

20th December 2022 // <https://www.fashion-district.co.uk>



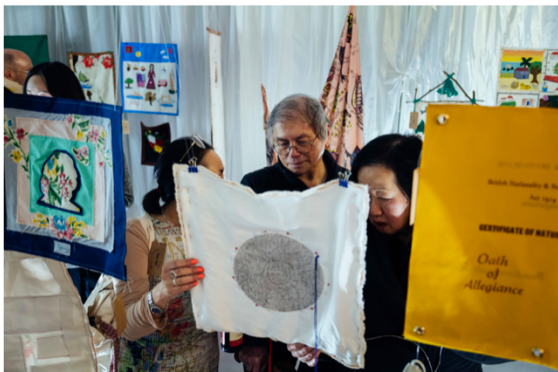
## CELEBRATING COMMUNITY AT THE TRACES: STORIES OF MIGRATION FINISSAGE

Last Thursday, it was all about celebrating the power of community at our Traces: Stories of Migration Finissage, in collaboration with Making for Change. Taking place only a few days after a migrant boat capsized in the English Channel, the event felt like a timely reflection on migration, underlining the need for compassion towards those seeking a peaceful life.

The evening, which was full of enlightening conversations, featured the work of over 60 individuals who participated in the inspirational Traces project. The project, which involved various communities across East London, explored the experiences of migration and the memories accumulated as people journey from one place to another. Launched 18 months ago, the programme consisted of storytelling and making workshops run by internationally acclaimed artist Lucy Orta.



With textiles being their chosen medium of creative expression, the Traces participants set about developing 'story cloths' that showcased and celebrated their histories as first, second or third-generation migrants. Reflecting the diverse heritage of each participant, the story cloths were stitched with personal marks and motifs, expressing each person's lived experience. Displaying the story cloths to the public for the first time, the event also exhibited textile portraits of the participants created by Lucy Orta throughout the project.





Speaking about the event, Lucy Orta said, "What a remarkable *finale* to conclude the Traces: Stories of Migration community engagement. The Lab E20 was resonating with the powerful stories that have been so generously shared over the last 18 months. The tremendous turnout of people, across generations and cultures, was a testament to the trust and friendships that have been nurtured, showing unity in diversity."





Helen Lax, Director of Fashion District, also took to the floor to thank everybody for sharing their personal stories of migration. “Thank you to all of you who have shared your stories so openly and beautifully with us. It is a real honour to hear you talk about your experiences and personal journeys. I am not a migrant, but I feel like my emotions have splashed into your world and that has been beautiful for me to experience in my time of life.”



Joining us at the event was the award-winning non-profit platform, Give Your Best – a clothes donation site for refugee women and children. The Give Your Best team showcased artwork from their charity fashion show, displaying the canvas runway which the models – asylum seekers and refugees – turned into artwork by dipping their shoes in paint and covering the runway in multicoloured footprints. The art piece is symbolic of the personal journeys they have embarked on, moving from one country to another. Attendees also heard from Sidorela, Basma and Kemi who walked in the fashion show and have been users of the GYB platform. “I was going to a job interview, but I had nothing to wear,” explained Kemi. “Give Your Best gave me four outfits. I didn’t get the job but I felt confident and empowered going to the interview. If you have any clothes you no longer want, please donate on the platform and help change the lives of refugee women and children.”



Emerging visual artist, Isaac Grubb, also displayed his interactive digital art installation, 'Impetus.' Exploring the intricacies of the human experience, the installation uses flowers to mirror the movement of people and asks the viewer to consider both the physical and mental journeys of human beings. "I would like people to come away from the installation with a sense of their own agency," Isaac told us. "And perhaps for them to consider the agency of other people and how that may differ from their own."





After hearing from all of our speakers – including Elena and Mariana, participants of the Traces project, and UAL's writer-in-residence, Nathalie Abi-Ezzi, who performed three poems on the theme of migration – guests mingled, danced and enjoyed the free bar. Marking our final Fashion District event of the year, it truly was an unforgettable night, and we were thrilled that so many of you came and celebrated with us.

Huge thank you to Making for Change, Lucy Orta, Give Your Best, Isaac Grubb and all the artists involved in the Traces project. Follow [@making.for.change](#) and [@lucyjorgeorta](#) on Instagram to learn about upcoming exhibitions of Lucy's textile portraits and the story cloths made throughout this project. You can check out more of Isaac Grubb's work [here](#), and if you would like to donate any clothes, books or items to Give Your Best, please head to [www.giveyourbest.uk](http://www.giveyourbest.uk)

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## TRACES: STORIES OF MIGRATION FINISSAGE GALLERY











