They are labelled as

“other” and represented as a source of threat and danger. Their dignity and rights are denied, and their experiences

PEOPLE WHO MOVE  
ARE DEHUMANISED,  
REDUCED DOWN  
TO “THE ASYLUM  
SEEKER”, “THE  
MIGRANT” AND “THE  
FOREIGNER”... THEIR  
DIGNITY AND RIGHTS  
ARE DENIED, AND  
THEIR EXPERIENCES  
DISMISSED OR  
DISTRUSTED.

dismissed or distrusted. By its very nature, immigration detention isolates us from one another and shatters our communities. Our event is our response to this.

Victor Mujakachi

## INSIDE MORTON HALL

After about ten minutes Kombo and I, with a few others, were led out of the lounge into the open air where a large glare of security lights greeted us. We stood outside a small security gate of strong wrought iron. The prison officer radioed control for authority to pass through. Permission was granted and we went through after our identity cards had been checked. There was a second large security gate for vehicles.

Through the gate, we came to a very large building whose name immediately attracted my attention: Rosa Parks Building! I was appalled to see Rosa Parks’ name in this place of confinement. This would not be in keeping with the principles by which Rosa Parks<sup>33</sup>, the great African-American woman who helped initiate the US civil rights movement, lived. From somewhere in the realm of the spirit world, she must be looking down

with horror and consternation to see the manner in which her name is being desecrated.

I WAS APPALLED TO  
SEE ROSA PARKS’  
NAME IN THIS PLACE

From the reception we were led towards a large corridor and again past a wrought iron gate that had to be unlocked. It really amazed me how the prison officers were able to remember all the keys because they carry a huge bunch of them and their walking motions are always accompanied by the chink of keys. The corridor was long, extending something like twenty metres. There were rooms on either side.

An occupant in one of the rooms shouted a greeting in a very loud voice:

*represent this type of contemporary policy approach*

*which attributes negative connotations to the act of migration.*

Deirdre Conlon

## "NEW" NORMAL/S

'Welcome to the jungle!'

I opened my door and switched the light on.

The room was small. It had a shower cubicle and toilet. There was a single bed with a thin blue mattress. The single bed was in the line of sight of the doorway. This was a security design because on each door was a small glass window about 45 cm high and 15 cm wide, with a wooden flap that opens from the outside only. I discovered during the night that prison officers would make regular checks on inmates by opening the flap to peep through and see if the inmate was inside, was alive, had not self-harmed and had not tunnelled out.

"Stay at home", the UK government's guidance and response (until 11 May 2020) in the current Covid-19 pandemic, has curtailed activities – like going outdoors, meeting friends, being in close contact with extended family – that many of us considered "normal" until recently. However, these mundane opportunities are difficult or denied for people who are confined indefinitely in immigration detention. There is

detention estate has the capacity to confine up to 3,200 individuals<sup>34</sup> with a daily population of 1,784, according to 2018 figures.<sup>35</sup> In March 2020 the Home Office released 350 vulnerable migrants<sup>36</sup> with underlying health issues in response to legal action by Detention Action, a national migrant rights group, and campaigns including Freed Voices<sup>37</sup> call for the release of all detained migrants.

IN MARCH 2020 THE HOME OFFICE  
RELEASED 350 VULNERABLE  
MIGRANTS WITH UNDERLYING  
HEALTH ISSUES IN RESPONSE TO  
LEGAL ACTION

irony, perhaps – and possibly scope for optimism – in this situation, as the current global pandemic has brought into sharp relief the need to end the use of immigration detention. The UK

My research collaboration with Nancy Hiemstra on detention economies<sup>38</sup> amplifies the call for change. The project examines private *and* public sector entities involved in contracting and subcontracting of US immigration detention infrastructure, which includes everything from food services and telecommunications to healthcare and transportation. It investigates the entities involved, how much revenue

*An automatic categorisation of migrants as "them"*

*creates social configurations through the process of "othering" which*



is generated, and how subcontracting reverberates for detained migrants, their networks, in governing/government, and political-economic spheres. We have found that beyond confinement and control, detention conditions become productive zones of social abandonment<sup>39</sup> where food provision, medical care, and even basic hygiene items, such as soap, are inadequate. Detained migrants often participate in work programmes earning exploitative wages (£1.00 p/hour in the UK, \$1.00 p/day in the US) that are used to supplement provisions with items purchased from overpriced facility commissaries. This cycle of containment, abandonment, and commodification is the norm in immigration detention.

While Covid-19 renders confinement part of a “new normal” for many of us, is it possible that it will also issue forth a “new normal” for people confined under immigration controls and an end to immigration detention?

## DETAINED MIGRANTS OFTEN PARTICIPATE IN WORK PROGRAMMES EARNING EXPLOITATIVE WAGES (£1 P/HOUR)



*distinguishes insiders*

Victor Mujakachi

## £1.00 AN HOUR

I asked a social worker in the prison that day about the question of work. I asked her why we were allowed to work and earn money in prison but are not allowed to do so outside prison as asylum seekers. She said it was our right to earn a living. I said I understood that but if I was to leave prison to go to look for work I would be put into prison where I would be allowed to earn £1.00 an hour! The Home Office deportation papers I was given at Vulcan House clearly stipulated that I was not allowed to be in any form of paid employment. There is a Home Office Centre in Morton Hall within the prison complex. They should be aware of this stipulation. Are they wilfully breaching their own regulations? If they allow me as a refused asylum seeker to earn a living within prison it follows

that I should be allowed to earn a living out of it.

This observation must also be taken up by campaigners who are advocating for asylum seekers to be allowed to work. Most of the cleaning in the complex is done by inmates and all work results

in payment at the rate of £1.00 an hour. I was amazed at how a lot of inmates work. Work is therapeutic and it also results in inmates getting

a little bit of extra cash for themselves. But why are inmates paid £1.00 an hour when the national minimum wage is much higher? Who actually is supposed to do cleaning work in the prisons? Where does the difference between the minimum rate and the £1.00 paid to prisoners when they work go?

IF I WAS TO LEAVE PRISON  
TO GO TO LOOK FOR WORK  
I WOULD BE PUT INTO  
PRISON WHERE I WOULD BE  
ALLOWED TO EARN £1.00  
AN HOUR!

*from outsiders, newcomers from residents, citizens from non-citizens,*

## Identity Stripped

Home. Family. Country.

Stay—die.  
Flee—a roulette of life and death.

The ghosts of death all around,  
where so many have lost their lives,  
where I could lose my life.

Now, this detention centre,  
identity stripped to a number  
on a case file  
that is always in progress.

In limbo.

Out of the way.  
Out of time.  
Out of place.

In a land of democracy  
and rich history—

yet so far away  
from English civilisation,  
village or town.

Are we contaminated?  
Are we in isolation because of this,  
like an animal in quarantine?

But quarantine has a time-limit,  
and then an animal is set free.

Am I then less than an animal  
because I flee death?  
Because I flee to another country?

Tell me it is not because of the colour of my skin?  
How can you not see me as human?

How do you expect *me* to see *you* as human  
if you fling me to the concrete floor  
like a sack of potatoes,  
sit on me, so I cannot breathe?

Like the guard  
who folded a woman  
down into a cushion  
to stop her defiant singing,  
on a plane that was deporting her  
back to the country she had fled from,  
because she refused  
forced 'marriage'  
to a much older man.

More than one human being  
has died as a result of  
this barbaric method of restraint.

Shame!

And yet no one seems to hear us.  
No one says:  
*These are crimes against humanity!*

In this social-media age,  
a tweet from someone with influence  
could put a stop to all this—  
a single click on a petition;  
letters, protests, marches.

A click to help  
make us visible,  
we who are invisible.

To see us as fully human,  
as you are,  
as you *say* you are.

When your identity is stripped  
like mine is,

then you know how much  
can be taken away,  
that can never be given back.

## A SEQUENCE OF THREE POEMS

and members from non-members. // There is an urgent need for a

positive attitude to the act of migration in contemporary politics in

## Morton Hall

I had a job. I was paying taxes.  
I was paying visa application fees.  
I was not a criminal.

But already I felt less than human  
when I was arrested. Processed.

Now I am here,  
behind these wire fences,  
this razor-wire.

They will not tell me  
how my case progresses. I wait,  
and wait.

Days and nights merge into one.  
It is all the same.

We have lost all hope.  
This is like a prison.  
They tell me this *was* a prison.

We are not animals, but this place  
feels like a slaughter-house.

I was told that the UK was the  
oldest democracy in the world,  
and that we would be  
treated with dignity.

We are human beings in need of protection,  
but this place is not of this world.  
*It is this other world.*

Nobody knows we are here.  
Does anybody care?

In my home country, I was tortured.  
I have the scars to prove it,  
but still my case has not progressed.  
I fled from persecution,  
but now I am here,  
in this harsh, bleak place.  
Men have killed themselves—  
men who look like strongmen  
weep into their pillows at night.  
I hear them.

I try to find a small freedom  
in the sky. I like to watch the birds fly.

But it is almost too sad  
in the hour before sunset,  
when flocks of birds cross the sky  
to roost in their nests—their homes.

But I *have* no home to go to.  
What home can I hope for?

Will they send me back to torture and death?  
Do they not care?  
I have the scars to show.  
I *have* shown them.

We are not prisoners.  
We are not criminals.  
We should be free.

We are not *less* than  
human beings.  
We are not *less* than you.

But each day and night that drags by  
weakens me.  
My identity is failing.

Tell me, who am I,  
if I am *not* a human being?

*order to eradicate mental polarisations within a society.*

*Artivism projects like The Big Walk can raise awareness of the issues*





## Manus Prison

Green hell—  
this jungle island prison.

No crime. No charge. No sentence.  
No hope of freedom on Australian soil.

Waves lash the island. The land heats up.  
Thirst. Hunger. Attack. Remain human.

Names. Numbers. Beatings. Illness. Suicide. Murder.  
Hear their stories. Hear their pain. Hear their chants.

No single person responsible in a Kyriarchal system.  
Hear the sea's incessant susurration:

*the boss says, the boss says, the boss says—*  
the white noise torture of its eternal song.

Alison Smith

## A NOTE ON KYRIARCHY

In his his award-winning book, *No Friend but the Mountains*, the Kurdish author and filmmaker Behrouz Boochani uses a mixture of literary prose and poetry, interspersed with dreamlike and imaginative 'horrific surrealism,'<sup>40</sup> to convey his experience of being imprisoned on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea as part of the Australian Government's policy of detaining 'offshore' all potential asylum seekers arriving by sea. Written clandestinely as a series of text-messages on a hidden mobile phone, *No Friend but the Mountains* exposes with visceral immediacy the bureaucratic system that constituted Australia's 'border-industrial complex.' At the same time, Boochani and his translator, Omid Tofighian, have developed a philosophical and political framework for explaining and understanding that system. At its heart is the concept of *kyriarchy*.<sup>41</sup> This term they take from the biblical scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who coined it to encapsulate her feminist theory of interconnected systems of institutional domination

and internalised submission. In Boochani and Tofighian's hands, as Tofighian explains in his 'Translator's Reflections,'<sup>42</sup> kyriarchy is used as a critical tool to describe the intersecting power structures that oppressed refugees

INDIVIDUALS ABSOLVE  
THEMSELVES OF  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR  
ACTIONS BECAUSE THEY  
ACT UNDER ORDERS

like Boochani in the brutal colonialism of Manus Prison

Everyone is complicit in this prison-machinery of colonial border violence; individuals absolve themselves of responsibility for their actions because they act under orders – no one person is responsible, it is always someone higher up in the chain: 'the boss says, the boss says, the boss says'.<sup>43</sup> The refugees indefinitely detained on Manus Island, some for up to six years

with migrant detention centres and question the

policymakers' attitudes towards the act of migration. The active

(more than seven, including their time in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea), were “processed”, given numbers, rather than being called by their names, just one of the manifold methods designed to erase a human’s identity, to render one less than human. Once someone is seen as not fully human, that person has become “other”, “invisible”. Consequently, it becomes easier to justify not even granting the basic human rights that should be applied to each individual, in a brutal bureaucratic-prison-machine designed to systemically torture, set individuals against each other and cause immense psychological as well as physical suffering.

Boochani and Tofighian’s concept of “The Kyriarchal System” can also be applied in its broader context, not only to refugees’ indefinite detention, held without charge, in immigration detention centres such as Morton Hall in Lincolnshire, with their similar kyriarchal systems, but to all forms of faceless oppression and suppression in non-accountable, “invisible” state and corporate structures wherever they may be found. As Omid Tofighian explains in ‘Introducing Manus Prison Theory: Knowing Border Violence’:

Manus Prison Theory is a response to the illegal detention of refugees on Manus Island and functions as a

unique and multi-faceted discourse about border politics, colonialism and intersecting forms of domination in contemporary Australia (and by extension, many other Western liberal democracies).<sup>44</sup>

He goes on to state:

It is a conceptual scheme and a field of knowledge about Manus Prison and the systems that gave rise to it, govern it and expand it. But it also pertains to international debates about border politics and theories of justice committed to freedom of movement.<sup>45</sup>

Their concept of kyriarchy and Manus Prison Theory is enabling ‘an empowering knowledge ecology’,<sup>46</sup> which is evolving into an international collaborative catalyst for structural change across academic, political, legal, philosophical and creative fields. The type of cross-genre writing and prison poetics developed by Boochani in *No Friend but the Mountains*, together with activism and artivism across the world, have the potential to halt structural violence, to break borders down, to render them obsolete, to achieve genuine liberty and the fundamental right that everyone should intrinsically have: the right to remain fully human.

*participants of such projects can become norm*

*entrepreneurs, and shift this negative attitude to the meaning of the act of*



## FILM AND MIGRATION

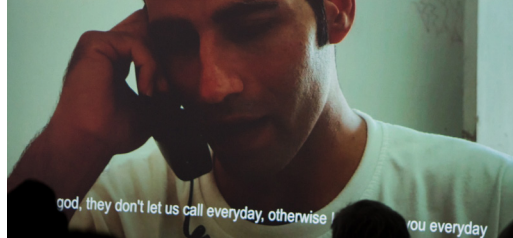
What is the relationship between film and migration? Do films about migration challenge damaging media and political stereotypes, and can they engender empathy with difficult issues like detention and deportation?

For years, migration has dominated headlines and been used by political actors to further their own agendas. For the most part, media and political depictions of migrants and refugees have perpetuated damaging perspectives, portraying them in stereotypical, disempowering and even dehumanising terms as helpless, suffering victims, or as unidentified masses of people, often trapped in transit on the shores of wealthy nations.<sup>47</sup> These depictions govern intelligibility of the migrant experience and, even when evoking empathy, tend to ‘replace personal expression, individualised and political perspectives [...] with standardised recognised depictions’.<sup>48</sup>

As a visual medium with popular appeal, films about migration can counter damaging media and political

### MEDIA AND POLITICAL DEPICTIONS OF REFUGEES HAVE PERPETUATED DAMAGING PERSPECTIVES

discourses and offer more complex and multifaceted visions of the migrant experience. Such films have become commonplace in recent years, with major blockbusters such as *Paddington*<sup>49</sup> offering sympathetic representations of migrant subjects, and with less high-profile art-house and activist films such as Kurdish refugee Behrouz Boochani’s documentary *Chauka, Please Tell us the Time*,<sup>50</sup> Ari Kaurismäki’s independent art-house hit *Le Havre*,<sup>51</sup> or Michael Winterbottom’s docudrama *In this World*<sup>52</sup> highlighting the stark realities of immigration detention, or



## FILMS THAT REIMAGINE THE GLOBAL PHENOMENA OF MIGRATION, DETENTION AND REFUGEE-ISM ARE ARGUABLY MORE NECESSARY THAN EVER

foregrounding the plight of children attempting to enter “Fortress Europe” clandestinely. These films – and others like them – have sought to emphasise the human benefits of migration, as well as the contribution that (settled) migrant and diasporic communities have made to their societies.

Filmmakers who treat the topic of migration range from those with direct lived experience of migration and/or detention to those who may not have experienced migration or detention first-hand. Whereas some filmmakers such as Winterbottom or Kaurismäki deploy close-ups and first-person point-of-view to align the spectator with their subjects and to help us view the world from their perspective, others adopt less indexical language, instead attempting to immerse the spectator in the lived reality of migration or detention by using sparse dialogue and non-representational strategies that prioritise feelings or sensations, such as being scared and lost in a hostile world, or being trapped indefinitely

in a detention cell. Collectively, these directors are creating new artistic and aesthetic registers for representing those who, in critic T. J. Demos’ words, have been ‘severed from representation politically’ and denied both ‘the rights of citizenship and the legal protections of national identity’.<sup>53</sup>

Films that treat the topic of migration are rarely just about entertainment. Rather, they address their spectator’s social conscience, attempting to transcend linguistic and cultural differences, and create opportunities for transcultural understanding and exchange. At a time when we are witnessing a rise in right-wing politics and a return to divisive nationalist rhetoric, films that reimagine the global phenomena of migration, detention and refugee-ism are arguably more necessary than ever.


migration to a political change based on the principle of freedom of

movement. This is only possible through an open dialogue in



## NOTES

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## ORGANISATIONS

**Mansions of the Future** is an arts and cultural hub in Lincoln brought to life through a public programme of free talks, workshops, communal lunches and family activities, alongside national and international artistic commissions.

Working with artists from inception to delivery alongside local communities, the programme privileges social, site-specific and collaborative ways of working. Situated in Lincoln, an ancient city that holds manuscripts of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest, key texts in the articulation of human rights, the project addresses the relationship between art, culture and democracy.

Mansions of the Future is a three-year project supported by Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence fund in collaboration with the Lincoln Cultural and Arts Partnership.

**The Justice, Arts, and Migration Network** was formed between Lincoln and Hong Kong in 2018:

- i. To interrogate the role of arts practice in articulating the status of citizenship and belonging for migrant demographics;
- ii. To deploy creative research methodologies in the discovery and analysis of migrant perspectives within and across national and sub-national borders;
- iii. To reframe and re-test contemporary theoretical articulations of the migrant condition through situated arts-based interventions.

The Network's aims are based on the existing research practices and findings of our original membership, but seeks to build a welcoming and collaborative infrastructure through which academics, scholars, service providers, and activists from all over the world can learn from one another. We are especially honoured when those who bring lived experience to their professional perspectives and contributions form part of our collective and our debates.

**These Walls Must Fall** is a campaign group. Members know what immigration detention is like. They know it's unsafe and mostly unlawful

in the pandemic. They've written to the Home Secretary, and they're asking you to co-sign the letter: [detention.org.uk/these-walls-must-fall](https://detention.org.uk/these-walls-must-fall). As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, hundreds of people remain in immigration detention in the UK. Lives are being put at risk. The effort to stop Covid-19 is being undermined. No flights are scheduled. No one is held pending an imminent deportation. Their continued detention is unlawful. We call on the government to release everyone from detention, now.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Deirdre Conlon** is Associate Professor of Critical Human Geography at University of Leeds. Conlon's research examines immigration and migrant (in)security. Current work on detention and destitution economies investigates how immigration enforcement, marketization, and commodification are linked. Conlon's 30+ publications include *Intimate Economies of Immigration Detention: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2017), co-edited with Nancy Hiemstra.

**Natasha Davis** creates live performances, installations, films and publications. Her interdisciplinary, personal and politically engaged work explores crossing borders, body and memory. The work has been programmed widely at venues such as Tate Modern, V&A, Power Station of Arts Shanghai, Project Arts Centre Dublin, Theatre Works Melbourne and many others. She holds a doctorate from the University of Warwick and teaches performance art and migration across the globe.

**Stephi Hemelryk Donald** FASSA FRSA is Distinguished Professor of Film at the University of Lincoln, and co-Lead of the Justice, Arts, and Migration network. Before moving to Lincoln, she worked in Australia at UNSW (Sydney), RMIT (Melbourne), and UTS (Sydney). Her publications include: *There's No Place Like Home: the Migrant Child in World Cinema* (2018); *Refugee Film-making* (Alphaville, 2019); *Childhood and Nation in Contemporary World Cinema: Borders and Encounters* (2017) and *Inert Cities: Globalization, Mobility and Suspension in Visual Culture* (2014).



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**Colette Griffin** is a curator, creative producer and artist based in Nottingham. Her interests and research centre on commissioning and programming that explores the architecture of our lives, the institutions and expectations that continue to shape everyday experiences, actions and interactions.

**Ingrid Hanson** is an academic and author, who has also worked as a journalist, magazine editor and ESOL teacher. She is a volunteer with Assist Sheffield and over the last eight years has worked alongside Victor Mujakachi on a range of voluntary community and creative projects, including editing some of his extensive writings for publication.

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**Victor Mujakachi** is an asylum seeker from Zimbabwe and a former banker with The Zimbabwe Financial Holdings. He became actively involved in Zimbabwean politics after the disputed elections in 2008 in which former president Robert Mugabe lost to the opposition. Victor graduated in Business Studies from Middlesex University in London. He now lives in Sheffield and has embraced the Sheffield community where he volunteers with Assist Sheffield, The Burngreave Messenger, The Sheffield Conversation Club, Sheffield Tools for Africa, Spectrum, FURD (Football Unites, Racism Divides), St Peter's Church, Ellesmere and Side by Side Drama Group.

**Jane Olson** is a composer based in the East Midlands. Inspired by the complex interactions we have with our environment she combines spoken word with carefully crafted soundscapes of recorded sounds and acoustic instruments. Her work seeks to stimulate a deeper reflection upon our changing relationships with each other and nature.

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In addition to contributing authors, many other people have contributed to the creative process underpinning this publication. Among them are the photographer and filmmaker Hoda Afshar, the photographer Manuchehr from the South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group (SYMAAG), the writers Behrouz Boochani and Omid Tofighian, and the poet Daniele Pantano. Equally important in shaping *The Big Walk* project have been a number of campaigners against the detention of refugees and asylum seekers: Rosie Huzzard, Boucka Koffi, Agatha Sibanda and Molly from These Walls Must Fall; Stuart Crosthwaite and other members of the SYMAAG; and all the activists in Student Action for Refugees Sheffield.

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A. S. (Lincoln, July 23rd 2020).

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On the 23 July 2020, we heard that Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre in Lincolnshire is due to close as an immigration detention centre. Words of celebration and victory were coupled with mourning the deaths of those killed inside – Carlington ‘Jammy’ Spencer, Rubel Ahmed, Lukasz Debowski, Bai Bai Ahmed Kabia among others, and anger as the hostile environment continues, and the news that the building will continue to detain people in prison. An inspection report by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons in early 2020 found high levels of self-harm, violence and use of force at Morton Hall.

The closure of Morton Hall means the reduction of the number of spaces in UK detention centres by 392, which should be claimed as a victory by those who have campaigned tirelessly for its closure since 2011. We give thanks to those in South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group, Student Action for Refugees Sheffield, and campaigners from Nottingham, Sheffield, and other areas for their persistent protests over the last decade. However, the victory feels bittersweet. It is a small win in the bigger fight of ending the Hostile Environment, the racist policies and practices deliberately designed by the UK government to intimidate and harm migrants in the UK. Morton Hall will cease to detain people under immigration powers, but those held there will be moved to other detention centres, rather than released. We demand their immediate release into the community. Migration is not a crime. The building will be used as a prison, which means an expansion of the UK prison estate, which we strongly oppose. And it also means we must continue to demand: close down Morton Hall. We have written about the cruelty, harm and injustices that take place inside the walls of Morton Hall many times. The closure of Morton Hall *cannot* undo the years of harm caused within its walls at the hands of the UK government, and in our name. End detention, and close down Morton Hall.

*Rosie Huzzard, Organiser These Walls Must Fall Campaign, Right to Remain*





