

## International Multidisciplinary Summer School

*The right way to inclusion and diversity via the music of the 'West Side Story'*



The multidisciplinary, international Summer School was held on 26-28 August 2021 and covered topics of Diversity and Inclusion via the music of the West Side Story. The opening of the Summer School was performed by Ellen van Schoten, a member of the Executive Board of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. She stressed the importance of the theme of diversity.

Paul van de Laar, Professor of Urban History (ESHCC), focused on the challenge we face to link Rotterdam's migration narrative of the past to a convincing inclusive narrative of the contemporary city. Port cities, like Rotterdam, have always been places of cultural transfer and have witnessed a continuous flow of a wide variety of migrants, both temporary and permanent. The past decades have shown an increasing diversity in ethnic and religious groups and socio-economic statuses among inhabitants with a migration background. Rotterdam hosts so many 'minority' migrants that it is now considered a super diverse city. This super diverse Rotterdam is put to the test to demonstrate how to become an inclusive city.

Gijsbert Oonk, Jean Monnet Chair: Europe in Globalizing World. Migration, Citizenship and Identity (ESHCC) gave a lecture on the Constitution of 'Utopia'. He showed two case studies about inclusiveness and diversity. The students could react to the two case studies: a more revolutionary case and a more conservative one. A nice debate between the students developed and showed how different cultures could have a considerable impact. The third lecture in this Summer School was based on the working experience of Emese von Bóné, Assistant Professor of Civil Law at Erasmus School of Law, in law and opera combining the legal aspects in opera and the diversity issue in the West Side Story musical. This musical performance has proven to be an ideal setting to experience dilemma's which deal with injustice, (in)equality and diversity. It deals with diversity and inclusion but also with social issues and economic circumstances. The relation between law and opera and a justified city, which is more and more diverse, has been taken as an example. West Side Story (based on the love story of Romeo and Juliet (1595/96) of William Shakespeare and Bellini's Opera I Capuleti e I Montecchi) was successfully screened in film theatres in 1961. The film is based on the play of Arthur Laurents, Stephen

Sondheim, with the music of Leonard Bernstein. Interviews were shown with Rita Moreno (who played the role of Anita in the West Side Story) in which she talked about her difficulties being a Puerto Rican actress. She also mentioned that there were discriminating parts in the script which she refused to play.

After a tasteful lunch organised by the students with pastries from Turkey, we listened to the exciting story of Associate Professor in Criminology Robby Roks. He connected drill rap with criminality. He stressed how drill rap gives voice to exclusion and a quest for inclusion. In the afternoon, we watched the West Side Story and afterwards, we discussed the themes of diversity and inclusion in the musical. The day ended with drinks and pastries from the Caribbean organised by students from the Caribbean.

On the second day of the Summer School, the theme of diversity and inclusion was elaborated by lectures with various disciplines. Robert Dur, Professor of Economics of Incentives and Performance, stressed the diversity in the labour market and how to deal with trends of discrimination and implicit bias by employers. He concluded that a lot must be developed in the labour market when employing people with a non-western background. An example of a lack of diversity in the field of the magistrates was pointed out by Ayla Ekiz, the first female prosecutor of the district court of Rotterdam with a Turkish background. In her lecture, she explained the judiciary structure and how the court is represented related to diversity. It appeared that there is not much diversity among the magistrates and prosecutors. In her field, there is still a lack of non-western magistrates. The presentation of Tax Law Professor Sigrid Hemels stressed the inequality in the taxation system. She showed the bias there still is when it comes to paying taxes.

After listening to various lectures on diversity and inclusion, which were presented from different perspectives, it was time to combine the theme with the cultural sector. Wilma Franchimon, President of Codarts (the Rotterdam Conservatory), outlined her experience on how to diversify the curriculum in art, dance and music. In her lecture, she mentioned the added value of bringing Codarts-students in touch with academic research. Her vase studies showed the benefits of merging these disciplines. Culture enhances the creativity of academics, which was illustrated in the masterclass of Arlon Luijten, the Theatre Director of Codarts. He showed the students how they could 'hack' the storyline of West Side Story by relating contemporary issues on diversity. At the end of the afternoon, students presented their new diverse narrative of the West Side Story during the poster presentations.

The last day of the Summer School was devoted to excursions. In the morning at subway station Rijnhaven on the Southbank of Rotterdam, we gathered, guided by Paul van de Laar. We visited the gentrified peninsula of Katendrecht, an area of pleasure after the war, and housed the largest Chinese colony before the Second World War. Citizens of Rotterdam came here to taste the flavours of Chinese food for the first time. New apartments are built for the happy few who can afford a house on the waterfront. We visited Codarts on a guided tour by Wilma Franchimon, who showed us how to become an acrobat on the new circus campus. We crossed the river Maas, and after this visit, we went to the World Museum, where curator Alexandra van Dongen gave us a workshop on how the canon of art history may be reinterpreted through a lens of cultural diversity. From Jan van Eyck to black artist Jean Michel Basquiat. As stated in an interview, Van Dongen explained how Basquiat viewed himself: "I am not a black artist but an artist!"

The Summer School showed that diversity is multi-interpretable and allowed the students to take an out-of-the-box approach towards the theme of diversity and inclusion.

## Programme of the Summer School 2021

<i>Thursday: 26 August</i>	
09.15	Opening Summer School: Ellen van Schoten, Board of Erasmus University.
09.30-10.15	Paul van de Laar, Professor of History of Rotterdam ESHCC, <i>Rotterdam a superdiverse city.</i>
10.15-11.00	Gijsbert Oonk, Professor Social History ESHCC, <i>Constitution of 'Utopia': case studies about inclusiveness and diversity (dilemma-game).</i>
11.15-12.00	Emese von Bóné, Assistant Professor of Civil Law at Erasmus School of Law, <i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion in the 'West Side Story' in legal-historical perspective.</i>
Lunch	
13.00-13.45	Robby Roks, Associate Professor of Criminology at Erasmus School of Law, <i>How drill music gives voice to exclusion and a quest to inclusion</i>
13.45-17.00	West Side Story 🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵
17.15	Campus: drinks and pastries from all over the world.

<i>Friday: 27 August: social, cultural, legal &amp; economic aspects of the 'Rotterdam'- West Side Story</i>	
09.30- 10.15	Robert Dur, Professor of Economics of Incentives and Performance Erasmus School of Economics, <i>Economics of inclusion and diversity with applications to the labor market.</i>
10.15-11.00	Ayla Ekiz, prosecutor, district court Rotterdam: <i>case study Rotterdam.</i>
11.00-11.45	Sigrid Hemels, Professor of Tax Law at Erasmus School of Law: <i>Inclusive taxation or gender bias?</i>
11.45-12.30	Wilma Franchimon, President of the board of Codarts: <i>Creative sector and the inclusive city.</i>
Lunch	
13.30-15.30	Arlon Luijten, artdirector of Codarts: Setup of the West Side Story & writing a libretto.
15.30-16.30	Writing a 'prelude' about the diversity in Rotterdam in the spirit of the West Side Story.
16.30-17.15	Poster-presentations

<i>Saturday: 28 August Excursions</i>	
10.30	City tour by foot from the Northbank to Southbank and at 13.00 Visit Wereld/Worldmuseum Rotterdam.