



Beauty and Beautification in Refugees' Lives and Their Implications for Refugee Policy

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HISTORY Published 2023-06-09

ABSTRACT

This article seeks to understand the significance of everyday beauty in refugees' lives and its implications for refugee policy; it is one of the first pieces of scholarship to explore this subject in this context. A review of the existing literature on beauty in refugee contexts followed by a deductive analysis of the literature on refugee homemaking demonstrates how beauty and beautification play an active role in how refugees (re)make home, even in temporary situations. Beauty is used to build hope, celebrate culture, create community, and honour past and present realities, and therefore has significant implications for the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. The role of beauty in refugee homemaking suggests challenging the narrow focus on durable solutions to a more holistic framework, transforming language and policy approaches to include refugees as decision-makers, and investing in the quality of shelters, camps, and homes as a more effective way to reduce pressure on host countries.

KEYWORDS

refugees; forcibly displaced; beauty; beautification; aesthetics; homemaking; protracted refugee situations; durable solutions; Global Compact on Refugees

RESUMÉ

Cet article vise à comprendre l'importance de la beauté quotidienne dans la vie des réfugiés et ses implications pour les politiques concernant les réfugiés. Il s'agit de l'une des premières études à explorer ce sujet dans ce contexte. Une revue de la littérature existante sur la beauté dans le contexte des réfugiés et une analyse déductive de la littérature sur l'établissement de domicile chez les réfugiés démontrent comment la beauté et l'embellissement jouent un rôle actif dans la manière dont les réfugiés (re)font domicile, même dans des situations temporaires. La beauté est utilisée pour donner de l'espoir, célébrer la culture, créer une communauté et honorer les réalités passées et présentes, et a donc des implications significatives pour les objectifs du Pacte mondial sur les réfugiés. Le rôle de la beauté dans l'établissement de domicile chez les réfugiés suggère de remettre en question la focalisation étroite sur les solutions durables au profit d'un cadre plus holistique, de transformer le langage et les approches politiques pour inclure les réfugiés en tant que décideurs, et d'investir dans la qualité des abris, des camps et des maisons comme moyen plus efficace de réduire la pression sur les pays d'accueil.

INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to understand the significance of everyday beauty in refugees' lives and the implications it could have for refugee policy. **Beauty** is conceptualized as the purposeful actions in, to, and through the built environment—what [Danto \(2003\)](#) estab-

lishes as “third realm beauty.” Third realm beauty is expressed through the deliberate modifying—beautifying—of the material world. Because this type of beautification occurs in the everyday and manifests in the physical dwellings of home, it is a relevant category of beauty to explore the daily realities

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of remaking home post-displacement (Neu-mark, 2013). The significance of beauty has long been recognized (Hamilton, 2021). As Danto (2003) has argued, while beauty might be optional for art, "it is not an option for life. It is a necessary condition for life as we would want to live it" (p. 160), and it is "not simply among the values we live by, but one of the values that defines what a fully human-life means" (p. 15). This article explores that claim in the context of refugees' lives: Is beauty necessary for refugees? Is it a luxury only for those with permanent places to call home? If beauty is, in fact, central to the human experience, why does refugee¹ policy overlook it?

While refugee numbers worldwide continue to grow at an unprecedented rate,² countries have increasingly implemented containment policies to restrict refugees' mobility and limit their protection (Brumat et al., 2022; UNHCR, 2018). The promoted policy solutions of repatriation, local integration, and resettlement have largely remained the same in concept and scope. As a result, they leave close to 80% of refugees "waiting" in "temporary" situations for anywhere from 5 to 20 years or longer (Donà, 2015; El Masri, 2020; UNHCR, n.d.c; USA for UNHCR, 2020). The global refugee regime³ "contains more examples of limitations than of successes and ... [is] unable to reliably ensure protection and solutions" (Betts & Milner, 2019, p. 6) for

the world's increasing refugee population (Betts, 2010; Betts & Milner, 2019). Policy solutions for refugees, wherever they come from, are much needed.

The following analysis of how beauty might appear in refugees' lives is positioned within the literature on refugee homemaking for two central reasons. First, with its focus on the **lived** experiences and practices of how, in this case, refugees build, conceptualize, and relate to "home," homemaking provides an apt analytical backdrop to explore Danto's claim that beauty is central to living. Second, home is central to both refugee studies and refugee policy (Brun & Lund, 2008; H. Taylor, 2013); indeed, "refugees are, in the crudest way, defined by the loss of home" (H. Taylor, 2013, p. 130). Homemaking thus provides a clear intersection between this article's focus on beauty in refugees' daily lives and its implications for policy.

Homemaking builds on a conceptualization of home that has multiple and profound meanings. Home can include the daily practices that take place in a dwelling or house, the emotional notions of being at home, and the legal rights of belonging to a homeland (Boccagni, 2017, 2022b; Fábos & Brun, 2015; Hammond, 2004; Mallett, 2004; H. Taylor, 2013). Its study is multidimensional (Mallett, 2004): it is material, spatial, temporal, and relational (Beeckmans et al., 2022; Boccagni, 2022b; Donà, 2015; Fábos, 2015; Massey, 1994; Pérez Murcia, 2020; Pérez Murcia & Boccagni, 2022; Ryan-Saha, 2015; H. Taylor, 2013; Walsh, 2006). For refugees, homemaking entails a losing and remaking in each of these different dimensions (Hammond, 2004; Korac, 2009; Pérez Murcia, 2020). Beyond the personal level, homemaking can be political (Beeckmans et al., 2022; Benson, 2022; Brun & Lund, 2008; Katz, 2022) and, for migrants specifically, transnational (Beeckmans et al., 2022, p. 15; Koptyaeva, 2017; Trapp, 2015;

¹Throughout the paper, the term **refugee** is used to describe any of the forcibly displaced populations under UNHCR's mandate, which includes internally displaced persons.

²The number of refugees doubled from 2010 to 2020; in 2022 the number of forcibly displaced migrants surpassed 100 million for the first time in history (UNHCR, 2022; UNHCR, n.d.b).

³The refugee regime is institutionally generally depicted as the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) but also includes states (especially those in UNHCR's Executive Committee, referred to as ExComm), implementing partners (typically national and international nonprofit organizations), and, as established by the call by the Global Compact on Refugees for a multi-stakeholder approach, civil society (academia, businesses, faith actors, and refugee-led organizations) (Betts & Milner, 2019).

Walsh, 2006). Increasingly, “home” is more practice than place, more verb than noun (Boccagni, 2022b; Hammond, 2004; Pérez Murcia, 2020; S. Taylor, 2015). This rich, layered, and complex backdrop of home lends significance to understanding beauty’s role in this context.

To explore the possible impact of beauty on refugee policy, possible implications are anchored in the Global Compact on Refugees (the Compact) (United Nations [UN] General Assembly, 2018). Adopted in 2018 by nearly every nation in the world,⁴ the non-binding Compact, while not without its critiques, has been regarded as one of the most important policy instruments since the creation of modern-day⁵ refugee policy (Triggs & Wall, 2020). While policy-making happens at various levels of government and can take different forms, the Compact may be used as a proxy of international policy as an established representation of the collective global assumptions and aspirations of what refugee protection is and should be (McAdam, 2019; UN General Assembly, 2018). Proposed policy implications are targeted for the global refugee regime.

What follows begins with an outline of the methods used in this study. This study is centred on a sequential, two-part review of the literature: first a review of the existing literature on third realm beauty among refugees and then, in part two, a deductive analysis of the literature on refugee homemaking to identify if and what examples of third realm beauty exist therein. It then proceeds with a discussion of beauty’s possible implications for each of the Compact’s four objectives. While the explicit research on beauty in refugee contexts is scant, everyday beauty

as expressed in, through, and onto the built environment is shown to potentially have an active and positive role in refugees’ lives. The implications of beauty range from the provocative to the conceptual frameworks of refugee policy to the practical in the administration of service delivery. Specifically, the examples of beauty identified in this review have the potential to (a) challenge the refugee regime’s insistence on durable solutions and its underlining framework, (b) transform the language used in refugee policy to align with its stated goals of increasing refugee self-sufficiency, and (c) indicate that valuing beauty in the built environment could ease pressure on host countries. The article concludes with a discussion on the limitations and challenges of this review, and additional research to advance understanding of beauty in refugee contexts is proposed.

METHODS

A sequential study of the literature was used to explore the significance of beauty’s role in refugees’ lives and its implications for policy. First, to understand the state of the literature, a review was conducted for focused studies of third realm beauty among refugees (referred to as part one of the review). Fifteen key word combinations consisting of **refugee(s)**, or **asylum seeker(s)**, or **forced migrant(s)** or **refugee**, or **internally displaced** and **beauty**, or **beautification**, or **beautiful** were used to search for and review academic, peer-reviewed articles published in English since the year 2000. The search was limited to articles with a key word in the title or abstract. It should be noted that the focus on beauty in the everyday material world means that two categories commonly associ-

⁴With five exceptions: Hungary and the United States were opposed, with abstentions from Eritrea, Liberia, and Libya.

⁵The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees established the present-day legal framework for refugee policy.

ated with beauty—physical appearance⁶ and art⁷—are outside the scope of this review.

While the search initially yielded 51 results, only 8 articles focused on both beauty and refugee populations, and of those, only 3 focused on third realm beauty (see [Appendix A: Table A1](#)). The claims of beauty's importance did not correlate to the available explicit scholarly literature on this topic. One explanation for this could be that beauty is/was present in refugee contexts, but attention has just not been paid to it. This seems plausible given the significant skepticism broadly held about beauty in scholarly research ([Coleman & Figueroa, 2010](#); [Marshall, 2013](#); [M. T. Nguyen, 2011](#)).

To test this, a deductive analysis of refugee homemaking literature was conducted (referred to as part two of the review) to identify if it contained examples that suggested beauty's presence. To do this, first, literature on refugee homemaking was identified. Using the 10 key word combinations of **refugee(s)**, or **asylum seeker(s)**, or **forced migrant(s)**, or **forcibly displaced**, or **internally displaced** and **homemaking** or **meaning of home**, academic articles published in English since the year 2000 with a key word appearing in either the title or abstract were searched and reviewed.

To detect whether the identified literature contained examples of beauty, a more detailed depiction of [Danto's \(2003\)](#) third realm beauty was built by synthesizing the explorations of beauty by [Boccagni \(2022b\)](#),

[Mandoki \(2016\)](#), [Neumark \(2013\)](#), and [Rautio \(2009\)](#) with the established definitions in the *Britannica*, *Cambridge*, and *Merriam-Webster* dictionaries. Three conditions were established of what would be classified as beauty for this review:

1. qualities in an action, object, or experience, which appeared to be ornamental, intentional, and/or meaningful, that
2. occurred to or within the built environment, and
3. displayed a positive impact or element on mind, spirit, or soul of an individual or community.

The **qualities** or **actions** are person-centred, ones possessed or taken by refugees; they do not refer to actions taken by entities or organizations, such as historically negative beautification campaigns in urban centres. The **built environment** refers to the material world and spatial and structural elements. The rationale for the three conditions is as follows. First, that beauty occurred in the built environment is an integral part of [Danto's \(2003\)](#) third realm beauty. The other two conditions represent an aesthetic component as well as a moral one. Since this article explores the claim that beauty is important and positive, the conditions needed to account for both a material quality or action **and** some type of delight, pleasure, or positivity that was associated with that quality or action.

Each of the identified articles was reviewed for instances that met the three conditions. In any of the identified articles, any instance in which all three conditions were met was categorized as an example of beauty. If the same example was mentioned multiple times throughout the article, it was only categorized as one example. If the article contained distinct sections that met the conditions, each was categorized as a separate example.

⁶There is more substantial literature that explores beauty in terms of one's own actual, perceived, expressed, or desired physical appearance and its intersection with class, race, and gender (e.g., [Bose, 2010](#); [Coleman & Figueroa, 2010](#); [Figueroa, 2013](#); [L. T. Nguyen, 2020](#); [M. T. Nguyen, 2011](#)).

⁷While art and artistic methods can be beautiful, it is well established in the literature that art and beauty are not synonymous ([Danto, 2002](#)). The role of art as being therapeutic and expressive, the art itself produced by refugees, and art that is made as commentary about refugees and refugee politics are all important aspects to study but are distinct from the exploration of third realm beauty.

THE ROLE OF BEAUTY IN REFUGEE CONTEXTS

Review Part One: Focused Explorations of Beauty

The literature review on focused explorations of beauty in refugee contexts presents a mixed but intriguing picture of the role of beauty in refugees' lives. The scholarly literature that specifically explores third realm beauty is extremely limited; three studies met the search criteria for part one of the review (see [Appendix A: Table A2](#)). However, the literature that does exist makes a strong case for the role of beauty in refugees' lives, with examples demonstrating beauty's role to heal, to empower, and to transform, as well as to connect to and improve the material world (see [Appendix A: Table A3](#)). [Keyes & Kane's \(2004\)](#) study of Bosnian refugees resettled in the United States found that as refugees began to feel safe in their new homes, they felt a "restored ability to notice beauty" (p. 17). These authors' focus was on understanding the mental health of refugees; thus, while this finding on beauty is not further expanded on, its ability to be appreciated was viewed as therapeutic. The two other included studies, [Neumark \(2013\)](#) and [Marshall \(2013\)](#), solely explored beauty in refugee contexts through participatory research with, respectively, resettled refugees to Canada and Palestinian youth living in the Balata refugee camp. Both studies find beauty to be active and transformative.

[Marshall's \(2013\)](#) study found that Palestinian youth used beauty in a variety of ways. Youth saw beauty in how their homes were decorated and the care that went into maintaining them. Instead of seeing the physical proximity of the refugee camp as a problem, they saw the care and closeness of neighbours as beautiful. They planned ways to increase the physical beauty of the

camp, and they used beauty to dream; one boy drew what his house would be like if it were outside the camp, by a river and among the fields. He stated, "Here you can see all the beautiful things ... here you can breathe, there is freedom" (p. 66). Another child used the language of beauty to comment on political realities: "This is a map of good and evil. The **ugly colours** [emphasis added] represent corruption, the people ... who violate the rights of the weak and poor ... like the Israelis ... do to us" (p. 64). For the children of the Balata camp, noticing beauty was a way of noticing and dreaming about life.

[Neumark \(2013\)](#) found that the simplest acts of beautifying space, "the ordering of a home, the sweeping of a floor, the placement of an object" (p. 238), were both practical and transformative. Home beautification served as a bridge for refugees to remember the "loss of their ideological homes" (p. 250) while also expressing a "readiness to make home anew" (p. 239). Resettled refugees used beauty to express the different socio-cultural and political dimensions of their lives and to grieve the trauma they experienced: "Through acts of home-beautification, the pain of the loss of home is intricately absorbed by and into aesthetic experience" (p. 249). It was a way to reimagine life; as one participant commented, "As refugees we lose our sense of beauty and when that happens, we lose our sense of everything, of life itself" (p. 242). For the participants in Neumark's study, simple actions of home beautification had a profound role in remaking home.

Both Neumark and Marshall found beauty to be very active and important in refugees' individual lives and communities. However, the scant scholarly literature raises the question of whether beauty is as important and ubiquitous as their studies—and Danto's

claims—suggest or if it has simply not been deemed worthy of exploration. Part two of the review explores this by identifying if beauty is present when it is searched for.

Part Two: Deductive Analysis of Refugee Homemaking Literature

The search to identify refugee homemaking literature initially yielded 47 articles; 2 were excluded for being duplicative,⁸ which left a final sample of 45 articles. Of these 45 articles, more than half (26) included at least one example of beauty that met the three required conditions outlined above. In total, 41 specific examples of beauty were found in the refugee homemaking literature (see [Appendix B: Table B1](#)). The review found 27 examples of beautifying the built environment and 14 examples of how the built environment served as a container for beauty (see [Appendix B: Table B2](#)). These examples represented refugees from more than 30 countries with six different legal statuses (e.g., seeking asylum, granted asylum, “waiting” in a protracted refugee situation) who were living primarily in Europe or the Americas but also in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East/North Africa (see [Appendix B: Table B2](#)).

Examples of Beauty and Beautification in Homemaking

While occurring in different regions of the world and among refugees with different legal statuses, the examples of beauty found in part two of the review had common characteristics (see [Appendix B: Table B3](#)). The examples demonstrate refugees spending concerted energy to improve and beautify the structures they lived in and the space around them. Regardless of whether they

were in a shelter, a camp, or a temporary apartment in a city, or if they had a more permanent place to call home, refugees painted walls, hung up pictures and wall-paper, carpeted floors, and invested time and effort in decorating and going to great lengths to find materials to do so (Brun, 2015; Kim & Smets, 2020; Steigemann & Misselwitz, 2020; van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). Even in temporary dwellings, refugees' cosmetic acts of beautification began in the first few days after their arrival and continued throughout their stay. These acts eventually became larger home improvements and transformations: roofs became gardens; porches became covered entryways for guests; sterile shelters became personalized homes (El Masri, 2020; Steigemann & Misselwitz, 2020; Trapp, 2015; van Liempt & Miellet, 2021; Wagemann, 2017; Zibar et al., 2022). The examples demonstrate purposeful decisions and actions to the material world that were meaning-filled and delight-producing.

In addition to examples of beauty **added or made to** the built environment, there were also examples of beauty **within** the built environments in which refugees lived. Refugees used their physical spaces and the material world around them for sensorial and ornamental rituals associated with hosting, spirituality, and food: incense was burned, special tea and coffee was served in decorative porcelain sets, collective daily prayers took place on ornate mats (Donà, 1995, 2015; Fábos, 2015). Homes and shelters were rearranged to allow for sharing meals, celebrating holidays, hosting parties and dances, saying goodbyes, and having brief moments of respite from the struggles of daily life (Dudley, 2011; Gabiam, 2021; Gil Everaert, 2021; Koptyaeva, 2017; Mould, 2018; Pérez Murcia, 2020; Rottmann & Nimer, 2021; H. Taylor, 2009; van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). Refugees created symbols and

⁸One result referred to a book, of which the relevant chapters on homemaking from the book were already included in the search; the other was included in part one of the literature review.

pictures on street signs in their camp to create order and organization (Donà, 2015, p. 69). They adorned businesses with decorative banners and played music from shops and in the streets to reflect their various homelands while also creating a sense of collective community in their new albeit temporary homeland (Bauman, 2002). The physical space and structures were containers that enabled beauty and beautification to occur.

The Impact of Beauty and Beautification

These various examples of beauty found in part two of the review, the analysis of the homemaking literature, echo the case made by Keyes and Kane, Marshall, and Neumark that everyday beauty matters. The review suggests that these examples of beauty and beautification in the built environment were profound. They were practical, proactive, and therapeutic. They were tangible ways of honouring past homes, expressing hope for future homes, and helping to (re-)create home in the here and now.

Building Home and Hope. Adjustments and additions even to temporary dwellings became key parts of refugees' stories and how they built home again. Refugees exerted vision and agency in the process of infusing a space "with their own sense of identity and taste" (Boccagni, 2022a, p. 147) and "creating a spatially visible and felt sense of difference" (Hadjiyanni, 2009, p. 547). Simple things such as taking "great care with the decoration" were associated with refugees feeling both happy and secure (H. Taylor, 2009, p. 95). As van Emmerik (2021) describes, the experience of beautifying secured a "sense of self-reliance" (p. 214); it transformed the feeling of life "into concrete existence, where **making** [emphasis added] results directly in **feeling** a better life" (p. 219). Deliberate

beautification of the built environment was not superficial.

Refugees exerted themselves as makers and creators. These acts, such as

ordering one's personal objects in a purposeful sequence or attaching a picture or an image close to one's bed place ... reveal the resilience of a need to exert some control over everyday space and time ... [the] ability and desire to make oneself at home ... no matter where.

(Boccagni, 2022a, p. 147)

Beautifying "enabled making plans for the future and having dreams about things to do at the place of displacement" (Brun, 2015, p. 49); this was represented both by refugees who chose to beautify their space and in the intentional act of deciding to not beautify a space—both were purposeful and seemingly an intentional way for refugees to demonstrate a focus on where they were headed (Boccagni, 2022a; Gil Everaert, 2021). Beautification was a way to exert agency.

Creating Community and Celebrating Culture. The spaces and structures refugees inhabited served as physical containers for collective expressions of beauty: culturally specific rituals of hospitality, celebration, and commemoration taking place to and within the built environment (DeRouen, 2019; Dudley, 2011; Gil Everaert, 2021; Koptyaeva, 2017; H. Taylor, 2009). These were ways of "connecting to a homeland [and] passing down one's cultural traditions to future generations" (Hadjiyanni, 2009, p. 547), allowing refugees to cultivate "a private ethnic identity that grounded them in the face of the pressures of exile" (Fábos, 2015, p. 64). Further, these intentional acts of adornment strengthened friendships and "evoked a sense of community and joy ... that [was] crucial to life" as a refugee (Rajan, 2022, p. 383). Aesthetic practices and actions in the built environment had positive ripple effects.

Honouring Past and Present. What might appear as simple cosmetics were in fact ways

to express complex realities of past and present, of acceptance and hope. Through the acts of “establishing a garden, and making the house look nice, people made a place for themselves ... and a home that connected with the memories of a past home” (Brun, 2015, p. 50). Refugees “replicated the decor of their homes left behind as a way of evoking the feeling of being at home in the new place” (Pérez Murcia, 2020, p. 473). Refugees used their homes and spaces for celebrations as a way to cope with the uncertainty of the present and as “a way for a community to bond around a shared history ... of what was left behind” (H. Taylor, 2009, p. 201).

Beautifying even temporary structures created comfort and were a way to for refugees to endure in the face of displacement:

Families transformed their **temporary** environments into buildings that could be recognized as **permanent** and **durable**. ... New and **bright colours**, **designed** fences, **decorative** elements, and the use of **familiar** materials all contributed to create **personalised houses**, **easy to identify in the temporary settlement**. Although families knew they would be **evicted from these temporary settlements** in the mid-term, they **put effort and care** in modifying their temporary houses, showing that they are **more than mere shelters to them** [emphases added].

(Wagemann, 2017, p. 210)

Refugees demonstrated an acceptance of their present temporary situation by using personal elements from their past. As refugees personalized “their units they could retrieve and fulfil a desire based on the ‘now’ and on ‘being’” (Zibar et al., 2022, p. 101). Temporary dwellings can cause all the other identities of “the displaced to disappear” (Brun, 2016, p. 436); their temporariness becomes their perceived identity. Acts of beautification, however, literally and figuratively allowed refugees to take up space in the here and now.

These examples of beauty found in part two of the review, the deductive analysis of refugee homemaking literature, were found in a little more than half (26) of the articles (45) that were reviewed. While that still leaves many articles (22) that did not contain an example that met the conditions to be classified as an example of beauty, the examples that were found represented refugees in all different legal and policy contexts: from migrants en route to seek asylum, to those who had been resettled to a third country, to those who had lived for decades in a “temporary” situation. While more research is needed, that even an initial exploration of the literature suggests that beauty and beautification are present and are positive aspects in refugees’ lives across such a range of contexts suggests that some precedent exists for those who seek to improve the protection of refugees to better understand it. Because if beauty is in fact an important part of refugees’ daily lives, let alone central and essential, as Danto broadly claims for all humankind, then it would behoove policies and services that aim to meet the essential needs of refugees to take that into consideration.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications from this review are anchored in the Compact’s objectives to ease pressure on host countries, increase refugee self-sufficiency, expand third-country solutions, and facilitate conditions for safe return (UN General Assembly, 2018, para. 7). The following describes how beauty could impact or improve each of them. It suggests challenging the narrow focus on durable solutions to a more holistic framework, transforming language and policy approaches to include refugees as decision-makers, and investing in the quality of shelters, camps, and homes

as a more effective way to reduce pressure on host countries.

Compact Objectives: Expand Third-Country Solutions and Support Conditions of Return

The global refugee regime has long viewed durable solutions as a key goal of refugee protection (UNHCR, 2006). These objectives spring from a framework centred on the nation-state where the “problem” is refugees’ lack of “homeland” and the “solution” is a new (or return to a previous) “homeland” (H. Taylor, 2013, p. 133). The strength of this underlying diagnosis is seen in the persistent pursuit of a strategy—as exemplified by two of the Compact’s four aims being allocated to this—that all evidence would suggest is not working.

The three historic durable solutions⁹ have not kept pace with the scale of forced displacement.¹⁰ There is ever-growing literature on the shortcomings of the durable solutions both in concept and execution (Addo, 2016; Ahmad, 2017; Crisp, 2003; Donà, 2015; Fábos & Brun, 2015; Hassel & Krause, 2016; Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Loescher & Milner, 2005; Milner, 2014; Mohee, 2021; Omata, 2013; Pressé & Thomson, 2008). The lack of durable solutions has made “waiting” in a “temporary situation” a “permanent norm” (Donà, 2015, p. 70) and creates a narrow definition of success, suggesting that little

else matters until a solution is found (Fábos & Brun, 2015). Even policy-makers formally note the shortcomings, and nonetheless, the focus on durable solutions continues (UN General Assembly, 2016, para. 9).

Homemaking research has long pointed out how the policy narratives around durable solutions do not always align with refugees’ lived experiences (Donà, 2015; Fábos & Brun, 2015; Katz, 2022; Wagemann, 2017). While refugees are frequently described as simply waiting for a solution, the examples of beauty tell a different story. Refugees are not just waiting; they are painting, planting, and personalizing. They are gathering, sharing, and remembering. They are making beauty in and through the spaces and structures they find themselves in. If beauty for refugees is the “most immediately available arena of personal action, [it] cannot be dismissed as ‘merely’ decorative or superficial” (Neumark, 2013, p. 242). Instead, the importance of beauty in refugees’ lives adds to the growing critiques of a framework that narrowly defines what matters and only marginally represents refugees’ lived experiences.

A practical way to shift the durable solutions framework would be to rename them to describe what they are (e.g., legal rights to residence and protection) and not the impact they might have (e.g., a long-lasting resolution to a problem). Another avenue would be to gauge progress on a range of factors instead of having the only metric report on the dearth of annual durable solutions. A holistic dashboard that measures many areas of refugees’ lives, such as housing, health, education, work, and transportation, as well as legal rights to residence, would begin to create a more representative picture of refugees’ lives.

⁹The three historic durable solutions are repatriation to one’s home country, integration into the country of first asylum, and resettlement to a third country. Most refugee-hosting countries are countries of first asylum (e.g., Syrians fleeing to Turkey). If a refugee is then able to locally integrate into that host country, it is counted as a durable solution; however, most refugees in host countries have limited rights and are not fully allowed to integrate into society.

¹⁰The lack of solutions currently leaves close to 80% of the world’s refugees displaced for anywhere between 5 and 20 years (UNHCR, n.d.c; USA for UNHCR, 2020). Further, while only a fraction of the world’s refugees will ever be identified as needing third-country resettlement, at the current rate, it will take a projected 18 years just to meet today’s refugee resettlement needs (UNHCR, 2018).

Compact Objective: Enhance Refugee Self-Reliance

While refugee self-reliance has long been a stated goal, the Compact has elevated it. While the definition of self-reliance and the implementation to increase it vary, increasing attention has been paid to it in order to ensure that refugees do not depend on humanitarian aid in perpetuity (Clements et al., 2016; Fiori & Rigon, 2017; PHAPassociation, 2021; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020). However, an international policy document that aims to ensure that refugees **can** take care of themselves implies that they currently **cannot**. This imagery and language proliferate throughout policy and research. Displacement is viewed as a condition solely associated with loss, suffering, and anonymity (Beeckmans et al., 2022; Katz, 2022; Malkki, 1995; Marshall, 2013). The very label of being a refugee “implies a dependent role ... [and] usually renders refugees powerless” (Korac, 2003, p. 409). Many have articulated the errors in this, demonstrating that on the contrary, refugees are “creative agents” (Katz, 2020, p. 236), not “passive beneficiaries of humanitarian aid” (Beeckmans et al., 2022, p. 16). This review, where beauty is evidenced as forward-moving, intentional, and planned, amplifies these arguments. The examples of beauty consisted of actions taken by refugees—that is, they included verbs describing what they were doing, not adjectives describing what had been done to them.

Beauty can help shift this long-standing discourse on loss and passivity. Noticing beauty in and through refugees' lives (re)anchors their dignity and humanity, which is so often stripped as their existence becomes synonymous with the injustices they have experienced. Beauty helps to highlight how refugees are “changemakers” (Beeckmans et al., 2022, p. 16). And when someone is

viewed as a changemaker, the language about them is never solely, if at all, focused on the “trauma” they have experienced, the “loss” that has occurred, and the “help they need” from those with means. If policy-makers' aim is for refugees to be self-reliant, then policy language cannot simultaneously describe them both as a burden that host countries need to be alleviated of and as being able to care for themselves. The language used in policy, funding, and technical guidance should be strengths-based. This could include not requiring grant applications or funding reports to emphasize refugees' needs and depravity but instead reporting on their skills and capacity.

Further, refugees' agency needs to be recognized throughout policy processes, not just as an end goal. This historically has largely not been the case. During the historic 2016 New York Declaration, only two refugees were documented speaking at the multi-day international policy gathering about refugees (Triggs & Wall, 2020); in any other field, this level of representation would invalidate the gathering (Drozdowski & Yarnell, 2019; Global Refugee-Led Network & Asylum Access, n.d.). Funding refugee-led organizations is still a new initiative, not a norm of demonstrated trust (UNHCR, n.d.a). Refugee participation in policy-making has started to change, but it is still not a systematic policy response (Milner et al., 2022). At all levels of policy- and decision-making, refugees should play central roles in developing solutions and executing plans.

Compact Objective: Ease Pressure on Host Countries

The lack of durable solutions has turned expected “temporary” stays in host countries to ones of extended duration. Historically, significant inequities have existed between the countries hosting the most refugees and the

size of their economies (Acker, 2022; UNHCR, 2021). As a result, a small set of countries experience a disproportionate impact in hosting refugees, and they are typically countries that are already experiencing social and economic challenges (UNHCR, n.d.b).¹¹ Nonetheless, stays in host countries are still expected to be **temporary**, and the Compact dictates that **essential needs** are to be the focus.

The examples of beauty in the literature, however, lead to questions about what counts as essential. Neumark (2013, p. 238) argues that beauty is not something that can be or is on hold for the millions of refugees who are waiting for durable solutions. The instances of beauty in the reviewed literature were not only employed by refugees who had a durable solution; many instances were found among refugees who were “temporarily” in shelters and camps in host countries. While beauty was not employed by **all** refugees, and at times was intentionally not used, it was not simply the temporariness of an arrangement that influenced whether beauty was or was not employed. While beauty might be perceived as important or plausible only after basic needs are met and permanent dwellings are secured, it appears to have utility even in the absence of these conditions.

Research has demonstrated the importance of beauty in the material environment, even in temporary situations. The impact when it is absent is seen in the shelters for asylum seekers in the Calais ‘Jungle’ in France and Hatch Hall in Ireland: refugees suffer from the “horrendous living conditions” (Katz, 2022, p. 158); endless security cameras, hallways that look like hospital corridors, and a lack of pictures and curtains had made the shelter “feel empty—even with the people in it” (Dreyer, 2022, p. 199). In con-

trast, the Banja Koviljača refugee centre in the former Yugoslavia has been described as the country’s most beautiful building, demonstrating that “creativity and beauty are possible, even necessary” (Staničić, 2022, pp. 189–190). The built environment has the power to hinder people or to help them.

While at face value many would agree that a lovely, more calming environment has benefits over a dark, damp, and dreary one, there are practical and political reasons why host countries do not want to or cannot provide beyond the essential needs¹² and basic care prescribed in the Compact (Achilli et al., 2017; Ferris & Kirisci, 2016; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). Shelters and camps have political implications, and demonstrating the “bare life” of those who stay in them creates an image that is “more manageable” (Malkki, 2002, pp. 353, 359). Further, not investing financially in these structures and/or policies that prevent refugees from decorating, personalizing, or improving them can feel like a way of reinforcing the temporary nature of the arrangement. While both Wagemann (2017) and Katz (2022) note how transforming a space and making a place feel homier—be it through ornamental plants and coloured fences or hanging pictures and curtains—can signify permanence, beauty and permanence should be unlinked. At minimum, it is misrepresentative, and at times offensive, to assume that refugees want their host country to be their permanent home (Achilli, 2015; Katz, 2022; Pérez, 2018). Further, a characteristic of beauty is its impermanence (Hamilton, 2021). Beauty does not last forever, but the literature suggests that it still matters. Refugees did not have to plan

¹¹Ninety percent of refugees are hosted in lower-income economies (UNHCR, 2021) and just 10 countries host 60% of the world’s refugees (Betts & Milner, 2019).

¹²The Compact expects host countries to provide “safe and dignified reception conditions ... [and to] meet the essential needs of refugees”—that is, adequate safe drinking water, sanitation, food, nutrition, shelter, and health care (UN General Assembly, 2016, para. 5).

to stay somewhere forever for them to make it more beautiful.

While minimal arrangements might be more cost-effective in the short term and feel more palatable, if the goals are to ease pressure on host countries and increase refugees' self-reliance, the research suggests, and this review underscores, that beauty in the built environment could help, not hinder, in achieving this. A therapeutic built environment can help people regain a "sense of normality" (Korac, 2009, p. 61) and become "self-sufficient and independent" (Pérez Murcia, 2020, p. 470). If policy-makers want refugees to be able to provide for themselves economically, then those refugees should also be able to decide if they can paint the walls of their room. Structures beyond basic shelters enable refugees "to re-establish their lives, even temporarily, in their precarious environments and realities" (Katz, 2020, pp. 236–237). Therapeutic physical environments are shown to increase unhoused individuals' health, safety, well-being, stability, and focus on future goals, as well as decrease their need for long-term services (Colburn et al., 2022). If policy-makers want to ease pressure on host states, it is arguable that creating beauty in the built environment will be what helps refugees recover and move on, not what makes them settle down and require more.

CONCLUSION: IS IT ... BEAUTY? HOW CAN WE KNOW? HOW WILL WE KNOW?

Limitations

There are shortcomings in this exploration of beauty and its potential policy implications. First, there is limited available scholarly literature that directly explores everyday beauty among refugees. The ubiquity of the words **beauty** and **beautiful** as adjectives for

good made it difficult to expand the search criteria to non-peer-reviewed articles and/or grey literature that might demonstrate a more complete picture of work on this topic. Both parts of the review focused only on refugees, excluding other populations in which members might have similar homemaking experiences. For example, looking at the ways individuals experiencing homelessness, older adults in nursing care facilities, or those experiencing dementia use beauty in remaking home could be insightful. In the identified articles, refugee populations from the Middle East/North Africa and Asia and the Pacific who were living in Europe or the Americas were over-represented. Further, while the identified examples of beauty in part two met the conditions established for the deductive analysis, they were not labelled as beauty or beautiful by the study participants or authors themselves.

An overarching challenge to exploring beauty is that it does not fit neatly into an isolated category; by its nature, it is diffuse. What is labelled as beauty or beautiful is personal and perceived and could thus also go by other names. Looking at beauty within the multidimensional domain of homemaking literature further compounds this. Examples in the review that met the conditions for being classified as beauty could also fit into several other categories and distinct disciplines, including but not limited to placemaking, spatial appropriation, hospitality, agency, attachment, memory, objects, psychology, home repair, and community-building. Van Liempt & Staring's (2021) study of Syrian refugees remaking home in the Netherlands is illustrative:

When asked about which **places** would have **meaning** for them, respondents often mentioned green open spaces—places **with aesthetic qualities of beauty**, where one can relax, empty one's head, and forget about one's worries [emphases added]. (pp. 314–315)

Places of restoration ... were found to act as sites of **belonging** where refugees start to feel at home because of the opportunity for **material** practices, such as smoking shisha, which bring back **memories** of an old life. However, they also have a restorative function ... people **appropriate** these **spaces** themselves—the joy when they “discover” **spaces** that they really like and the feeling of **taking back control** in a context of severe restrictions on mobility [emphases added]. (p. 322)

Here we see beauty to be a reason that a **place** has **meaning**, which allows for **memories**, **materiality**, and **belonging** and enables **appropriation**, which leads to **agency**. Perhaps more extensive studies of beauty must entail multidimensional frameworks and approaches similar to those called for in homemaking research (Mallett, 2004, p. 64). While beauty's diffusion might subject it to criticism and render it difficult to study, it arguably also shows its power: beauty can be found **anywhere**, even in displacement.

Further Research

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations and in light of rapidly growing numbers of refugees, stagnant solutions, and decreasing international protection, there is a strong justification that researchers and policy-makers should pay attention to anything that could have a positive impact in refugees' lives. While there is insufficient research on beauty in refugee contexts to empirically understand its impact, this initial exploration of the literature points to it being something worthy of more in-depth analysis. Specifically, it should be analysis that leverages participatory methods—used by both Neumark and Marshall in their studies. Citing Maclure et al. (2010), Marshall argues that pursuing aesthetic and participatory methodologies allows for “a more open array of responses that are less burdened with the **weight of prior assumptions, our own included** [emphasis added]” (Marshall, 2013, p. 68). If

there were ever an area where it was clear that our own prior assumptions were not working, the state of current refugee policy is certainly one.

Future research could focus on several areas. First, generating primary data to understand how refugees see, use, and value beauty in their own words is important. Adding to this would be understanding how perceptions and the use of everyday beauty evolve in refugees' lives as they experience different legal contexts and physical places of dwelling. Exploring how practices of beauty and beautification differ between groups of refugees and understanding when and why some refugees employ and embrace beauty and beautification while some do not would be insightful. Further, it is important to explore in greater depth beauty's intersections with other areas, such as placemaking, appropriation, and psychology, to determine how beauty is part of these important home-making processes.

Beyond the personal expressions of beauty taken by refugees themselves, more research is also needed to understand how beauty in the built environment—such as conditions of shelters, camps, and reception centres—impacts refugees. For example, future studies can evaluate how refugees' psychosocial well-being, economic outcomes, and health are impacted by intentional shelter designs, like Shigeru Ban's curtain divider used in shelters for earthquake victims (Lasky, 2011; Pogrebin, 2014), or by policies that allow for refugees to personalize, beautify, or improve their space. Experimental designs could be employed: some examples include assessing the impact of giving some refugees freedom and/or funds to beautify or improve their spaces and comparing short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of refugees staying in more aesthetic shelters and camps to refugees staying in “usual care” settings.

Last, this review highlights the importance of evaluating what counts as an essential need and implementing the proposal to test Maslow's hierarchy of needs to understand if and where beauty fits on that hierarchy (Neumark, 2014). In many ways, Maslow's hierarchy informs and justifies humanitarianism's focus on "essential needs" and thus dictates funding and service structures, but Danto's claim and the instances of beauty found in the literature across refugee contexts underscore the question of what is essential.

Searching for the Whole Story

This article has sought to understand the claims of everyday beauty being essential. It has explored the role of beauty and beautification in refugees' lives and specifically how it shows up spatially and structurally through actions taken on and within the built environment. The scholarly literature review presents a mixed picture on the role of beauty. That which directly explores third realm beauty in refugee contexts is limited, but the literature that does exist makes a strong case for it. The deductive analysis of part two of the review identified multiple examples of beauty embedded in refugees' lives and ways that it positively impacted refugees in a range of contexts. This initial exploration highlighted several possible policy implications. It suggests questioning our conceptual policy frameworks to develop ones that more closely align with the lived experiences of refugees, as well as transforming the policy language we use to be strengths-based, focusing on refugees' agency and skills and thus changing how we develop policies by including refugees in the process. Further, beauty has implications for how shelters and homes for refugees are designed and the policies that dictate how refugees can or cannot customize them.

The literature suggests that beauty serves as a meaning-filled, forward-looking, empowering practice through which refugees both honour past homes and (re)make home. While the current narrative about refugees focuses on their waiting and loss of home, examples of beauty in refugees' lives are filled with action, intentionality, creativity, and care. The skepticism that surrounds beauty as an academic concept coupled with the refugee regime often being in a state of emergency, responding to one displacement crisis after another, could make it likely that beauty will remain overlooked in policy and research. But ignoring beauty and the ways that refugees express, embody, and practice it in their daily lives risks ignoring the wholeness of who they are. And when policies, and the research that informs them, do not reflect the whole story of a population, they cannot be effective.

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APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS: REVIEW PART ONE—FOCUSED EXPLORATIONS OF BEAUTY

Table A1 Review Part One—Focused Explorations of Beauty: Initial Results and Reasons for Inclusion or Exclusion.

Included	Article focus / reason for inclusion / exclusion	n
No	Unrelated ^a	14
No	Portrayal of refugees in media and art	6
No	Refugee art and expression ^b	3
No	On refugees but not beauty ^c	18
No	On beauty but not refugees	1
No	On refugees and beauty, but beauty as physical appearance ^d	5
Yes	On refugees and beauty, with beauty as third realm / everyday	3

Note. N = 51.

^a **Forcibly displaced** and **beauty** are frequently used in periodontology research but were not actually related to either refugees or the study of beauty.

^b While art can be beautiful, most scholars view art as a broader discipline not inherently tied to beauty. These articles focus on art and artistic expression and did not include explicit references or focuses on beauty.

^c Due to the ubiquity of the word **beauty** as an adjective, many articles met the search criteria requirements but were not related to the study of beauty in refugee contexts.

^d This review was focused on the ways that beauty was exemplified in the spaces and structures that refugees inhabit, and thus, studies that were focused on beauty as it relates to physical appearance, physical attributes, or self-beautification were excluded.

Table A2 Review Part One—Focused Explorations of Beauty: Final List of Included Articles.

Author(s)	Title	Year
Keyes, E. F., & Kane, C. F.	Belonging and Adapting: Mental Health of Bosnian Refugees Living in the United States	2004
Marshall, D. J.	"All the Beautiful Things": Trauma, Aesthetics and the Politics of Palestinian Childhood	2013
Neumark, D.	Drawn to Beauty: The Practice of House-Beautification as Homemaking Amongst the Forcibly Displaced	2013

Note. N = 3. These are the three articles that are referenced in the last row in [Table A1](#) that met the search criteria and thus were included in the final results.

Table A3 Review Part One—Focused Explorations of Beauty: Detailed Examples of Beauty's Role from Included Literature.

No. Examples of beauty's role

Beauty as empowering^a

- 1 "For her photo-diary, Iman ... took a series of pictures of the interior spaces of her home. While her focus on the space of the home is in part a reflection of the spatial restrictions imposed upon adolescent girls in the camp, Iman's photos evoke wider spatial-temporal, even sacred, geographic imaginaries. As Iman explains, **'I wanted to send a message with these images that this is a home, I live here, I've lived in this home my whole life, and it is beautiful.'** In speaking about her photos, Iman commented that the decorations are beautiful because they show how her mother 'cares for us in this home, and how hard she works to maintain the home.'" (Marshall, 2013, p. 62)
 - 2 "Diana's sense of 'beauty in the making' has been acquired through steadfast attention to the material world as much as to her inner sense of home. This steadfastness has, in turn, fed and re-enforced her inner sense of self. Undertaking the gestures of beautification, of homemaking, means overcoming resistance and making choices." (Neumark, 2013, p. 253)
 - 3 "Building and decorating a home is not a passive surrender of the right of return nor is it a simple act of coping or making do. The difficult, patient work of maintaining a home and raising a family under occupation is an act of steadfastness (samud). It is the 'aesthetic performance of the as if' at the heart of refugee subjectivity—a refusal to give up their status as refugees, while at the same time refusing to be homeless, voiceless and invisible. If decorating the home is a way of disrupting one distribution of the sensible, and creating another visibility of beauty, cleanliness and control inside the refugee camp, it is the external world of fawda or chaos in the camp that threatens to disrupt such a carefully maintained space." (Marshall, 2013, p. 63)
 - 4 "This is made explicit in Diana's eloquent self-reflection: **'Beauty is an opportunity to have a sense of being entitled to exist. The word entitled is very important to me because I never felt entitled. [...] Beauty is attention to detail, a detail that has a meaning in it. [...] I mean I think our home is maybe a place where most of us hope to have a certain sense of control and when that is taken away from us, you know? I do remember as a child not feeling like I had a right to be there. We had no place that was ours. It wasn't about ownership cause we never did own [...]. I sort of remember this feeling of never being able to quite relax. And that stayed with me. Beauty now feels like quite a privilege, you know?'**" (Neumark, 2013, p. 253)
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Table A3 *Continued.***No.** Examples of beauty's role

- 5 "Rather than expressing a purely ethical or normative understanding of how a home should look or how a mother should behave, by bringing to light the aesthetic value of the work that goes into building and maintaining a beautiful home the girls express a kind of political solidarity with this domestic physical and symbolic labour. ... Moreover, beyond just keeping up with the neighbours, maintaining a beautifully decorated home in a refugee camp, a meticulous practice often associated with landed Palestinian urbanites, serves as a disruption of the aesthetic divide between city and camp, and an aesthetic subversion of the broader ethical order in which refugees must remain in their place as humans in waiting." (Marshall, 2013, p. 63)
- 6 "Diana told me: '**... To me beauty is about ... intentionally putting things in your space or disposing them in a way that is trying to create a sense of cosiness or something; a sense of comfort. ... Rather than experiencing housekeeping as the drudgery of ... unending repetition, after years of ... mindful aesthetically charged beautification practices, we can ... come to recognize the space in which we dwell as home, even as we become more ourselves in the process. By conditioning our individual and cultural capacity to take care of what is "out of place" in our daily handling of so-called ordinary objects, or by co-activating artful manifestations of imaginary and real worlds, we become aware of the qualities we want to cultivate as we make ourselves at home.**'" (Neumark, 2013, p. 247)
- 7 "Choosing to embrace beauty is perhaps one of the most telling signs of one's capacity to determine the course of one's life after the trauma of displacement. Indeed, following forced displacement, choice making—and acting on the belief that one's choices matter—are decisive elements in making the transition from victim to survivor: they are both a sign and a means of building resilience and practicing home." (Neumark, 2013, p. 251)
- 8 "Recalling my mother's '**you make it mean something to you,**' Diana's '**it's about intentionally putting things in your space [...],**' Meena's '**beauty making is definitely, definitely, definitely, definitely linked to establishing a sense of home**' and Vera's own '**what I wanted more than anything else was to make my living space my own**' it is clearly possible to get from mourning and anger to home (anew) through the performance of beautification. The process of getting from one to the other implies an act of volition." (Neumark, 2013, p. 251)

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Table A3 *Continued.***No.** Examples of beauty's role

9 "The choice to engage in home-beautification, however, is not self-evident. The very promise of pleasure may be what impedes one's readiness to embrace beauty. ... A willingness not to cling to the past can seem like a profound act of individual and cultural betrayal. At another level, abandoning the stance that one's new home is temporary is also fraught. It means, accepting the original loss, as well as letting go of a disruptive but comfortable-through-familiarity positioning of oneself. Some ... spoke of how wary they were of **'investing'** in aesthetic appreciation and in making efforts to endow their dwellings with beauty, thinking that their housing situation was only temporary—even though the original displacement may have occurred decades previously." (Neumark, 2013, p. 252)

Beauty to heal^b

- 10 "Alexis, a Canadian immigration lawyer ... told me ... **'As refugees we lose our sense of beauty and when that happens we lose our sense of everything, of life itself.'** If the corollary of Alexis' perception is true that a recovery of a sense of beauty reveals or aids in the recovery of an engagement with life, then clearly the aesthetics of homemaking, as a most immediately available arena of personal action, cannot be dismissed as 'merely' decorative or superficial. For individuals suffering the kind of total breakdown that Alexis describes ... the beautification of home is grounded in the physical. By attending to ... the cognitive/perceptual 'which registers genuine sensuous qualities such as colours, sounds, tastes and smells' and the emotional / sensation 'which evaluates the sensuous data on a scale between desire and aversion' (Welsch 1996, 9)—we might more fully understand the conditions for successfully (re)creating home for the involuntarily dislocated." (Neumark, 2013, p. 242)
- 11 "Through acts of home-beautification, the pain of the loss of home is intricately absorbed by and into aesthetic experience. This is because a material object can contain and reflect a myriad of worlds (personal, social and political) and emotional responses." (Neumark, 2013, p. 243)
- 12 "The beautification of home, then, is a site of exchange where the aesthetics of memory and the aesthetics of present experience act upon one another. ... The care of and attention to one's material belongings can play an important role here. These are activities that tend to take place on a small manageable scale, they can be repetitive and predictable and they can subtly stimulate an aesthetic moment." (Neumark, 2013, p. 245)
- 13 "The practice of beauty in the realm of homemaking is not just a profound engagement with the appearance of things. It is a wholly interconnected examination, experimentation and exploration of being, being in relation with and becoming." (Neumark, 2013, p. 246)

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Table A3 *Continued.*

No. Examples of beauty's role

- 14 "Rula, a Palestinian woman, stated, '**On the concept of home and beauty, you really have to take the time and effort to appreciate it and think about it and get connected to it. ... For years, I experienced the trickle down effect of the loss of home from previous generations and, as a result, I don't have a place of special meaning. It is only now that I'm starting to invest in the concepts of home and beauty because before I tended to devalue these, just in case they would disappear. Even gardening: I have only recently come to appreciate those little aspects of the original home, the story, beauty in the food and in relation to the efforts of getting the olives. My husband places a huge emphasis on making our home beautiful. He survived the war in Lebanon. People who have lived that kind of trauma need what beauty offers. It creates stability. It is not a superficial thing; I think it is a real internal need for him, even if he can't articulate why.**'" (Neumark, 2013, pp. 252–253)
- 15 "These reactions to being resettled have been described by researchers as being negative mental health outcomes. ... However, these Bosnian refugees also reported experiencing feelings of relief and safety because of leaving behind the threat of death, feelings of gratefulness for their new freedom to hope for a better future, and the restored ability to notice beauty as well as a beginning sense of normalcy in their new lives." (Keyes & Kane, 2004, p. 825)
- 16 "House-beautification gestures support the process of relocating the displaced individual at the centre of her/his experience of home. Creating coherent narratives out of the fragments of memory and dislocated histories is similarly productive: Working through, or remastering, traumatic memory ... involves a shift from being the object or medium of someone else's (the perpetrator's) speech (or other expressive behavior) to being the subject of one's own. The act of bearing witness to the trauma facilitates this shift, not only by transforming traumatic memory into a coherent narrative that can be integrated into the survivor's sense of self and view of the world, but also by reintegrating the survivor into a community and re-establishing connections essential to selfhood." (Neumark, 2013, pp. 247–248)
- 17 "As Rula's experience illustrates, a choice for aesthetic practice can help us to understand that the real betrayal lies not in the letting go, but in the incapacity or unwillingness to transform the trauma of displacement into a life-affirming embrace of renewed inhabiting, with all the vulnerability and responsibility inherent in such growth. To some extent, appreciating beauty means that one has accepted that one is entitled to pleasure and is not threatened by the fear of betraying the experience of home's loss through the process of making one's home anew." (Neumark, 2013, p. 253)

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Table A3 *Continued.***No.** Examples of beauty's role

- 18 "If we read her words as spoken, we end at trauma; but embedded in her memory is the forward motion of a history in which trauma was overcome and home remade, there is pain but it is not paralyzing. ... [It] is a ... memory attached to the care of the things and objects of home. ... As my mother experienced it, cleaning or polishing even cracked and broken furnishings could be more ... if care and attention were brought to these processes." (Neumark, 2013, p. 246)
- 19 "Talking about a tattered and stained 100-year-old embroidered cloth used for the ritual meal during the holiday of Passover that was brought over from Poland, my mother acknowledged that it could not be used on account of how moth-eaten and raggedy it was: **'And yet to us it is a thing of beauty because of who made it. To think that so long ago my grandmother put so much work into this thing, all the beading and the embroidery. Just appreciating what went into it makes me feel very emotional.'**" (Neumark, 2013, p. 254)

Beauty to reframe and transform^c

- 20 "I asked her what aspect of life in Balata she wanted to discuss and she answered: **'How it's beautiful. How life in the camp is beautiful [jameela].'** When asked to elaborate Yara ... answered: **'I mean how close people are. How we take care of each other.'** The other girls and boys nodded in agreement. ... Moments ago the children had been discussing physical proximity as one of the main difficulties of life in the camp. The discussion was framed within a particular ethical understanding of refugee childhood predicated on that which is lacking—space, privacy, rights. Yara, however, in her aesthetic rendering, had transformed the physical and social proximity in the camp from its main problem into its defining beauty, and had transformed the overcrowding of the camp from a story of everyday suffering into a narrative of everyday care and beauty." (Marshall, 2013, p. 61)
- 21 "Aesthetic experience ... can help people to realize that complex forms of problem-solving are seldom static but change with circumstance and opportunity; to think with and through material; and to learn to say what cannot be said. ... In short, aesthetic practice ... can invite displaced persons to live more fluidly and responsively within their new environments. Even small acts of beautification can be very satisfying. The deliberate appreciation of beauty is ... a rather useful and straightforward way to develop situated knowledge and tease out the indirect attitudinal and gestural dexterity and ingenuity necessary for the complex and life-long process of recreating home; a process that is very often psychologically challenging, physically arduous, financially burdensome, culturally disorienting and politically charged. Sensory knowledge can become new mental knowledge, just as new thoughts can reshape the sense people make of their feelings as they come to terms with loss." (Neumark, 2013, p. 244)

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Table A3 *Continued.***No.** Examples of beauty's role

- 22 "Physical attention to the handling, the care and the placement of material household goods imbues the passage of time with a sense of renewed continuity and purpose. It creates a new narrative. Trauma 'undoes the self by breaking the on-going narrative, severing the connections among remembered past, lived present, and anticipated future' and 'reveals the ways in which one's ability to feel at home in the world is as much a physical as an epistemological accomplishment' (Brison 1999, 41 and 44). The sensorial connection, lived viscerally and made sense of culturally, is a vital locus of identity reconstruction and of recreating, coming and being at home." (Neumark, 2013, pp. 248–249)
- 23 "Raghad agreed and suggested that if the girls were polite, and remind their neighbours that **'God is beautiful and loves beauty'** ... people would surely agree with them and change their behaviours accordingly, thus redistributing an aesthetics of beauty and care from its place in the home, toward its proper Islamic ethical position infusing all aspects of public and private life. In this discussion, the girls appeal to an everyday, Islamic ethic of beauty against the moral and aesthetic chaos of the camp." (Marshall, 2013, p. 64)
- 24 "In a mixed group of girls and boys, one of the girls, Sajood, drew a mental map of her world as situated within a larger moral universe: **'This is a map of good and evil. The ugly colours are evil. And the beautiful colours are good. The ugly colours represent corruption, the people who are strong and wealthy and have power so they violate the rights of the weak and poor. It's like the Israelis [yahud] do to us, but also other countries, even the Arabs.'** ...Sajood explains: **'These colours are the good people, the weak and poor who are deprived of everything in this world [ad-dunya—the material world].'**" (Marshall, 2013, pp. 64–65)
- 25 "The use of Palestinian embroidery and Islamic decorative arts in the home are more than just symbolic performances of Palestinian identity; such images and practices simultaneously produce the home and nation while also serving as reminders that one is not at home—neither in one's actual home, one's homeland, nor one's eternal home in the hereafter—evoking a spatial-temporal imaginary that stretches beyond the physical territory of the present state of occupation and exile." (Marshall, 2013, p. 62)

Connecting to and improving the built environment

- 26 "The photos feature images of neatly arranged furniture and perfectly plastered and painted walls adorned with various religious and Palestinian decorative accoutrements including a Qur'an, decorative prayer beads and Palestinian embroidery. The other girls responded positively to the photos: **'I like this picture because it is clear from the beautiful decorations that they have been building a home for long time,'** one girl remarked." (Marshall, 2013, p. 62)

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Table A3 *Continued.***No.** Examples of beauty's role

- 27 "Interpersonal relations [are] crucial to trauma recovery ... [and] ... the care and manipulation of one's home's objects is also vital. ... This is certainly true for Meena ..., a young woman of Tamil descent. ... She spoke to me about gardening, cooking, cleaning and the process of hanging decorative fabrics on the walls of her apartment: **'I move every year so home is not related to any particular geographical place. Home is more in the gestures. [...] I think that for cultures such as mine that have lived through colonization and displacement there does have to be a certain kind of resilience and beauty making. The beauty making is definitely, definitely, definitely, definitely linked to establishing a sense of home.'**" (Neumark, 2013, pp. 249–250)
- 28 "The crux of beauty-making's significance is in the making: the processual nature of beautification can affect the way in which forcibly displaced individuals relate to the loss of their ideological homes and operate within the material culture of the built environment. I asked Vera, **'At what point for you did beauty become important?'** ... she said: **'... it is connected to survival. [...] What I wanted more than anything else was to make my living space my own, whatever that meant and so I still do this. [...] The idea of practicing home is important and I think it has to do with paying attention.'**" (Neumark, 2013, p. 250)
- 29 "In discussing a picture of flowers that Raghad had taken for her photo-diary, the girls discussed the benefits of beauty in public places, and their desire to see beautiful places and behaviours fostered in the camp. As Raghad explains: **'I took a picture of flowers because it's pretty [Hilwa], not just how they look, but everything [...] I mean, they have a sweet smell [Hilo]. Also people can benefit from flowers because they make you feel good, and they attract birds and butterflies too.'** The other girls agreed and listed other benefits of flowers: **'Some people even make some drinks from flowers, or perfumes, or give them as gifts. If I had a garden I would do that.'** The girls then discussed the possibility of growing gardens throughout the camp, not just in the nearby park or the cemetery, but along the streets, in front of shops and homes, and in schools." (Marshall, 2013, p. 64)

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Table A3 *Continued.*

No. Examples of beauty's role

- 30 "Sheila spoke lovingly of the home that she has built with her husband and of the myriad ways in which their physical space is permeated with beauty: **'The beauties of nature in many forms, natural and humanly modified, surround me. Indoors, I have chosen to have an uncluttered space where everything visible has a story that provides the beauty of continuity even if the item itself has no intrinsic beauty of its own.'** While there are several items brought over from Turkey during her grandparents' move and others still purchased more recently during subsequent trips back to her father's birth country on display, most of the furnishings in Sheila's house are locally sourced or handmade. 'Home beautiful,' for Sheila, is inscribed in a sense of continuity as iterated through the objects and things accumulated from here and there over the generations, as well as the stories told about these items." (Neumark, 2013, pp. 254–255)
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Note. N = 30. All examples are quoted text from the three articles included in part one of the review. Anything a participant in a study said has been bolded. In instances when an example could be assigned multiple categories, it is listed under the theme that is most prominent.

^a Instances that demonstrate beauty or beautification as an intentional action and/or creating the feeling of agency.

^b Instances that demonstrate beauty having a therapeutic role, helping people to feel better, cope, and/or move on.

^c Instances where the language of beauty transform how a situation was viewed or perceived.

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS: REVIEW PART TWO—DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF REFUGE HOMEMAKING LITERATURE

Table B1 Review Part Two: Examples of Beauty Refugee Homemaking Literature by Article.

Articles contains example of beauty	No. of articles
Meets conditions for example of beauty	
Yes	26
No	19
Number of examples in each article	
One example	16
Two examples	8
Three examples	3

Table B2 Review Part Two: Examples of Beauty in Refugee Homemaking Literature by Type, Context, and Country.

Instances of beauty identified in review ^a	n
Type of beautification	
Beautifying space ^b	15
Beautifying structures ^c	12
Structures and spaces that allow for beauty ^d	14
Refugee context ^e	
Asylum seekers—waiting adjudication ^f	5
Asylum seekers—granted refugee status ^g	3
Forcibly displaced population ^h	3
Internally displaced persons	4
Protracted refugee situation ⁱ	9
Third-country resettlement	2
Host country / location of study ^j	
Africa—East, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes	1
Africa—West and Central	1
Americas	6
Asia and the Pacific	2
Europe	11

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Table B2 *Continued.*

Types of instances of beauty ^a	n
Middle East / North Africa	4
Various	1
Refugee Country of Origin ^k	
Africa—East, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes	3
Africa—West and Central	2
Americas	5
Asia and the Pacific	10
Europe	6
Middle East / North Africa	16
Various	2

^a For each of the instances of beauty found in the deductive analysis, this table describes the types of and characteristics associated with those instances.

^b Acts of beauty or beautification to anything within a dwelling.

^c Acts of beauty or beautification to the outside or physical layout of a dwelling.

^d Acts of beauty or beautification that were able to happen because of the available space or structure (e.g., the space of a home was an enabling environment for a beautiful coffee ritual).

^e Refers to the status of the refugees in the article, which is significant as it can imply the level of protection they had received and the degree of permanence in the place that they lived.

^f Individuals who have moved to a country seeking asylum but have not had their claim adjudicated; often have limited or no rights to movement, work, and supportive services.

^g Individuals who have moved to a country and have been granted asylum (i.e., given official refugee status). Most have rights equivalent to other residents and access to some social services.

^h Instances when the article was not clear on the official status of the refugees beyond them being forcibly displaced from their country of origin.

ⁱ Refugees waiting in a country of first asylum for a durable solution for at least five years.

^j Host countries are classified using UNHCR's world regions.

^k Refugee countries of origin are classified using UNHCR's world regions. Several articles focused on refugee contexts that comprised refugee groups from different parts of the world; thus, the numbers of countries represented exceeds the total number of instances of beauty.

Table B3 Review Part Two: Detailed Examples of Beauty in Refugee Homemaking Literature.

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
Beautifying space			
1	Syrians with refugee status	Amsterdam, Netherlands	"[When refugees moved into a housing project] during the first few days ... they painted their walls and bought furniture ... and then gradually decorated their homes by, for instance, hanging pictures on the walls and putting carpets on the floor." (Kim & Smets, 2020, p. 616)
2	Somalia, Eritrea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kosovo, Albania, and Palestine asylum seekers	Norway	"During the first meeting, Mila proudly showed me the crochet work that her mother and sister had started just after receiving confirmation of their new settlement. They had made curtains and a beautiful matching tablecloth, believing they would use it in their 'new house.'" (Archambault, 2012, p. 42)
3	Syrians with refugee status	Netherlands	"[Many] talked about how they had to invest a lot of time and effort into decorating the house in the beginning. ... All ... except one family who were housed in a temporary place, were proud to show us their house and give us a tour." (van Liempt & Miellet, 2021, p. 2384)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
4	Asylum seekers, largely from Syria	Berlin, Germany	<p>"The youths had managed to secure the support of two social workers who had already helped to mobilize networks and resources in order to provide Tempohome residents with furniture, decoration, building materials and tools, and also partly train them how to improve their living situation in the containers. The social workers and youths now approached us as architects and design professionals for help, which led to the joint conceptualization and organization of a building workshop with local residents. Furniture and wooden plant boxes were constructed for private use as well as a soon-to-be established youth center. ... The workshops became ... a way to consider concrete spatial practices within a paradigm of co-production and co-design." (Steigemann & Misselwitz, 2020, p. 643)</p>
5	Internally displaced Georgians	Georgia	<p>"The 42 block houses were all the same size. ... Before moving in, many families painted the floors and put wallpaper on the walls. There were two small rooms, a living room, and a bathroom at the back. Some families made a kitchen in one of the two rooms, others made part of the living room into a kitchen. ... Most people made only cosmetic changes to the houses before moving in, making them beautiful by finding the cheapest wallpaper and floor paint. These acts of decorating and painting contributed to the ways people felt at home in the dwelling." (Brun, 2015, p. 49)</p>

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
6	Resettled Hmong and Somali refugees and Mexican migrants	Minnesota, US	"[Somalis] adorned their living spaces with prized possessions from Somalia. ... With few possessions, undocumented Mexicans used relatively inexpensive and easy to acquire things like a Mexican flag and a calendar with the Virgin of Guadalupe to personalize their homes. On the other hand, Mexicans with legal status invested in complete furniture assemblages, Mexican-themed paintings, and ceramics. ... All of the 43 interviewees, to various levels and degrees, devoted some time, energy and funds to consciously transform their living environments to places with meaning and value. Their constructions of aesthetics were purposive—reasons ranged from making a space beautiful to connecting to a homeland, passing down one's cultural traditions to future generations, fostering alliances with others from the same cultural group, and differentiating themselves from the mainstream and other cultural groups." (Hadjiyanni, 2009, pp. 544–547)
7	Liberians in protracted refugee situation	Ghana	"After our first meeting, Lillian offered to give me a tour of her 'refugee mansion,' as she called it. A front porch welcomed us into a large living room with high, airy ceilings. The painted walls were sparsely decorated with several formal photographs of Lillian and her family, along with several plastic flower arrangements. ... While her host teased her for dressing 'big' and 'bluffing' (showing off), Lillian did not hide her lifestyle and what she hoped to achieve." (Trapp, 2015, p. 38)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
8	North African asylum seekers	Italy	<p>“Acts of spatial appropriation, such as ordering one’s personal objects in a purposeful sequence or attaching a picture or an image close to one’s bed place ... reveal the resilience of a need to exert some control over everyday space and time in order to draw from it a sense of predictability and security. ... Moreover, spatial appropriation points to people’s attempts to personalise a place by infusing it with their own sense of identity and taste, including references to their biographies. This is less a matter of aesthetics than of the retention of some ability and desire to make oneself at home, or of a need and desire for ‘homing,’ no matter where.” (Boccagni, 2022a, p. 147)</p>
9	Karenni refugees in protracted refugee situation	Burma	<p>“Red, however, the colour most important and emblematic for the Kayah, was described as impossible to produce in displacement, because of the unavailability of appropriate plants locally. ... Weaving is of course important because of the practical functions of its material results—clothing, blankets and bags. But continuity of style and of sensory experience is highly significant, too. ... The importance ... lies partly in repetition of habitual actions and the provision, sight and use of familiar artefacts. It lies too in providing refugees with a modicum of control over, or at least adaptation to, a new and challenging environment.” (Dudley, 2011, p. 751)</p>

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
10	Syrian refugees	Istanbul, Turkey	"The eventual visit by [her] neighbors ... represented an opportunity for her to reclaim her lost social status and a tool to confront the discrimination and prejudice of the Turkish people toward Syrians. She was offended that many Turks assumed that she did not have a nice house in Syria. She says: 'My Turkish neighbor once came to my house here, and when she saw the house, she said, 'it is very beautiful!' surprised. I told her, 'my house in Syria was bigger and more beautiful than this one.' The Turkish people think that they gave us a palace to live in, and that before we came here, we were living in tents!'" (Rottmann & Nimer, 2021, p. 1392)
11	Internally displaced Colombians	Bogotá, Medellín, and Cartagena, Colombia	"The internal decoration in places of dwelling also plays a role in remaking home. Many replicated the decor of their homes left behind as a way of evoking the feeling of being at home in the new place. Rosemary said, 'I have a painting which recreates the landscape of my hometown. When I look at this painting, I feel myself to be home.'" (Pérez Murcia, 2020, p. 473)
12	Palestinians in protracted refugee situation	West Bank, Palestine	"The flowers are not only to be found on the roof, but they also decorate the outside walls of the house, hanging from windows all around the house, 'to make the house beautiful.' Flowers are more expensive to buy, she explains, and 'need lots of love.' But it is worth having them, 'because I give them love and they will give me love back.'" (van Emmerik, 2021, p. 214)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
13	Cypriot refugees	London, UK	"Adrienne explained how she searched for the right kind of house in London before choosing the one she lives in: 'I feel happy here. In this house I feel secure,' she told me. She has taken great care with the decoration and the centre piece is a painting she bought soon after her husband died, depicting open patio doors looking out onto a garden." (H. Taylor, 2009, p. 95)
14	Resettled Kurdish refugees	Binghamton, NY, US	"What we see are ... the transformation of spaces into Kurdish places. These refugees used cultural artifacts to decorate their living rooms where they welcome their relatives and friends. ... These refugees were able to transfer the sustainable cultural aspects of Kurdish traditions into their diasporic settlement in Binghamton, manifesting in areas from the decoration such as rugs, doilies on coffee tables, colorful fabrics covering shelves, metal pitchers, trays, and ceramic cups, as well as the arrangement of their houses to the landscaping of their backyards. These artifacts, such as rugs, fabrics, and bags, represent the Kurdish culture through their dyes, weaving techniques, and motives." (DeRouen, 2019, p. 29)
15	Syrian refugees	Netherlands	"When asked about which places would have meaning for them, respondents often mentioned green open spaces—places with aesthetic qualities of beauty, where one can relax, empty one's head, and forget about one's worries, and where one's level of energy is once again restored." (Van Liempt & Staring, 2021, p. 314)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
Beautifying structures			
16	Internally displaced Georgians	Georgia	"[Even in the first few months] they started talking about the alterations and extensions they were planning or wanting to do. The houses enabled making plans for the future and having dreams about things to do at the place of displacement. While their hope for the future was still to return, they could imagine improving their lives during displacement." (Brun, 2015, p. 49)
17	Palestinian refugees in refugee camps / protracted refugee situations	Lebanon	"Because no parks or gardens exist within the camp area due to the lack of space, many camp dwellers have decided to transform their roofs into small-scale gardens, where they place many potted plants ... [and] set up vertical structures around the roof as a pergola, where grape leaves would form a coverage net, providing a soothing atmosphere similar to a garden." (El Masri, 2020, p. 8)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
18	Syrians in refugee camps / protracted refugee situations	Iraq	<p>“With the blessing of the camps’ management, many NGOs provided materials and cash for refugees to upgrade their shelters. This upgrade was conditioned within guidelines that mainly ensured a degree of permanence within the plots’ boundaries (brick walls, temporary roofs of either corrugated sheets or sandwich panels). Within a few months the humanitarian regime adopted ‘improved shelters’ instead of mere tents, adding brick-built latrines, bathrooms and kitchens for each plot ... these spatial readjustments of the camp’s material surroundings became indistinguishable parts of her family’s autobiography. Thereby seeking betterment through personalising one’s unit (i.e. appropriation by addition), one can retrieve and fulfil a desire based on the ‘now’ and on ‘being’ in the camp which goes beyond dwelling there, so that homing starts.” (Zibar et al., 2022, pp. 98–101)</p>
19	Syrians in refugee camps / protracted refugee situation	Iraq	<p>“Consequently, refugees keep ‘their’ outdoor spaces maintained and clean, and even furnish them with chairs and plants. Such practices—imported from past contextualised practices—(re)introduce welcome threshold zones as spatial cues other camp dwellers recognise. Therefore, the fluid space becomes a container for fragments of cultural habits restored from the past through these spatial adaptations; a more fluid culture reshaped by refugeehood seems to emerge.” (Zibar et al., 2022, p. 102)</p>

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
20	Liberians in protracted refugee situation	Ghana	"Mercy lived in a sunny orange house that was flanked on two sides by a garden and small patio. A large tree with a painted trunk near the patio provided shade over the area that served as a sitting and cooking area. ... As one of 'the originals,' Mercy came to Buduburam in 1990, when the camp was just a collection of tents and a few concrete housing structures owned by the Ghanaian government. Mercy had built her house by selling portions of her rice rations to buy concrete blocks and was able to get a piece of tin that had been distributed by the UNHCR for roofing." (Trapp, 2015, p. 38)
21	Syrians with refugee status	Netherlands	"Although the Syrians whom we interviewed in this study had only recently moved, we often encountered freshly tilled soil and recently planted flowers, plants and herbs upon our arrival. These gardens, and the everyday practice of caring for these plants, alone or aided by neighbours, ... were described by several respondents [who] enjoyed talking about and showing us around their gardens. They spoke about the future and their plans for the garden, but also about the gardens of the past in their country of origin." (van Liempt & Miellet, 2021, p. 2389)
22	Asylum seekers, largely from Syria	Berlin, Germany	"Many residents had closed off the porches with blankets or found plastic sheets to transform them into thresholds between the 'public' access street and the private interior of their container. ... One resident of the Wollenberger Strasse Tempohome turned his porch and adjacent green spaces into a small but elaborate fenced garden, reminding him of his house in Syria." (Steigemann & Misselwitz, 2020, p. 639)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
23	Refugees from various African countries	Kenya	"Refugees from different parts of Africa who live together in refugee camps in Kenya transform standardized spaces into homes by delineating boundaries, giving them familiar names and embellishing them with symbolic pictures." (Donà, 2015, p. 69)
24	Internally displaced Chileans and Peruvians	Chile and Peru	"Besides making the temporary house a more adequate space to inhabit in the medium term, families modified houses to make them 'unique,' to add their 'signature' to them, and to recognise them as their 'home.' Although some changes were for the purposes of efficiency, safety and protection, such as adding new rooms and adapting the house to the climate, families made other changes in order to feel comfortable and proud. For example, adding paint to the house not only protected the timber from the weather, but also provided a new façade, and therefore colour choice become important for families." (Wagemann, 2017, p. 225)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
25	Internally displaced Chileans and Peruvians	Chile and Peru	<p data-bbox="788 454 1449 909">“Families were inclined to demonstrate their individuality and taste within anonymous prefabricated temporary houses. Some houses were painted, and ornamented with plants, coloured fences, front porches and terraces, providing the temporary house a more ‘permanent look,’ in some cases making it difficult to recognise the temporary nature of the settlement. ... Even the plastic layer (geomembrana) was personalised by families, in order to give the house a different look.” (Wagemann, 2017, p. 203)</p> <p data-bbox="788 931 1449 1261">“The houses were transformed into places of opportunity and hope. Transforming an ‘anonymous’ shelter into a ‘home’ was a personal process for each household. Families in Peru and Chile transformed their repeatable, prefabricated temporary shelters into identifiable ‘homes,’ using familiar elements.” (Wagemann, 2017, p. 226)</p>

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
26	Internally displaced Chileans	Chile	<p>"Cases studied in Chile were displaced households residing in temporary houses and settlements. Despite this situation, they modified their houses extensively. Families transformed their temporary environment into buildings that could be recognised as permanent and durable, due to their aesthetics and good quality. Identity and familiarity were achieved adding specific elements to the house, making changes that were beyond the need to achieve basic comfort. New and bright colours, designed fences, decorative elements, and the use of familiar materials all contributed to create personalised houses, easy to identify in the temporary settlement. Although families knew they would be evicted from these temporary settlements in the mid-term, they put effort and care in modifying their temporary houses, showing that they are more than mere shelters to them." (Wagemann, 2017, p. 210)</p>
27	El Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran asylum seekers and migrants	Mexico	<p>"Finally, both the women's module and the teen module got a second floor, in order to increase the shelter's capacity. By 2018, La Ruta was an impressive set of constructions, beautifully decorated and densely populated. ... It was not only about how an external reality affected a space like La Ruta, nor of how La Ruta was a stage or context where things happened (Gieryn 2000, 466). Instead, La Ruta was a place in constant construction, both literally and metaphorically. ... The space was 'filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations.'" (Gil Everaert, 2021, p. 4336)</p>

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
Spaces and structures that allow for beauty			
28	Sudanese migrants, largely forcibly displaced without recognized status	Cairo, Egypt	"Sudanese hospitality to visiting guests was a paramount feature of exile homemaking in Cairo. ... Sudanese hosts made their small, dim, rented accommodations homey through performing acts associated with Sudanese culture and identity. In Sudan, homes are perfumed by casting a few oily sticks of sandalwood or other fragrances (bukhuur) onto charcoal embers, and the scent wafts through the rooms. Sudanese living temporarily in Cairo apartments reproduce this homey smell, more often using electric incense burners acquired from relatives in Gulf countries. Visitors are offered sweetened milky tea, sometimes flavoured with cloves, cardamom, and cinnamon, and biscuits—in elegant serving sets for wealthier Sudanese exiles, and in glasses on plastic trays for those of more limited resources." (Fábos, 2015, p. 62)
29	Forcibly displaced migrants	Various	"For [a] Bosnian Serb women, it was precisely teacups, seemingly inconsequential objects, that enabled her to re-imagine a sense of home. Displaced during the war, she took with her four teacups out of a set of six. She understood that this was frivolous, that the teacups were taking up space in her bag that could be filled with something more practical, but she loved them and she wanted to retain some connection to her old life. Returning to her home after the war, she found it was looted. Everything was ruined or gone. ... Everything except the last two teacups that completed the set." (Dossa & Golubovic, 2019, p. 180)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
30	Palestinian and Syrian refugees	Istanbul, Turkey	"A number of Syrian refugees in camps in Jordan, improving their shelters means transforming them into 'homes' by creating spaces that are amenable to the culture of hospitality they enjoyed in Syria and which entails certain eating and hosting rituals." (Gabiam, 2021, p. 43)
31	Syrians with refugee status	Netherlands	"Cooking and sharing Syrian food were also often mentioned as ways to feel at home in an unfamiliar environment. The smell and, most of all, the taste, evoke memories and provide people with a feeling of belonging. ... There are strong political and symbolic meanings around the act of offering food ... and ... these instances enable a departure from the receptivity and passivity that is often associated with the experiences of resettled refugees. They also offer the potential for agency and the development of less hierarchical connections." (van Liempt & Miellet, 2021, p. 2390)
32	Afghan refugees	Delhi, India	"Hospitality [was] a significant aspect ... that helped create and strengthen bonds with friends and neighbors. ... Hospitality [was] 'a resource of agency' and ... an attempt to 'make themselves at home in a new social environment.' ... Gul (one refugee) took careful planning and pooling of resources. Such gatherings were thus a deliberate act of homemaking devised by refugee women, that imbued the domestic space with a significance that exceeded its utility as a shelter. ... Gul's attempts to create a space that evoked a sense of community and joy for other women [was] part of a politics of care that is crucial to life in Delhi for refugees." (Rajan, 2022, p. 383)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
33	Asylum seekers	Calais, France	"The restaurant is one of the largest prefabs on site. ... Inside, ... a giant stuffed tiger sits among a field of balloons. For brief moments, the joviality of the restaurant ... obfuscated the reality of the world we inhabit as a collective. The vivid colours, smells and laughter emanating from the place were a small moment of escapism from the continued precarity and instability that everyone faced on a daily basis in the Jungle." (Mould, 2018, p. 393)
34	Afghan, Iraqi, Iranian, Syrian, Kurdish, Palestinian, and Pakistani asylum seekers	Athens, Greece	"The pronoun 'we' was often used during interviews, for example, 'We live together,' and pictures of former and current residents are on the walls in the hall and in the bar, which are the two most frequented public spaces. The notion of 'one big family' is created by these visual factors. ... The notions of 'one big family' and 'second home after the motherland' were shared by nearly everyone. ... When families are leaving (because they are relocated), residents organise goodbye-parties for them. Some people cry because they don't want to go; some try to stay in touch even when they have moved out." (Koptyaeva, 2017, p. 38)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
35	Syrians in refugee camp / protracted refugee situation	Iraq	"Fragments of a recent past in Syria still find their way to the present reality. ... Most of the camp shops have banners that explain their services in Arabic side by side with Sorani Kurdish. External cues such as businesses and stores named after famous Syrian TV shows and locations ... and Arabic and Kurdish music streaming from shops all blend together in the street and are hardly noticed by camp dwellers; it is just another feature of an 'ordinary' day. In other words, these visual and sensual cues become 'emanations of [a] reality.' ... These different retrieval forms appear to (re)foster a sense of connectedness. ... It is a matter of 'redefining the boundaries of belonging' ... bringing forward what they identify with culturally from the past and ascribe it to this fragile present. It appears that a broader sense of belonging to a homeland and a nation-state crystallises physically: an 'us' that (re)asserts familiarity and homes the camp." (Zibar et al., 2022, p. 106)
36	Karenni refugees in protracted refugee situation	Burma	"As Saw Eh Gay put it, watching a group of high school students eating pork and bamboo shoot curry at the end of Karenni National Day in 1997, 'even here in the jungle, where they have nothing, they try hard to make a celebration.'" (Dudley, 2011, p. 749)
37	Internally displaced Colombians	Bogotá, Medellín, and Cartagena, Colombia	"Marina explained that inviting neighbours to enjoy traditional recipes from her hometown enabled her to strengthen social ties in her new community and was a way for her to express her identity: 'We share the food and have such a great time together in this house. It's what the feeling of being at home is all about.'" (Pérez Murcia, 2020, p. 472)

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Table B3 *Continued.*

No.	Refugee population and context	Location of study	Referenced example
38	El Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran asylum seekers and migrants	Mexico	"Celebrations were one of the most common strategies. Every Saturday evening La Ruta's dining space turns into a dancing club. Reggaetón, bachata, Punta, and cumbias are blasted through a speaker to which people connect their phones, lining up to get a turn to deejay. Music inundates the shelter's walls from eight to eleven p.m. as women, men, teenagers, kids, and shelter staff dance." (Gil Everaert, 2021, p. 4331)
39	El Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran asylum seekers and migrants	Mexico	"Since 2016, migrants have participated in the city's yearly carnival, a celebration of the town's history and a week-long party where there are traditional dances and food fairs." (Gil Everaert, 2020, p. 3)
40	Cypriot refugees	London, UK	"While in no way as abundant as they were in Cyprus, such festivals still occur in London and offer away for the community to bond around a shared history and memory of the Cyprus that was left behind. Village festivals in Cyprus are remembered as a time of celebration and took on a number of forms, as they do in many cultures." (H. Taylor, 2009, p. 201)
41	Resettled Kurdish refugees	Binghamton, NY, USA	"[The] use of space is mapped onto the physical fabric according to social codes. ... There are a number of festivals, religious events, and commemorative events that are celebrated by the Kurdish refugees. ... These events expand and transform the use of physical space in which the refugees bind the social with the spatial. ... Regardless of their generation and gender, the narrative illustrates that these Kurdish refugees value community, to which they feel a sense of belonging and connection, which also helps them locate and more regularly engage with their memories." (DeRouen, 2019, pp. 29–30)

Note. N = 41.