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## Mixed Identity (*artist's statement*)

**Victoria Team**

I am a medical anthropologist and a women's health researcher. Currently, I am working in the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. I was trained as a medical doctor and further as a doctor of public health. My publications focus on cultural issues in disability, caregiving, body image, reproductive screening, breastfeeding, and mothering. Pot painting is my hobby. However, I am a mother of five, four of whom are still living with me, and I have a difficult time keeping up with my day to day household and professional activities. I frequently carry the image of my future artwork in my mind for years.

My artwork, *Mixed identity* vase, was a self-reflection of my mixed background. Sewn together the Greek key and the Ukrainian cross-stitch parts of the heart represent mixed Greek-Ukrainian identity. Bleeding represents painful experiences related to the attempts to get closer to and to be accepted by either of these communities. The questions of ethnic identity were bothering me since childhood. My father was Pontic Greek; my mother is Ukrainian. I cannot say that both sides of my family and both communities were against me; however, I was accepted partially. Later, at school, I thought whether partial acceptance by both communities equals full acceptance. The community labels that were attached to me reflected the sense of my otherness. In Ukraine, I was frequently called Greek Bastard, including by my family members from Ukrainian side. In Greek diasporic community, I am known as Russian Bitch. As part of self-reflection, I use my artwork as a tool for questioning the construct of identity, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000, 1) did:

If identity is everywhere, it is nowhere. If it is fluid, how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal, and crystallize? If it is constructed, how can we understand the sometimes coercive force of external identifications? If it is multiple, how do we understand the terrible singularity that is often striven for...?

I have painted this vase specifically for the book on marginalised groups within Greek diaspora, a diaspora within the diaspora. Unfortunately, this book was rejected by the reviewers; and one of the reviewers has found this topic ridiculous. The reviewer's comment and the editor's decision indicated that ethnic nationalism is still the dominant politics in diasporic communities. However, as Anagnostou (2015, 20) has pointed out, there are tensions between other groups within the diaspora, so called

counterpublics, and general public; and the 'counterpublics openly reject ethnic triumphalism.' This diasporic politics of nationalism-based ethnic triumphalism reflects current politics of othering both in the Mediterranean and of the Mediterranean (Chalaniova 2014, Khrebtan-Hörhager 2016). The population movements in the region are increasing; they are related to boat migration via the Mediterranean routes and influx of refugees from Africa and the Middle East (Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012, Traublinger 2014, Lendaro 2016). Individual Mediterranean countries are unable to address national and transnational identity issues; and the ethno-nationalist and neo-fascist movements are rising (Gattinara, Froio et al. 2013, Sotiris 2015). The Mediterranean crisis indicates that many people are experiencing their identity crises (Dalakoglou 2013, Lendaro 2016), the construct of identity is increasingly open, and people's hearts are bleeding...

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**Nota sulla copertina del n. 5 (1/2016) di *Politics. Rivista di Studi Politici***

La copertina è stata elaborata partendo da una foto gentilmente inviata da Victoria Team (Australia), in cui è ritratta una sua opera intitolata *Mixed Identity*: vaso di argilla rossa dipinto con una pittura a olio di lino. Il vaso è stato dipinto in stile greco antico da Victoria Team.

Dimensioni del vaso: altezza 16.5cm, diametro massimo 10cm.

Fotografato con Nikon D100 60 mm lente +16. Processata con Nikon Capture Editor. Ritagliato e convertito a CMYK in Photoshop C56. Immagine di Robert Lean.



**Artwork title and description**

*Mixed identity*. 2012. Linseed-based oil paint on red-coloured clay urn. Vase painted in an Ancient Greek style by Victoria Team. Dimensions: height 16.5cm, maximum diameter 10cm. Photographed on Nikon D100 60 mm lens +16. Processed in Nikon Capture Editor. Cropped and converted to CMYK in Photoshop C56. Image by Robert Lean.