BAUTOPIA
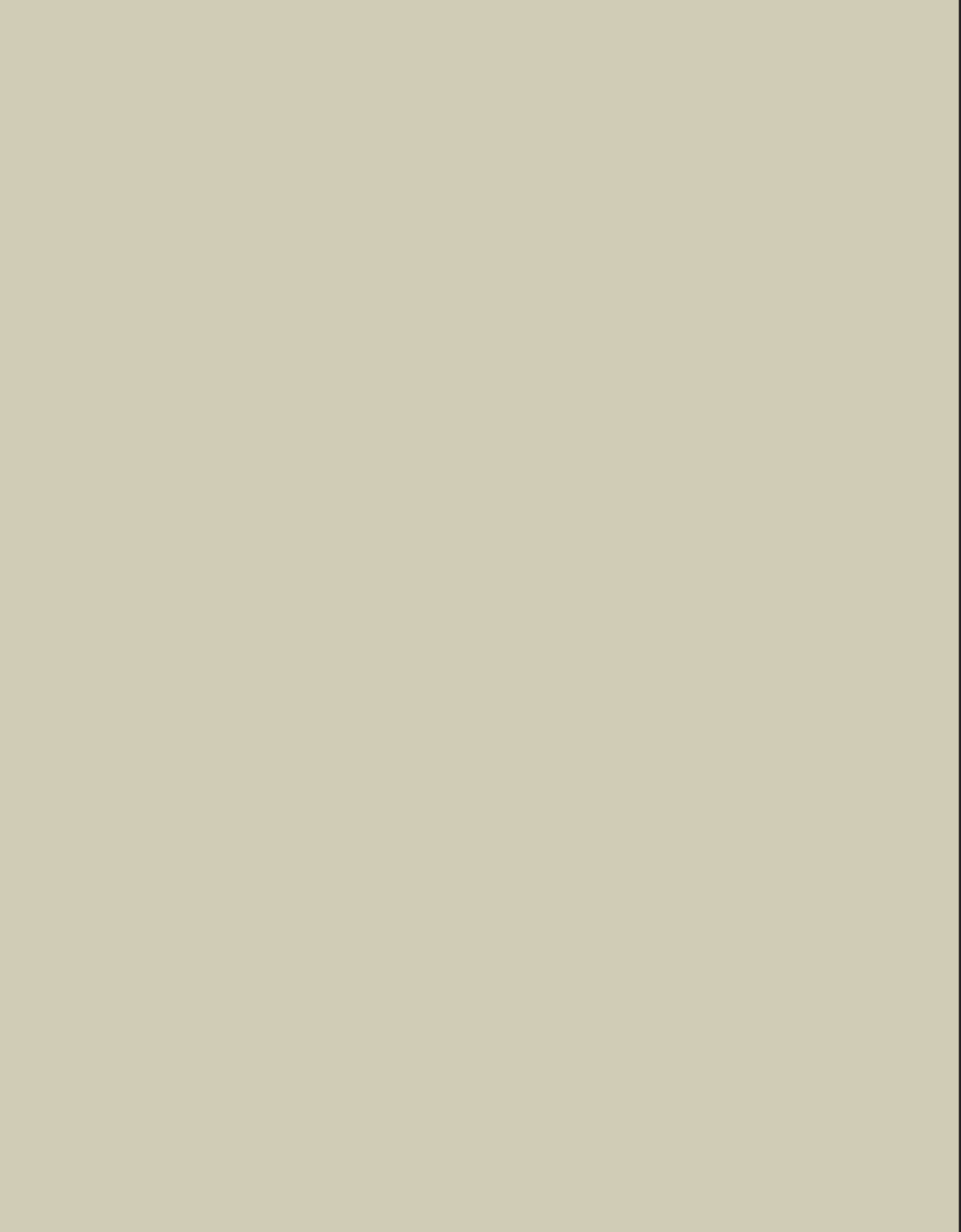
BAUTOPIA 1

Gradually moving away from the hegemonic paradigms of modernity which imposed a one-world ontology, a passing of knowledge based upon hierarchy, rather than care, BAUTOPIA 1 embraces differences, and explores new and transversal ways of creating knowledge together.

How can we, in this post-pandemic turmoil, gradually move away from the screen, and learn from each other's presence and time?

Texts in BAUTOPIA 1 go from a kitchen cooperative in Athens, in which food acts as a language and space for sharing, to more broadly re-thinking productivity at the workplace through the power of friend- ship in Porto. By turning seemingly solitary practices such as writing, printing, publishing, and architecture into collective ones, contributors from Belgrade, Warsaw and Brussels, explore working together to enforce their creative potential.

From formats of spending time together, to making sense of the artists' role in response to the misinformation era, to post-digital practices and ecologies of care; BAUTOPIA 1 proposes new models and tools for re-imagining the current forms of knowledge-sharing, togetherness, and artistic creation.

european
creative
hubs
network

www.creativehubs.eu

Inside view of the Kiosk Radio's DJ booth

Kiosk Radio

Kiosk Radio is an online community radio based in a shack in the middle of Parc Royal in Brussels. As an open-air bar and streaming radio station, Kiosk is an accessible meeting hub for dancing under the trees in an urban setting. Besides representing a platform for local and international DJs, Kiosk has recently received funding from the Creative Europe program to team up with other European online radios and launch "25AV", a new platform for audiovisual arts and performance that will foster the collaboration among international music producers and visual artists.

Realities like Kiosk show the potential of local and digital communities, which can mobilise creative professionals and trigger cross-fertilization out of the most conventional channels

kioskradio.com

previous page: Kiosk Radio in Parc Royal, Brussels

Daphne Dragona, Berlin

FINDING HOME
ART-DRIVEN PRACTICES IN A PERIOD OF CLIMATE CRISIS

The present seems intolerable and the future impossible in the shadow of the planetary emergency. Extreme weather phenomena, ongoing forms of extractivism and species' extinction darken the hopes and prospects for what the next generations will encounter. It is a "time of rupture" as Tsing et al write, with "deep histories" being "bulldozed into gardens of Progress." [1] It is a time that one is invited to learn how to live in ruins or to stay with the trouble[2] it is a time of realization that a new world is not really possible but 'new ways of living with what we have, in the ruins of the present world' need to be found.[3] The present moment calls for acts of care and repair that question priorities and values based on models of hierarchy and sovereignty. But how to turn towards new models based on a different understanding of growth that respects the needs and temporalities of different human and more-than-human worlds? Which forms of learning and caring can help us live and think accordingly in a time of crisis? The interests and comfort of the North have so far created misconceptions and contradictions with reference

to these questions. This short essay will address this topic, while also turning to the potential for substantial change found in contemporary art-driven initiatives; it will refer to related practices and methodologies and discuss how and why it is crucial to still fight for a world *of* and *for* many worlds.

Living in ruins, as Isabelle Stengers writes, demands "a capacity to learn from and learn with, to care for what has been learned." [4] Caring and learning are verbs that imply forms of relation and possibly forms of power between subjects and/or objects depending on what is understood as such. The articles used for the different verbs at stake are of importance. To care for implies hands-on care, to care about signifies emotional engagement while to care *with* points towards some political mobilization[5]. The agency of the caregiver and the caretaker changes from case to case, and a similar remark could be made for the use of articles for the verb learning. It is different to learn *from* or to learn *with*, and it is important who decides to learn and how; it defines a relation.

The relation of humans to the planet is one that is difficult to describe at large, unless one accepts falling into the trap of generalization. While, for instance, the climate crisis does reveal the impact of anthropogenic activity on the planet and therefore the power of the former to the latter, populations and peoples around the world cannot be rendered equally responsible as if they have had similar ways of living, producing and consuming. The understanding of the earth as an endless and "inanimate resource" [6] is one of a privileged careless world. The separation of culture from 'nature' opened the way for the objectification of the planet and the metaphor of a well-regulated system or an engine that can be controlled.[7] This metaphor, enhanced with the first famous images captured from space, created the illusion that the 'blue marble' planet can be programmed again and again. As Frédéric Neyrat writes, the desire and plan to remake, to reconstruct or to modify earth was and is a project for those who "view themselves as residing off-planet, outside the earth, without any kind of vital relation

with the ecosphere, detached and separated as far away as possible from the Earth object..."[8] *Geoengineering* is a proposed strategy that comes in accordance with this point of view, introduced in a way as a form of planetary care, a form of restoration despite the fact that its impact will be difficult to predict and it will depend on the power of states and markets involved; poorer areas and vulnerable populations are not likely to have a say in it and will mostly suffer consequence. Its logic follows, however, the imaginary of limitless human growth which is based on cultural, scientific and technological developments without estimating the possible costs for lands, regions and populations. As Braidotti writes, 'progress' is anyway defined by "the distance it establishes from the natural order and those who inhabit it" [9] while Tsing comments that a part of the world is willing "to turn things into rubble, destroy atmospheres, sell out companion species in exchange for dreamworlds of progress.[10] Growth and prosperity for the North can only be based on forms of exploitation and dispossession in the South and this surely cannot be a ground for a more livable world for all.

Which forms of learning and caring can help us live and think accordingly in a time of crisis?

A very different and known model capturing humans relation to the planet is the one based on personification of earth. Earth is approached as a mother and caregiver by indigenous cultures around the world and personhood is also acknowledged in forests, mountains, rivers or weather phenomena. This personification can to an extent also be found in science. Gaia, the name for the mother of all life in ancient Greek mythology, was used by chemist James Lovelock in order to emphasize that earth is a "vast being who in her entirety has the power to maintain our planet as a fit and comfortable habitat for

life," [11] while microbiologist Lynn Margulis, continuing Lovelock's work, used the term Gaia to argue that the evolution of the biosphere is happening thanks to symbiotic and autopoetic processes. The planet, in other words, evolved thanks to the cooperation of and not to the competition between species – an aspect progress advocates seem to forget. The term 'Gaia' is also used by philosophers engaging with the environment. For Stengers, Gaia captures a 'history of coevolution', "as a being... with its own regime of activity and sensitivity.[12] With her poetic writing, Stegners speaks of a Gaia that has been offended and provoked, and waits for nothing more from the human kind. Mark Smith and Jason Young point out that it can be misleading approaching Gaia as the one that does not care, as a being that is indifferent. This complex system that grants life rather, is in their opinion to be approached and acknowledged for being a source of provision and care.[13] In any case, Gaia with its different uses and readings invites us to confront not the end of the world, but rather the end of progress[14] and to learn *from* and *with* not only scientists but also individuals, peoples and communities; especially ones that have had "relationality, reciprocal generosity and respectful care" as guiding principles for their lives.[15] The call according to this model that approaches earth as a living entity is for restoring, not the climate based on dubious strategies, but rather the bonds of parts of the world to the planet itself.

Growth and prosperity for the North can only be based on forms of exploitation and dispossession in the South and this surely cannot be a ground for a more livable world for all.

To succeed in this, one needs to learn to 'compose with Gaia', as Stengers comments and to learn again to 'pay attention', to notice beings, encounters, phenomena and situations.[16] In the last few years, different curators and artists have been responding to a need

to embrace practices of learning and caring that are living and evolving in different lands. Their work might bring to one's mind practices of commoning from previous periods where art was a starting point for assembling, and bringing together, with artists or curators becoming the facilitators for action. Tan, for instance, had specifically spoken of an *'uncommon knowledge'* driven by affect and involving 'collectivism, otherness and transversal methodologies' that can empower relations and forms of organization.[17] The practices to be discussed in the next part, though, are of great interest for the ways they address and involve the more-than-human world, in this moment of planetary emergency and its impasse.

Forest Curriculum, initiated by scholar Pujita Guha and curator Abhijan Toto has developed its methodology around the Zomia forest which connects South and Southeast Asia. *Zomia* is described by them as a 'natureculture', a field where different forms of life come together. It is a terrain where the human does not occupy the central position they have in Western thought. Zomia is very much about "swamps, leaves, mosquitoes, ghosts of the forest." [18] It is an area where what is an 'object' and what is considered 'inanimate' changes as nonhuman personhood is acknowledged, and the so-called Anthropocene is questioned for the generalizations it implies. For Guha, it is important to speak for a personhood of, *in* and *from* the forest.[19] As she writes: "the forest is where fabulation happens, not because it beseeches itself as the orientalist jungle, the distant dark phantasmic space, but because, as a dense ecology, it implores a dynamic connection between species, organisms, and selves." [20] The forest is seen as a home and a refuge for plurality and multiplicity. It is where identities are formed while respecting the agency of the living world and by building forms of solidarity and organization against sovereign forms of power.[21]

Following this logic, *Forest Curriculum* creates situations as well as opportunities for encounters amongst communities. Arguing that existing systems of formal education are based on extraction, and that university itself needs to be imagined otherwise, they approach the forest as a territory for learning with others.[22] They are inspired

by Harney's and Moten's work on the topic of the 'undercommons' who explain that the most important is to find ways of being together in homelessness and brokenness. Guha and Toto pay attention to all people and other beings who live in the forests or find shelter there and spend time with them. They believe in 'fugitive forms of knowledge' and in *'indisciplinarity'*—a term they borrowed from Jessika Khazrik and used to question how knowledge is dependent on power structures[23]— Learning and spending time together is not about the structure, the discipline, the outcome; it is rather about an exchange and an experience that will emerge. Sometimes, as they say, people might just meet, talk, and find their way. *Forest Curriculum* works itinerantly in order to literally bring together knowledge from different parts of the world, and they expand their ways of working by always leaving space for what might emerge.[24]

This desire and need to bring people and communities together is also of primary importance for the *Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology* (LAE), formed by curators Dea Antonsen and Ida Bencke as well as editor Andrea Fjordside Pontoppidan; this is a platform focusing, as they put in, on planetary becomings.[25] LAE is interested in kin-making and especially in creating and maintaining spaces of co-existence for human and more-than-human worlds. LAE uses a 'we' that is inclusive, referring equally to humans, plants, animals and bacteria, and working towards transpecies encounters. [26] In order to go beyond anthropocentrism and the objectification of the planet, LAE invites people to tell stories and imagine languages from these perspectives. Encounters, for them, can be symbiotic; when, for instance, different bodies share the same space, like the water of the oceans. [27] Finding meaningful and sustainable ways to live in the ruins is crucial, and possible only with a transpecies approach. Similar to the *Forest Curriculum* members who remind us that forest is home for many, the *Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology* emphasize that the etymology of 'ecology' comes from the Greek word oikos meaning home or house, and the question, therefore, needs to be how a transpecies and transgenerational understanding of homebuilding can be achieved. [28]

The methodology of LAE is to a great extent a feminist one, or more accurately an ecofeminist or posthuman feminist one. It manifests what Braidotti writes when explaining that ecofeminists think both transversally and intersectionally, managing to build "affective connections across the ecological, the social, the technological and other domains." [29] Their cross-species way of thinking is central for posthuman feminism that exactly wishes to reject anthropocentrism and to rather establish a "zoe-centered transversal link of interdependence across species." [30] LAE applies this methodology on their experimental programming that involves exhibiting works, hosting performances, organising readings that to a great extent are taking place outside, in the open, in different places and surroundings.

It is no coincidence and possibly no surprise that the *Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology* will collaborate with *Forest Curriculum* for their upcoming project entitled *"Hosting Lands. Between the Ruin, the Field and the Forest."* [31] They plan what they call a "slowly growing and decentralized exhibition" which will take place over a period of three years at six different locations, to be developed in dialogue with localities, artistic practices and local communities from Denmark. This is a project about finding and developing ways to care for land and to find home in the midst of a climate crisis, that they very much hope will be a starting point for a new tendency and movement in curating which will challenge the character of a spectacle and the relatively short duration for most projects.[32]

Taking the aforementioned examples in mind, one interestingly notices that art can offer a greater paradigm for change when artistic or curatorial work no longer needs to constitute a one-off project with a unique identity, a fixed plan, a defined outcome, or a specific target audience. Without any attempt to be didactic, to demonstrate, to explain, to achieve certain numbers, the *Forest Curriculum* and the *Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology* are attentive to moments, experiences and surroundings. Sustaining bonds between individuals, communities, species, worlds means letting go of the usual curatorial

or artistic roles, and rather spending time to get to know others and interact with them. As Tsing notes, "to survive, we need to relearn multiple forms of curiosity" [33] and this possibly can only happen by appreciating and experiencing time differently in living environments, understood as home.

These situations and encounters, the forms of getting to know how to learn and care with each other can be transformative. Experimenting with ways of provoking change and transformation, and consequently mobilizing others is something that art and culture do very differently from science.[34] By forming kinships and assemblages of different human and more-than human actors, these initiatives also create or communicate a different form of ethics. Braidotti calls these ethics 'affirmative' because they are about "relational interconnection, pacifism, non violence and generosity." [35] Being affirmative in the midst of a climate crisis does not mean being ignorant or optimistic. To identify the living environment as home and to realize that one actually lives in the ruins of progress can be empowering when one also realizes the potential to act. It is good to start by understanding that one is not alone, but also by acknowledging that responsibility must be shared, and that transformation towards a truly habitable world will take work and time...

Daphne Dragona

Daphne Dragona is an independent curator, theorist and writer who lives in Berlin. Among her topics of interest, we find the controversies of connectivity, the promises of the commons, the importance of affective infrastructures, and the ambiguous role of technology in relation to the climate crisis.

Notes

1) Anna Tsing, Heater Swanson, Elain Gan, Nils Bubant (eds). Arts of living on a damaged planet: Ghosts and monsters of the Anthropocene. (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 6.

2) Donna Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene, Durham: Duke University Press, 2016

3) Déborah Danowski and Krystian Woznicki, Welcoming the Ends of the World: an interview with philosopher: https://blogs.mediapart.fr/krystian-woznicki/blog/080419/more-world-welcoming-apocalypse (accessed 29.08.22)

4) Isabelle Stengers, The Challenge of Ontological Politics in Marisol de la Cadena, Mario Blaser. A World of Many Worlds (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 108.

5) The Care Collective, The Care Manifesto (London/New York: Verson, 2020), 21.

6) Mark Smith & Jason Young, Does the Earth Care? Indifference, Providence and Provisional Ecology (Minneapolis/ London: University of Minnesota Press, 2022), 12

7) Jennifer Gabrys, Program Earth: Environmental Sensing Technology and the Making of a Computational Planet (Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press, 2015), 4

8) Frédéric Neyrat, The Unconstructable Earth: An Ecology of Separation, translated by Drew S. Burk, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 5.

9) Rosi Bradotti, Posthuman Feminism (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022), 71

10) Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing et al, Arts of Living in a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 2

11) James E. Lovelock, Gaia, A New Look at Life on Earth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) Accessed August 29th, 2022: https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/gaia.htm

12) Isabelle Stengers, In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism (Lüneburg: Open Humanity Press, 2015), 44-45

13) Mick Smith, Jason Young, Does the Earth Care? Indifference, Providence, and Provisional Ecology (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 2022), 86

14) Ibid, p.6

15) Simon Bignall, Daryle Rigney, Indigineity, Posthumanism and Nomad Thought: Transforming Co-lonial Ecologies, in Eds. Rosi Braidotti and Simon Bignall (New York/ London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 161

16) Isabelle Stengers, In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism (Lüneburg: Open Humanity Press, 2015), 50, 62

17) Pelin Tan, Uncommon knowledge: A transversal dictionary, Accessed August 29th, 2022: https://www.eurozine.com/uncommon-knowledge/

18) The Forest Curriculum. The Forest Curriculum, Introduction. n.d. Accessed January 20, 2022:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ElzlNG_7Ahj-FDo3CeQIIO57XNqLD3Jb/view.

19) As stated by Pujita Guha at the Online Panel Personhood of a forest of EMAF 2022 https://www.emaf.de/en/online/#section_2 Accessed August 29th, 2022

20) Pujita Guha, A Century of Dying: Anthropocenic Imaginaries and the Cinema of Lav Diaz, MPhil Thesis, (New Delhi: School of Arts and Aesthetics, 2018), 54 University. Accessed January 20, 2022. https://www.academia.edu/37908377.

21) Online Talk: To Think With the Forest: a Platform for Interdisciplinary Research and Mutual Co-Learning, (Melbourne: Monash Universiry, March 2021), Accessed January 30, 2022. https://www.monash.edu/muma/public-programs/recordings/2021/video-to-think-with-the-forest-the-forest-curriculum,-platform-for-interdisciplinary-research-and-mutual-co-learning.

22) Pujita Guha, Abhijan Toto Notes Towards Imagining the University Otherwise in Institution as Praxis: New Curatorial Directions for Collaborative Research eds Carolina Rito, Bill Balaskas, (New York: Sternberg Press, 2020)

23) Conversation with Abhijan Toto and Ian Tee An Interdisciplinary Practice for Knowledge in hte Art", Terremoto, Accessed August 29th, 2022 https://terremoto.mx/en/online/una-practica-indisci-plinar-para-el-conocimiento-en-el-campo-del-arte-conversacion-con-abhijan-toto/

24) An earlier version of this part of the text, focusing on the work of Forest Curriculum, can be found in: Daphne Dragona, Whose Planet? Whose Commons in Danae Theodoridou, Publicing: Practicing Democracy Through Performance (Athens: Nissos, 2022), 236-250

25] https://www.labae.org/about

26] https://www.labae.org/transart

27] https://www.labae.org/project#/hydrosphere

28] https://www.labae.org/always-coming-home

29) Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman Feminism" (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2021), 103.

30] Ibid, 97

31] https://hostinglands.com/english

32]https://www.bikubenfonden.dk/sites/default/files/2022-08/The%20Laboratory%20for%20Aes-thetics%20and%20Ecology.pdf

33) Anna Tsing, Heater Swanson, Elain Gan, Nils Bubant (eds). Arts of living on a damaged planet: Ghosts and monsters of the Anthropocene. (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 11.

[34] As discussed by Isabelle Stengers in The Earth Wont Let Itself Be Watched in Bruno Latour & Peter Weibel, Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth (London: ZKM & Cam-bridge: MIT Press, 2020) .234-235

35) Rosi Braidotti, Posthuman Feminism (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2021), 239.

Vitsche

A community of young Ukrainians in Germany formed Vitsche, an association that stands for Ukraine's freedom and facilitates humanitarian help for those hit by the war. As part of its fight, Vitsche supports displaced Ukrainian artists to give more visibility to Ukraine's cultural scene and emancipate it from Russian appropriation. Vitsche's fronts of action include the organisation of public protests, political education and the production of cultural events that showcase Ukrainian talent.

vitsche.org

previous page: Vitsche war protest in Germany

Amy Sillman, New York

UNPRESIDENTED TIMES

The following is something jotted out the day after the election. I happened to be making a zine for a show at the Drawing Center in NYC, and purely by coincidence the printing deadline for the zine was that week. I was shocked by the election results, and had no idea how to process the news or how to make art for a show that would open in January or how to return to a studio at all. But a zine is a fast and furious public/private form of address, so I just knew that I should write something, a kind of letter, about how to approach this new time.

A FEW YEARS AGO we were knocked out by the first line of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: "I want to speak about bodies changed into new forms." What the hell: That was written in, like, the year 8 AD, and it's still totally up our alley. We are on the same wavelength with Ovid in at least one sense: total fascination with a structuring logic of endless change. But meanwhile, this work is being shown, dismayingly, on the literal eve of the inauguration of you-know-who, and we face a global rise of neofascism. Changes are urgently required, but how exactly to refuse and resist now as artists, citizens, educators, people? How to split up one's time, how to keep going to the studio, to go defiantly, or

not go at all? Should we not be in shows, not sell work, not go to art fairs? (Call us old-fashioned, but personally we really don't understand why artists go to art fairs anyway-networking while someone sells your work from a booth?? We don't get why this is "fun"—but whatever...) What do we do right now? Our desires are conflicting and ill-fitting... do we re-tool our art practices, or just keep going, putting the anger into the work? What would be the point of abstraction now? Our immediate answer was refusal, but does that refusal actually function to do anything except turn us against our own methods? After a few days the answer seemed to be: Don't allow them to take away your sense of humor. Keep making that awkward slow, funny, unaesthetic, non-product-oriented, skeptical, passionate, complicated thing you want to make with all your heart, and *with the* anger. Gang up with your friends. Don't be silenced. We enjoyed the weirdness of the Agnes Martin show at the Guggenheim Museum (an artist whom we respect, but at whose altar we have never worshipped), and noticed that we could see it better-rather than asking why Martin was making abstract paintings of grids during times of political crisis, the work beamed out its stoic, clear-headed, purposeful, classical, stubborn weirdness... good qualities even in those extreme times. But we don't care about "the grida—we are committed to something different: something scrappy but complex, earnest but smart, ironic but not cynical-a strange FORM! We're not in it for the money and WE'RE NOT MONEY. We're not coins of the realm, easily identified by our denominations; we're definitely not thin paper currency meant to slip inside a wallet. We don't make sense. We have rough edges and contradictions. What the fuck is "thing theory anyway—we're like things that talk back. Where is emancipation located? Should we split our time between art and politics? Is art enough? Is it possible that our work, our love, our beliefs, our symbolic gestures, our senses of humor, can amount to any meaningful resistance? Does resistance come in different lengths; a long game and a short game? Does everyone have to do it the same way? We haven't figured it out but we love art that offers change above all: insistent, unremitting change that won't resolve into finality or finesse. We don't know quite what to do but the qualities that mean something

have shifted: knowingness is out, a goddamn 'good' painting seems irrelevant, smug... we don't need someone to tell us which painting is 'better.' Fuck that. Plowshares? We need to sharpen our senses of humor into swords. We need to know what we love and what to toss out. We need to not normalize. We need to stick together. We have no answers. We have questions. We send these questions out with love to the people with whom we're walking home.

We refuse to be stripped of our complications.

With love, Amy

Amy Sillman

Amy Sillman is an artist who works and lives in New York City. After developing her practice in painting throughout the 1970-80s, she established herself as a writer, curator, and animator. She is well-known for her colorful abstract figurative paintings and witty humoristic writings on art.

LEM Station's space reconverted to storage for
humanitarian goods

LEM Station

In 2016 LEM Station revitalised an old
tram hangar of Lviv Ukraine, giving
birth to a creative hub for innovation
and entrepreneurship in the heart of
Western Ukraine. With the Russian
invasion and war against Ukraine,
LEM Station has suspended most
projects and dedicated its resources
to humanitarian help. With the support
of its community, LEM has mobilised
more than 100 volunteers. Although
the reconstruction of the hangar had
to stop, the cultural programming did
not, in order to support local Ukrainian
artists. LEM's roots in the local
community and people's participation
have been the key factors for a smooth
readaptation of the hub's resources
and facilities.

lemstation.com

previous page: LEM Station main stage before the
2016 renovation (left) and on the first concert (right).

Renata Gaspar, Porto

KNOWLEDGE AS FRIENDSHIP (AFTER-IMAGES OF COLLABORATION)

Friendship is a way of practicing knowledge. Like the impression of a vivid image retained by the eye long after the stimulus has ceased, friendship overflows any neatly contained approach to knowledge-making. Because friendship is a privileged place of extensive disclosure, where shared feelings and the exchange of experiences coexist with the negotiation of different standpoints through ongoing storytelling. Friendship can thus serve as lenses through which to consider difference (otherness), while offering a fertile ground for collaborative approaches to artistic and intellectual practice. Perhaps then, it is important to start by acknowledging that relations of friendship are a vital thread binding connection, knowledge-making, care, and belonging. The uniqueness of each person/friend – their rational, moral, and spiritual components – not only shape the relation at stake but have a bearing on each person's sense of belonging in civil and political society.[1] Moreover, in interweaving different modes of thinking and being, friendship holds critical (progressive) transformative potential. That is, by means of each friend's acknowledgement and respect for the distinct singularity of the other, friendship highlights a pluralistic attitude to social relations. The impossibility of generalizing the relation (or the friend's uniqueness) enables us to relate to difference beyond dichotomies of same/other – each friend's particular knowledge, ability, and motivation, but also set of interests and perspectives become 'equally' important in informing and determining the development of any joint task. In the struggle to counteract dominant and oppressive ways of knowing (and working), friendship alongside collaboration can offer the means to move towards common goals and goals made common through pluralistic visions of belonging.

In the struggle for emancipatory socio-political alternatives, friendship alongside collaboration can offer the means to move and be moved by an ethical-political imperative towards what is shared – questions, problems, dreams, desires.

The shared practice of collaboration appears to be growing in frequency and scope. I have but empirical observations and my own experience of participating in increasingly more collaborative artistic and academic endeavours. While the ongoing pandemic has certainly contributed to this expansion, there is far more to consider on collaboration as an intentional collective approach to knowledge-making. From the outset however, collaboration conveys paradoxical uses and connotations. If on the one hand we can draw on the early avant-garde's legacy of collective forms of artistic intervention like the work of Dadaists, futurists, constructivists, and other art movements with strong political affiliations from the beginning of the 20th century, which aimed at creating alternative modes of sociality through collective and transdisciplinary cultural production; on the other hand, we know, collectivity does not equate to empathy or solidarity. Indeed, the term can even evoke traitorous cooperation, as in the case of the French Vichy regime, when French cooperating with the Nazi-German occupiers were labeled as 'collaborators'. More generally, as the action of working with someone to produce something, collaboration can allude to the manifold cases of exploitation experienced in most precarious work arrangements based on unacknowledged and unequally shared labour. It is no surprise that the term gained widespread currency since it appeared in the 19th century as it remains central to liberal discourses and the disguise of exploitative forms of labour driven by financial gain. So, in trying to make a case for further expansion of collaboration (through friendship) I am advocating for work that deviates and diverges from productivity linked to profit, for work in progress, incomplete and partial as the knowledge it produces. I am, in other words, calling for practices of sharing based on a collective effort to create inclusive approaches to knowledge-making through equitable relations. Collaboration as a form of 'commoning' our means

of knowledge production. And 'commoning' as response to neoliberal capitalism's effort to control different forms of life and knowledge and, following Silvia Federici, as a unifying concept for counter-hegemonic (anticapitalistic, anticolonial, feminist) socio-political possibilities. [2] In contrast to capital's production and exploitation of enclosures, privatization, and individualization, the production of commons, of shared practices of responsibility and care, can pave the way for the creation of counter-hegemonic meanings and values; and these are crucial for reflecting on collaborative modes of knowledge production as pathways towards interconnectedness.

Not unlike many others, in the last few years, most of my work (time) has been online. I have been sharing thoughts on Zoom and writings on several online documents in the context of different projects, attempting perhaps, a production of 'commoning' practices – in thinking, reading, writing, and editing with others.[3] Prior to these endeavours however, I was accustomed to think, read, write and edit alone (believing it was easier to concentrate); apart from some punctuated moments of collectiveness, like being part of a discussion-group, or a reading-group, most of my study-life was solitary. Yet, 'in practice' things were different – in practice, the study of performance was hardly ever solitary. In fact, and this might be the case for those who, like me, did study performance in dance and theatre departments in European universities, time was mostly shared-time – rehearsing, debating, performing, debating further, rehearsing more, performing again, with others. Performance was often experienced as an end – to the rehearsals, the debating, the project at stake – but it was never experienced in solitude. Performance, its embodied study (whatever form it would take) was an ensemble of people, a gathering of energies, an assemblage of ideas, a joint effort – at times conflictual – to create something together. Beyond university contexts too, performance has been, for me, an exercise in collaboration – in practice. In theory, by contrast, performance (studies) has mainly been, up to very recently, an exercise in enduring solitude. The plural form of 'studies' does not seem to translate into plurality in writing – into the writing of

performance theory and scholarship, and the praised transdisciplinarity of its theoretical frameworks and approaches to meaning-making. Though 'studies' – after performance – does inspire and reflect some degree of interconnection amongst disciplinary views; in practice, its writing mostly performs something else – the voice of the individual researcher, single author, mostly male and white. In this regard, intellectual academic practice shares a genealogy with institutional art practice concerning the persistent myth of the singular creator, the solitary genius, mostly male and white. Indeed, the general organization and structuring of performance work varies greatly: one thing is a collectively performed piece, or a piece that intersects the work of several artists and different disciplines, an entirely different (and exceptional one) is a collectively directed or choreographed performance. In a way, the link from the 'genius' of modernity to the entrepreneurial author or artist as a 'brand' shows how singular authorship has been foundational to a capitalist mode of (knowledge) production which, in turn, supports the continuing maintenance of European cultural institutions.

The link from the 'genius' of modernity to the entrepreneurial author or artist as a 'brand' shows how singular authorship has been foundational to a capitalist mode of (knowledge) production.

While numeric plurality does not imply pluralism (difference linked to different places, histories, and multiple identities) it can encourage and help sustain it. For plurality can nourish the 'commoning' of pluralistic (inclusive) values by means of collaborative approaches to knowledge-making. This invitation to a pluri-vocal mode of knowledge production starts with a refusal to see oneself separate from others; as Federici argues, if "commoning" has any meaning, it must be the production of ourselves as a common subject. This is how we must understand the

slogan "no commons without community" [...] Community as a quality of relations, a principle of cooperation and responsibility: to each other, the earth, the forests, the seas, the animals (2012, 145).

Through commoning practices involved in collaborative knowledge-making, the self begins to open to plurality, and becomes shared – perhaps even sharable. Ideas, thoughts, and gestures will always already be relational (partial, situated, fragmentary), yet it is their intentional and acknowledged intersection that might open new possibilities. From this standpoint, where community is viewed as a quality of relations and as means of production of shared practices of responsibility and care, collaboration can begin to delineate its potential counter-hegemonic reach, thus becoming a sustained performance of interconnectedness.

In my experience, adopting a collaborative approach to artistic and intellectual practice (academic or otherwise) is a choice that reinforces a particular need and desire for connection, care, and belonging. It is an emotional and political choice, integral to the idea of creativity and criticality as modes of experiencing, reading, and interpreting the world with others. This understanding follows a progressive pedagogical approach to knowledge production precisely because it involves an acknowledgement of each collaborator's position – the differences in power based on class, race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, achievement, etc. Such acknowledgment cannot evade an ethics of care. The ethicality practiced through relational modes of questioning is key for artistic and intellectual collaborations to succeed in confronting hegemonic thinking, narratives and practices of socio-cultural ordering and control (based on exploitation, commodification, and exclusion). In devising pluralistic modes of engagement with knowledge-making, we unfold an ethical (caring) reading of socio-political interconnectedness. In working towards the non-erasure of difference, we enable multiple directions of interdependent becoming(s). As Audre Lorde has put it, "Within the interdependence of mutual (nondominant) differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant

power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being. Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged"[4] (2007: 111-112).

As unsatisfied participants in socio-political structures built on the 'institutionalized rejection of difference', we are required to take charge of conceiving 'new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference' (Lorde, 2007: 123). In friendship, difference is both respected and cherished. With plurality as one of friendship's key constituents, we can establish the basis for redefining difference. Moreover, friendship upholds the latent possibility of adopting alternative, potentially divergent values than those previously cherished. The possibility of changing one's views and beliefs through association with a friend means that friendship encourages a shift in normative-inspired perceptions of oneself, of one's subjectivity, such as the idea of an independent, autonomous, and rational subject in full control of her life and decisions, as it is promoted by dominant neoliberalist ideologies. This space of intersubjectivity, built through dialogue and exchange, is critical for artistic and intellectual collaboration, and the rethinking of politics of knowledge formation that they bring about.

We are all, or have been, connected to some form of education – processes by which learning is activated and sedimented as a formative effect of various experiences, which may take place outside formal learning environments – and carry specific relations with institutional structures, their hierarchies and norms. Thinking about the politics of knowledge formation involved in education is a way of addressing the relation between bodies (difference) and world-making efforts, as well as the differential violence and suffering involved in these epistemological connections. What are our sources and frames of reference, who do we read and cite? In a sense, with whose knowledge do we collaborate? The investment in challenging institutional norms that sustain the walls which prevent many (most) from inhabiting – and changing – institutional structures and hierarchical modes of

transmission is pertinently described by Sara Ahmed.[5] Ahmed explains this through the materiality of the institutional brick wall – a materialism of how history is made concrete, brick by brick, in its resistance to transformation. One prominent example of impediment to change within academic institutions is citational practice, and how it sustains sexism and racism by providing for the continuing dominance of the male, white, solitary authorial voice. Citations are bricks sustaining academic walls – including the naming of academic buildings. Ahmed explains, "Once something has been reproduced, you do not need to intend its reproduction. You have to do more not to reproduce whiteness than not to intend to reproduce whiteness" (2017: 150). As a white woman, I hear it clearly: stopping the violence of repetition is an ethical (wilful) act of responsibility and care, which involves not only an acknowledgment of the sedimented histories of exclusion, but also a joint effort to push against those epistemological walls of separation. Because the exercise of challenging hegemonic thinking, narratives, and practices is a collective assignment. This is what shared practices of responsibility and care (in collaboration) mean in practice. This collaboration is a means of questioning and responding to our inheritances, together – of trespassing epistemic walls and other physical and symbolic borders by making common cause with other wilful subjects.

Affinity in counter-hegemonic willfulness is a form of friendship. It is also a mode of being (and remaining) in transit, wherein connections are located beyond borders, in reaching out for their dismantling. This stretching, in turn, assists in the travelling between 'worlds', between the traditional and the visionary constructions of life that María Lugones wrote about: "One can 'travel' between these 'worlds' and one can inhabit more than one of these 'worlds' at the very same time" (1987: 10-11).[6] This is relevant for collaborative approaches to knowledge-making, particularly, as is often the case, when pluri-vocality corresponds to multiple places of enunciation regarding culture and language. In Lugones words: "One can be at the same time in a 'world' that constructs one as stereotypically latin, for example, and in a 'world'

that constructs one as latin. Being stereotypically latin and being simply latin are different simultaneous constructions of persons that are part of different 'worlds'" (1987: 11). In transit, between worlds, the 'I' becomes plural. This means that the pluri-vocality of collaboration comprises the multiple voices present within each one of us – the manifold 'worlds' that any given subject simultaneously inhabits and engages with. Additionally, in collaboration through friendship, the travelling between worlds – the experience of being (feeling) different in each of these worlds – is further stimulated by the uncertainty, open-endedness, and spontaneity that is intrinsic to friendship. In collaboration through friendship, transit turns into play, and it is playfulness that defines the course of any joint task. Such "Playfulness is, in part, an openness to being a fool, which is a combination of not worrying about competence, not being self-important, not taking norms as sacred and finding ambiguity and double edges a source of wisdom and delight" (Lugones, 1987: 17). In a way, collaboration through friendship is a playful attitude towards not-knowing as an intentional approach to knowledge-making.

Our subjective journeys of ongoing relocation are deeply intensified with and through experiences of friendship. The dislocation of the 'I' in friendship is a journey of attempting to find continuity in belonging – of reaching out for other possibilities of enduring the ephemerality of being. For it is through our connections, both welcome and unwelcome, that we perceive our generative potential of becoming. Friendship is an improvised dance of possibilities in and through togetherness. With friendship as the vehicle and route for developing collaborative approaches to knowledge-making, we support the progressive disappearance of borders between working and living spaces of action. In merging professional with personal relationships, not only can we disrupt conventional working arrangements that follow hegemonic roles, behaviour, and learning approaches; we also enable long-term relations of friendship to form and/or develop. The possibility to collaborate through friendship (and even to collaborate at all) is undoubtedly a privilege, inaccessible to most working in other contexts

than artistic and intellectual practice, and to many within the different spheres of cultural production. Yet, at stake here is friendship's ongoing capacity for self-renewal as a continuous reminder that practices of sharing are places of knowledge-making, and that friendship is a way of practicing knowledge through care, both a mode of thought and everyday practice. The decentring of our individual 'I' towards a shared 'we' is a journey of collaboration – an affirmation of our becoming(s) together. The path is unknown, but it asks for commitment. A commitment which for many can be actualized in the decision to do work predicated on relationships which themselves constitute a significant part of what we aspire creating and experiencing – connection, care, belonging as sources of wisdom and delight.

Renata Gaspar

Renata Gaspar is an artist and researcher based in Porto, Portugal. Her work deals with the socio-political construction of place in/through art-making, particularly with mobility in relation to language and belonging. She holds a PhD in Performance Studies from University of Roehampton, UK.

Sources

1) My take on friendship is based on my experiences and the writings of feminist and postcolonial theorists working with or alongside political philosophy, including Marilyn Friedman, What are friends for? Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993) , Leela Gandhi, Affective Communities: Anti Colonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendhsip, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), Neera Kapur Badhwar (1987) Friends as Ends in Themselves. Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. 48 (1) pp. 1-23.

2) Silvia Federici, Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle (Common Notions), (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012).

3) Though I am the sole author of this text, many of the concerns and ideas presented here have been articulated with others. In the past couple of years, I was happily involved in multiple discussions, verbal and textual, with a growing number of interlocutors, some of them friends; this text includes contributions from those with whom I have been collaborating: Alex Ambayec, Kristof van Baarle, Peter Burke, Mia Ćuk, Sozita Goudouna, Nilüfer Gros, Adham Hafez, Valentina Karga, Jan-Tage Kühling, För Künkel, Eero Laine, Sarah Lucie, Juliana Moraes, Evan Moritz, Malin Palani, Rumen Rachev, Aneta Stojnić, Alia Zapparova.

4) Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider: essays and speeches. Freedom, (San Francisco: Crossing Press, 2007).

5) Sara Ahmed, Living a Feminist Life, (Durham: Duke Univeristy Press, 2017).

6) Maria Lugones. (1987) Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception. Hypatia. 2 (2) pp. 3-19.

FIX or MIX project

The Creative FLIP Project powered a series of Learning Labs, examples of cross-sectoral cooperation between the CCS and education. In Gent, Belgium, the makerspace Bulb and the Saint Barbara College facilitated the FIX or MIX project, where students learned to repair, disassemble and repurpose electronic equipment, furniture and garments.

creativeflip.creativehubs.net

bulb.gent

sint-barbara.be

previous page: FIX or MIX project, photo by Adrian Debruyne

Sanem Su Avci, Athens

MAGIC KITCHEN

This is the story of the Magic Kitchen of Exarcheia, a cooperative vegan eatery in the center of Athens, founded by a migrant trying to escape the solitary life of an academic. The project turns into a journey of personal development as she chases the dream of a self-organized kitchen where individuals from different backgrounds learn from each other and work together in harmony, making good food at accessible prices.

− 1

October 2019, I found myself in distress in Athens. I had migrated here together with a friend. We wanted to build a new life for ourselves and have fun. We could have stayed in Turkey but we liked Greece as it was more peaceful and a part of the European Union. In our first Athens summer in 2018 we were shining with joy. Then our tourist visas expired, just around the time that Turkey fell into a currency crisis that would last. In time we started to perceive our migration less like a choice and more like a rational obligation, a chore that we had to carry out for our future. The bureaucratic ¨problems of migrating into the EU,

together with the homesickness and isolation of immigration, crushed our joy. Eating together in our apartment in the evenings, we could only talk about obstacles and hardships. I noticed at some point that I had stopped hearing her heartfelt, careless laughter. Our relationship of mutual love and care frayed as we became vulnerable and diminished. We were too fragile to support one another but we pushed it, to the point that our friendship broke.

In the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020 I started a master's degree in the University of Athens. I had enrolled in the university mainly to get a residence permit, since I did not have 250,000 euro to invest in real estate and get a *Golden Visa*[1] I was not persecuted in Turkey more than average to demand asylum and live in Greece as a political refugee, nor did I have a stable relationship with an EU citizen who could marry me, nor any desire to work in the call center that employed Turkish speakers and got them work permits. Among the limited options of legal migration into the EU, I had the academic resumé and basic language skills to become a graduate student, so I did that. In class, I would be thinking about what to do with my life. The isolation of academic studies, of individually producing abstract knowledge on a restricted domain with the hope of, one day, being useful to the greater society one day, had to be balanced with a more concrete activity. I wanted to have a stable income doing something that connected me to my immediate environment, for I knew how precarious an academic life could be.

I lived in Exarcheia, a central neighborhood of Athens with a diverse population of migrants and refugees,political movements, and squats that hosted them. My house was near the dodgy, gloomy and vibrant square. Many other people from Turkey lived in Exarcheia, most of them political refugees but I didn't seek their company as I wanted to integrate into the society around me. My Greek was improving fast but strangely the more conversant I became, the more isolated I felt. A tavern run by a group of political refugees from Turkey eventually became a second home. I fell for a young political refugee who worked at this tavern, who was also thinking of what to do with his life. Maybe to open a restaurant, but migrants making food was such a stereotype. I wanted

to be part of a meaningful community, work-oriented, one that has unity in its objectives. We kissed and commented on the fate of revolutionaries turned political refugees, who made food because it was the only thing through which they could exist in another society, which helped them communicate without need for language.

There was a small takeaway restaurant on Themistokleous street, run by some other people from Turkey. It was a rented place, and someone I knew from the tavern was trying to sell the lease. I ran into him on the street one summer morning. They had opened this restaurant to create jobs and livelihood for political refugees from Turkey. It made money, he said, but it was failing because nobody had a vision for that place. They needed someone to buy it, or to invest money and become a partner. Months later when I heard that he was looking for me to discuss his offer which I could not afford, I felt happy that someone in Athens was looking for me. We had a series of *tête-à-tête* meetings. Before the end of October 2019 we agreed he would give me the keys of the restaurant without any monetary exchange or official procedure. I would start a cooperative, make it work, and pay him later when it would be making a profit.

It was a radical move, and seemed strange to the people around me. People warned me a deal could not be safe if it didn't specify how much would be paid in return for what. A business model defined by socio-political values rather than numbers was likely to be a scam, and such scams were rampant between self-proclaimed revolutionaries, in migrant communities. The restaurant business is hard and I had no previous experience so getting into such an adventure in a foreign land was perhaps an overextension of my courage. Furthermore I didn't have a social security number in Greece[2] nor the legal right to have an enterprise.[3] I just had a strange, compelling conviction that it would work. How difficult could it be to improve a restaurant that had failed because of bad management? Wasn't it about the quality of the food and some mathematics, after all? I would be part of a community by joining an existing project, by filling a lack of *vision* that could go towards helping the lives of others. This work would also help my integration into Athens and to my life in general, which so far seemed to be

a series of clumsy, suboptimal decisions made under anxiety.

−2

Before moving to Athens, while I was still living in Ankara, I daydreamed a lot. It was the period before and after the Coup attempt of 2016 in Turkey, when frequent suicide attacks and armed clashes in urban zones made it fearful and sometimes outright dangerous to inhabit the public space. The terror subsided in 2017, leaving behind intensely securitized public areas. A central street on my way from home to university was permanently cordoned off to prevent the protests of academics and teachers who were dismissed from their lifelong careers with the decree of one single person. Crowds shouting Islamist slogans roamed the streets of my secular neighborhood late at night, while anything that resembled a protest group against the government was dispersed immediately. Daydreams helped protect my sanity while I made sense of the situation and at night I dreamt of walking streets that were not under the blockade of security forces. I imagined beautiful encounters with others who were free like me. My dream neighborhood somewhere in this world, had a little square with trees where there was also a magically delicious kitchen cooperative, where I also worked. I dreamt of dancing with thousands of strangers holding hands, our joy filled the streets of the neighborhood, and spilled over into the whole city. This utopia was my refuge. I had not been there but I knew its cityscape by heart. In Athens the takeaway on Themistokleous Street, in every detail, resembled the place in my dream.

I had moved to Athens because among the cities I knew, it came closest to this utopia. Here, access to the public space was not regulated by the police or restricted through privatisations. After years of protest against austerity measures there was pervasive disillusionment and cynicism in Greek society. I too was cynical against anything that passed as political, or spoken about in big abstract goals. I desired the

solemn and strong unity of stray cats that are fed by a neighborhood, or of ants that gather food for their community in silence and harmony. The direct and simple communication of food could bring us together in a place where abstract goals had become divisive. A kitchen that created the optimum outcome in taste and price because it knew what to do, with the expanded sense and reason of a diverse community, might be what we needed.

I met many people who declared interest or whom I thought could be interested in joining a kitchen cooperative. The name and the keywords that explained the enterprise came by through conversations. A co-worker from the first team casually named the place the Magic Kitchen. I was delighted to realize that MK for *Magic Kitchen* was MK for *Mutfak Kooperatifi*, as it was MK for *Μαγική Κουζίνα* but also for *Μαζική Κουζίνα*.[4] In the symbolic realm things came together perfectly. In the real everyday realm, there was defeat. The fast food place that I took over had to close in early December 2019, when the shop window was smashed for the second time in one month by unknown attackers. It just didn't make enough money to repair the glass twice a month. The people whom I thought I could depend on, were absent. My search for community had brought me to a new level of loneliness and exposure, as I had to take care of a failing shop in the center of Exarcheia all by myself.

— 3

Chilean biologists Maturana and Varela argue that knowing and doing cannot be different things for a living being[4]. Living beings have to maintain compatibility with their environment, which always includes other living beings [5] All existence is coexistence. Living beings are also made up of other living parts, who individually and as a whole constantly recreate themselves while in coexistence with the whole environment. Knowledge is obtained through repeated interactions in an

environment and subsequently how to coexist in that environment. We don't perceive knowledge unless we see the appropriate behavior. [6] All living beings in any particular environment change together, depending on themselves and the others. Being means being able to learn how to coexist in an environment that is always changing.

I was changing within the landscape of Exarcheia, within the interplay of different groups that made up the neighborhood, all of which was under a constant transformation with the post-crisis influx of capital even before the pandemic. Making a cooperative kitchen in this neighborhood meant putting myself in a radically different setting, and I yearned for all the novelties that it would bring to my life. The first encounters were discouraging. I was being too self-righteous, and alienating others. My temperament and attitude had not been welcoming, as I came to understand after many quarrels with people who abandoned the project. People had various reasons for quitting, but the inconsistency and vagueness of my dream came up frequently. What others saw in me was a middle class activist who did not know how to run a business, made big claims that I was unable to deliver, was not kind, and spoke the language of non-profit when inviting people to work for me. I could tell that others were being warned that I was a scam. The crucial point for my survival, as that for any living being, was the compatibility between myself and the environment which had to be maintained through my actions. If I was not able to act adequately here and now, I would have to leave, the street was a tough place and my chances were limited. It would be sad to fail in my utopia.

The pandemic that started in March 2020 allowed the Magic Kitchen to have an embryo phase. Teams came together and fell apart. When the restaurant finally opened in October 2021 with five choices on its menu written on an A4 paper, no proper sign or advertisement, our permanent team was made up of just two people. One was me, the other was Zelal. She had joined the project at a later phase, with the specific task of making village bread like they do in Turkey. She knew many things I didn't know, like how to knead dough or how to make a rolling pin out of a branch. It was the two of us who were at the Kitchen constantly in the beginning, during times that required a lot of effort with little outcome.

We became the pillars on which the project started to rise. I was scared that she would leave too. Why did she stay? I imagined some of her motivations would resemble mine - lack of other truly interesting options, the wish to one day have a stable income, a desire to spend time outside, the need to be part of a community that came together for a purpose. How could I know someone else's motivations when I found it hard to grasp my own? Staying together in a cooperative was not about knowing another's reasons. It was about being able to stay together.

– 4

During our first months of operation the daily workload was so heavy, that getting a menu designed and printed on durable material seemed like an impossible ordeal. Running a restaurant six days a week as two amateurs, we could only do the bare minimum. Our food was good and the place was gradually becoming known. Two people turned out not to be enough but how would we decide on who to bring into our small team? The people that we had originally started with were either not available or remained unsuitable. New people came with various hopes and left because of insufficient material returns, disillusionment, or personal or health problems, or because we asked them to leave. We had to learn how to keep a team, but the issue remained that we couldn't define what outcome we wanted from an expanded team. We were bringing to life an entity whose needs were changing as it developed. Each person that quit the team left a trace for us to gather to answer the question of who the Kitchen needs and how we should behave.

A cooperative has to work like a business insofar as it exists in an environment made for businesses. But it also has to be a collective where decisions are made together, profits and losses are shared, where everybody has a sense of what the whole is about as they play their part in the operation. The logic of collectivity and the logic of profit-making seems incompatible, though they have to run in a cooperative. We had

to figure out by ourselves how to combine these two diverging logics, as there was no guide to show us the way. Our work was a cycle that was rolling and for so long as we could not get hold of it, it would keep crushing us at every turn. What we could not learn returned to us as exhaustion. We had to learn from the work itself, by observing it in its course.

– 5

What was it that kept people together? Making a team was like making food. You could put the best ingredients together and work them elaborately, but if they don't match or if you cook them the wrong way, the result will not be appetizing. For a long time we supposed that the basic ingredient of team-making was material return, or money. It was not. Just like all other social phenomena, a team is built on trust, and love and care, which are intertwined and take time to build. We have to trust, but also to be trustable. We have to love, but we also have to find people who can love us and the thing that we are building. Love is, according to the Chilean biologists: "the acceptance of the other person beside us in our daily living [7]. It is about moving around and with them in such a way that they can exist with you [8]. It is the emotion that allows coexistence, while care is the practice of this emotion. Living together requires constant learning, and building something together a little more because you start to create your conditions of coexistence. One needs to take care to create what they can love, what permits them and other loved ones the space to exist.

The Magic Kitchen is an experiment in food-making as community-making. It is a living thing that recreates itself and its parts, learning how to be adequate to its objectives and efficient in its processes, and how to help the lives of those who make up its units and its environment. Can an eatery in the center of Athens be a space for the harmonious coexistence and collaboration of individuals who live side

by side, but do not share a common language? Will it be possible to have affordable prices and pay decent salaries in the coming future, considering the new economic crisis unfolding, triggered by pandemic and war? These external determinants are accompanied with adverse factors internal to the Kitchen. We might profess allegiance to collectivities, but we have come into being in a society that does not care for the commons. We are used to being screws in machines, the totality of which is alien to us, and we need to learn a new way of socioeconomic coexistence. Will we manage to learn? We will try, as that's what the existence of Magic Kitchen depends on. It is a baby that will have to grow up in a harsh environment. We need to give it a lot of love and care so that it can become a healthy adult cooperative, self-organized and autonomous as every proper adult canbe, living a life in loving coexistence with others like itself.

Sanem Su Avci

Sanem Su Avci was born in Izmir in 1989, to parents who were white collar workers. In 1996 she moved with her family to Istanbul. She graduated from the Department of Political science in Boğaziçi University in 2010. She moved to Ankara to work in the public sector and to continue her studies. She worked in political parties and in the parliament, afterwards with foreign journalists, while she continued her graduate studies in the Department of Public Administration in the University of Ankara. In 2018 she moved to Athens with the aim of becoming a musician. In Athens she founded the cooperative "Magic Kitchen of Exarcheia" and completed a Master's Degree in Political Science and Sociology in the University of Athens. Currently she is preparing to start a PhD in the Department of Political Science and Modern History in the University of Panteion, sporadically working as a journalist, writer, interpreter, musician-performer and fortune-teller.

Sources

1) George Papam, "Real Estate Cosmopolitanisms", in (Forced) Movement, Across the Aegean Archipelago (Athens: kyklàda.press, 2021), 57-64

2) Starting from the spring months of 2019 Greece practically stopped issuing social security numbers (AMKA) to its non-European residents. A social security number is needed to go to the hospital except for emergencies and to work legally. During the pandemic, the temporary social security number PAAYPA was introduced to circumvent issuing standard social security numbers to foreigners. Currently a regular immigrant from a third country such as Turkey into Greece cannot get a permanent social security number unless they have a written declaration from an employer.

3) A non-EU citizen residing in Greece with a residence permit for studies is not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week, and is not allowed to have an enterprise. This same condition is valid in many other EU member states.

4) Mutfak Kooperatifi, kitchen cooperative in Turkish. Μαγική Κουζίνα and Μαζική Κουζίνα, magic kitchen and mass kitchen, in Greece.

5) Maturana, Humberto R., and Francisco J. Varela. The tree of knowledge: the biological roots of human understanding. Translated by Robert Paolucci, Shambhala, 1992. (page 26)

6) Ibid p.172

7) Ibid. p. 25-29

8) Ibid. p. 174

9) Maturana, Humberto, and Pille Bunnell. "The Biology of Business: Love Expands Intelligence." Reflections: The Sol Journal, vol. 1, no. 2, 1999, pp. 58-66

10) Ibid p. 34

S.jumaily 21

Saddam al Jumaily

Saddam al Jumaily, (1974) is an artist, writer, and graphic designer from Basra, Iraq, currently living in Helsinki. When facing threats from the political and religious regime, Saddam left for Jordan, and later with the help of ARTISTS at RISK (AAR) to Finland. In Finland, Saddam is involved with the residency program of AAR, initiated by Marita Muukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky, which helps artists who escape their home countries from forms of politico-military oppression.

Saddam's artistic practice consists of figurative painting and drawing presenting a surrealist depiction of his world, an experience of a political refugee. In the selection of drawings and collages printed here, apparently untroubled characters in tragic scenarios convey the banality of death and trauma for these protagonists.

Many of the artists' work read as collage, where different patterns, forms, and colors, cohabit to create a place for the puzzling of conflicting memories and emotions. The collage medium allows Saddam to grasp how each symbol changes meaning according to its environment, how things are never quite one thing or another, particularly if one changes perspective.

www.saddamjumaily.net

Artists at Risk

Artists at risk is a non-profit organisation that coordinates a network of hosting residencies or events for artists who are at risk of persecution or who had to flee their country for war or oppression. Through its relocation system, Artists at Risk has created a network of safe havens for artists across 19 countries.

artistsatrisk.org

previous page: Saddam al Jumaily "Dusty Catwalk" (2022)

Paul B. Preciado, Zurich

MOVING BODIES

There are people that use their bodies as if they were disposable plastic bags. Others carry their bodies as if they were Ming dynasty porcelain. There are people who are not treated as citizens because their legs cannot work. There are people who live to transform their bodies into that of Pamela Anderson. Others who live to make their bodies into that of Jean Claude Van Damme. Some carry their bodies as if there were a common coat of skin, and others as if they were a transparent suit. There are some who get dressed in order to be naked and others who undress in order to remain hidden. There are people who earn their living by swaying their hips, others who don't even know they have hips. There are those who use their bodies as they would a public square, and those who treat them as if they were a private parking lot. There are those who understand their bodies as a savings account, and others as if they were a river. Some people are locked up in their bodies as if they were in Alcatraz, others understand liberty only as something the body can pull off. Some people wave their hair to the rhythm of an electric guitar, others experience electric shocks rising directly from their central nervous system. Some people will never let themselves leave the repertoire of acquired gestures, others get paid to throw off this repertoire, but only within the realm of art. There are bodies who are used socially as sources of pleasure, value or knowledge for others, and others absorb pleasure, value and knowledge.

There are bodies who are not regarded as citizens because of the color of their skin. There are those who walk on a mechanical rubber ribbon to keep in shape, while others walk 600 kilometers on foot to escape war. There are some who do not own their own bodies and others who believe that the bodies of animals belong to them - that the bodies of children belong to them - that the bodies of women belong to them - that the bodies of proletarians belong to them - that non-white bodies belong to them. Some think that they are the owners of their bodies the way they own their apartment. Among them, some spend their time doing renovations and interior design, and others take care of their apartment as if it were a nature reserve. There are people who believe they own their bodies the way the cowboy owns his horse. They mount it, force it to a gallop, stroke it or beat it, give it food and drink, let it rest so they can use it again the next day. They don't speak to their bodies, just as some people don't speak to their horses. They are surprised when they realize that when their mount dies, they are unable to continue all alone. Various bodily services can be bought with money, others are regarded as inalienable. Some people feel that their bodies are completely empty, others imagine their body as a cupboard full of organs. There are people who view them as advanced technologies, others as a prehistoric tool. For some, the sexual organs are organic and inseparable from their own body. For others, they are multiple, inorganic, and can change shape and size. Some people make their bodies function solely on glucose, whether it's in the form of alcohol or rapid sugar. Some people send tobacco mixed with poison directly into their lungs. There are some who make their bodies function without sugar, or salt, or alcohol, or tobacco, or gluten, or lactose, or GMOs, or cholesterol. There are people who treat their bodies as if they were their slaves, and others as if they were their sovereign. Some people are not regarded as citizens because they prefer to live in keeping with the social conventions of femininity whereas their bodily anatomy identifies them as masculine. There are bodies who do everything quickly but never have time for anything, and those who do things slowly, who are even capable of not doing anything at all. Some bodies are not regarded as citizens because their eyes can't see. There are those who take the penises of others in their hands until they ejaculate. And then there

are those who put their fingers in others' mouths to put white paste in the cavities of their teeth. The former are called illegal workers, the latter qualified professionals. There are bodies who are not regarded as citizens because they prefer to obtain sexual pleasure with bodies whose sexual organs have shapes similar to their own. There are people who calm their nervous systems by taking tranquilizers. Others meditate. Some people drag their living bodies as if they were corpses. Some bodies are hetero but masturbate only while watching gay porn. Some people are not regarded as citizens because they possess one chromosome more or one chromosome less. There are those who love their bodies more than anything else, and those who feel unspeakable shame about their bodies. There are those who experience their bodies as if they were a time-bomb they're unable to defuse, and those who take pleasure in their bodies as if they were a melting ice cream. Some people wear implanted mechanisms thanks to which their hearts can beat. Others bear in their chests a heart that belonged to someone else. There are others still who bear, inside themselves, for a time, another body in the process of growing. So, can one speak of a human body as if it were a single body?

Paul B. Preciado

Paul B. Preciado is a writer, philosopher, and curator whose work deals with the subjectivity and social construction surrounding concepts such as gender and identity, sexuality, and body politics.

The former airport site Tempelhof populated by the participants of Climate Care 2021 organised by the Floating University

The Floating University

The Floating University took over the remnants of the old Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, where rainwater gathered, after years of abandonment, and created a new natural ecosystem. By engaging a big community of architecture students and local citizens, the Floating University has turned this area as an arena for collective practices and community building, through sustainability and ecological values.

Floating-berlin.org

previous page: A rainwater retention pool is being repurposed every summer as the Floating University

Aleksandra Kędziorek, Warsaw

OSKAR HANSEN'S OPEN FORM: ARCHITECTURE, ART AND PEDAGOGY

Although the theory of *Open Form*, created by Oskar Hansen (1922 – 2005), a Polish architect and member of Team 10,[1] was primarily devoted to architecture, thanks to his teaching at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts it overcame the disciplinary boundaries. *Open Form* became one of the seminal points of reference in the history of Polish experimental film and performance art of the 1960s and 1970s, and an inspiring source for the artistic and pedagogical activities of the next generations of artists.

Opening Architecture

Hansen first introduced the *Open Form* at the 1959 CIAM congress (International Congress of Modern Architecture) in Otterlo. He developed it throughout the 1950s, testing its assumptions in projects of various scales: from exhibition designs and housing estates, to the *Linear Continuous System* [LCS], a project of state-wide urbanization initiated in the mid-1960s. The main intention of the *Open Form* was to introduce the undefined, subjective and processual element in architecture. This approach manifested itself in the participation of future users to the process of design and the possibility of further adaptation of the executed project to their changing needs. By arguing for leaving a spatial and formal margin in architectural projects for the users' individual expression, Hansen was opposed to designs which he defined as *Closed Form*. He characterized these as dominant, patriarchal, passive and completed. He pointed to the projects of his contemporaries such as Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille or Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia that were rather monuments to their architects than comfortable

living spaces.[2] Hansen accused them for being "passive towards the changes occurring in time" and thus "outdated from their very moment of birth." [3] Instead, his theory of *Open Form* proposed to treat architecture as a framework, a "passe-partout" that frames and exposes the visual richness of the everyday life: "the art of events." [4]

Treating *Open Form* as a conceptual basis for all his architectural, artistic and pedagogical activities, Hansen sought for opportunities to explore its potential in different fields and scales of design. He tested it in *microscale*,[5] designing exhibitions, temporary pavilions, interiors and monuments. Those designs helped him develop one of the crucial components of the *Open Form*: the concept of an "active" or "perceptive background" (both terms were interchangeably used in his texts to express the "passe-partout" effect of *Open Form* compositions). Temporary pavilions for international trade fairs like the ones he designed in Izmir (with Lech Tomaszewski, 1954) and São Paulo (with Zofia Hansen and Lech Tomaszewski, 1959), or for local events such as a pavilion for the Warsaw Autumn Music Festival (with Zofia Hansen, 1958) were not only meant to expose the displayed products (or music in the case of the latter), but also turn the visitors into active participants and co-creators of their spatial experiences. The most striking example of such an approach manifested itself in *The Road* monument, a collaborative project submitted for the international competition for a memorial to the victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp (with Zofia Hansen, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Edmund Kupiecki, Julian Pałka, and Lechosław Rosiński, 1958). The never-implemented design, which became a milestone in the history of Polish art, rejected the idea of a traditional figurative monument. Instead, it proposed to treat the entire area of the former concentration camp as a space of commemoration. The only element the authors intended to introduce was a black asphalt road which would cross the camp diagonally in a symbolic gesture of crossing out a history that should never repeat itself. The road would also provide a space for individual gestures of commemoration, allowing people to enter the road, experience the decaying ruins of the camp and leave there pebbles for the dead in accordance with Jewish tradition.[6]

While testing the strategies of *Open Form* in *mezoscale*, namely in the designs of public buildings and housing estates, Hansen revealed another component of the theory: that of finding a balance between individual and collective, between subjective and objective elements in architectural designs. "*Open Form* has the task of helping the individual find himself amid the collective, to make himself indispensable in the formation of his own environment," he stated during the 1960 Team 10 meeting in Bagnols-sur-Cèze. "It would seem that society should facilitate (and not impose, as *Closed Form* does) the development of the individual. There needs to be a synthesis between the objective, collective, social elements, and the subjective, individual elements." [7] Such synthesis was not an easy goal to achieve in the realm of a prefabricated mass-housing industry in a state-socialist country, yet Hansen, together with his wife, Zofia, made several trials. They provided diversified plans for the apartments in the blocks of flats in the Rakowiec estate of Warsaw (1958); they conducted a survey among

---

The main intention of the Open Form was to introduce the undefined, subjective and processual element in architecture.

---

the future inhabitants of the Słowacki estate of Lublin (1961, realized 1963–1966) asking them to design partition walls according to their own needs (the experiment failed as the apartments were later distributed randomly); or using coloured compositions on the façades of Przyczółek Grochowski estate in Warsaw (1963, realized 1968–1973) in order to help people identify their individual space within the massive structure of a 1,5 kilometer long meandering building. What was difficult to achieve in housing estates seemed to be easier in public buildings, although most of Hansen's public designs remained only on paper. Unfulfilled projects such as an extension of the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw

(with Lech Tomaszewski and Stanisław Zamecznik, 1958), the Museum of Modern Art in Skopje (with Svein Hatløy, Barbara Cybulska and Lars Fasting, 1966) and the Studio Theater in Warsaw (1974), or the defunct space of the Polish Radio Experimental Studio in Warsaw (1962) all explored the concept of "building as a tool." [8] Aware of the fact that the future development of artistic disciplines is impossible to predict, Hansen proposed adjustable designs for public buildings that would house them—art galleries, theaters and experimental music studios that would stay open to unknown possibilities and allow the users to constantly modify their spaces according to their changing needs.

The attempt to find a synthesis of subjective and objective elements in architecture reached its peak in Hansen's *macroscale* project of the *Linear Continuous System* [LCS]. Developed since 1966, the LCS formed a proposal of a new settlement system for a socialist society, composed of four linear cities stretching throughout Poland, from the Tatra Mountains to the Baltic Sea. Egalitarian, non-hierarchical settlement belts combined the benefits of a city and of countryside, providing each inhabitant with equal access to sun, greenery and public infrastructure. However totalitarian its spatial ambitions may sound, the LCS was also based on the *Open Form* ideas—the space for users' individual expression beingprovided in the composition of individual living spaces, which, as in the LCS' Western Belt II project (1976), could be constructed by the inhabitants in the space chosen for themselves within the given linear structure.

The Pedagogy of the Open Form

From 1952 Hansen aimed to relate his ideas to the students at the Faculty of Sculpture of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, where he ran the Solids and Planes Composition Studio (1955–1970) and the Visual Structures Studio (1971–1981). His main task was to teach the students the basic rules of composition, the "ABC" of visual language. Although a part of Hansen's teaching programme was rooted in exercises introduced by his predecessor, Wojciech Jastrzębowski, the studio's curriculum became quickly permeated with the theory of *Open Form*.[9]

The programme began with a series of compositional exercises based on dichotomic notions such as heavier and lighter solid objects, static and dynamic forms, or contrasts of shape and size. They were followed by exercises performed on didactic apparatus—devices designed by Hansen and his assistants to help the students study the problems of "Rhythm," "Legibility of complex form," or "Legibility of a large number of elements." The latter device was nicknamed "The Large Number" in reference to the notion of the "greater number" studied at the time by Hansen and the Team 10 milieu. Another exercise that was unique for Hansen, but informed by ongoing debates, was the "active negative," a sculptural interpretation of spatial sensations experienced by an individual in a given architectural interior. Developed first in reference to his apartment on Sędziowska Street in Warsaw (designed with Zofia Hansen, 1955, the "active negative" with Emil Cieślar and Andrzej J. Wróblewski, 1957), in parallel to the studies of negative spaces by Bruno Zevi and Luigi Moretti, and the global interest in Gestalt psychology, it distinguished itself by introducing a subjective, emotional factor.

In the 1970s the curriculum was supplemented with open-air group exercises that began outside of the Academy from the initiative of young artists and Academy graduates, and were afterwards introduced by Hansen in the official teaching programme. In December 1971, Hansen participated in a meeting of theYoung Creative Workshop in Elbląg, where artist Przemysław Kwiek suggested to move the discussion outdoors and replace words with visual communication— "a performed battle of 'visual tactics'." [10] The group action, known as *A Game on Morel's Hill*, inspired further exercises performed by Hansen and his students in open-air workshops in Skoki and Dłużew. There the students were encouraged to collectively construct an open visual conversation, in which every personal statement could be followed by a subsequent voice; thus to create an open visual dialogue that questioned the traditional roles of author and recipient.

In 1973, when the Faculty of Sculpture moved to another building and Hansen was invited to redesign it, he made an attempt to reshape the whole teaching system according to *Open Form*. The change was supposed to happen thanks to the transformation of the physical space

of the building, with Masters' studios to be replaced by an open space for teaching and learning that questioned the traditional professors-students hierarchy. This unfulfilled concept was brought back in 1981, when Hansen, elected by the students, became Dean of the Faculty of Sculpture. Nevertheless, his effort to introduce the *Open Form* pedagogy as an official teaching method at the Academy was rejected by a protest of his colleagues. Hansen abandoned the reform and left the post soon after, retiring from the Academy in 1983.

Opening the Dialogue

Although his attempts to convert the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts to *Open Form* pedagogy turned out to be unsuccessful, Hansen's activities left an important mark on the artistic lives of many of the Academy graduates. Together with a parallel studio run by sculptor Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Hansen's curriculum offered one of the very few challenging systems of thoughts that students encountered during their academic education. Thus the theory of *Open Form* inspired strong reactions—students eagerly entered into discussion with Hansen, followed or rejected his views, and enriched their own interests. They helped move the initial architectural base into different artistic disciplines, and created a multidirectional artistic tradition.[11]

Among those who felt a strong need to enter into a discussion with *Open Form* was the artistic duo KwieKulik (Zofia Kulik, Przemysław Kwiek) who combined the assumptions of Hansen's theory with their own concepts of games, group actions and for-camera activities. Years after, Kulik referred to Hansen's concept again, but in an opposite way, claiming her fascination with *Closed Forms*.[12] Another approach was developed by Wiktor Gutt and Waldemar Raniszewski, who enriched *Open Form* with their interest in methods and aesthetics of communication characteristic for primitive tribal cultures. In 1972, they started *Grand Conversation*, a visual, photographically-recorded dialogue between the two artists that continued until Raniszewski's death in 2005. A graduate and teaching assistant of both Hansen and Jarnuszkiewicz, Grzegorz Kowalski moved *Open Form* theory forward not only in his artistic, but also pedagogical practice.One of the most

fundamental exercises in Kowalski's renowned studio was 'Kowalnia', standing for Common Space, Individual Space. Such a concept was re-iterated throughout the visual games held in Hansen's studio. Thanks to Kowalski's teaching, *Open Form* became an inspiring point of reference for future generations of artists, including Paweł Althamer and Artur Żmijewski.

Having had relatively little impact on ongoing architectural debates in Poland, *Open Form* found itself another line of continuation in Norway. The Bergen School of Architecture, established in 1986 by Svein Hatløy, a student and assistant of Hansen, based its first educational pro-gramme directly on the pedagogy of *Open Form*— and continues to do so to a varying extent, passing on the enthusiasm and significance of Hansen's theory to its sister schools in China.


Aleksandra Kędziorek

Aleksandra Kędziorek is an independent scholar and art historian interested in exploring the intersection of architecture and the visual arts.

Sources

1) Team 10 was an architectural group that formed the first critical voice against the modernist orthodoxy of the Athens Charter and the followers of Le Corbusier. The group assembled starting with the 9th Congress of the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) in July 1953. Members included: Pancho Guedes, Geir Grung, Oskar Hansen, Reima Pietilä, Charles Polonyi, Brian Richards, Jerzy Sołtan, Oswald Mathias Ungers, John Voelcker, and Stefan Wewerka. (Editor's note)

2) Oskar Hansen, "La forme ouverte en architecture ou l'art du grand nombre," in Le Carré Bleu, no. 1 (1961). In English: Oskar Hansen, Zofia Hansen, "The Open Form in Architecture—the Art of the Great Number," in CIAM'59 in Otterlo, ed. Oscar Newman (Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1961), 190–191; reprinted in Aleksandra Kędziorek, Łukasz Ronduda, eds., Oskar Hansen—Opening Modernism: On Open Form Art, Architecture and Didactics (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 7–9.

3) Oskar Hansen, "Forma Otwarta," in Przegląd Kulturalny, no. 5 (1959), transl. Marcin Wawrzyńczak and reprinted in Jola Gola, ed., Towards Open Form (Frankfurt, Warsaw: Revolver, Foksal Gallery Foundation, 2005), 199.

4) Ibid.

5) Micro-, mezo- and macroscale was a scalar system used by Hansen to organize his projects in the book Towards Open Form, among others.

6) The monument has an extended bibliography, summarized e.g. in an essay by Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, "Open Form, Public Sculpture and the Counter-Memorial: Encounters between Henry Moore and Oskar Hansen," in Oskar Hansen—Opening Modernism, op. cit., 199–211.

7) In Dirk van den Heuvel, "Bagnols-sur-Ceze (France) 25–30 July 1960. Team 10 on Its Own: Against Formulae, against Formalism," in Team 10, 1953–81. In Search of a Utopia of the Present, eds. Dirk van den Heuvel, Max Risselada (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2005), 85.

8) See: Aleksandra Kędziorek, The Museum of Modern Art in Skopje and the Potentiality of an Exhibition Space, in Team 10 East. Revisionist Architecture in Real-Existing Modernism, ed. Łukasz Stanek (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 205–209; Aleksandra Kędziorek, "The Studio as an Instrument: The Architecture of the Polish Radio Experimental Studio by Oskar Hansen," in Ultra Sounds. The Sonic Art of Polish Radio Experimental Studio, ed. David Crowley (Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Łódź, Warsaw: Kehrer Verlag, ZKM, Muzeum Sztuki, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, 2019), 88–99.

9) A full curriculum is presented in Jola Gola, Grzegorz Kowalski, eds., 30 Years Later: A Look at Oskar Hansen's Studio(Warsaw: Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, 2013). See also: Soledad Gutiérrez, Aleksandra Kędziorek, "Oskar Hansen. Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, 1952–1983," in Radical Pedagogies, no. 45 (2015): 6–7, special insert.

10) For full description, see: Łukasz Ronduda, Georg Schollhammer, eds.,KwieKulik: Zofia Kulik & Przemysław Kwiek (Warsaw, Wrocław, Vienna: Museum of Modern Art, BWA, Kontakt, 2012), 94; KwieKulik, A Game on Morel's Hill (Group Action), 1971, Filmoteka Muzeum, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

11) The further artistic developments of Open Form theory are described in detail in Łukasz Ronduda, Michał Woliński, Axel J. Wieder, "Games, Actions, Interactions: Film and the Tradition of Oskar Hansen's Open Form," in 1 2, 3...Avant-Gardes: Film/Art between Experiment and Archive, ed. Łukasz Ronduda, Floryan Zeyfang (Berlin, Warsaw: Sternberg Press, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, 2007), 88–103; Łukasz Ronduda, "In the Circle of Open Form: Visual Games, Interactions, Participation, Archives, Communities," in Łukasz Ronduda, Polish Art of the 70s (Warsaw: CCA Ujazdowski Castle, 2009), 171–201; Axel Wieder, Floryan Zeyfang, eds., Open Form. Space, Interaction, and the Tradition of Oskar Hansen (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).

12) See: kulikzofia.pl/en/cv-zofii-kulik.
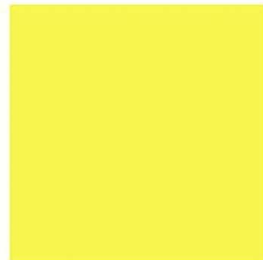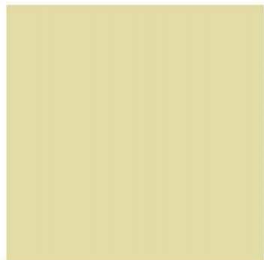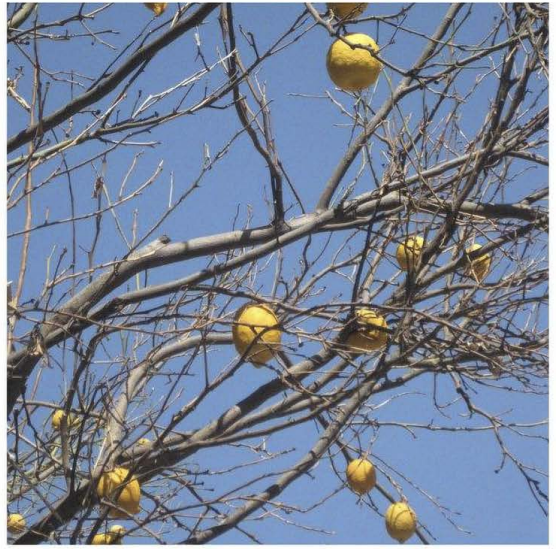
MakersXchange

The MakersXchange program facili-
tated a series of mobility exchanges
among European makers, to give them
the opportunity to share expertise
and initiate new collaborations. The
COVID-19 pandemic struck during the
implementation of the program, but
this did not stop makers from devising
new ways of remote collaborations.
Lottozero (Prato, IT) and Bios (Athens,
EL) connected two of their in-house
professional weavers, respectively
Cristina Mariani and Alexandra Bissa.
Despite the distance, they created
unique artworks inspired by images of
each other's cities, whose colours and
architectures determined the palette
and patterns of the final outputs.

cristinamariani-art.com

alexandrabissa.com

makersxchange.eu

previous page: Inspiration for the color palettes used
by the two artists

ANYONE WITH A LINK CAN EDIT

The self-conscious collective
Create new document.

> I wished that woman would write and proclaim this unique empire so that other women, other unacknowledged sovereigns, might exclaim: I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard-of songs. Time and again I, too, have felt so full of luminous torrents that I could burst — burst with forms much more beautiful than those which are put up in frames and sold for a stinking fortune. And I, too, said nothing, showed nothing; I didn't open my mouth, I didn't repaint my half of the world. I was ashamed. I was afraid, and I swallowed my shame and my fear. I said to myself: You are mad! What's the meaning of these waves, these floods, these outbursts? And why don't you write? Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it. [1]
>
> — H.l.ne Cixous, 1976

It's 2020. We write. She, they, them, he writes. All bodies write. We write through fiber-optic cables under oceans, waves encapsulating our outbursts of words and desires. We write through the 4G and 5G towers hovering over natural and urban landscapes. We write as a feminist publishing collective that runs on electricity and Wi-Fi. We exist

in the physical realm; one can find our printed pages in bedrooms and bookstores around the world. But we also live in the shared online documents of to-do lists, collected notes, names, ideas, financial calculations. Spreadsheets and folders. *Girls Like Us* rides the metaphors [2] of digital interfaces,[3] carrying us across, standing in for connection.

And yet, we try playing by different temporalities. We appear in print when the feeling is right (when the deadlines are stretched). Almost all work and time is donated. We are makers of our own time. Our shared documents live in a constant state of flux.

As you know, we have a soft spot for collectives, collaborations, friendships and support structures. People doing things with other people: loving, working, organizing, living. These strategies for surviving together form an underlying thread throughout all our issues.[4]

At this moment, we ask ourselves: what does it mean to work together? What does it mean to work together as a collective? What does it mean to work together as a feminist collective? What does it mean to work together as a queer feminist collective? What does it mean to work together as a queer feminist collective on digital platforms? What does it mean to work together as a queer feminist collective on digital platforms built on surveillance-capitalist business models? What does it mean to write together?

Writing collectively is so much more than writing collectively. It's researching the past and exploring the archives. It's reading together, more often aloud than silent. Experimenting with fonts, formats, photographs, filters, fantasy, frontlines, f-words, focus, feminisms... Rethinking the future while digging into the past. Walking the paths that have been carved out ages ago, and taking different exits. Pausing in-between to rethink. Constantly reframing and reshaping. Rewriting the past, present, and future. Formulating new ways of living together, eating together, loving together. It's about giving voices to others, or making other voices heard. It's about different geographies, different time zones, different backgrounds, upbringings, cultures.

It's a collection of collectivities. A collection of interviews, Q&As, essays, love letters, diaries, archives, travel journals, biographies, auto-biographies. A collection of lives, lifestyles, life stories, life speculations, lives lived, and lives unlived. Hidden life, underground life, life under the radar. Her stories, forgotten, never told, never surfaced.

It's collectivities. Plural. As in many: plural pronouns, off the gender spectrum. A collective is making errors, failures, taking risks, and welcoming going down with them. A collective is about the process as much as the end result. The collective is reinventing itself, always. It's learning by doing, setting borders, and time and time again reshaping them, crossing them, marking and unmarking them.

It's about text (and texting). Quotes. Fiction. Autofiction. Speculative writing. Sci-fi. Dystopias and imaginary worlds. It's about images. Dream-state projections. Free-flowing, undefined experiments. Inhaling, exhaling, taking a break. And starting all over again.

It's remembering that the impersonal is apolitical. Putting an asterisk next to the small and forgotten. In the margin. The labor of daily tasks and routines. The labor of unpaid labor. The putting in your face of things you never thought about. Opening perspectives, showing unseen worlds.

Double tap. Hold. Pinch to zoom.

Painstakingly someone(s) (hello, hi, hej) has written these words, shoulders hunched over machines of loving grace. Yet another someone has edited these words, a third has designed the layout of this page, a fourth has proofread, a fifth has received the digital file for printing, a sixth has prepared the plates for printing, a seventh has operated the printing press, an eighth has folded, a ninth has bound and trimmed, a tenth has packed these books into boxes for shipping, an eleventh has transported the boxes, a twelfth has received the shipment and unpacked the boxes, a thirteenth and countless more have helped the book reach its readers. All these hands and minds at work, careful,

caring. Physical labor, and hands that made it possible for these words to reach your eyes.

> Our hands are tools; they transform thought into action, shape our reality, connect us to the world and all the beings that are part of it. An extension of our hearts, they can bring the ones we love closer, and keep at a distance those we distrust. Their sophisticated anatomy enables both the use of brute force and the most delicate of gestures. They feed us, defend us, but also hold a lot of stress. [...] Hacking with Care is a collective composed of hackers-activists, caregivers, artists, sociologists and friends. It represents the merging of our visions and practices of hacking, activism and care. To us, hacking and care are not defined solely by their techniques or tools (whether these be hands or machines) but by what visions of a world, what ways of living, our actions support. In computer and telecom technology, the "handshake" is the process by which two devices establish a connection before they start to communicate.[5]

The paper collectives
Open recent document.

Collective friction, slowness, arguments, dreams, and documents miraculously materialize into a printed magazine. Because we want to be held, carried around, shared with friends, spilled coffee on, slept on, forgotten, discarded, or saved. Because we are bodies, we want to meet the physical bodies of our readers. The magazine is a reason to gather. We write futures together.

We want a future outside of straight time. A future in which all our friends and lovers and their lovers are coming over for dinner around a table we built together. We want a future that is fair, fun,

furry, fabulous, fierce, free and not fucked up. We want futures. A future in which we have dismantled the harsh economic systems that govern our lives and loves. We want a future of cohabitation and self-governance. A future that sees and acknowledges emotional labor. We want a future that understands the reality of being broke, of being evicted, of being talked down to, of being ignored. We want a future that embraces weakness, where we come together, where we can lean on each other and stand strong. [6]

We write in the company of all the feminist publication projects that have come before. Pile after pile of aged, yellowing magazines, pamphlets, fanzines. Brittle paper that tears easily. Materials matter; the spaces of the page as a place to gather or a Great Escape, the sound of pages turning softly or eagerly, hungry readers. Physical relics to touch. Digital (PDF) relics to save. Peeking back into the past has been a constant navigational tool. A history of feminist publishing efforts — material witnesses to past lives and struggles. Publishing creates publics, creates spaces. A spread is an opening into other possible worlds.

We try to make space to come together and meet. Leave the digital screen to meet IRL, AFK. With the editorial team, with our collaborators, with potential editors, with students, with other independent publishers, with peers and non-peers. To walk the talk, to do what we preach in the form of brainstorms, workshops, summer schools, book fairs, and physical magazine making.

On February 27, 1977, Charlotte Bunch gave a talk entitled "Feminist Publishing: An Antiquated Form?" Her notes for the talk, published in the third issue of HERESIES magazine, read:

What is the specific importance of feminist publishing/ writing?

--If words, the written word is important, then it's important
where, why, and how to do it. I'm not talking about
IND. (sic) morality or duty of why a particular person
publishes where that debate has polarized too easily and
often denies ind. Complexities -- I mean the underlying
basic issue of why feminist publishing is vital to feminist
writing + to women's power
And why it should be supported as crucial to our future.
[...]
Now there are over 200 feminist newspapers, magazines,
presses and publishers and another 30-40 women's book-
stores. All of that material from mimeo (sic) to finely published
books is the feminist press.
[...]
No, the feminist media isn't just a stopgap
--it isn't just ind. (sic) choices about where to publish,
which can involve various issues
--it is our future, as an institution and as the well-spring of
our words and thought and action.
It is our looking back and going forward in the written
word.[7]

The legacy of queer and feminist publishing is being traced and played
with through projects like Loraine Furter's *Speaking Volumes* research,
the online workshop *Liberation in Print* by Common Interest, Danielle
Aubert, Delphine Bedel, *Just for the Record*, *The GenderFail Archive
Project* by Be Oakley, Nat Pyper, MsHeresies by Rietlanden Women's
Office, *Queer.Archive.Work* founded by Paul Soulellis, the book *Libera-
tion in Print* by Agatha Beins. Many efforts are being made to open up a
fragmented history; this list is too short, hereby acknowledging all of its
omissions.

But a part of feminist practice has been to, simultaneously, write your
own feminist history. In *The New Woman's Survival Catalog* (Berkeley
Publishing Company, 1973), itself a milestone in the history of Eu-

ro-American feminist publishing, one chapter is dedicated solely to listing and presenting feminist publications, publishers, and printers in the US at the time (there were many!). In *Rolling Our Own: Women as Printers, Publishers and Distributors* (Minority Press, 1981), the editors (Eileen Cadman, Gail Chester and Agnes Pivot) map another lively landscape of

Euro-American feminist publishing. Through interviews with writers and publishers in the UK and US, they talk through collective writing, publishing, pamphlets, illustration, typesetting, printing, distribution, and "sexism in the radical book trade," and they share a directory of women's liberation newsletters, magazines, and journals.

HERESIES was one of the hundreds of feminist magazines that Charlotte Bunch mentioned, published out of New York with the subtitle *A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics.* Every issue was a collage, carefully edited by a different editorial collective. Its statement of intent, repeated in all issues, reads:

> HERESIES is an idea-oriented journal devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact, and that in the making of art and of all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a role. We hope that HERESIES will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, encourage the writing of the history of femina sapiens, and generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. [...]
> HERESIES will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. Topics for issues will be announced well in advance in order to collect material from many sources. [8]

The outcome of a collective is always limited (and expanded) via its members. A collection of experiences never complete, always questioning, evaluating, growing. Sharp critique and loving praise can exist within the same voice, within the same word. Accountability is a practice.

The secret is the place and moment where knowledge appears and disappears, shows or fades in its relationship to power. Secrets become a way to distribute and circulate different stories, schemes or memories. Maybe the utopia we're searching for has been here all along and would reveal itself if only we understood how to look.[9]

The interfacial collectives
Last modified May 3, 2020.

Girls Like Us have always been a collective *across*, more often sharing digital spaces than physical. Twenty-five thousand seven hundred and eighty emails later. One hundred and twenty-four gigabytes of archives scattered across hard drives and clouds.[10] *Girls Like Us* writes all its editorials collectively in shared documents hosted on cloud service platforms. We have agreed to the terms and conditions that give our data over to the corporations that host us. We (the queers, the feminists, the publishers, the activists, the archivists, the artists, the everyones) gather on platforms everywhere. We share knowledges on and with the platforms. Convenience trumps criticality.

A message, a heart, a GIF. Surveillance capitalism is smooth, well-camouflaged, well-designed, comes with so much ease and so many benefits, and it feels (oxytocin) good. Even the word platform is designed, and it does well in covering up a business model of extraction. The "platform" is potentially neutral ground, a space where the owner of the platform doesn't necessarily harvest intimate details of its performers.

A platform is a raised level surface on which people or things can stand. A raised floor or stage used by public speakers or performers so that they can be seen by their audience.

Framed as inescapable, indescribable, uncontrollable and essential, economies are everywhere. Oppressive and enabling, lucrative and undervalued, there are economies that trade our emotional labour, desires, love, fertility, time, minds, queerness, politics, and clicks. There are economies that we can control and that control us, and those that we can subvert to serve our collectives.[11]

We meet in interfaces: designed "drives," "folders," and "documents" contingent on a stable internet connection. We submit to the interfaces. As users, we are the pillow queens and powerless bottoms of digital capitalism. Through the interfaces, writing pushes itself into our lives, into our bodies. Go to the bathroom; bring your phone. Text your friends. Text your lovers. Email a collaborator. Go to bed. Draft an email. Sleep mode.

In the essay "Black Gooey Universe," American Artist critiques the genesis and development of the Graphical User Interface (GUI/gooey) — that smooth, designed, responsive surface, the only part of our devices that we actually see.

By simplifying the programming process to one method and abstracting it further through clickable icons and images, a limitation was placed on transgressive or nuanced possibilities available in early devices. [...] In the computers we interact with most often at this moment (our smartphones), this interface has been further reduced by superimposing the map of correspondence of the mouse and cursor onto the virtual display itself. With this reduction comes a lack of mobility on behalf of the user (only being in one program at a time, never really closing, opening or "seeing" files), which reflects a pattern of making the mechanic apparatus invisible and thus easier to consume from and pour oneself into. [12]

Secrets can be both beautiful and terrifying. There are times when it takes enormous amounts of courage to bring light to the shadows. At other times the world of coded messages is a necessary safe haven. A secret can be a private space for self-creation — or a shared site of pleasure.[(13)]

We know — "everyone knows" — that the well-designed front ends of commercial digital platforms are cover-ups for the surveillance, extraction, and commodification of social relations. This awareness is omnipresent, and refreshing (y)our memory feels na.ve. But willfully we still ask: how can we reach beyond the singular, individual subject, how can we be more than one, in the digital interface? How can we clear the haze of self-promotion and commodification that influences so much of our online lives? How can we find ways to enact care, carefulness, collectivity, on (or off) the streamlined platforms? Many people are gathering! Touching each other's profiles, touching each other's hearts. Reaching out and into each other's lives. How can we access the true potential of collectivities in digital spaces? And how can they be radical? In a speculative proposal entitled "QueerOS: A User's Manual," Fiona Barnett et al. write:

> "QueerOS diverges from the digital network culture, widely accepted today, in which Terms of Service and License Agreements are quietly updated by corporations in order to limit users' rights to their own data, where agreements are to be scrolled past and clicked through, and consent is not taken seriously. QueerOS demands that consensual agreements
> are the means by which we build new architectures of possibility and make our dreams of abundance real. By agreeing to the QueerOS Terms of Service the user binds themselves in a relational network of queer kinship with and between people and systems, bodies and objects, one and another. [...] The interface marks the site at which

human-machine interaction is situated. For most users, the interface is the only means of engaging with a given operating system, as all possible actions are mediated by the predetermined interactions built into the system. The interface is therefore a site of control, of restriction; it is a black box that accepts limited input to produce limited output, the workings of which remain hidden. [...] a more productive interface would be expansive, proliferating the relationality allowed for by the inter-face, its inter-activity, its nature as that which is between or among, that which binds together, mutually or reciprocally. Far from the extractive impulse of contemporary systems that mine and surveil, it is an act of consent and mutual transformation". [14]

Hide this program, close all your tabs.
Scroll-back-to: when an interface was the surface of touch between two persons' skin.[15]

Future collectives
Create new shared folder.

A couple of months into a global pandemic, dependence on communication via connected screens is bigger than ever. Never before have we spent so much time with interfaces and so little time with faces. [16] Post-virus infection, in March 2020, Paul B. Preciado writes:

"Between the fever and the anxiety, I thought to myself that the parameters of organized social behavior had changed forever and could no longer be modified. I felt that with such conviction that it pierced my chest, even as my

breathing became easier. Everything will forever retain the new shape that things had taken. From now on, we would have access to ever more excessive forms of digital consumption, but our bodies, our physical organisms, would be deprived of all contact and of all vitality. The mutation would manifest as a crystallization of organic life, as a digitization of work and consumption and as a dematerialization of desire." [17]

This hallucinatory divination is not yet reality. And the tech-pessimism performed in this text can be countered with more nuance, without falling into tech-optimism. Graphic designer, artist and educator Paul Soulellis does so in his 2017 talk "Performing the Feed":

I approach network culture through the lens of experimental publishing and publishing as artistic practice, and I see that lens shifting dramatically right now, as algorithmic media and the network become more and more entangled. Making public is expanding into a new array of gestures and performative conditions that need to be examined and theorized, perhaps as a new paradigm. [18]

Soulellis defines the (old) publishing paradigm as revolving around "a fixed container in time and space — a carved stone, a poster, the book object, the printed page." As opposed to this: "In the new publishing paradigm, the container is open and fluid, maybe non-existent. Authorship is certainly no longer fixed — voice might be disguised, unrecognizable, or non-human."[19] For sure, digitality holds its own potential for play and radicality.

**In a World WITh Too many choIcES and Too lITTlE
TImE To ExplorE, play IS an ExcEllEnT STraTEgy. oBJEcTS,
roIES, BodIES, SETTIngS — anyThIng can BE TranSFormEd
In play. playIng acroSS TImE, SpacE, archITEcTUrE, BEdS,
hoUSES, lIVES, papErS. SUddEnly, a chaIr IS a planE IS a
STory IS an anImal IS an aVaTar IS a nEW rEalITy. rEThInKIng
ThE procESS oF maKIng mUSIc. pUShIng dEadlInES,
crEaTIng momEnTS To ExpErImEnT. or playIng on a
KEyBoard aS a Way To EScapE War. maKIng Up WorldS,
FIlmIng ThEm. SUrFIng Warm and cold WaVES. playIng
WITh IdEnTITIES. playIng En maSSE, lEarnIng From Each
oThEr. playIng To BE FrEE. (20)**

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of "The Cyberfeminist
Manifesto for the 21st Century," cyberfeminist VNS Matrix (collectively)
write "A Tender Hex for the Anthropocene":

> she barks:
> are vandals sleeping in the software?
> terror-garbed, unreason bound,
> they seize and sound
> flipping wayward surveillance agents
>   [corrupt, clinging like caterpillars]
> into hyperdrive
> a greedy storm builds
> the sky is crashing into the sea,
> [...]
> machines must be perverted, re-instrumentalised,
> redeployed in the service of the birds unking the castles,
> crown the swans
> fly on our feet
> towards a new nature (21)

As feminist writers, makers, publishers, we stay cautious when facing (and using) the seamlessness and ease delivered to us by large corporations. Could we learn from history that ease for some means someone else is paying a price? Can we stay with friction? Can we resist competition, and reach for collectivities? Can we burst the frames?

We stay in the margins.
We keep printing.
And we're looking for the digital margins.
Hold, touch. Release.
Fold. Wrinkle. Cut.

GIRLS LIKE US

GIRLS LIKE US is an indepedent magazine turning the spotlight on an international expanding community of women and transpeople within arts, culture and activism. Through personal stories, essays and vanguard visuals, GIRLS LIKE US unfolds feminist legacies in arts and writing. Mixing politics with pleasure, the magazine is mapping collaborative routes towards a non-patriarchy.

<u>Sources</u>

1) H.l.ne Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, Signs, vol. 1, no. 4 (Summer, 1976): 876.

2) From the Ancient Greek μετά (transl.: "with, across, after") and φέρω (ph.rō: "I bear, carry").

3) "People learn more quickly when an app's virtual objects and actions are metaphors for familiar experiences — whether rooted in the real or digital world. Metaphors work well in iOS because people physically interact with the screen. They move views out of the way to expose content beneath. They drag and swipe content. They toggle switches, move sliders, and scroll through picker values. They even flick through pages of books and magazines." From "Human Interface Guidelines," iOS Design Themes, Apple, accessed April 25, 2020, https://developer.apple.com/design/human-interfaceguidelines/ios/overview/themes/

4) "Editorial," Girls Like Us, issue #8: FAMILY, 2016

5) Hacking with Care, "The Handshake: A manual," Girls Like Us, issue #10: FUTURE, 2017, 46.

6) "Editorial," Girls Like Us, issue #10: FUTURE, 2017

7) Charlotte Bunch, "Feminist Publishing: An antiquated form?," HERESIES: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics, vol. 1, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 24–5

8) See: http://heresiesfilmproject.org/

9) "Editorial," Girls Like Us, issue #6: SECRETS, 2014

10) "To users, the cloud seems almost formless, or transparent — always available, ever-changing, hanging in the air, on screens, in waves, appearing and disappearing, 'formless cyberspace' indeed. Yet at the core of this informational ghost dance lies a rudimentary physical form — steel and concrete infrastructure. If the enormous, energy-slurping data factories are the cloud's true form, then these instances of the 'space of flows' recall the medieval castle, the treasure chest, and the military base." From Metahaven, "Captives of the Cloud: Part II," e-flux, issue #38, October 2012, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/38/61219/captives-of-the-cloud-part-ii/

11) "Editorial," Girls Like Us, issue #11:ECONOMY, 2018

12) American Artist, "BlackGooey Universe," unbag, 2018, https://unbag.net/end/black-gooey-universe

13) "Editorial," Girls Like Us, issue #6:SECRETS, 2014

14) Fiona Barnett, Zach Blas, Micha C.rdenas, Jacob Gaboury, Jessica Marie Johnson, and Margaret Rhee, "QueerOS: A user's manual" in Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016, ed. Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/e246e073-9e27-4bb2-88b2-af1676cb4a94

15) Sentence borrowed from Klara Utke Acs.

16) The original meaning of interface (from 1874) is "a plane surface regarded as the common boundary of two bodies."

17) Paul B. Preciado, "THE LOSERS CONSPIRACY," Artforum, March 26, 2020,18 Paul Soulellis, "Performing the Feed," a talk delivered at The Cybernetics Conference.

18) 2017, https://soulellis.com/writing/nov2017/

19) Ibid.

20) "Editorial," Girls Like Us, issue #5: PLAY, 2014

21) VNS Matrix, "A Tender Hex for the Anthropocene," 2016, https://vnsmatrix.net/projects/a-tenderhex-for-the-anthropocene

The new Izone building in Kyiv

Izone

Izone is a platform for cultural initiatives originally based in Donetsk, Ukraine. Its goal is to catalyse culture in Eastern Ukraine to facilitate systemi change and disseminate knowledge in a highly isolated region. In 2014 Izone's premises were occupied by filo-russian paramilitary forces, who severely damaged the building and the artworks contained in it. Since then, Izone moved to Kyiv, where it continues its battle to condemn the Russian invasion and to catalyse culture on a regional level in Ukraine.

izolyatsia.ui.org.ua

previous page: The 49.5m high slagheap on the `Izolyatsia` with a two-metre deer on its apex. From that same slagheap a panorama of the whole of Donetsk opens up.

WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE SCREEN PRINTING

If it weren't for screen printing, Matrijaršija might never have existed. The intricate network around Matrijaršija/Novo Doba/Fijuk, with its/ theirs innumerable and incalculable activities, has one solid component at its base. Because of screen printing we were looking for a workshop, we did more than that, we found a house, planted a garden, painted a fence, and settled down. Before that our practice remained expansive and nomadic either as a guest, visitor, or by colonizing other print workshops. We explored different chronotypes of our work/life through networking, cooperation and temporary alliances, by accident or good fortune.. However, the screen printing studio had to have its own home and furniture. One dark chamber to store screens in, one table for flashing the screens, one tub for washing them, one printing table, an organized drying area, storage for inks and other equipment.

Screen printing has always been attractive to scoundrels like us because it made it possible to carry out the printing process in so-called 'do it yourself' conditions, which would mean under one's own conditions, according to one's own rules. With the pandemic waves coming and going, when all our previous habits came into question, it became even clearer that we didn't know what we would be able to do, but we would always have screen printing.

Precise rituals, special tools, techno chemistry and magic, turned over time into a cultic source of complex organization, addictive commitment and obscene joy. The screen is not just an object, it is a transparent, permeable surface that can contain potentially endless amounts of images or parts of images, since all layers are printed separately. The screen has its own memory, its own ghosts, it endures

pressures, it has its own durations, it splits and changes at its own will, the marks on it may not be visible, but they are present.

Loyal to the screen, we have become a group of photosensitive photophiles and photophobes in constant play with semi-darkness, whose days are organized around the question of what can and cannot be exposed to the light. What is directly exposed to light, burned by light, what remains untouched by light in dark shade. Counting minutes and seconds and having large periods of time in between.

We used to be printing nomads, printing irregularly, intensively at other people's ateliers. We would print when occasion would allow. We have all gathered for different reasons, and we might have easily parted ways if it weren't for the screen. We got attached to the screen, (un) structured our time and relations around it,because the screen has its own time, rhythm and organization. In between there is a lot of waiting, a lot of time spent together. That time that cannot be scheduled, cannot be easily yielded, rationalized, purposeful, effectively used, fully actualized. Screen imposes a different kind of time. Time wasted and time dependent on the will of objects, and unpredictable interactions. You could tame some of that time by improving your equipment, working conditions, resources, machines (semi-automatic or automatic), but the uncertainty remains.

Screen imposes a different kind of time. Time wasted and time dependent on the will of objects, and unpredictable interactions.

There are several phases in the process of printing, all of which can fail and delay the process. The failure means that you have to erase all the existing traces on the screen and start the whole process all over again. Whatever you intend to do, you have to start and end with the clean, transparent screen that is pure potentiality. Waiting for the screen to dry

when washed with water is the first waiting. The thin coat of emulsion that is put on the screen also needs to dry in the dark. (emulsion is thick and sticky, it colors your skin yellow if you expose it directly, so you have to use appropriate tools). That is the second waiting. The amount of time needed for the emulsion to dry depends on temperature and humidity, type of emulsion, thickness of the layer put on the screen, size of the screen, season and time of day. You can have certain estimations, based on previous experiences, but they change all the time and you learn to wait. Flashing the screen means exposing the screen with emulsion to the light. Flashing time varies from 2,5 minutes, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 9 minutes. It varies of course because of different types of emulsion, types of lamp, the expiry date of the emulsion and other environmental factors. One of the first questions you would ask in a screen printing atelier you are visiting would be how long do you expose your screens to light. You always have to ask be-cause those who know the answer have also learnt it from the screen. A lot of knowledge in the atelier has to be circulated and transferred all the time. There is no fixed knowledge. There is experience and its variations. Everything is dependent on interaction between different agencies.

So, flashing the screen is the third waiting in the process where the aim is to create an image by printing several layers of color, one on top of the other. A flashed screen is showered with water which takes away the emulsion that was not exposed to light. That is the moment of revelation because all the previous phases were aimed at producing the screen with parts of emulsion "burned" i.e. that should not let the color through, making a barrier, while others that should be printed are transparent. While "opening" the image on the screen you never know if it will turn out right. You have to spray the screen with water and wait for the emulsion to start to melt, then you use a certain pressure of the water gun to remove the emulsion where there shouldn't be any. It is a fragile, sensitive phase where you have to be aware of the strength of the water pressure and the strength of the emulsion. Using the right pressure, not too much and not too little, is part of the search for the perfect balance where parts of the screen are kept closed or opened

up.

If this process was not successful and either the emulsion melted too much, or thin lines or tiny details are not clear and sharp you have to wash the emulsion from the entire screen and start the whole process again, all the waitings included. In between times for drying, flashing, washing, for revelations and mistakes, we were gathering, waiting for the screen to be just right for printing. It can take half an hour, but it can easily eat away a day.

Even when the screen is ready and dry, preparatory activities for printing take time. Putting the tape on all angles to stop the color leaking through surfaces of the screen not covered with emulsion, fixing the screen to the table, positioning the paper, to name just a few standard ones. We already know how much it takes to print 130 copies (our regular run) of one color on a 50x70 cm paper in standard circumstances. But we can also consider how much time it takes when things go in an unplanned direction: if the emulsion starts to dissolve, if the tape won't hold, if the print is blurred, or the color dries too fast, if the color is too thick, or mixed with too much water, if the paper gets wrinkled due to humidity in the air, if the paper was moving too much while printing the previous color, so the next color doesn't fit perfectly (counting in millimeters), if the screen is too close to the table, if the screen is too far from the table (counting in millimeters), if the vacuum that held the paper stuck to the table is not strong enough, or if it is too hard, if you don't press the squeegee equally against the entire surface, or if you press too hard, if the squeegee starts to release some previously used inks hidden in the joint, if a crumb is stuck to the squeegee, if a hair gets pasted to the screen, if the pressure made by the machine vacuum leaves uneven marks of color, if the screen breaks (!?). Sometimes you understand what has gone wrong and you can fix it but there are times when there isn't an immediate solution and you decide to stop printing and leave it all for the next day. The next day you might be able to act upon what went wrong but sometimes one cannot precisely determine, and therefore you have to accept this and just keep printing. Printing usually includes three people, with divided tasks (one positioning the paper, one printing, one removing the paper and putting it on the drying
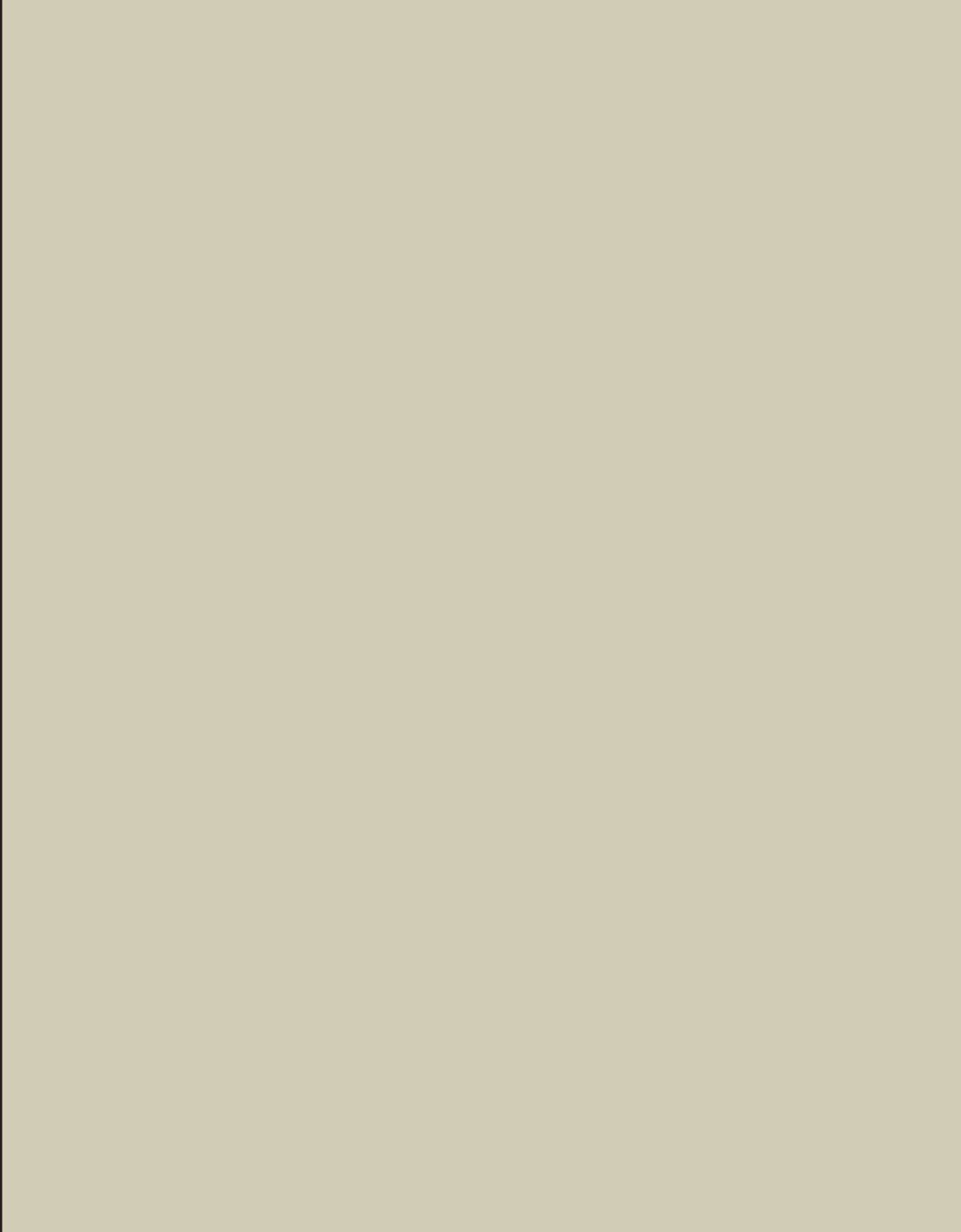
rack), all gathered around the screen and its moods. For us, printing is a gathering. There are solitary printers, but most often screen printing tends to organize groups of people who are occupied with it.

All the waiting made us spend time together and in the time passing, everyday life was passing by too. We were getting hungry and drunk, tired and weary, cold and dreary, laughing and trying. So, without structuring and organizing who we were, apart from screen printing, we would be eating, listening to music, making music, painting, telling stories, having ideas, making plans, caring, drinking, smoking, dancing, fighting. The time spent together separated those who could bear the rhythm of waiting and learning and exchanging in between and those who couldn't. We knew that none was better or worse, it just was like that.

It would be a pure idealization to say the screen conditions our relations, but it contributed to it. Conscious of the art practice, relations and life we wanted to live and pursue, we chose the screen and the screen chose us. Based on previous experiences in the arts scene, taking into account socio-economic environment, knowing of other types of organization, production, and loose hierarchies; we chose to start constructing and reconstructing our own printing home, somewhere in half-shade between darkness and light. For years and years now, we are dealing with processes in which images are first dissolved to be made whole again, and the effort to make it whole again also creates divergence. While we are printing one thing, we are thinking of another, we keep parts of the emerging images, separate layers, mix them with something else, someone else's. They settle in different series, books, and experiments. We make noise. The knowledge becomes noisy and dissolves into particles and loses its center. It is distributed between humans, objects and other elements. It becomes scattered and relational, as it really always is. Isn't it?

Matrijaršija

Matrijaršija is an autonomous and artist-run cultural center, based in Belgrade (Serbia) since 2014, when all activities that it includes materialized in one space. Today, its activities are numerous and spreading out to a screen printing and riso printing atelier among other things, running a Street gallery, organizing a festival of non-aligned comix Novo Doba (New Era) for 13 years, organizing Fijuk fair for small publishers (books, graphics and comix), working with Bitlsti (group of artists with mental disabilities), hosting artist in residency program, organizing parties, co-producing music editions, collaborating with institutions, festivals, collectives and artists from all over the place.

BAU

TOPIA