

# REFRAMING THE INTERNATIONAL — A CARD SET FOR ART WORKERS

## USER'S GUIDE

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### ABOUT THE CARD SET

This card set is a thinking and design tool developed to help artists and art workers to redesign their projects in a more sustainable way. It was conceived in the context of *(Re)framing the International*, an R&D trajectory by Flanders Arts Institute.

For background reading, it is recommended to download Joris Janssens, *(Re)framing the International*. On new ways of working international in the arts (Brussels, 2018), via the 'Publicaties' section on [kunsten.be](http://kunsten.be).

### INTRODUCTION

For many years, working internationally has been self-evident in music, visual arts and performing arts. But discomfort is growing. With the economic pressure, inequality and precarity are increasing. Geopolitical turbulences and ecological concerns strip our assumptions of their innocence. How to understand these trends? What is the actual value and significance of working internationally in the arts, in a shifting societal context? Which frictions and contradictions occur? Which answers or alternatives are being developed? How can we imagine new ways of working internationally?

The *(Re)framing the International* pocket publication collects insights and 'aha' moments from a two year long interactive R&D trajectory. The publication charts meaningful trends and, on the basis of numerous inspiring examples, provides a strategic framework for a more sustainable approach to internationalisation in the arts. The final chapter contains 25 'tracks', i.e. strategies or approaches, deployed by artists and art workers in order to enhance the different

forms of value and meaning that working internationally promises, but which are sometimes under pressure: artistic and intellectual capital, economic capital, human capital, social capital and natural capital. These 25 'tracks' are the basis of this card set.

### THE AIM OF THE CARD SET

The card set wants to help you in applying the framework of the last chapter of the book to your own international arts project. The card set can be used with different levels of ambition: it can be a conversation starter with colleagues and peers about sustainable internationalisation, or it can be a design tool to generate ideas in a process of strategic planning in the context of an organisation, a project or a network.

### HOW TO USE THE CARD SET

The set is to be used in different steps:

- **First**, you imagine an international arts project you (want to) work on. What is the aim of the project? What is happening?
- **Second**, you draw a black 'threat' card. Would this event impact your project? If so, how? Or why not?
- **Third**, you draw a (re)frame card of each color. The colors refer to 5 forms of 'capital' that working internationally holds a promise for, but that are sometimes under pressure. As explained in the book, you can be inspired by 25 'strategies' used in other arts projects or practices. You have a look at the 5 of the 25 cards and will need to redesign your initial project in a more balanced and sustainable way. Not all cards will be relevant, but in most cases one or two cards can be applied to your project. What two cards would you choose? What triggers you? What elements could you apply to your own project? What would your re-designed project look like?

## NUMBER OF USERS

It is possible to use the card set just on your own, individually. However, it is also aimed at starting a conversation in a group, and a collective reflection among colleagues. The set is fit for a group discussion (preferably in duo's, max. 4 participants) per card set. The time you need to 'play the game', will depend on the number of participants.

It is possible to use the cards in larger groups (unlimited number of participants): then you will start with smaller groups (preferably in duo's, max. 4 participants) who each have a card set. All the groups play the game separately, and you work towards a plenary exchange in the end.

In groups, it is recommended to work with a facilitator who has read the background material and can introduce the background and the aim of the game and the steps to be taken. The facilitator will help the different groups in their reflection, she takes care that all the steps are taken within the foreseen timeframe and she moderates the sharing rounds and a collective reflection at the end.

## A POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR A WORKSHOP

- **The facilitator introduces** by giving some background about the research, the general aim of the card game, and the different steps of the exercise. Participants are divided in groups of min. 2 persons and max. 4 persons. (10')
- **Step 1 - individual reflection** (5'): participants imagine an international arts project they (want to) work on.
- Next, the facilitator **distributes the card set**. Each participant draws a black threat card.
- **Step 2:** individual reflection on how this 'threat' could impact the project (2).
- **First sharing phase:** in a first round, each participant is interviewed by another participant. Facilitators see to it that discussions stick to the point, and that everybody has the chance to speak (5'). These are questions that can be asked:

What project did you have in mind?  
What is the aim of your project?  
What is happening?  
What is on the threat card?  
Would this impact your work?  
If so, how? If not, why?

- Now put the threat card aside and focus on the reframing cards. **The facilitator distributes 5 reframing cards to each participant** (one of each color/capital) and introduces step 3.
- **Step 3 - individual reflection** (5'): which of the cards could be applied to redesign the initial project, in order to make it more sustainable? Choose two cards. Apply the idea on the cards to your own project.
- **Second sharing phase:** Once more participants interview each other (everyone speaks 5'). You can think utopically, the reality check comes later. Use pen and paper to take notes.
  - What two cards would you choose that are relevant for the project?
  - What triggered you?
  - What elements could you apply to your own project?
  - What would your redesigned project look like?
- **OPTIONAL: third sharing phase.** If different groups are working simultaneously, there can be a plenary round. All groups choose one of the redesigned projects to present to the other group(s). You can organise mini-pitches answering the following questions:
  - What is the name of the project?
  - What is the goal? What value/capital does it want to achieve?
  - Did the threat card impact the project?
  - Which capital cards were relevant?
  - How did they impact the design of the project?
- **Closing of the workshop: a collective reflection** from the participants about the game. How did the game work for you? What was inspiring? What did you learn? What will you take along for the future?

Of course, the card set can also be used in any other way that you see fit. Feel free to experiment.