



DeRadicalisation  
in Europe and Beyond:  
Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate



## **D.Rad 'Complicating the Narrative (in a time of false simplicity)'**

An exhibition on political, social, and cultural polarisation

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**We are final year students from lycée Colbert and thanks to Ms Leach's kind invitation, we could get a guided visit to D.Rad show on our own. Following our visit to the exhibition on April 6th, we started out with a group discussion:**

***When we say RADICALISATION, what comes to mind?***

**N:** Someone who acts moved by an extreme ideology.

**C:** It has become something very political, as we've seen with the protests against the age of retirement bill. The use of a kind of executive order (49.3), could be seen as typical of an oppressive regime. There is also the example of European people joining ISIS at the time of the civil war in Syria.

**A:** Radicalisation could also be something that can improve society - e.g. radical feminism. Some feminists think we need radicalisation to counteract sexism.

**V:** People need to be radicalised in order to make changes for the greater good. There is the example of Malcolm X, but it does not necessarily means that there is violence. While radicalised governments become oppressive.

**>**Is there a difference between being radical and radicalised?

**N:** I understand radical as something active, whereas radicalised is more like the result of an influence. There is an example of influencers creating ideologies.

**C:** There is also the example of how the right to abortion has been curbed in the US because of the Republican party's radicalisation.

**A:** People do not realise that they are being radical, many anti-abortion views are often backed by religion. A similar phenomenon arose with the vaccine controversy during the pandemic.

**N:** Radical thinking could be damaging to other people, e.g. Andrew Tate. It really is a 'double-edged sword', as it can be beneficial or damaging.

### **Why are people radicalised ?**

**N:** I believe it is caused by the growing influence of social media. People are easily impressionable, and young people are more likely to be radicalised because there is an easy access to radical ideas. Anyone can pitch their views.

**C:** Technology allows ideology to be much more invasive, it can pop up on your screen in spite of your preferences.

**A:** Being radical can boost one's confidence, people feel sure about their ideas.

**N:** But being radical is also about freedom of speech.

**A:** Freedom of speech is fine as long as there is no discrimination.

**L:** You have to make people aware of radicalisation.

**C:** That is why deradicalisation is hard to do, it is less talked about.

**L:** It makes the exhibition helpful.

**C:** The exhibition makes these topics less political, and more approachable.

**R:** Artists want society to understand what they wish to express.

**M:** The best case is the Steve White Experience, it uses parody, it is absurd, as a way to criticize radicalisation in the media.

**N:** It is good that it is easy to get at surface level, if it is too subtle, people won't get it. It is more efficient to get ideas across.

**Then the students split into groups according to the various works on display.**

### ***The Steve White Experience - by Emily Brooks Millar and Lew-C***

This art piece is made out of video animation like music clips, there is an association of sound and images, it creates an immersive situation for the audience. Steve White, the main character, is spreading false information through media and hate rises as a consequence. It is a caricature of extremist lies.

Like Alice Neel's artwork, this kind of art makes us feel uncomfortable because it is very graphic in order to awaken awareness.

But things are not always clear, for instance, at first we thought that what was supposed to be slabs of soy in the second video were in fact dancing sanitary pads, and that they stood for feminist symbols. It is only later on that we realised that it was a personification of veganism somehow.

There were weird ideas and disturbing images that made us laugh because of the character's facial expressions. Moreover, there are a lot of metaphors, like the moment when Steve White is turned into a frog, or the mice that stand for society.

These videos symbolise radicalisation in the media.

The animation is made with drawings that look quite childish and flat. The colours used are very vivid and bright and lead the viewer to question both the situation and its impact on reality.

### ***Stefan Lukic***

A performance artist who took a symbolic run: in order to express 22 years of separation he wanted to run 22 times the length of the bridge between Kosovo and Serbia. The bridge symbolises union. He ran over a banner stating: 'Stefan knows no boundaries'.

But he was stopped before he could complete his 22 crossings, so he re-enacted the performance in a Belgrade street. Other people and cars could go over the banner.

The banner is the only remainder of the performance, scraps of it were visible at the exhibition. The banner is torn apart and damaged like the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo. It is better for the audience to see a physical remainder rather than just a video.

## Velko Vuckovic

Tito is depicted in the two pictures. At first glance, you would think it is a photo.

The artist makes paintings from stills. There is more than meets the eye : the image is staged, and it is propaganda stating that Tito is like everyone, he is the people. With his concentrated face and self-control, he embodies 'state control'.

Tito was a dictator, so he was 'one against all', against people's will.

Is that in opposition with the idea that he tries to appear as a 'normal', ordinary man ? The paintings show the importance of self-image.

## Alan Stanners

The painting that we chose is called *Umwelten Gap*, by Alan Stanners.

It is a diptych. We can see two women and two insects, a moth on a woman's forehead, and a caterpillar in front of the other woman's eye. But we are not sure whether the two people are men or women. The insects may stand for the fear of insects.

The black person's colours are similar to the insect's wings'. The fact that the moth is placed on the forehead and the caterpillar in front of the eye may personify radicalisation, because the forehead may symbolise the mind and mindset, while the eye may stand for vision of the world.

In the first picture there are horizontal strips whereas in the second, they are vertical. There is some kind of parallel between humans and insects. We can see that the line of the nose is parallel to the plant's stem in the second picture. The moth's shadow looks like a butterfly. There is some kind of symmetry between the caterpillar and the woman's face, and both are in profile.

These paintings offer a close-up, showing that even if insects are small, they have a strong impact on people. The two white dots on the moth's wings can represent the person's eyes. The close-up allows insects to look much bigger than their normal size. The two people portrayed look away, could it be because the insects are a personification of the fear of difference ?

*Umwelten* is a German word which means 'self-centred world', so it may represent radicalisation and the people who think they are right.

## **Frances Ryan**

The collage panel deals with body image problems via sports and food. It focuses on a minor Scottish football team.

It deals with eating disorders. The collage could represent the mind of a person who suffers from that.

The thoughts seem both a mess and somewhat controlled. But we need to read the description to understand this.

Frances Ryan's art is about self-isolation caused by failing mental health. The football team is meant to help those with obesity and weight issues.

These themes are not that clear to make out in the collage, and it is hard to relate them to the images or titles.

People who have been through mental illnesses or eating disorders may connect better with the collage panel.

How is it related to D.Rad? It deradicalises the need to have a certain way of thinking about one's bodies.

The collages look old-fashioned. The use of squares make the panel look very orderly and neat, in contrast with the overall theme.

Overall it was interesting to see the concept of deradicalisation being represented in such a variety of media and so many points of view. This also reflects how ideology can exist in a multitude of aspects.