

## Belief and conflict in the UK

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Innovation

Curation and Programming for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### What was the question?

Can art play a role in understanding the relationship between belief and conflict in the UK?

### Who were the collaborators?

3FF (Three Faiths Forum), art practitioners, journalists, faith leaders and academics from the Departments of Defence Studies, Law, Music, Theology & Religious Studies, and War Studies, as well as from the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies at King's

### What did we do?

Working in partnership, the Cultural Institute at King's and 3FF programmed a series of three salons that drew on the expertise of academics from different departments across the university, the creative perspectives of established artists, and the experience of faith leaders, activists and journalists.

The salons involved sharing a meal and engaging in open discussions about art, belief and conflict. Each salon also featured a series of guest speakers who provided provocations for discussion, and the final session allowed time for participants to discuss opportunities for collaborating together in the creation of new artwork.

Speaking about her involvement in the collaboration, Holly Jones from 3FF said, 'It was a pleasure collaborating on the *Belief and conflict* series. What resulted was a highly effective new model, engaging a group of professional artists, campaigners and academics with a wealth of knowledge and experience in a set of stimulating and broad ranging discussions. The academic/artistic collaborations that have emerged as a result look set to produce some highly innovative and challenging new work.'

The events were designed to challenge received wisdom, to provoke fresh ideas and relationships, and to inspire and foster cross-disciplinary collaborations. As part of the process, participants were invited to submit proposals for new collaborative artistic work.

### What was the outcome?

As a result of the new connections formed during the salons, a number of ideas for creative collaboration received seed funding for research and development. These included *Brightfield*, a collaboration between artist Ansuman Biswas, Father William Taylor and Professor Ben Quash; *Through a Wall*, a collaboration between artist Alinah Azadeh, Dr Craig Larkin, and theatre producer Maria Pattinson; and *Syrian Voices in London*, a collaboration between artist Kai-Oh Joyce Young, Professor Michael Kerr and Dr Aaron

Rosen. With a view to profile raising and seeking ongoing support for project development, a showcase to share the outcomes of the R&D collaborations was organised at Rich Mix in London for the producers, curators and funders.

Involvement in the salons and the resulting collaborative projects has also influenced the teaching and research of the six participating departments at King's.

