This special issue originates in the research project *EXPECT_Art*, i.e. *EXPloring and Educating Cultural literacy Through ART* [1], which has decoloniality as its methodological foundation. The aim of the project "is to identify current barriers and potentials for promoting critical cultural literacy by means of arts education, education through arts and uses of arts in education within and across different educational contexts in Europe, and to generate and activate knowledge on how to enhance critical cultural literacy and understanding among European citizens." (Project Management, 6).

The project is informed by decolonial theory – along with critical pedagogy – to answer its focus on critical cultural literacy, i.e. a shift in attention, in relation to education, from cultural literacy understood as an individual competence enabling one's participation in the dominant cultural form one lives in, to, instead, acknowledging the multiple ways people express their perceptions and views on their lives. Critical cultural literacy deviates from the view that to be culturally literate depends on the acquisition of knowledge of one's dominant cultural environment (Hirsch 1983), which implies giving priority to a given cultural form over others that are viewed and evaluated in relation to it. Critical cultural literacy asks for making the effort of acknowledging cultural plurality and the multiple ways in which people express their views on their lives, i.e., how these views are made explicit in linguistic as well as in non-linguistic forms, whether in different art forms, cultural artefacts, the organisation of the physical and social environment, and bodily expressions and movement. Everyone, such is the assumption, is culturally literate, and with this assumption comes the challenge of understanding the multiple expressions without imposing one's own expectations and interpretations upon them. Social interaction is always shaped by power dynamics and structures that cultural expressions are formed by and navigate in, including the one performing the critical approach itself, which requires a high demand of self-reflectivity and willingness to be challenged.

It is the shift in attention that calls for a decolonial perspective.

Decoloniality – along with postcolonial discourses – has in recent decades gained a wider popularity as a critical approach to forms of cultural marginalization beyond a strict colonial context. We believe we are justified in using it, as we find colonial patterns in contemporary cultures of global exchanges – in trade, communication, migration, cultural exchanges, etc. However, it is a belief that can be challenged by asking whether we remain true to decolonial intentions or if we, European-based researchers, are appropriating a critical perspective for our own interests. The use of decoloniality must happen with special attention to its particular focus to avoid reducing it to an academic commodity, which,

despite all good intentions, may “erase and shroud decoloniality’s terrain of political project, praxis, and struggle,” as Catherine Walsh notes (Mignolo & Walsh 2018, 82). It is not up to us to judge our work, we can only explain what we have done, aware that good intentions are not always good enough.

For this thematic issue we made an open call to invite others who likewise work with decoloniality to learn of its potentials, and be inspired from different perspectives and approaches.