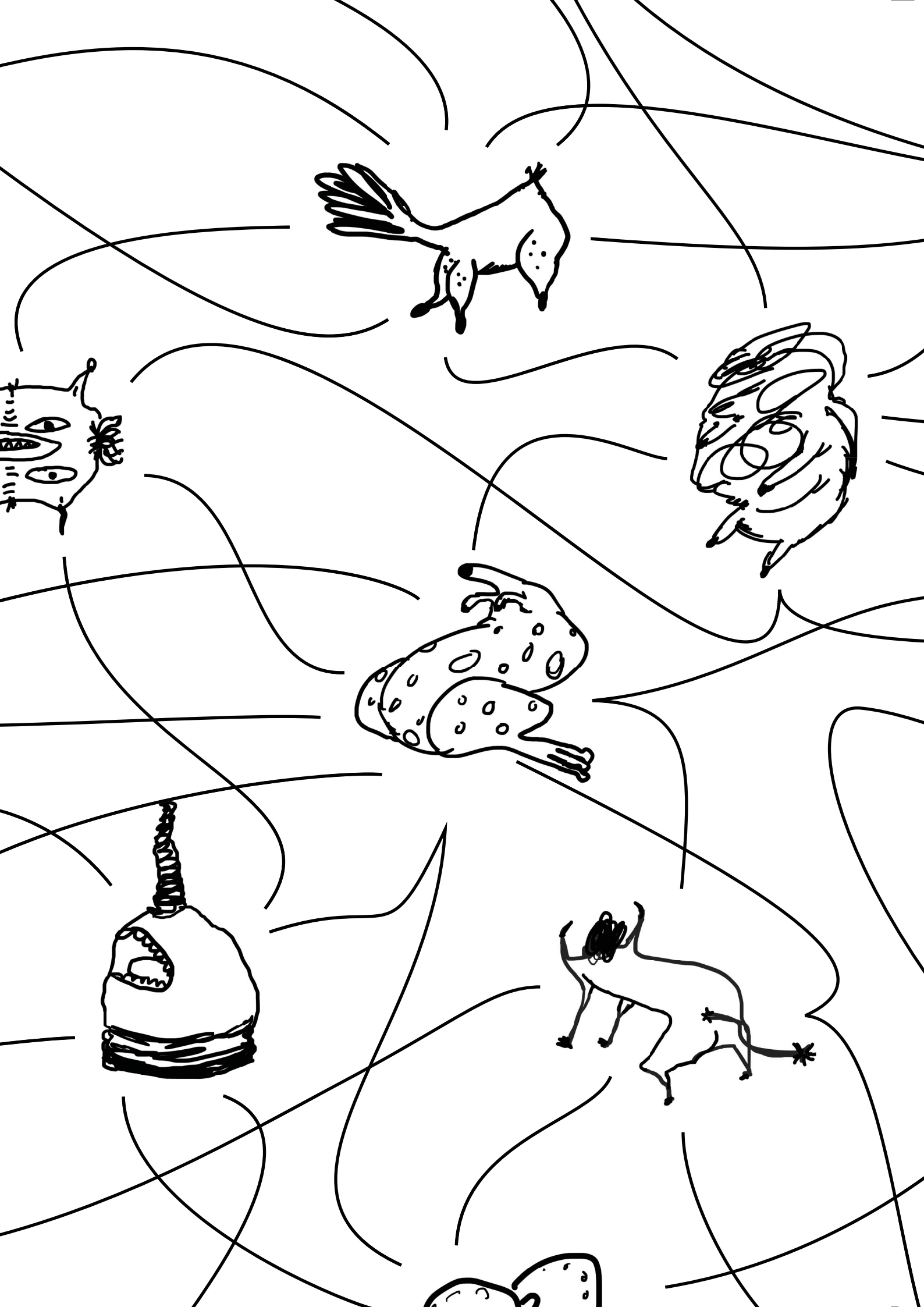


UNDERSTORIES

The
CreaTures Zine

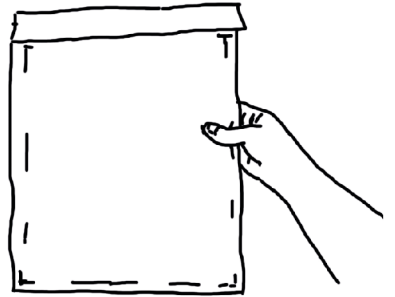
A loose and messy
collection of tales
bringing to light unseen,
yet critical conversations
that make a research
project alive.

Published with love in 2022.



Super Eclectic

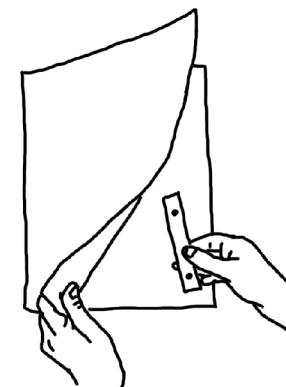
Make your zine



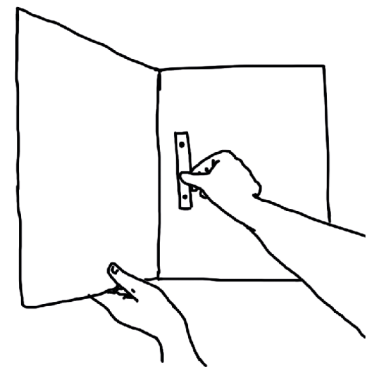
1. Your zine comes in envelope.



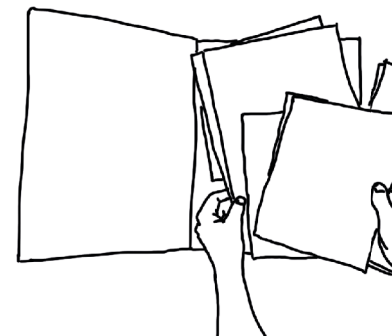
2. Take out its content.



3. Get the folder and the fastener.



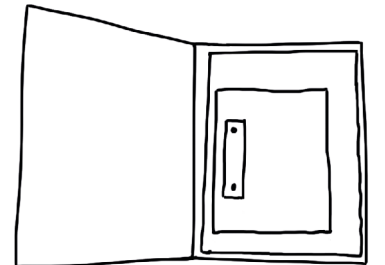
4. Install the fastener.



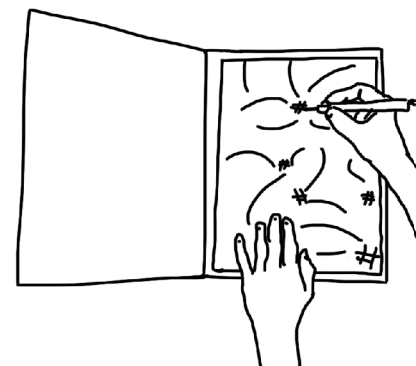
5. Sort out the content.



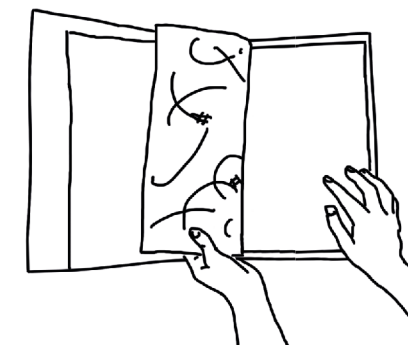
6. Organize it the way you want.



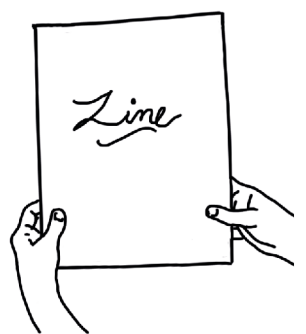
7. Secure it with the fastener.



8. Customize the dividers.



9. Use the dividers to organize the content.



10. Enjoy!

Tara Smeenk

Tales of Essence



The idea for the tales of essence came from a conversation about dividedness. We felt that the pandemic has been driving us apart, forcing us to only communicate online in efficient meetings. We wanted to rediscover our common ground, our shared motivations, our dreams as a community. That is what these tales are for. Based on deep conversations about our inner and outer worlds, they show us each other's essence. Where do we come from? Where do we go to? Where are we now? The poems tell you the stories of the CreaTures researchers told from the viewpoint of their hearts. They express strong activism, critical opinions, and firm words. But they are also filled with dreams, hopes, curiosity, warmth, and love.

I have been writing these tales with great pleasure, compassion, and for the benefit of all beings. Enjoy!

1 / 11

The origin

We thought we could be courageous and that we could do it
We needed to find alternatives and be bold
Support people who do things differently
Fight for the playfulness, the reflective tone, the open-endedness
I remember physically jumping

We said, the science isn't happening fast enough,
It isn't happening at a level that convinces people to move themselves
A cultural shift is essential
We need equality, justice, a fellow-feeling, reflection, and to work together
Sustainability is the predicament of our time, there is nothing else more urgent
That wasn't the narrative that was popular

Creatures has been an anchor,
A motivation, and a source of questioning
It is my life's work, this is what I want to do,
That's the level of audacity, and hopefulness, and passion that I need to see

The playground is a mud of hopeful hopelessness
Mud is simultaneously the source of life and a metaphor for unclarity
In the playground there are frames, tools, and toys
But running behind the bush and giggling instead of using a climbing frame
Is exactly what our values are upholding

There are also certain constraints: the instruments of torture to punish us
For doing something so different and possibly edgy
What keeps us sane
Is the ability to connect emotionally and existentially with the things that matter to us

We got to where we are through a lot of hardships
Pandemic included
I was awake most of the night
It is not incidental that it happened because an arts project caused a challenge
That's what art is supposed to do

We didn't know all the things
That we needed to contain to be free
There are so many ironies that we need to explore
Both through our writing and through surviving

One of the most unexpected things
Was the amount of challenges that we've had to face
But despite of them all we carried on and we are carrying on
People didn't let go
That means a lot



Where I come from

I come from the space of the inner sense
The space of internal work and self-evolvment
Where I come from, we make loops of everything that happens in the inside first
And then reflects
These loops we call awareness

We respond to the calling of the inner dimension to transformation
I don't know why it started
It was in my journey
It's one of those conversations that you have with yourself
Who am I? What am I doing in this world?
Why am I here?

If we go deep down into what really matters
We start questioning our purpose
Because suddenly, what happens in society, in the world
Doesn't give us fulfilment anymore
In the way it used to do before

I look around, and I look around
And everywhere around me
Where I come from
We ask the same questions
Even the children do

Where's humanity going?
How do we evolve?
I haven't changed my narrative at all
Have people changed?
We move from open societies to closed ones, to open ones again,
Those are the moments when you see if people have really changed

We won't talk about feminine energy
Talking about things that connect to your heart
Or your body, or the earth
And the very personal experiences and emotions that come with it
They don't like it

But we celebrate! We celebrate that there is value in being transparent
And showing our true selves
And secretly, we are calling it feminine energy

We create spaces to explore very intimate conversations
And we don't think strictly in frameworks
We are just there
In genuine connection, genuine encounters
And it's valued



I have been moving in-between worlds

Something in the universe has aligned,
And something that I was very much going towards
Is coming towards me as well

I have been moving in-between worlds in my life
The world of ecology and climate activism
And the world of arts and culture
This movement set me on the path to find ways to merge them

Knowing how socially engaged art
Is being thought of, is being conceptualized, is being done
It probably crossed my mind a few times
That my preference would be to do something of my own

Wrestling the impossibility of evaluation
In ways that were promised
While trying to produce something
Feels like a double thing that I have to do
When inhibiting both worlds

I feel comfortable in groups and spaces that have the collective ability
To be open and clear about anti-capitalist critique, colonization and imperialism
And the fact that it is not something that happened in the past
But that we are living with it now

There is a lot of silencing of the ways that oppression works
And talking about violence, being critical of the state, and thinking about how capitalism functions
Could add much weight, transformative power and radicalness
To the discourse around transformations

The creation of alternatives is essential work
This work is made much more meaningful, strong and wholesome
If we know what we are trying to resist
Because when we know what harm is caused, how and to whom
Our ability to resist can become the ability to create new ways of being with each other
In the widest possible sense

We have entangled ourselves in dependencies
And created a sense of collective caution
People might have internal policing
Thinking that it is too radical or too risky to say something
But it is not like that at all
It is about being able to be very explicit and upfront about what you believe in

Something in the universe has aligned,
And something that I was very much going towards
Is coming towards me as well



Everything beyond our immediate needs

Somehow I know
That we need art in our lives
But I don't know how to make a universal claim about it
That is what we are struggling with

Art is universal in its principles
But not in its specifics

I am learning a lot of new things
Mostly in the way of doing
But also through the language that we use
To articulate things in ways
That are a little bit more sensitive or nuanced
Than I am used to

The freedom of art comes with
A lack of accountability
They say you can do crazy things
Because "it's art"
But you are also not taken seriously
Because "it's art"
And it is easy for them to dismiss you

There is a possibility, a space there
You want to have a kind of exploration
And you want to have the possibility of trying crazy things
But when there is a specific responsibility attached to it
You become less daring

How can we go beyond
The individual creative practices?
Is it even fair
To put them on the same paper?

Somehow
The individual conditions of specific artworks
Don't really change the fundamental fact
That we need it

Making art is our way
Of thinking about things
That we are amazed by
Or that we don't understand
And that we don't have a way
To talk about

It's everything beyond our immediate needs



So precious, these moments

We are quite humble
Each of us doesn't know something
We have come through many bumps
Energy floating in the air
Wild

We cannot know everything
We can know a little bit
We will always have our perspective
Perspectives can be valid

Inner craving to sit around the fire and be there together
We have been doing this efficient bullshit for so long
Not real
So precious, these moments

Not knowing what we're doing
Saying it out loud, proudly
Empowering
We are not just extracting facts
Our conversations are meaningful

Some bad things can actually bring good
What we are doing is not clear to most of the world
Probably
We need to express ourselves in ways
More approachable for others

Easy to blame each other
Nobody did anything wrong
Nobody did anything illegal or unethical
Clear to everyone

Gaps in the system
Infrastructural gaps
Not that we can't fix them
They just emerged
They were revealed through us

We have to provide support
Not punish
We need to be on the same page
Together



What I feel is lost

The pandemic has happened
And we found other ways to connect

Any sense of loss
Comes from a reverence for the kind of practice
That I won't get to celebrate

Taking much care in bringing people together
In ways that are thoughtful
I have the most reverent respect for that

How odd, this weird reverse
It was so hard because the room was cold

Someone cared to come in early and put the heating on
Someone signposted the space
Someone saw the other's body being uncomfortable

Putting discomfort into the space
And working with that especially

What I feel is lost
When people generalize or instrumentalize creative practice
Is those things

All of the little forms of care
All of those little things that have to be done

All the reproductive labour
That doesn't matter
To the productivists

These embodied acts of facilitation
Should not be missed

I'm still searching for ways to address the loss
Strategic ways to bring the lost practices
Into the bigger story



Agency over your reality

I am still angry
That I have not been ably to do this for such a long time

I was fighting so much
To bring a drop of imagination
Into a horribly technocratic world

I do have a lot of positivity
But I also have a dark world view

I think it's wrong to be sleepwalking
To be sleepwalking all together
While the sleepwalkers dictate that we should do all kinds of nonsense
And keep us from being our full Selves
That can make me angry

I feel a lot of sadness
About all the people who think they are not allowed to live imaginatively and fully
Because they haven't learned how to do that and because everything tells them not to
I think that people are better than they are allowed to be

I believe that metaphors, myths and stories are the basis of our experience of reality
The imagination is ontologically more powerful than people think
It's not just making up something
To imagine is to reshape reality

Your body also participates in your imagination
You feel things through your imagination
And your imagination is shaped by your feelings
Being able to be fully in that opens up so many possibilities

If you understand that your imagination
And the interaction between your imagination and the life around you
Is a reality-structuring force
Then you can do everything differently

Imagination is not just imagination of the individual
It is a collective process of meaning making
And of understanding, inventing and filtering
Imagination is worldmaking

Bureaucratic places are constantly recreated by the imagination
There is no distinction between the imaginary world and the real world
Everything is mixed and entangled
One person's imagination can mean another person's death

Imagination is causally very powerful
Imagined futures determine everything we do in the present

Almost everything



Friction

It is in conflict
That new things are born

We have to be able
To hold the tension
Of the opposites

Without going to one polarity
Or the other

If we fall into this or that
One or the other
Either or
The tension collapses

To me
Art becomes exciting
When it's rebellious
When I don't understand it
When I don't want to look at it
When it shows me places
I'm hesitant to enter

Friction

The good thing is that
When art makes me uncomfortable
It makes other people uncomfortable as well
That is part of the work
And I enjoy observing it

It is this territory of friction
Of conflict
That carries the potential
For new life

I would love to build infrastructures
For translation
Exploration

Infrastructures that are strong enough
To hold tension
To even invite it

Become stronger because of it
And make us enjoy
Our own unease

And let us
Make peace

A deeper truth

Telling the story has become a challenge for us too
This is a lovely conversation
It is easier to think in terms of challenges
Than of successes

How do you give people a sense
Of an alternative potential reality
When they do not have space in them for it?
Or when they do not know how to find that space?

Talking about imagination, imaginaries, and reflection on difference
How do we help people believe?
We know that we are connecting to something
That is ultimately more important than almost anything else
We have something powerful

One persons' meaning is one persons' meaning
It can be a whole societies' meaning
But the transformation happens with one small group
Or a few people
Or an individual

We are trained to look for what the quick win is
And how we spread something fast
But in the end, to generalize transformation is to say
It has to be local, it has to be meaningful, it has to be rooted in place and land

There is a certain paradox, or irony
In the set-up of what we are asking ourselves to do
But it is the paradox that exists across the world now
If we do not design our way out of that
We will not be able to move away from the direction that we are heading in

There are layers of paradox and irony in everything that we do
Science is predicated on eliminating paradox
So the very fact that we are generating all these paradoxes
Makes us unscientific
And yet

We know there is a deeper truth there

Message from the author

Writing these tales was for me a process of healing and connecting in difficult times, and I sincerely hope that you have enjoyed them. The thought scares me that while I am writing this, war has started very close to my home and I do not know what the world will look like when you will read this in a few months from now. Of course, war is always happening in the world and it is also raging in myself. The connection between my inner war and the world around me partly inspired the poem "Friction", and relates to all the other ones. I keep asking myself, what can we do to help, when we feel like we have so little control? The answer, for me, lies in being within and living from my essence. I made the conscious decision to present the poems anonymously, because it is not about who said it. We all have our own tale of essence, but these tales are also connected. In other words, in a world of dividedness, polarization and conflict, we can find connection in our shared essence. Turning towards your essence is something we have much control over, and that we can very well do by ourselves. This is the message that I hope to spread.

Special thanks to the interviewees:

- Andrea Botero
- Ann Light
- Astrid Mangnus
- Cristina Ampatzidou
- Iryna Zamuruieva
- Jaz Hee-jeong Choi
- Joost Vervoort
- Kirsi Hakio
- Lara Houston
- Markéta Dolejšová
- Tuuli Mattelmäki



Colophon

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Contributors:

The list of contributors is expected to grow as more pages are being added to the Understories Zine. These are the people that we first embarked on this adventure with:

Cristina Ampatzidou, Isabel Beavers, Andrea Botero, Kit Braybrooke, Ruth Catlow, Jaz Hee-jeong Choi, Markéta Dolejšová, W. Liebrecht Fick, Felipe Gonzales Gil, Juliette Grossmann, Amira Hanafi, Anab Jain, Ann Light, Miranda Marcus, Tuuli Mattelmäki, Lydia Nicholas, Angela María Osorio Méndez, Anton Poikolainen Rosén, Jana Putrle Srdić, Genevieve Rudd, Tara Smeenk, Cassie Thornton, Kirsikka Vaajakallio, Iryna Zamuruieva, Klelija Zhivkovikj

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Disclaimer:

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CREATURES

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01: List of Contributors

Cristina Ampatzidou is a researcher with a background in architecture and urbanism. Her practice focuses on the affordances of new media, particularly games, for sustainable urban futures. Cristina has been alternating between academia and practice, currently working as a research fellow at RMIT for the CreaTures project and a film programmer of the Architecture Film Festival of Rotterdam.

Isabel Beavers is a transdisciplinary artist and creative producer based in Los Angeles. Her iterative work investigates ecology, climate, technology, and astrobiology. Beavers' work has been presented nationally and internationally.

Andrea Botero is Academy of Finland Fellow at the school of Arts, Design and Architecture of Aalto University and conspirator at the design studio Suo&Co. Her design and research work explores the possibilities and contradictions inherent in the design of environments, tools and media that afford more relational and caring interactions amongst, and between people and their environment.

Kit Braybrooke is an anthropologist and artist whose work explores digital-material futures. They are co-director of Studio Wê&Ûs, which helps institutions foster sustainable development through creative participation, and Senior Researcher at Habitat Unit, Technische Universität Berlin.

Ruth Catlow is a recovering web utopian. As artistic director and co-founder of Furtherfield London's longest-running (de)centre for art and technology she curates and creates collaborative, playful and emancipatory artworks to engage people across silos around emerging technologies and the wicked social and political problems they give rise to or intensify.

Jaz Hee-jeong Choi is the Director of the Care-full Design Lab and Vice-Chancellor's Principal Research Fellow in the School of Design at RMIT, Australia. Her transdisciplinary research and practice are often playful, multisensory, and participatory, and start from the margins to understand, imagine, and co-create just, liveable futures with humanly and otherly creatures.

Markéta Dolejšová is a design researcher experimenting with embodied, relational ways of knowing and doing, often in multi-species settings. She currently serves as a postdoctoral research fellow in the CreaTures project; Aalto University and co-leads creative and research activities at the Uroboros festival and the Feeding Food Futures collective.

W. Liebrecht Fick is a graphic designer and illustrator from South Africa. He is currently enrolled as a Master's student investigating the agency and contribution of artists and arts-based approaches in art-science collaborations where visions of social-ecological futures are co-produced.

Felipe Gonzales Gil works at ZEMOS98, a non-profit organization dedicated to cultural mediation. Felipe currently coordinates Commonspoly: an open source board game that fosters a culture of cooperation and. He also writes at elDiario.es about Internet culture.

Juliette Grossmann is a french philosopher on-the-go. After a degree in research philosophy at Sorbonne University, she decided to work with non-profit organizations to draw new action-research methods. She is currently working on the 'Collective practices using transformative narratives' research project with the Plurality University Network about how future narratives determine our conception of what is possible.

Amira Hanafi is a poet, researcher, cultural worker, and artist working with language as a material.

Anab Jain is a filmmaker, designer and futurist. She is the co-founder of Superflux, an experiential futures and design studio in London, working for clients such as IKEA, Google AI and UNDP. Her work has been featured on NPR Radio, BBC 4 and the Guardian, and exhibited MoMA, V&A and Venice Biennale amongst others. Anab is also Professor in Design Investigations at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna.

Ann Light is Professor of Design and Creative Technology, University of Sussex, UK and Professor of Interaction Design, Social Change and Sustainability at Malmö University, Sweden. She is a design researcher and interaction theorist, specializing in participatory practice, human-computer interaction and collaborative future-making.

Miranda Marcus is a technology researcher and creative producer working with data, digital & design. She currently leads BBC News Labs whilst also developing a creative practice exploring the social impact of technology using interactive media.

Tuuli Mattelmäki is associate professor in Design at Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Finland. She is expert in service design and co-design with a special interest in implementing design approaches for supporting change.

Lydia Nicholas is an anthropologist and researcher who explores intersections of technologies, bodies, and communities, and works with people to imagine and build systems which value care, sustainability, and connection.

Angela María Osorio Méndez is urban researcher and practitioner with a degree in Architecture and a PhD in Urban Studies. Her fields of research are: urban renewal, culture, welfare and urban migration. She is an activist in l'Asilo (Naples, Italy) and the Italian Network of emerging commons and civic use (Rete beni comuni emergenti a uso civico), where she is part of the working group on the depatriarcalization of politics. She is interested in the development of methodologies that enable political participation of voices left out of the main public debate sphere.

Anton Poikolainen Rosén is a PhD student in sustainable HCI at Södertörn University, Stockholm and Umeå University, Sweden - He studies more than human-centered design in urban farming communities.

Jana Putrle Srdić is intermedia art producer at Kersnikova Institute (Ljubljana), translated poet and novelists, but also writes reflections on different contemporary art forms.

Genevieve Rudd is a community artist from/based in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. She develops creative projects that encourage closer looking and connection with nature, such as walking arts projects.

Tara Smeenk is a Human Ecologist (MSc) and storyteller. She is studying to become a Jungian Psychoanalyst, and loves to work with the mythical, the imaginal, and the magical through spoken word.

Cassie Thornton is an artist and activist who creates a “safe space” for the unknown, for disobedience and for unanticipated collectivity.

Kirsikka Vaajakallio is a Principal Service Designer and partner at Hellon. She has a Ph.D. in service design and 20 years of experience in employee experience and customer experience design. She has specialized in organizations’ customer-centric transformations.

Iryna Zamuruieva is a Ukrainian-born, Scotland-based artist and researcher. Her work combines socially engaged art, interdisciplinary research and creating spaces to explore ways of encountering and being with more-than-human worlds.

Klelija Zhivkovikj is a transdisciplinary designer who investigates the building blocks of intimacy as organizing principles for models of resource extraction and distribution which can serve as alternatives to the existing ones.

**Ruth Catlow, Jana Putrle Srđić, Kit Braybrooke,
Felipe Gonzales Gil, Anab Jain, Iryna Zamuruieva,
Kirsikka Vaajakallio**

Meet the e CreaT ures



For engagement with and around creative practice to be truly participatory and impactful, its design must be informed by a rich understanding of the contexts in which the creative practices and engagement activities take place. There is limited understanding about research and practice around this nascent yet important field. One of our aims is to to investigate and share creative-critical voices for care-full engagement around creative practices towards transformational futures. For this reason, we have asked the people of CreaTures to present themselves by answering a predefined set of questions, in the form of an audio recording.

These questions were:

What is it that you “love” - what do you “love” in your work/practice? What sustains you during challenging times?

How did you get here? Was there a moment that started this journey or was it a gradual steering towards where you are now, doing what you do, being who you are?

What is the change/s you are trying to affect/make through your work?

How does the future you are creating through your practice (and/or along with others) look/feel?

What’s the future of „engagement“ in what you do and what are you doing about that?

What are your hopes for CreaTures?

What are your hopes for yourself?

Here is what some of them told us.

Kit Braybrooke

Senior Researcher, Habitat Unit, Technische Universität Berlin - habitatunit.de

Co-director, Studio We&Us - studiowe.net

Co-founder, Art/Tech/Nature/Culture - atnc.persona.co

I

I am a digital anthropologist and artist from Canada living in Berlin whose work explores creative futures across digital, material and multispecies terrains.

As a practitioner, I co-direct Studio Wê&Üs, which builds spaces of care and reflection that foster sustainable development through creative participation. This builds on my work over the past decade managing public programmes that explore systems change through regenerative cultures, from commoning and open source to circularity - working as Mozilla’s Curation & Codesign Lead from 2013-15, exploring



the circular economy with creatives in China as a British Council delegate, launching the world’s first Open Knowledge Festival in Helsinki & co-founding Art/Tech/Nature/Culture in 2020 with CreaTures collaborators Lara Houston and Ann Light, a global community for creative practitioners at the intersections.

As a researcher, my approach to ethnographic inquiry spans the posthumanities and design to gather community tales of wordly transformation. I am informed by multispecies and posthuman anthropology in particular, in the tradition of Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing and Eduardo Kohn. In my work, I am currently researching the role of everyday socialspatial practices in fostering sustainable development across three Living Labs in Taizhou, China and Thüringen, Germany on the project ‘Urban Rural Assembly’ with Technische Universität Berlin and Tonji University Shanghai. I have conducted fieldwork across Asia, Europe and Canada and I have a PhD Media/Cultural Studies, University of Sussex for ‘Hacking the Museum’, a study of sociospatial power relations in the UK’s first museum makerspaces at Tate Modern, Tate Britain, British Museum and Wellcome Collection.

The thing that gets me the most excited these days is participating in the construction of utopian, hopeful spaces that experiment with regenerative cultures, from repair and maker communities like ‘Chaos Communication Camp’ and festivals like Burning Man to cultural community centres such as Berghain and Floating University, where diverse beings come together to rethink the unhealthy power relations that got our species into a state of climate crisis, and build alternative worlds that prioritise collective care and well-being, and nourish our interconnectedness to the 5 million other species who live on this planet - following what the anthropologist Eduardo Kohn has referred to as “an ecology of selves”.

I’ve seen this happen in many different contexts: when facilitating creative workshops that explore cultural heritage

with migrant communities in museums, for example, or when spending time in public parks and getting to know the names of their multispecies inhabitants. These experiences have shown me that we don't need much as humans to come together and build new alternatives. We just need to share an intention: to look outward, beyond our own subjectivities and towards a wider sense of community made up of many different kinds of subjects, each with their own ways of perceiving and interacting.

II

I have always lived as a migrant in-between cultures and nations. I'm Canadian, but I grew up in the middle of the desert in Las Vegas, USA and I've lived in cities like Vancouver, London, Oxford and Berlin. In the pre-Covid times I was continually travelling, because I wanted to understand what it means to live in different cultures. From driving a tuk tuk with no doors across India from Kerala to Rajasthan, to working with craft communities in China, to taking a train through Vietnam, there was always more left to learn. My experience of being brought up as a third culture kid, an alien, always a bit on the outside is what led me into the worlds of science fiction, from cyberpunk to solarpunk, and its diverse visions of what alternative futures can look like. This is also what inspired me to become an anthropologist and study what these worlds look like from the experiences of the communities who are most impacted by them - human and more-than-human alike.

I also grew up learning a great deal about multispecies kinship in the company of companion species, and in particular dogs, working in animal hospitals and dog day-cares for many years. I've always viewed other species as individuals, parts of my own community and family. This is why the projects that I am most nourished by, like CreaTures, are those that rethink the ways that we perceive other beings, to nourish more equitable earthly relations.

III

I co-founded the creative lab We & Us because I wanted to explore the possibilities of a world that prioritises care, inclusion, and collective wellbeing over profit. Our conceptual framing is derived from the ancient tradition of commoning, where public resources (from forests, artworks & public spaces to digital code) are collectively shared within a community, in ways that facilitate worldly regeneration. Our approaches are diverse, inclusive and always participatory, from speculative design, critical making and socially-engaged art, to ethnographic research and public interventions. Our way of working looks a lot like the symbiosis of lichens, fungi and algae - trusted others exchanging creative labour through evolving kinship constellations that foster mutual benefit. As the British Lichen Society states, "a lichen is not a single organism; it is a stable symbiotic association between many."

By co-creating new things together in ways that are applicable and useful in a wide variety of contexts, we are powerful. With this in mind, I feel that public engagement - making people feel engaged and welcome in your space - is the most important part of every academic research project if we truly want to make a difference in the world through our work. I decided to study access in museums for my PhD, for example, because when I first moved to London ten years ago, I didn't feel welcome at all in museums like Tate or the British Museum. As a recent migrant I felt like an outsider, looking in at elite spaces for people that weren't built for people like me. In Las Vegas I didn't grow up going to museums. I walked some of my first steps in casinos like Caesar's Palace. That's what the culture was. So, I really had to learn how to find a sense of agency in 'high-end' arts and cultural spaces, bit by bit, and a lot of that came from working with museum practitioners who care a great deal about community engagement with the arts. This is the kind of experience that many people who weren't lucky enough to grow up around art have had. It really takes time to feel welcome, to feel you belong. So, in a big way my work has always been about harnessing creative approaches to help other people feel welcome, too. By offering a variety

of hands-on ways for us all to get involved, to try things out on our own terms, and to reflect together.

IV

My hope for CreaTures is that this project becomes something that lives beyond the three years of its funding, that it grows outward, organically, and continues to evolve over time – a bit like an ecosystem or a living organism. I launched Art/Tech/ Nature/Culture on an email discussion list in the early days of the covid-19 pandemic with CreaTures collaborators and many others working in between art, tech, cultural and ecological worlds because we felt there was a real lack of digital spaces for creative people to gather and reflect on new ways of being in the world that offer alternatives to business as usual. The network now has almost 500 members, so it does seem that we have struck a bit of a collective nerve. It feels like we are living a bit of a zeitgeist moment in our history, where very many of us are looking for something which looks very different from that which came before.

My hopes for the next year are both simple and complex. First of all, I am putting together a polyphonic dog opera with fellow artist and kindred CreaTures spirit Iryna Zamuruieva, which uses open-source wearables to explore interspecies sensemaking in urban space, and we are hoping its first iteration will emerge from Athens. I also hope to have more time for the things that matter the most: To spend more time with my kin, family and chosen; to work on my art; to keep learning tai chi; to celebrate. After covid-19, I hope to never take such seemingly small things, like meeting in person or going out to dance, for granted again.

Ruth Catlow

Artistic Director of Furtherfield

The question ‘what do you love’ is just such a brilliant starting question because it gets me into an imaginative space. I think ‘many things’ is the answer, but if I were to try and sum up what I most love, places and the things that make those places what they are... their cast of characters would be one way of talking about it. Its characters are its plants, its animals including humans, birds, insects, all kinds of things... When I imagine a place that I visited recently, a place that I had a wonderful time in, I remember the water running through it, I remember the lichen, the rotting fence post, I remember the Holly and the Ivy and the Oak and the Hazel, and somehow it’s these characters with their names and their qualities, the sheep crowding against the gate having crossed the stream; all these things together being together in a very particular way: this is what I love. The reason I love it is that it awakens in me a curiosity about the relationship between these beings and all the many, many ways any beings relate to each other.

What I most love in my practice is creating places where these beings can come together and play. I guess I see play as the most open and active form of relating, because the norms aren’t already set. When I say the norms I mean, what play does: it opens up the possibility for finding new ways of relating to each other that we forgot or may have ruled out, or that we constrained through politics or social conventions, what it means to be polite, or correct, or to gain status etc. By creating a playful space we’re freed from those constraints temporarily to find out what other potentials might exist in the relations between us.

I really want to explore what this play means across species, so across and between others. Beings not like me. Let’s face it: there are no beings like me, no beings are like you, but the similarities, like the further we move away from people

like us, the more imaginative we have to become in our ways of learning how to communicate and I feel and that is where this practice is going. This can go into all kinds of areas: these beings might be technical beings -they might be machines, they might be mechanical systems, they might be socio-technical systems, they might be human beings who have a culture that is somehow invisible to me because of my condition, alongside the cultures of animals, plants and living systems.... This is where things are heading for me.

I am most sustained by connections with people who share my feeling and understanding that the thing that is most dangerous to us is to become disconnected and dispersed. Right now, the most inspiring and sustaining work that I see going on are in projects like The Hologram where we see people coming together to learn in new ways how to produce collective healthcare between themselves, to see themselves, as Cassie Thornton says, "as the medicine".

Also, we have been producing live action roleplays since lockdown and, these have been incredibly inspiring to me because I see people making meaning and making meaning together in new ways. They make me laugh out loud with their ingenuity sometimes and they are also offering great insights into the current situation. I'm spending time with people who are living through very, very complex difficulties and seeing people learn how to be open about those difficulties is very sustaining and I learn a lot from them and try to pass that on. Like not pretending everything is ok all the time.

II

How have I come to live the life I am living? I started out as a sculptor but the places where my sculptures ended up in the art world in the mid-90's felt meaningless and confusing to me so, to put a sculpture in a gallery for someone who had the money to buy it was very discouraging to me as a way of relating to the world. Around that time, I had my first encounter with the web and that coincided with me meeting



Marc Garrett who introduced me earlier to bulletin boards - these spaces where people were creating their own technical spaces to gather and share content, poems, political rants, instructions for action...-, and this really opened up a new world for me and the idea that we could create our own art world and our own context for our art.

I see the internet as an artistic medium, as a medium where we build ourselves together with others around the world. This really landed to connect with play in a participatory net artwork I made in 2003 called Rethinking Wargames. I had been on a march with a million people to protest the Allies' planned attack on Iraq only to be told by Tony Blair how privileged we were to have the democratic right to protest, and to see the reports of those marches diminished. At that point I think I understood that war is always an attack of the wealthy and powerful on the poor. I reconfigured an image of a chessboard with all the pawns on one side and all the higher pieces on the other and sent it to chess forums to ask under what conditions the pawns in this game could defend world peace... This catalysed a whole lot of arguments with angry chess players who didn't like me messing with their game, but also an understanding that through existing games that basically are there to train us to think in terms of hierarchy and dominance that, by making small hacks and using these as our places for play we can really engage people very quickly in how you might change things.

I made a game in the end where each player flipped a dice to define whether they could play the higher piece or the pawns, and if the pawns could prevent violence or prevent peace being taken away, the board would progressively be overtaken by grass, different grasses and eventually the cheque board would disappear under a wonderful ecology and world peace would be declared.

III

Furtherfield's presence in Finsbury Park - running a gallery in



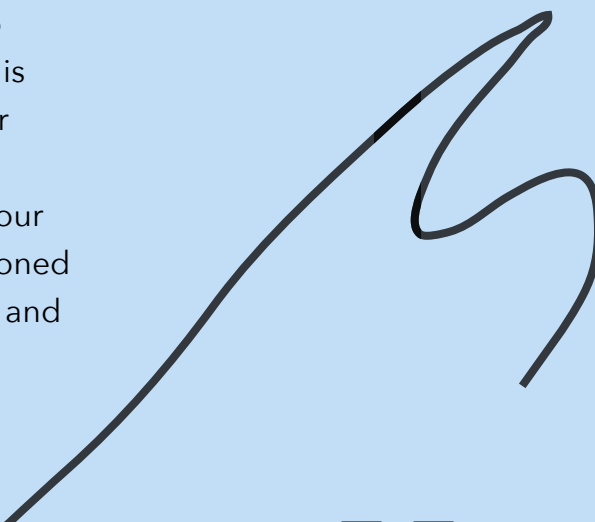
the heart of a park in North London has put a much greater emphasis on the work that is to be done in a physical space with people, with bodies in places and understanding that I really want to learn from the people who live in places because they have the knowledge and the expertise about what is good for those places.

A problem with the internet is that we can overreach and lose touch with our own physicalities, our own physical needs, our own bodies and what's going on inside them. The work in the park has reminded us that we are part of a physical web of life as well as this kind of fast-moving, electronic web of knowledge and excitable exchange that is the internet.

The change that we are trying to affect is to create a larger place, or a larger context for people to be able to come together with that open, playful and curious attitude to recognise the potential of these webs of relationships that we exist in. To better understand....to reconcile life in full physical form with life in global networks.

I feel like we're toddlers in the networked age with so much to learn together about living with this wild and wonderful communication network that we have built at a planetary scale. But learning how to make it work for ourselves as part of a network of living beings...wow, there's a lot to be done there. And creating playful, friendly spaces, where we can learn new ways to be kind to each other -it feels like it could start!

The future we are creating through our practice would be a future where people are brave enough to ask for what they need from each other. Where we're less constrained by shame in admitting our vulnerability and where requests for help are met with pleasure and a sense of empowerment. This is something I've learnt from The Hologram is that asking for what we need is so bounded by shame for so many of us and this is something to do with the way money works in our society...the way money is used or the way we are conditioned by the use of money is to think everything is a transaction and



that everything in that transaction must be calculated.

The future I'm looking for is one where we've learnt that money is our tool, not our master...

Really attending to the needs and wellbeing of each other and making those others; understanding the range of otherness and revelling in the range of otherness feels like a good future.

My hope for CreaTures is that we create a place that is populated with delicious new languages and rituals for generating mutual well-being between beings and healthier systems for those beings to live in. My hope for myself is that I play some part in that and that I get to enjoy doing it.

Felipe Gonzales Gil

ZEMOS98 member

I am part of ZEMOS98; It's a small team, a small organisation located in Seville, in the South of Spain. We work at the intersection between the political and the cultural. We try to be in between many different social agents, such as activists, artists, people from academia, journalists, media makers, public and private institutions. Most of the time, our job is to connect them, to foster synergies and to co-create and co-produce solutions for social and political issues.

We are very attached to social movements, and we have a strong activist approach to what we do. That means that even though we are not a public institution, sometimes we conceive what we do as a 'public service', we just aim to be sustainable as an organisation rather than thinking about profit or obtaining benefit.

This means that we often have problems with paying the rent, and we have a precarious life. In the last crisis we accumulated a huge debt - it was €160,000 and we needed to do a campaign, not a crowdfunding, but more... We were



considering asking for a loan to COOP57, an ethical Spanish co-operative, which gives loans to cooperatives and other organisations like NGOs. In order to be eligible, you have to prove that you are socially engaged, and you need to prove that you have a community that will sustain you, in case you cannot pay back. So, we did a campaign in 2012 and we gathered 271 people, who committed to provide the money in case we were not able to pay back the loan. They didn't have to pay any money but sign a document to ensure that if there was a problem with ZEMOS98 they would be there.

We gathered €107,000 (which is a lot!) but it was also a crucial moment for the organisation, because we were thinking to just stop our activities and to close our organization. Just after that, and this is more personal, I had my first kid, Ada - in honour of Ada Lovelace; and life changed. Even though most of the time I love what we do there at Zemos98; when we had Ada, and now we have two kids - Jara is our second one - we realised that work-life balance is very hard to achieve. Before we were compensating this precariousness with having more time, and doing something we loved like working on a small project, having no boss, wearing whatever we want in the office everyday etc.

When we had kids...our time availability changed and so did the way we approached precariousness. We had to be responsible for a vulnerable life...it was not now only paying the rent but paying for everything else that someone who is little needs. I was facing many doubts and remember thinking "What do we do; why are we keeping this? I am 39 years old. I know that for certain standards, I am still young. But I know that if I want to go back to the market, it's not going to be easy. With the crisis we have 45% of youth unemployment in Spain. My profile is not really easy, I still struggle to explain what we do to people because it has a research side, an activist side, it's related to cultural and artistic practices and it's partly what you could be doing in a volunteering organisation, but it has many professional layers. But it is also experimental, so it's new. Although I feel I could be joining many different



teams in different places, in my curriculum there was only one organisation. So, I have spent my 20 years of professional life in the same organisation. Which is not good, if you want to have an interview or..."

So, one day, when Ada was, I think, four years old, we were coming back from the swimming pool. She always was really good with words, with language. She started reading at the age of three; first, single words, and then sentences...It was a very shitty day because we were about to leave our flat, we couldn't pay the rent what the landlord was asking for. They were going to sell the property and we were trying to find a new place. We had been looking for almost a year, the prices were so high because of the housing bubble we have in Spain. And I was really, really worried. I was feeling anxiety, "What are we going to do?", we were about to have a second kid, my partner Sofia, she was pregnant. So, it was a sad, sad day for me. Of course, she didn't know - she was four years old. Just when we were 400 meters from our flat, she told me "Do you know, Papa, that the floor is listening to us?", and I said "What?" - I was thinking about the emails I had to respond to, the budget that we needed to do, that problem in the participatory process that we were facing, and to be honest in the beginning I didn't even reply. I was lost in my own thoughts, but she insisted and began to say: "The floor isn't only listening, Papa, it's telling us things but in a very quiet way, so we cannot listen." So, at that point she got my attention, and I just asked her about that. There was no reason for her to tell that. It was just something she came up with. And I thought, "What a strong metaphor, right?". We are not aware of what is happening with our environment'; we don't listen to our environment.

This idea, that the floor is telling us things, but we don't listen. I never got why she came up with that idea. But what I can ensure is that this is why we continue working to date, why we are part of CreaTures, and why we continue struggling with precariousness, and with the idea that we need a more cooperative and inclusive democratic world...

I am building a world in which she can use her imagination to tell something, to tell a story which can transform me, in this case – I can ensure you that this really was empowering to me, not as a father but, even as a person! I felt equally connected to her, and she was four years old, and I was 35.

That is the kind of future I would like to imagine that we are helping to create. A place where more and more people are using their imagination to have a fairer world in which we respect more the environment and we build better cities, better communities with inclusiveness and more democratic ways of deciding things together.

Anab Jain

Co-Founder and Director, Superflux

I

I describe myself as an artist, a filmmaker and a designer. I suppose what I love the most about my work or my practice is the opportunity to explore intangible concepts; the opportunity to try and bring them to life through various kind of formats, that's what really drives me. The opportunity to be able to creatively engage with different mediums and talk about and engage with some really critical and important issues and bring them to life.

I don't think there was a moment that particularly led me to this journey or this point; I was always interested in something like filmmaking and design. I ended up studying filmmaking in India and realised that there was also a part of me that was more interested in a collaborative approach. The film projects gave me a certain amount of satisfaction and I was working on it as a documentary filmmaker, so it was really exciting to go out into the field and meet so many incredible people and

spaces, this is something that I still really enjoy doing a lot. At some point I felt that the translation from those ethnographic observations into something that shows potential was something I really missed. This was why I joined the Royal College of Art and then ended up starting Superflux with my partner Jon Ardern.

Our practice is a kind of slow, critical activism because the work we do is often in the space of speculative design but perhaps more like critical design. Anthony Dunn and Fiona Raby talked about it in their books but also when they were teaching at the Royal College of Art. My own practice and Jon's practice together have been focusing on: "How can different possible futures that we are able to bring to life start painting a different picture of the world? Start showing that other worlds are possible? Start showing that we have the opportunity to make more informed, better decisions today?". So, our work isn't about walking on the streets with placards. While we completely understand the importance of that kind of activism, our work is more about changing how people think, how they perceive the world, how they might think differently, how we might catalyse their imagination to do so.

I think the future is really a lens to look at the present, so our intention when thinking about the future is not to imagine the ideal future we want to end up in, but to say "If we were in a different future, what does it feel like and what are the potentials of that future? What are the unintended consequences of that future?". Then we come back to the present and see how things can be different today, to achieve that world. And this is completely dependent from a very individual and locational point of view; every single person's lived experience of the future will be different, and so we are very aware of not trying to suggest that this is "the future" or "a future" but more like a possible future, one possible future – it will be different for different people.



II

We have such incredible organisations in the CreaTures project that we have the opportunity to partner with! I'm hoping that together we can create a new body of work that shows a different way to start thinking about climate change, about art practice and about engaging people across multiple different disciplines. We want to show that so much of the work that needs to happen around climate change can happen if people are willing to get behind it. And for people to get behind it, they need to really, emotionally understand how such an enormous hyperobject affects their personal lives. We believe that art, and stories, and imaginative, expansive, creative work can get people on board and start to show a vision of a more regenerative and hopeful future.

Jana Putrle Srđić

Kersnikova Institute

I live and work in Ljubljana in Slovenia. I am a poet, novelist, intermedia producer, and occasionally I publish articles on art.

As an art producer I worked for more than a decade for a small Slovenian publisher. We were also organising events in other countries such as translating workshops with poets. Later, together with my friends, who were also artists and curators, we founded a small cultural organisation, and we were presenting emerging art in the form of exhibitions and public interventions, for example large inflatables in public spaces, or sculptural works with organic materials. We had public discussions about art, and we were quite dispersed and somehow open to experiment.

This was a good preparation for my later work when I started to produce artworks in Kapelica gallery, this became part of a larger umbrella institution called Kersnikova Institute. A

few years later we established BioTehna lab for artistic work with living systems, so in the last few years I have been quite involved in BioTehna with artists who work with live materials.

I could say that I live in a bubble of art. Very early on in my life, my first love were books...I started with books and literature, basically reading stories, fairy tales and poems. Books have taught me how to think in unusual ways, how to be present in the world, how to put myself in someone else's shoes, to look at the world as an animal, as a plant, as another person. And I think this is very crucial as a foundation of one's own mental world, and also my love for art starts and ends with books. It started with books in my childhood, and I end with books every evening when I pick one up and start to read.

In a way it accustoms you to abstract ideas and offers you a new way to live your life. You can learn very practical things like in a books of Herta Müller or Slovenian writer Vitomil Zupan there are writings on how to survive in a prison or in a concentration camp, what to do with your mind to endure it. I was never in those situations, but nevertheless it is something you can learn about.

I think literature and art can teach you how to think as a free person and in a way that you are not expected to think when society puts you in a certain frame of ideas and values. Art shows there are other solutions to the same problems, not necessarily the ones we are pushed into, and it opens us to be freer, to resist the education systems, the institutions; everything that tries to enforce boundaries and distinctions. And art with all imagination allows us to become more free people.

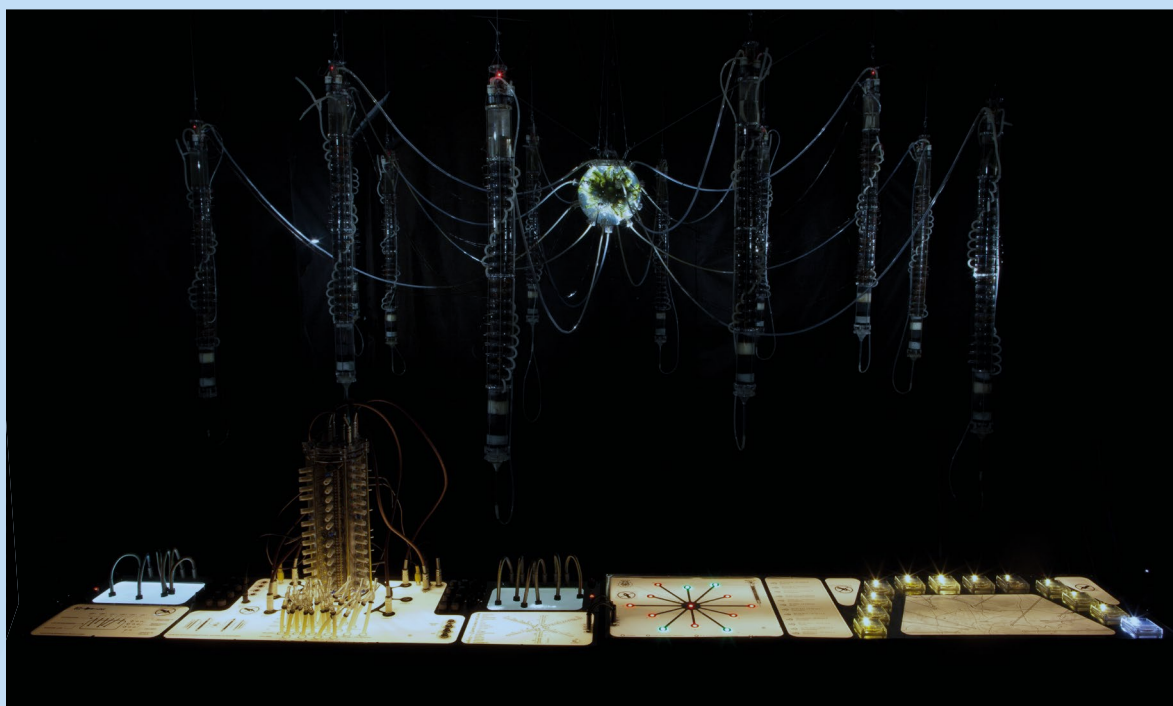
After literature, the next step for me were art films. I was watching them all the time as a student in the art cinema. The editing of images and the storytelling through images have been a great influence and probably brought me closer to visual artists.

I was studying languages and I had friends from the art academy, so I was visiting lectures there. There were some great talks, on modernism – for example. This was like a parallel world that I was pulled into. Suddenly I had all these friends who were artists, and I still haven't stepped out of this circle.

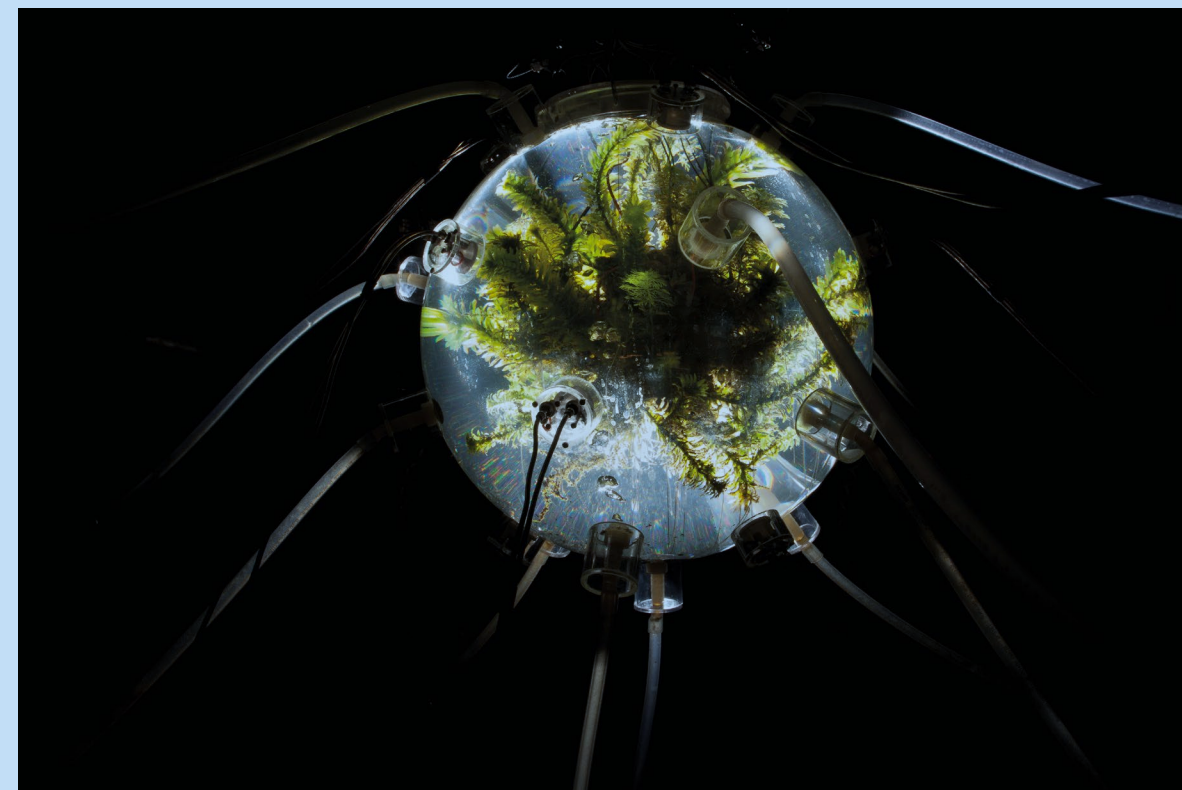
II

We established our own art organisation because we were young and wanted to do things differently from the more traditional ways. But eventually this led me to a gallery where they appreciated what I was doing, and I became a part of Kapelica's team.

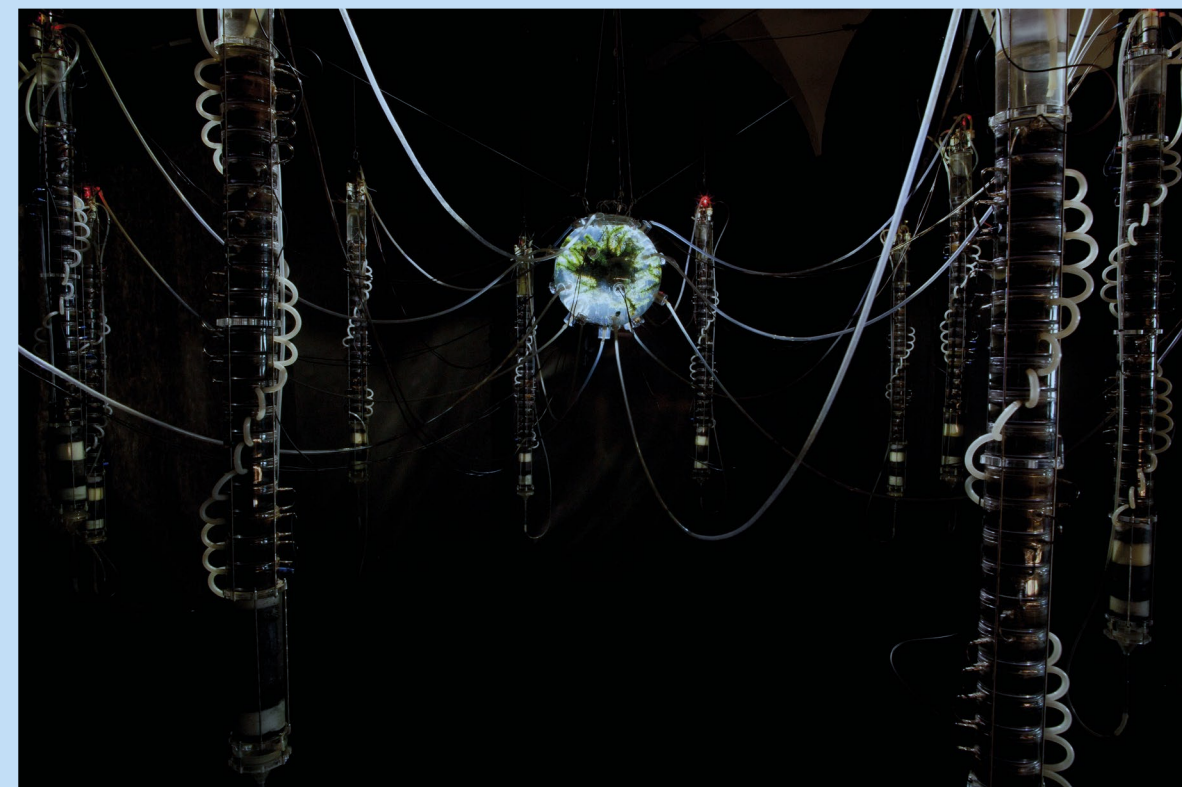
I was thrown into this situation where two of my co-workers were on maternity leave, so it was just the curator and me. We were preparing a demanding exhibition of Australian artists, Helen Pynor and Peta Clancy, that was called The Body is a Big Place. In this project, we established perfusion, a circulating blood flow through big living hearts. We got



Gilberto Esparza (foto: Miha Fras)



Gilberto Esparza (foto: Miha Fras)



Gilberto Esparza (foto: Miha Fras)

them straight from the slaughterhouse and hung them in the gallery to create this circulating blood system, and the hearts were beating for 48 hours in the gallery and both artists were sleeping there on the floor with them. It was quite a demanding and involving project, pondering the boundaries of life and questioning whether the organs outside of the body are alive or not.

I tried to connect this with the CreaTures projects...and I would mention that one of my first exhibitions with the Mexican artist Gilberto Esparza was also interesting in a way that I learnt how his art pieces really connect with concrete environmental problems, such as cleaning the rivers in a self-sustainable way or recycling the garbage. And he made really wonderful projects from these ecological ideas. Later I found out he was planning to use these ideas and his art pieces on his own land around his house.

Another interesting setup came from Koen Vanmechelen, a Belgian artist who started his art from his living environment on a chicken farm and used those chickens to mix the purebreds. For example, the Belgian rooster with the Slovenian hen, and then would raise those chickens basically to be healthier. In a way it has to do with national pride, with the idea of 'clean' breeding and then his own mixed breed, which is much stronger – so it defies the idea of pure race. The way he connects the visual image of roosters with the installations, with live chickens is impressive. It goes from live installations like the one at Kapelica gallery, to communities that he creates around the world, for example he has a small chicken farm in an African village that involves all the people there. It's really amazing and it shows how art can provide not only solutions but also added value and inspiration. These projects are partly funded by fertility research for humans because he has a good track of breeding history of his animals.

Also, for me it was taking care of live hens and roosters in a gallery, and their eggs – putting them in an incubator, growing



the chickens, doing the practical work like vaccinating the chickens and trying to export them back to Belgium. It was exciting times for someone just being new in a gallery.

With these examples I am trying to connect dots within different art projects to show how art can be relevant for a society. I think our projects miss theoretical reflection and positioning in the field of contemporary art, there are so many good art projects that reflect on societal problems and try to find solutions even before people recognise these as problems. Such is the case with the value and free flow of internet data that appeared in art in the 90's and biotechnologies at the moment. I would love for CreaTures to recognise this potential in art works and art platforms that enable them.

III

What I would personally love to achieve with what we do is to reduce the fear of future changes, induced by new technologies and the negative perception of being able to shape life, and the notion of artificial intelligence being a threat to us.

With artists we also deal with new, cutting-edge science such as quantum biology, the 'mini brains' or so-called 'organ-on-chips', artificial intelligence being a mediator between human and a dog, for example in Maja Smrekar's !brute_force project or artificial intelligence as a communicator with a plant in Spela Petrič's PL'AI.

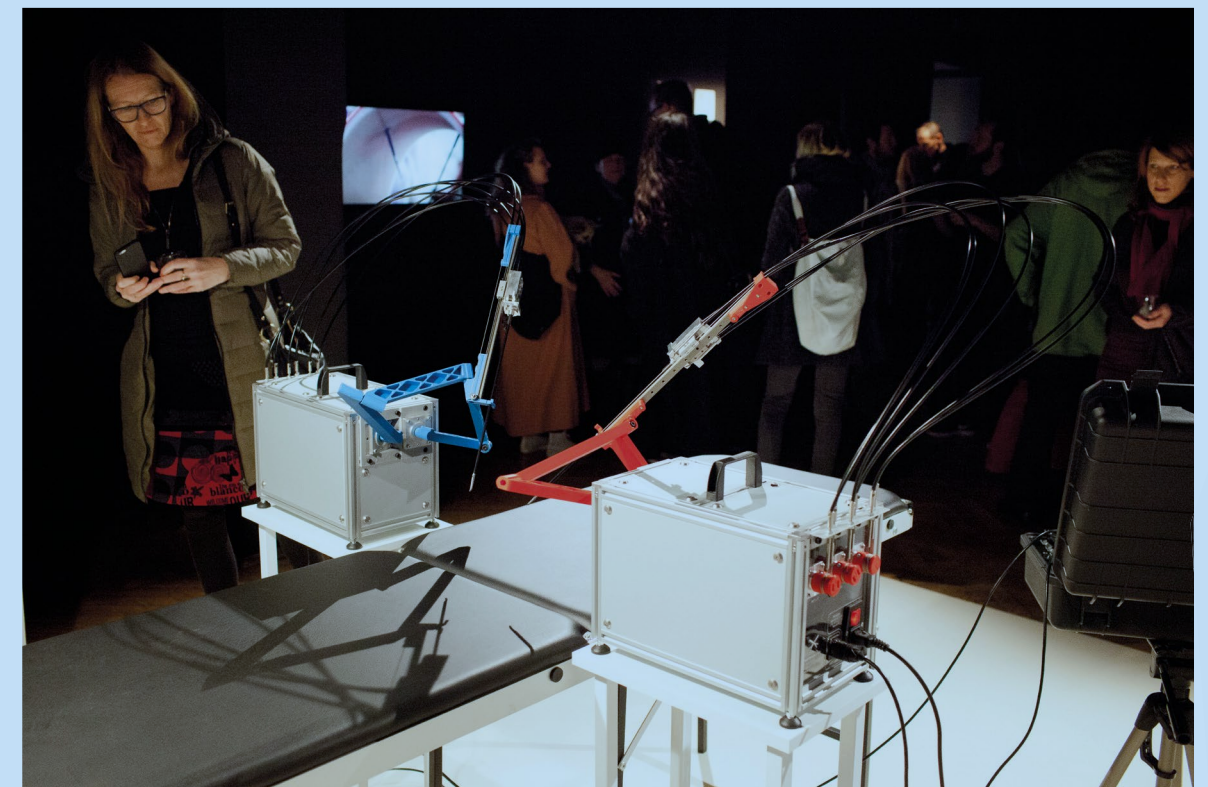
We are now starting a project called Art for Medicine, because as we know medical equipment and expensive drugs are not available to everyone on the planet, and there are already groups of hackers trying to hack the medical industry. Years ago, we hosted Frank Kolkman's exhibition Open Surgery in which he sets up a DIY operating table. At the moment, we try to carry out another concrete project in the field of medicine. Some people think that the kind of art we produce is very

narrow, specific, hard to understand; art connected with performance, technology, bioart (even though we don't like to call it this way), the truth is that through different art forms, we try to point out how society tries to control us as individuals, and the easiest way to do this is through our bodies.

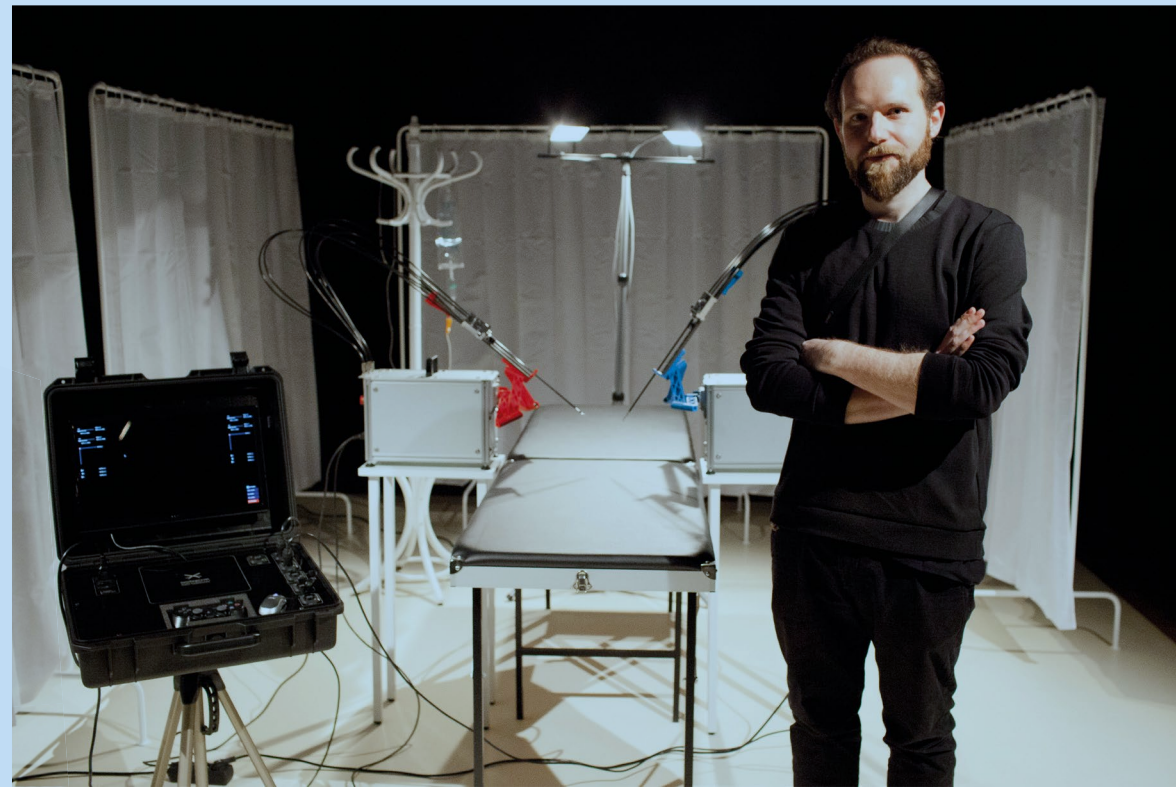
That's what performative arts, but also art that uses biotechnology or artificial intelligence have in common. We try to raise ethical questions around new technologies. Personally, I'm a fan of science fiction, the use of technology in my life, the use of artificial intelligence and just living partly in a virtual world; interlacing the experience of nature with technology. For me it seems like the one logical step ahead is trying to reflect on all this, and I just don't see myself following the traditional ways.



Frank Kolkman, Odprta kirurgija (foto: Miha Fras)



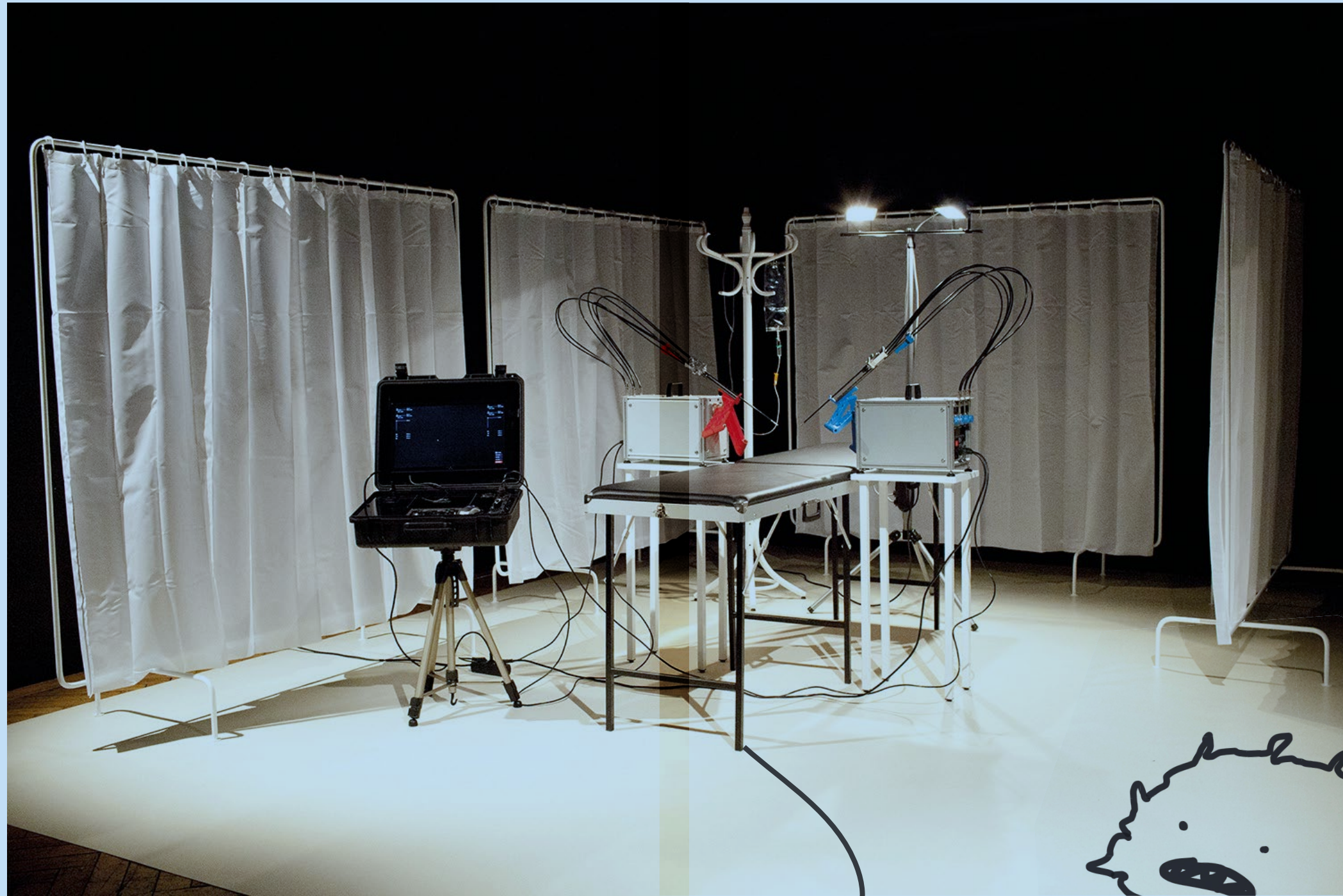
Frank Kolkman, Odprta kirurgija (foto: Miha Fras)



Frank Kolkman, Odprta kirurgija (foto: Miha Fras)



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Frank Kolkman, Odprta kirurgija (foto: Miha Fras)



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Kirsikka Vaajakallio

Principal Service Designer at Hellon

I'm a partner in a boutique customer experience and design agency called Hellon, located in Finland and in the UK. What I'm doing is using design approaches to transform organisations so that they can become more human-centric in their thinking and in their doing. This means that the organisations should put efforts into considering their employees' and customers' experiences when thinking about how to run their businesses. Furthermore, as a personal ambition I want to utilise creative thinking for a more sustainable and happy future, so our kids have a safe space to live in.

I really love the work I'm doing and there's a lot of things that I enjoy; one of the main things that drives me in challenging times is to be able to work with a diverse group of people who have different knowledge and experiences other than my own. So that when we work together, we complement and learn from each other. The other thing that gives me energy is to see that a change to a more sustainable business has taken place in the organisation I'm working with, or in the people I'm collaborating with. It can be a small or a big change, and it can be more on the individual or organisational level. But in most cases, this means the organization has started to take steps away from the traditional organisational-centric approach, and closer to a customer-centric mindset. I believe that this is the first step needed to move into a more sustainable future. Many organisations are not ready to take the leap into holistic and systemic sustainability, but they can start their transformation by better understanding their customers' needs and wishes and trying to answer those.

My way to becoming what I am today has been gradual, as most cases, I believe. I started as an industrial designer, really focusing on product design. But then at some point

I got interested in understanding, 'who are those people that I'm designing for?'. And so, it became clear for me that it's not designing for but designing with people. Many people are affected by the solutions we are designing: for example, if we're designing current services, or introducing completely new ones, it will change the way things are and the way people are used to behaving and doing things. That's why all those people's perspectives need to be taken into account in the design process. Hence the basic value and starting point for me is co-designing with customers, with users, and with multiple stakeholders. It's not about me, but more about the others and how I can bring different people and different perspectives together. At the same time, I started to look at codesign beyond the products. I wanted to know how different systems work and influence on each other, understanding different scales and perspectives from individuals, groups, organisations or even from a society. How can we make people's everyday lives better? Who are these people? What are they dreaming of? How do these things relate to organisations and their business targets? What needs to change in order to create a sustainable future? How can creative practice play a bigger role in that? So, a lot of questions popped into my mind that I have been addressing for almost 20 years.

I think that the best situation for all would be a future in which organisations, humans and environment exist in some sort of balance. To do that, we need to understand sustainability as a complex, living object with several perspectives and interpretations. There is no easy way. Considering my place in a creative agency I would like to say that everyone can be active in saving today and tomorrow. My role is to be some sort of facilitator in this process. I can inspire people, and through them, organisations can orchestrate their actions with a human-centric point of view, creating opportunities for a better future for more people. Quite idealistic, I know. But without a bit of naive trust, we can turn passive and indifferent.

I wish that the future we are aiming for brings more equality,

and that people become more capable and willing to recognise what a desirable future should look like, for them and for the society at large. To move together towards that, I believe the only way is to use imagination, creativity, and science together. To utilise capabilities and resources in new ways. Being in the CreaTures project allows us to jointly create examples of how creative practices can play a part in saving the future – in many different ways and at many different scales. I wish that at the end of the day I will be able to say that I have been a reflexive practitioner, understanding my power and limitations in reshaping the future through my diverse clients' projects. I also hope that I am able to find new ways to utilise a design approach to motivate and engage more people showing them that they can play a role in co-creating a better future.

I think one important audience to engage is top managers and influencers from diverse organisations, both public and private. I would like to hear what kind of future they want to live in, and how they are going to rethink and reorganise their resources to live in that future.

Iryna Zamuruieva

**Climate Resilience Manager at Sniffer
One of the CreaTures**

*Disclaimer: please note this text was produced before the war and that the statement has not been edited to reflect author's current political organising work in support of Ukrainian resistance against Russia.

I am Iryna Zamuruieva. I am an artist, researcher, cultural geographer. I am currently* sitting in my kitchen in Leith, which is in Edinburgh, which is in Scotland, Europe, in the Northern Hemisphere. What do I do? I walk, I make visual art about multispecies care, imagination, response-ability, and



I am involved in a bunch of sociologically and ecologically engaged creative projects. I am also working as a climate resilience coordinator with Sniffer, which is a sustainability charity (and a partner in CreaTures) where I work both on very hands-on projects that help different places and communities across Scotland to adapt to climate change, and also on some more governance-focused level projects that try to bring about change at the systems-scale.

What I love about the kind of work that I do is feeling at home in spaces, and being able – or at least thinking and hoping that I'm able – to change and subvert these different fields and practices to allow for more radical and imaginative futures to emerge. I also love the energy working through ideas with people, and those 'a-ha' moments when things just click and there is this beautiful energy of people coming together from very different backgrounds but being very aligned and wanting to do something together – that's really beautiful and exciting.

What sustains me during challenging times is the relations that I have with humans. My partner, my family, my friends, just being with them; food – food is another kind of very vital nourishment that definitely sustains me! Also, in 2020 what was prominent in sustaining me was collaborating with other women and coming up with structures to practice our art in ways that imply also caring for each other; creating those spaces and care structures that are autonomous and non-hierarchical, had a great sustaining energy of working with other women, learning from other women, exchanging skills and just being there for each other. But relations, in general – that's quite key.

I got here through oscillating between art, activism and ecology...I started studying ecology as a bachelor in Ukraine, which is where I'm from, but somehow, I was always interested in doing some art on the side. But the point where it all really came together bringing combining political, ecological thinking and arts was when I was doing my Master's in

Germany in Kiel. Working there, in the Cultural Geography Working Group I brought together those climate-, political-, and art-thinking and doing together. This was a very cool, interesting, and challenging time for me. I realised one can bring these three together and think through all these challenging, huge topics of climate change in a very political sense through art, different artistic mediums, interventions or visual art. I kind of stepped on a path of consciously trying to combine them rather than put them into two separate boxes. What brought me also here, more practically, to Scotland was my partner doing his PhD here, migration policies that enabled me to be here, a mix of practical and abstract things, I guess!

I think as an artist I am trying to create spaces, times, or situations that allow us to pay attention to the interconnections the world is made up of. To pay attention to the world-making practices of different creatures and beings. Following other ecological & feminist thinkers, I am also interested in how we can dismantle patriarchy, imperialism and colonialism and how, might we collectively imagine other futures to aspire towards.

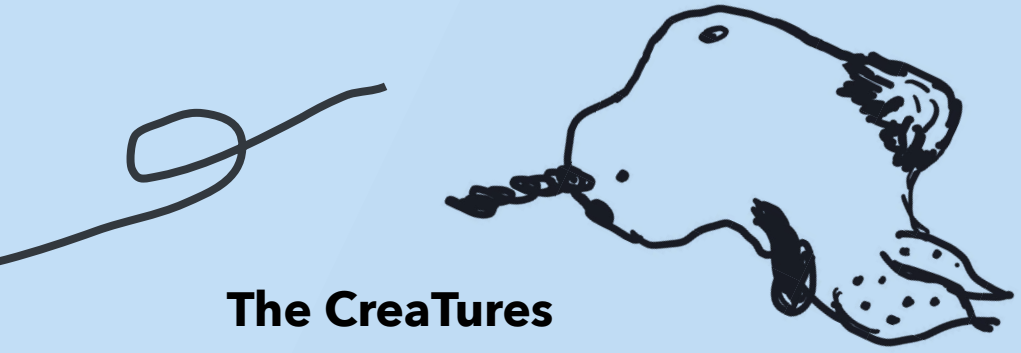
The future that I'm creating with other collaborators, creatures and friends is the one that is really, truly welcoming those different world-making practices. A future that makes space for difference, and where that difference makes space for another kind of difference, and where that difference is something that is treasured. Where we allow each other to make worlds in our own ends, for own reasons and own designs, whoever these creatures are that are making these worlds. Sorry, this is a bit tangled! The future that I'm creating is also the one where bodies matter, and where we act like other creatures' bodies matter. It's the one which is very sensuous as well, and it's a flourishing one. It's also a future where we have collective capacity of being affected by others and acting in acknowledgement of that.

The future of engagement in what I do is an ecological one, an

engagement where we engage with other creatures with other species in recognition that they have agendas of their own.

I hope that CreaTures becomes this – well it already is in many ways – but I hope it continues to become and find different ways to be a nourishing and caring space for us all. A space to share ideas, build ecological alliances and find ways to resist, to imagine different futures, to enact them, to practice them, to experiment with them, to play with them, to engage other interested creatures into this process. A space to be this rhizomatic network, a productive space for those seeds of different futures that are emerging through the creative practices that our experimental productions are experimenting with. I also hope that we learn from each other a lot, and become friends, become collaborators, allies.

I hope that I thrive, in this strange place we find ourselves in, that is both very exciting and full of possibilities, but at the same time so difficult, challenging and full of crises, fundamentally a very uncertain one. I hope I also find a way to build poetic and practical structures that allow for different ways of living and being with each other, and I also hope that I do more art, as that's always a good thing to do, for me!



The CreaTures

***A marv
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1/3

We move in mysterious ways
We are mycelial, networked, multimodal
We are time alchemists, dancing in deep time
We are made of recycled and recyclable ideas
We are iterative and open ended
We are processual and emergent
We are not just the mushroom on top
We are defiant and courageous
We communicate in many languages
We went on a journey and we continue, never
with the luxury of arrival, but with all the fun of
the getting there.
We like to get lost (on purpose)
We do our thing. We call into question our
thing. We do more of our thing
WE ARE RADICALLY UNCERTAIN
We are ALIVE
We live in balance, pause and listen to the land,
to the winds and the tides
We know what to pack to bring with us, we
know who to get on the train, how to organise
We know how to evaluate and share knowledge
about the tracks as we are laying them
Our journey exists as one of many, we don't
force others along the way



We are plural
We ask and go on asking : what does it mean to
dwell together well?
We are ontologically humble
We have the best conversations
We discover the power in others
We are not afraid of making mistakes
We are valued for the questions we ask, not for
the answers that don't yet exist
We are not data driven
We are not here to guarantee your impact
We are everything when we are everyone
All that we touch changes us - change is the
only lasting truth
We are not that important
We died happily

With love,
The CreaTures

* This manifesto was collectively written by multiple
people involved in the CreaTures project during the
CreaTures Workshop: Tools for Transformational Creative
Practice, facilitated by Superflux on 14 October 2021.



Ann Light

This will not be tidy

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Diversity as a principle for research into sustainable futures

CreaTures, as a research project, supports creative practices for transformation. Ideally, the research would address every creative practice - from the scientist waking up with an idea, to the council or community deciding on the layout of a neighbourhood garden. However, because we are funded for research into the arts, because we are looking at transformation to more sustainable futures and because it is a project limited in time and numbers of staff, we have focused on professional artists and cultural producers seeking to create fairer and more ecological futures, from the myths that surround us to our everyday practices. Even so, the range of issues and ways of coming at them has been exhilaratingly broad.

The consortium welcomes these diverse approaches to “eco-social change” (as we are calling it). We listen to artists’ ambitions and respond to their variety; we do not hold up one version of what the world should be. Scientific

method looks for common starting points leading to common outcomes: a claim that B follows from A. Our inquiry is methodical, yet differently orientated. It is not a research journey to a single outcome or a new end point; it is an inquiry into common process that pivots on meaning, a highly localized quality of any engagement. Practitioners and academics work together, exploring practices of calling into question and the effects of doing so. Superflux stages Invocation of Hope, where burned forest gives way to a flourishing clearing in which we see ourselves alongside neighbouring species. Furtherfield presents The Treaty of Finsbury Park, where more-than-human negotiations are in play. Cassie Thornton’s The Hologram offers a version of healthcare where emotional, social, and physical support comes in an ever-reproducing viral triangle of friends. Each of many contributions is distinct, yet they work together as a form of action research, a site for cross-fertilization, and an attractor for difference. Across all is a belief that cultural change is possible and necessary, and a desire for mobilisation of different experiences, reflections

and calls on imagination to create worlds in which all life lives well.

There are two compelling reasons why this abundance of themes, styles and approaches is important and not to be judged as a lack of scientific method.

First, we can make claims about commonalities in the processes of transformation, but a basic tenet of the practices of transforming is to start with what you have and know the conditions well; it is fundamentally a how, not a what, question. As such, when dealing with relations and their meaning, we do not have a common input or output; rather the process can be shown to make a difference of a particular kind. The particular kind, here, is an amplification of understanding and feeling. Where most of us are occupied with local phenomena and engrossed in the everyday, our engagement in well-conceived transformative arts practices can reveal how this relates to global and societal aspects of life, laying out systems, altering perspectives, recentring meaning and offering

new paths for constructive action, through connecting material and social implications to reveal and transform relations and the actions that come from them. This transformation affects personal or group understandings of significance, even at the existential level of how we experience ourselves and our place in the universe. These changes - where we change ourselves to change our world - point to more deeply encountered response than mere behaviour. They contribute to an activist stance, with space for passion, a feed-out effect of engaging others and a commitment that can alter motivations from extrinsic (e.g. peer and status rewards, saving money) to intrinsic (e.g. value realignment). With sensitive facilitation, this transformation can be tuned to the particular preoccupations and experiences of each person and group to change how they go about their lives.

Purposeful change in the nature of relations cannot be exact; it happens against endless, less deliberate, changes in myriad interlinked systems. This constant change affects any

phenomenon. Projects take place in our evolving worlds and may notionally have a starting point, but crisp beginnings and ends exist only in the researcher's mind. At any moment, it is possible to judge from where one has come, but only to guess at where one is going. There is a moment and a set of conditions to be identified as the start, then merely a hopeful journey. Despite this, if we are to claim transformation, there must be a measuring of change over time: judging when the change began, how much has changed, what is different, when it happened, how we know and why. Many possible definitional questions can be asked. There is no way to get from the "here" to "there" of transformation without a sense of outset and passage, and no way to speak of it without a good description of "before" and "after". Otherwise, it is indistinguishable from the general flow.

Logically, there can be no transformation without evaluation, for, without it, we can make no claims.



At the policy desk, this investment in evaluation is profound; there is a craving for certainty and an expectation for a neat tie-in between cause and effect. Environmental policy has become absorbed in targets and goals that address the big social issues, like how humans eat (SDG 2), how we live together (SDG 11, 16) and how we maintain life at sea and on land (SDG 14, 15). The methodological afterthought about transformation, Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17) is often assumed. Anyone working in collaborative/participatory design knows that much of the labour of change is listening, adjusting, keeping a whole consortium travelling together, acknowledging disagreement and holding space for new relations to fall out. None of this is possible without a grasp of from where (emotionally, professionally, politically, etc.) people are beginning their journey. Responding to this is a craft not a science: it is to manage idiosyncrasy at the individual level and cultural difference across groups. At the point of work to transform people's energies (to care more, take risks, act on hope), generalization serves no purpose.



Every group is different. Every encounter brings different priorities and these depend on and alter with contingencies. Every person makes their own meaning through interpretation.

Hence, there is a tension in making cultural change between doing and reporting, measuring and staying locally accountable, and making usable knowledge versus dazzling with abstractions. Cultural change cannot be isolated in the laboratory as a controlled experiment; it is inseparable from context. Specifically, there are commonalities in the means of change we see operating in CreaTures, but we can make no argument for delivering a one-size-fits-all starting point. This would be to exclude some people, bewilder others and reduce the rest to an unresponsive herd. In other words, to corral people's wisdoms into standard fare makes only an approximation of cultural and material relevance, without the opportunity of shared learning or actual significance. Furthermore, it denies the agency of those that know a place and a time intimately and transports authority out of the situation to remote expertise. That



may develop the perception of reassuringly smart scientists, but not the potential in the broad base of society.

To wrestle between trust and demonstrability in process is to situate the project in the tensions of a very Modern cultural idiom: that of making systems that emphasize efficiency and cost management rather than care. The very idea of customized attention may seem to many to be expensive and ill-judged, given how far the cultural idiom of efficiency is taken-for-granted in most contemporary societies. As publics, we are used to experiencing broad-brush and poorly-tuned practices and tools in response to our care needs, from the standardized forms that deny our circumstances to the language recognition automated phone trees that cannot help us find the right person. Landscapes are crop monocultures. Media barons sell simplistic, self-interested messages. The masses are pushed about, unloved and to be managed – even the idea of “masses” speaks to this idiom. How wonderful, then, if our transformations are geared to honouring the life and hopes of all

beings and attending to the uniqueness that is common to all... In this, we can link up what is best in human ambition to tackle what has become the worst of it.

Summed up, if we do not start carefully, with individuals' sense-making and each neighbourhoods' priorities, then we are addressing our own concerns, not others', and meaningful transformation will not happen. The link between attending to individual and group starting points and a world where care is not rationed by expediency is not incidental. To enlist people's responsiveness requires attention – and responsiveness is needed. To survive the collapses we face, only ongoing refocusing will suffice, with the detailed and evolving processes this implies. Acknowledging ongoingness and situatedness is an enhancement of the scientific method, not a rebuke to it or failure to grasp its elements. Design research starts with where materials/people are. Further, when we attend to different ways of being and tune into these, we find an added benefit from this diversity. We find



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we can use diversity as a texture as well as an approach. So, a second point in judging CreaTures' eclecticism is consider that an intense web of related but different activities is the perfect foil for an overly functionalist, neo-liberal moment when imagination seems to be on the wane.

If we accept that corporate ambitions have created a globalized consumerist culture, dominating local moods and individualizing even how we live in groups (family, neighbourhood, clubs and churches, etc) to the point of atomization, then we start to appreciate the need for deliberate cultivation of hybrid and diverse relations. Without this cultivation, it is difficult to imagine alternatives: a sense of potential alterity needs feeding with examples of difference. Both a globalised culture and atomized responses weaken the networks that sustain creative action, solidarity and social activism of the kind that helps prevent collapse and promotes resilience and deaden practical imagination while removing chances for reflection. (I am assuming that both

mitigation and adaptation will be needed - in the sustainability literature parlance - and that one or other will require creativity and flexibility at various points as crises worsen.)

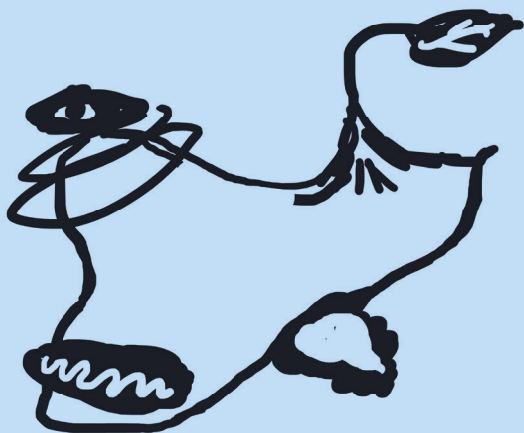
How useful, then, if hundreds of different visions of utopian and dystopian futures flood our worlds and drowse us in a sense that things can be designed to mitigate, adapt and rethink; that current orientations are not inevitable; and that material matters, such as energy overuse, and eco-social matters, such as how destructively we handle biodiversity, are not given for all time. Not only are the visions different, dynamic and exciting, but everyone (however that is understood) is invited to participate in furthering them, defining and enacting them... How wonderful if we can learn, as nations and communities, not to fear change at any cost, but to choose our type of change in answer to the changes around us.

In promoting this, creative practitioners and activists work knowingly alongside one another, aware they are part of something greater than

any individual contribution, vulnerable to an art market and funding context in which they must strive to be relevant and original, but also using the milieu created by their influence to form a loose coalition. They become some of the many faces of a broad movement for change, like so many mushrooms sprouting from mycelium below. They form ecologies of subversion to feed new philosophies, providing raw material for new ways of being and shifts large enough to unsettle paths to extinction. They collectively reduce the plausibility of the dominant present and present points where the undesired can be unraveled. This unseemly inconsistency addresses the fact that the planet cannot afford conformity of approach. There is too much existing diversity and ongoing alteration already present to allow for finding a single solution. In the practices we are investigating, we seek provisional answers with multiple experiments, but we also explore how the aggregated force of multiple different practitioners affects cultural tolerance for change. Each of our case studies may have inputs, impacts and unique method, but collectively they are something more.

To sum up the second branch of the argument for a diverse assembly (rather than neat empiricism): we have one planet and no time to perfect our approaches. If action research demonstrates the potential to unhinge current shortcomings and provide the leverage for change, then let us mobilize our partial knowledge and imprecise insight and effect change before other forces at work make it too late for yet another species, argument or path to hope. Let us not test only the fine-grain truths we already know, but try multiple simultaneous approaches to see what sticks (and where) as things change around us and at an increasingly rapid rate. And let us be grateful that, in testing so much variety together, we are also ensuring a landscape diverse enough that it proves the designed, therefore designable, nature of our worlds to anyone who can look up long enough to participate in future-making. We need multifarious approaches both to jolt us awake to the opportunities for change and to give us many different paths to follow. As researchers, our job is to demonstrate that, within this

seeming disarray, there is enough order to inspire confidence as well as transformation.



Ann Light
Jaz Hee-jeong Choi
Andrea Botero
Tuuli Mattelmaki

A Crea Tures Tale

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Andrea Botero (AB), Jaz Hee-jeong Choi (JC), Ann Light (AL) and Tuuli Mattelmäki (TM) reflect on how CreaTures journey began: how their coming together with desires to do meaningful transformative work led to the original concept, how they designed it as a project, and why.

The origin

AL: I have probably the most to say about the history, because for me the history of CreaTures goes back much earlier than it does, perhaps, for everyone else. I remember thinking I'd love to work with Jaz and Andrea. This would be a dream team but we needed to find a topic that we could all be invested in for a few years.

Back in 2013, I was starting to notice a link between the social and the environmental in the work that I had been doing. I was noticing how technology was destroying socialization in some places and had been moving further away



from the idea of doing things in a technologized environment. Later I met other people, including Ruth Wolstenholme (Sniffer), and we formed a consortium aiming to look particularly at theater and drama as transformative creative practice, because in theatre one could live in a much more imaginative world and see how things could come into being. That initial bid led to a bigger proposal but wasn't successful because of our inability to adequately communicate how what we were proposing was transformative and how communities imagining difference and reflecting together was actually going to be strongly influential. But this experience led to a very strong connection between Ruth and me and the mutual feeling that there was something we hadn't managed to do. Rolling forward, we decided to start working with Ben Twist from Creative Carbon Scotland looking at going from "how do we reduce our carbon-footprint?" to "how do we understand creative practice and cultural workers being influential in the transitions we are trying to make?"





We realized that our first report into these practices was very research focused, so we turned it into something much more policy focused. (Both Ruth and Ben would benefit from being able to articulate this aspect more clearly and I felt that was my life's mission.) That's how we wrote the short pilot summary that you all then read as the starting point for CreaTures.

AB: I think that pilot summary resonated with the H2020 call that Jaz had brought to our attention, because then we discovered this aspect of 'Arts and transformation' was what we felt gave space for things we could attempt to do together, including what eventually became CreaTures.

It was my opportunity to work with you because we had been trying to do so for quite some time already and I knew that was our chance. My work until then had not so aligned with sustainability per se, but of course, it had always been very much about collaborations and understanding where we are now and where we ought to be and what needs to be designed.

Even if I think about the most pressing problems of a country like where I come from, Colombia, which has a lot of social upheaval, if you trace these problems back long enough, they are all social, cultural, environmental problems. It all made sense. I could see the connections.

AL: If you hadn't noticed that specific open call, it would have gone past me completely. Because even though I was thinking about the next iteration for this, I wasn't even looking at this sort of call. Then you came around and suggested to do something for the EU and then you found the perfect call. What I mean is... it takes so many different ingredients to make something happen.

TM: I will always associate the first days of CreaTures with being in a sailing boat and trying to have a phone conversation with Andrea when we learned we got the funding. But I think the journey started much earlier, during all the time that I've been involved in research activities on creative methods. I met Ann in a wonderful workshop, where we committed to find an



alternative, be bold and support people who do things differently. I feel that CreaTures is really good at that, because it creates this wonderful gallery of things that people can relate to. And I hope that our transformations or insights lead to new ways of being and doing things in the world. That's my strongest motivation.

AL: Now I think people are recognizing that the science isn't happening fast enough (and not at a level that's convincing people that they need to move themselves) and that actually cultural shift is much more important than people recognize.

JC: CreaTures is very special. It's been an anchor, a motivation, and a source of questioning, especially through multiple pivotal moments for me as a scholar, as a practitioner and as a human being. It means a lot to me.

Shortly before I wrote to you about the H2020 call, I had joined RMIT to focus on research on care-full design for four years and was invited to be a Design and Social Context fellow at

RMIT Europe in Barcelona straight away. There I contributed to a few H2020 applications. I was happy to help and it helped me understand the Horizon programme better. While doing that, I started to wonder how we might be able to do large, transdisciplinary work like Horizon projects care-fully, and started asking people direct questions at conferences and elsewhere: "Who's ever applied for these? Do you want to have a chat? I've got questions!". People generously shared their experiences, and one piece of common advice was "make sure you work with people you know well - those you respect and trust and remain or become friends over three tough years together". That was a turning point for me and why I wrote that email to you: „ How about we do a H2020 together?"

Like you, Tuuli, I also remember the precise moment I heard we got the project: I was on a plane to Brussels, and when I landed - DING! - the phone connected to a local network and the first thing I saw was this message from Andrea: "WE GOT IT!!". I couldn't believe it. It was wild. I vividly remember actually, physically jumping

at the airport. Luckily, I wasn't arrested for disorderly conduct. It was time to play.

The playground

AB: I think the playground is this mud. It's a mud that it's kind of hopeless but at the same time, a hopeful hopelessness. There is a very famous Finnish literary piece called Under the North Star, and it starts with „In the beginning there were the swamp, the hoe.” Then he tells the story of their lives in the swamp and, you know, the environment and the social life then were so complex, and there were wars, shared and different pains and mud ... I often think about Under the North Star when I think about our project.

AL: I love your analogy of mud, because it's simultaneously the source of life and all that is rich in the soil. Water and soil together makes mud, and yet it's also our metaphor for when

something is not clear or gets murky. So, we've got both things that are absolutely present for us at the moment. The idea of mud is so core in a way.

TM: Where's the playground for us is actually quite an interesting question, because in a playground there are certain frames, tools, and toys and so forth. But there are also certain constraints and safety mechanisms, so their whole purpose seems to be to create opportunities for playful, manageable risk-taking. I was with my grandson in the playground yesterday. Although there are swings and other toys, he wanted to run behind the bushes where I couldn't see him and he stayed there giggling until I ran after him. I thought that may also be what we need: to find our bushes and giggle behind them.

AL: The idea that you can run behind a bush and giggle instead of using a climbing frame seems to me exactly what the values of the project are upholding.

Challenges and unexpected

AB: I always remember what Tuuli said when we started the project: "I think we should be courageous. We can do this".

TM: I'm so happy you brought that up because there have been a lot of challenging moments, so I always try to keep that in mind: the courage. We knew from the beginning that this was a wild card!

AL: There are so many difficulties and ironies that we're just beginning to explore. Partly, I think, through our writing and partly through how we survive, because we have to bracket things so that we can still do the research. Despite of all the challenges, it's really interesting to see how CreaTures can bring in people who weren't necessarily aligned with the more scientific and hard-modelling end of this. It's really interesting how it gives a different

constituency to who is engaged.

JC: One of the unexpected things for me was the sheer number of challenges with the system the project operates in, reviews, the pandemic, and so much more, but despite them all, we carried on and we are carrying on and that is quite an unexpected coup. People didn't let go! And for me, that means a lot.

I've shared this with you previously: the Korean idea of pan. It has several meanings in Korean. It can be used as a suffix or prefix and means "specific spacetime for things"., Game 1 pan is a round of game saying there's an end. It's a temporary spacetime for play. Pansori pan plus sori or sound, is a performative musical storytelling art. But what's really important with this is its participatory nature. It's open, people, including the audiences, come in and out, and actually become part of whatever is going on in the spacetime.

That's also what we do in CreaTures; we create pan. Something one may not understand unless

they're in it. To be part of it, for me that's core of care. At the same time, for the same reason, I feel telling the story of our care-fully co-creating pan itself has become a challenge for us.

AL: I like the way that you pointed out how you have to be a participant to some extent. Remember when we were trying to find a way to convince the reviewers of the experience and we were stuck because we couldn't give them the experience? We could only represent the experience, and of course that didn't work at all. Another challenge we are facing is how do you give people a sense of an alternative potential reality when they don't have space for it or they don't know how to find that space.

I think being able to connect emotionally and existentially with the things that matter to us, has been what keeps us vaguely sane, even as we are mad for doing this project. We need to feed ourselves and clothe ourselves and do all those kinds of things but then we need meaning in our lives, and this project is about those meanings and how they are interdependent

with other life forms and other people. But this doesn't scale. One person's meaning is one person's meaning, and it can be a whole society's meaning, but the transformation happens with one small group or a few people or an individual. And of course, one of the things we promised was to understand the process of transformation sufficiently that we could generalize it. But that's the only thing we can generalize from it.

Outlook

AL: So there's a certain paradox or irony in the very setup of what we are asking ourselves to do. But it is the paradox that exists across the world now: the anthropocentric functionalism as a problem in design. Because science is predicated on eliminating paradoxes, the very fact that we're generating all these paradoxes makes us unscientific, and yet we know there's a deeper truth there, so it's a weakness of scientism, not of our project, but it's nonetheless

one of the other obstacles that we are creating for ourselves in having to recognize that so much of what we're doing is paradoxical. And while ambiguity may not be helpful, paradox may just be something you cannot eliminate.

AB: We have lots of little examples of that. I think the last part of the project is going to be quite interesting. We will definitely lack time to put out to the world everything we will have learnt so far and still need to learn.

AL: We're going to get to the point where we can begin at the end of this project.

TM: I think we've been opening a lot of things and the tricky part ahead now is to think how to close some of these things and how to make sense of them. Let's see how it goes!

JC: At least for me, we made a conscious decision to become feral, and inside and outside the boundaries we've encountered, we remained feral. This may be the last of such a feral endeavour I get to be part of in my life,

who knows, but I would like to remember it as "yes, no matter how brief, we were beautifully feral as we were". And I hope other people would see beauty in that, too, and not be afraid to become feral themselves, and that would be all I could hope for, really.

AL: That ties in with some other things I've been thinking about what our outcomes might be I was just struck by the idea of the feral and, the playground. If we're feral, then we're not in the playground; we're creating our own playground. So where is the playground? Where we choose it to be, because we can make it on brownfield sites and urban decay if we want it to be.



The Crea aTures Glossa ry



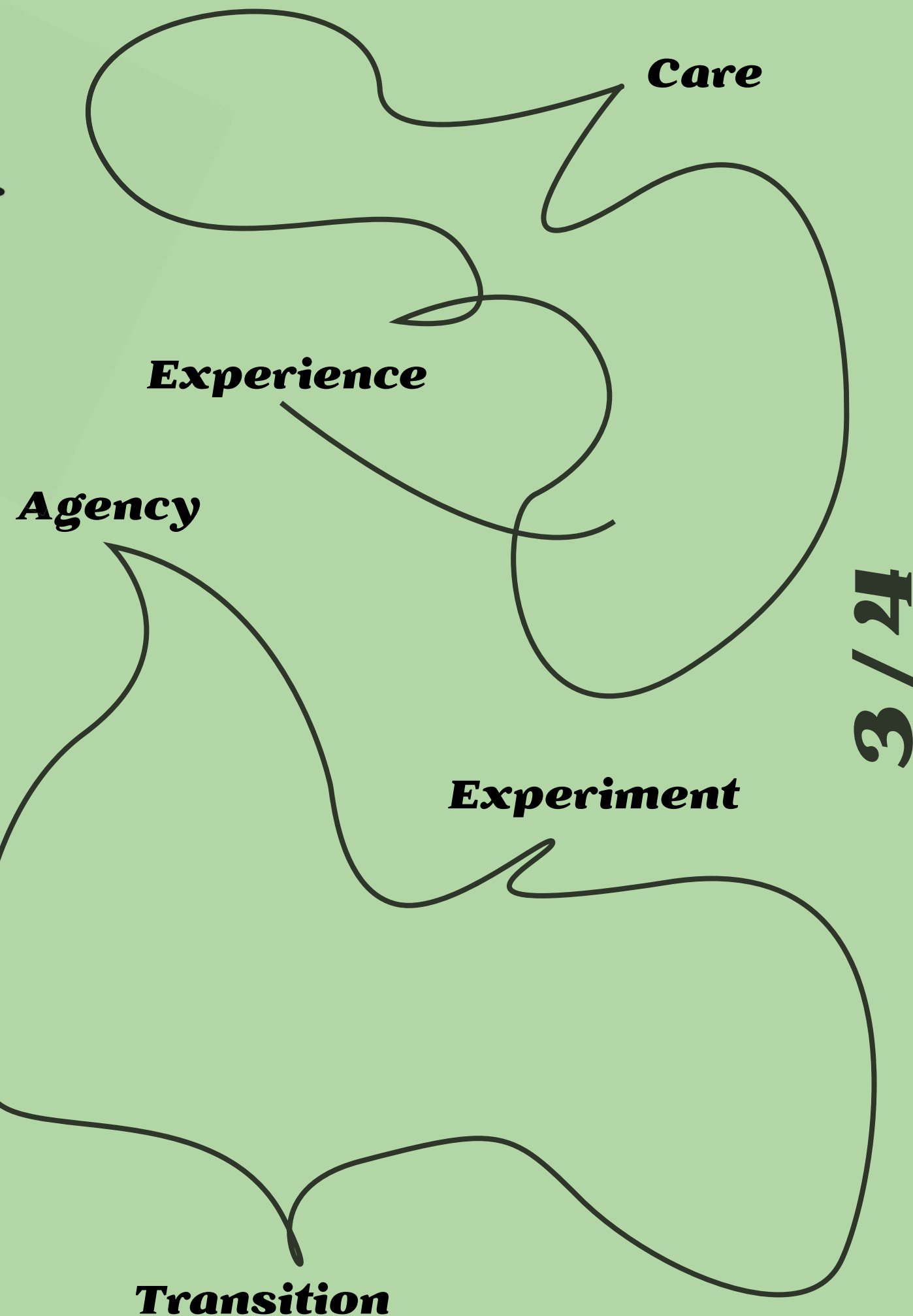
1 / 24

In the heart of CreaTures is the premise that creative practices have already shown transformational potential in the area of social and ecological care and sustainability, but they are often fragmented, poorly resourced, and badly understood. One contributing factor is the lack of common language across different domains of knowledge and practice (e.g. members of the public, creative practitioners, and those in various areas across cultural, educational, and public sectors).

There is a need for a glossary of key terms and processes that could aid with creating better understandings through the use of a common language. Problematizing, enriching and generally thinking about the language that we use to discuss creative practices has become a core search of this project, under the umbrella of the CreaTures Glossary. The Glossary

evolves as a constellation of explorations about the language of and about creative practices for transformational futures, extended through continued creative engagements with the project's diverse stakeholders.

In this section, we invite you to contribute your own definitions to some of the Glossary's key terms. Use this space to express what these terms mean to you, in a text, drawing or collage. If you want, you can share it with us by taking a picture and posting it on social media using the hashtag #CreaTuresGlossary



Care

Experience

Agency

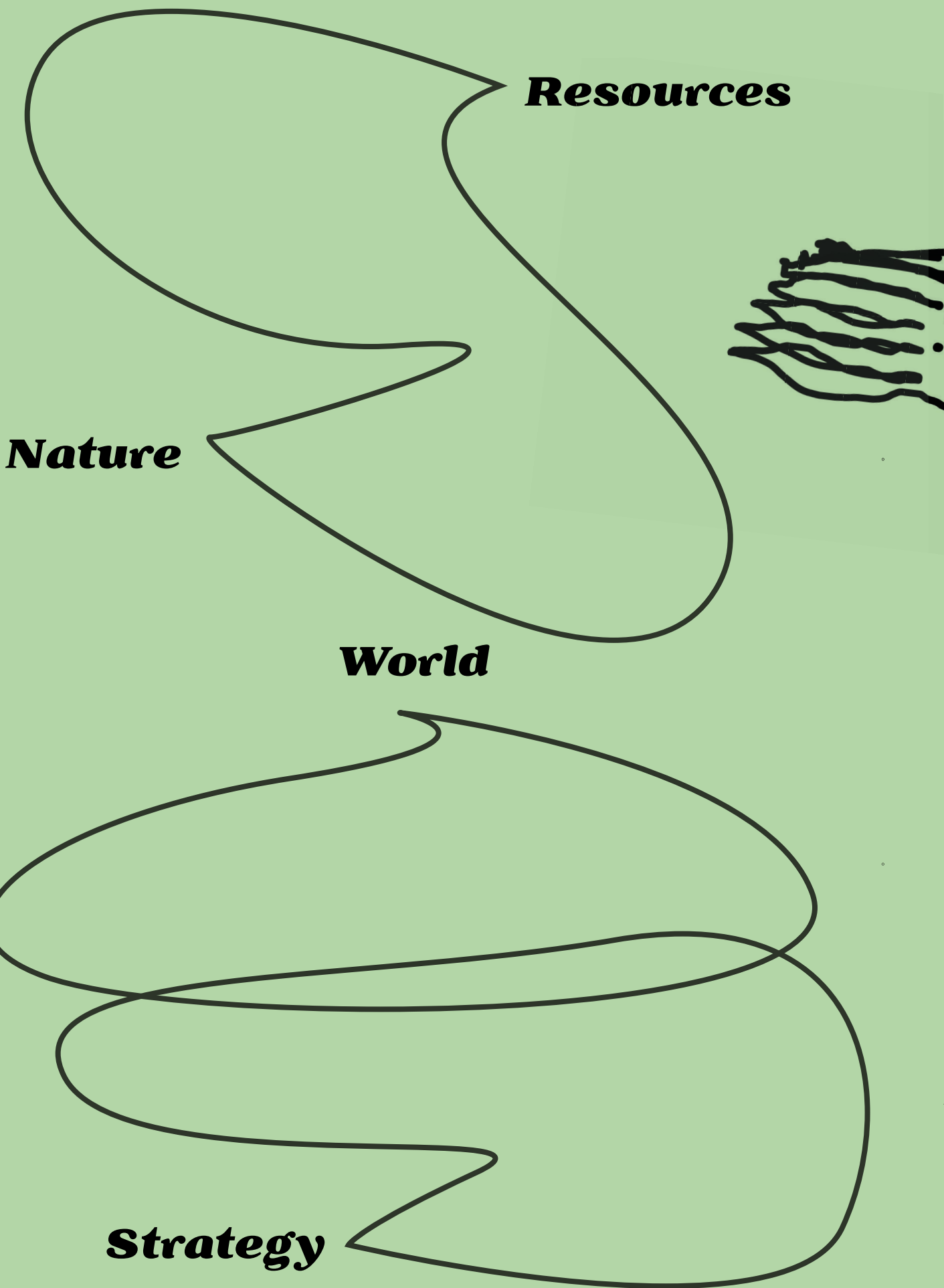
Experiment

Transition

Stakeholder

Impact

Threshold



Hellon

Helsinki of green communities



'Helsinki of green communities' is a co-created story of the future from a Sustainable Futures Game session. The game was hosted for participants from the private sector, public sector, and research institutes. The story illustrates a future of local communities which produce their own food, energy and crafts.

„Helsinki in 2030 is a green city with thriving local communities. The city is changing it's appearance: old buildings are covered with rooftop gardens and vertical fields for food growth, and the communities are actively involved in



2/3

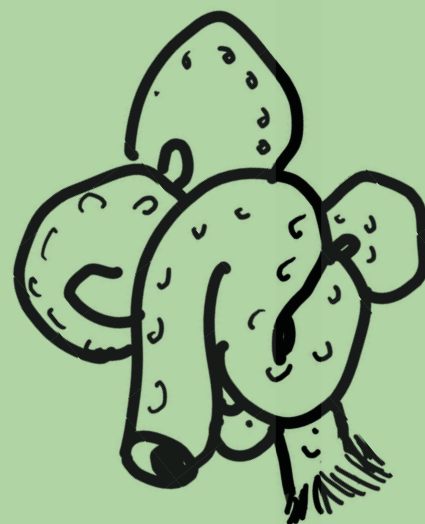
producing locally grown food, sharing it and utilising it.

A big change came when communities were given more authority in decision-making. It created local democracies, where even children have wide rights for voting and voicing their opinion. But the new body for decision-making isn't heavy and rigid, as new technologies such as AI is used to voice people's wishes and wants.

If we look at the new area of Kuninkaantammi in Helsinki, we see how the new driving force in building is the wooden townhouse. Kuninkaantammi is an environment where the wild nature and lush spruce parks are close at hand for anyone to take a walk and refresh their mind. The connectedness to nature is looked after in city planning, and it naturally connects the woods to the buildings, as rooftop gardens and urban farming dominate each block of the newly built town. Overall, less land is used in farming, as food production is brought close and made a communal effort.

Living in Helsinki is safe and well-being is prioritised. Local communities have a wide range of skills to utilise: you can always find a local tailor, educator or even a think tank, to answer your needs. People work much more from home, remotely and collaboratively. The communities offer co-working spaces as new arenas of work, and those spaces are not restricted to work alone. Workweeks are shorter, work-life balance is prioritised in organisations.

What makes the city special is that the communities are self-sufficient in energy use also. Communities produce their own energy, there is low need for centralised energy production. People are also mindful of their energy use and energy is not wasted. In fact, not much anything is wasted anymore. Waste is collected, recycled and even upcycled. Goods are produced from waste locally, and people value their local repair shops. Collaboration, inclusion and interaction between different generations are highly valued. It is your local elderly that might be taking care of your kids."



Sustainable Futures Game "Helsinki 2030"

Anna-Stiina Lundqvist, Kela
Outi Merilahti, Aalto University
Sarianna Leporanta, Kemira
Tuula Jäppinen, Kuntaliitto
Kristina Tornblom, City of Helsingborg
Hanna Huhtonen, Aalto University,
Design Factory

20th of May 2021

"A big change came when communities were given more authority in decision-making. It created local democracies, where even children have wide rights for voting and voicing their opinion. But the new body for decision-making isn't heavy and rigid, as new technologies such as AI is used to voice people's wishes and wants."

"Rooftop gardens and urban farming dominate each block of the newly built town. Overall, less land is used in farming, as food production is brought close and made a communal effort."

"Living in Helsinki is safe and well-being is prioritised. Local communities have a wide range of skills to utilise: you can always find a local tailor, educator or even a think tank, to answer your needs."

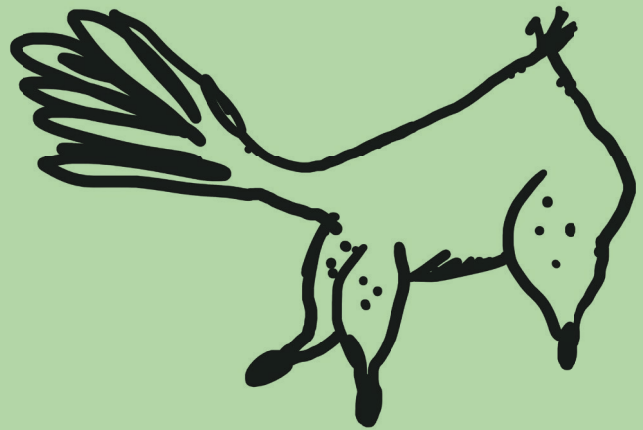
"The communities produce their own energy - there is low need for centralised energy production. People are also mindful of their energy use and energy is not wasted."



3/3

Amira Hanafi

Small acts




February 2022

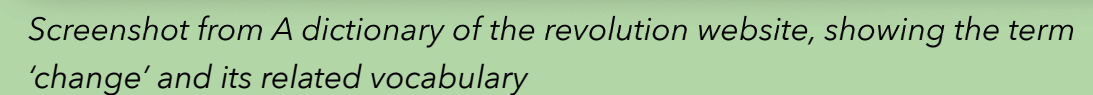
September 2019, the front room of the apartment where I'd lived through the 2011 revolution and all the years of its aftermath. Out in the street, I hear, "ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam, ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam," and I am transported! At first frozen, then fascinated. Later, in the following days and weeks, darker feelings come. The years unravel. "I can't live through this again." A feeling that my values are emptied out, that my heart is treacherous.

In July 2020, I gave away nearly all of my possessions and left the neighborhood in Cairo where I'd lived for a decade. I mapped out a few months of housing in Detroit, in exchange for some work with friends. I left my apartment, my city, the people around who knew me. On the other side, I tried hard to keep up my routines, but they soon slipped away. I lost most of what helped to define me: the boundaries of a life. Since then, I've been moving around.

1 / 1



01 **Cr**





Superflux

Invocation for Hope



Wander up the ramp. Tread carefully along the path, meander past the skeletal remains of black pine. Row after row, arranged in a perfect, orderly grid, their blackened bodies remain stubbornly standing in the damaged soil. Pause a moment. Examine the dark, uneven surfaces of the decomposing bark that still holds onto its slender host. A stark reminder of that luminous flame that swept their bare skins, extinguishing their dreams of canopying under the white sun.

Millennia of communal bonds broken by human greed in just a few hundred years. Whole ecologies disturbed by capitalism and war destroying life sustaining worlds – taking human and non-human alike.

If you lend your ear to the grid, you might hear the echoes of that calamitous terraforming in the hollow landscape.



The traces of this destruction persist in the grey rocks littered across the land. How do we move forward in this shattered landscape?

Hold onto this predicament and continue the journey to the end, and you may hear whispers of a sprightly frond, unfurling in the mythic shadows of burnt black pine. The enticing poem of a resurgent forest rising from the skeletal remains, gracefully returning fertility to the earth.

In the heart of the dead forest, a glimpse of an interdependent, tentacular flourishing, a glimpse of hope. Come along, with abandon, and embrace this spirited renewal in, and amongst, damaged ruins.



Dance with wild grasses amid adolescent trees. A spell binding dawn chorus calling out across the midsummer morning. If you gaze into the glistening pool what awaits? A hope for a renewal of our bonds.

A hope for new, collaborative world-making. Worlds where humans and non-humans carve and shape their destinies together.

An ecology of refugee species in reflection, taking strength in each other. Taking courage in the mere fact that they are not alone, that as long as there is life there is hope. Is this you? Are you them?

Welcome to our Forest.





'Invocation for Hope' by Superflux was exhibited at the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) as part of the Vienna Biennale for Change, 2021 from 28.5 - 3.10.2021.

All photo credits to Gregor Hofbauer.

Isabel Beavers

We can all hope to be Cr eatures!

Reflections on working with the CreaTures team

Credits:

Curation - Marlies Wirth

Curatorial Assistance - Antje Prisker

Idea and Conception - Anab Jain and Jon Ardern

Superflux Development Team - Ed Lewis, Florian Semlitsch, Leanne Fischler,

Niccolo Fioritti, Eva Tausig, Lizzie Crouch, Nicola Ferrao, Matt Edgson

Sound Design - Cosmo Sheldrake

Motion Design - Michele Vannoni & Dimitris Papadimitriou

Technical Coordination - Philipp Krummel

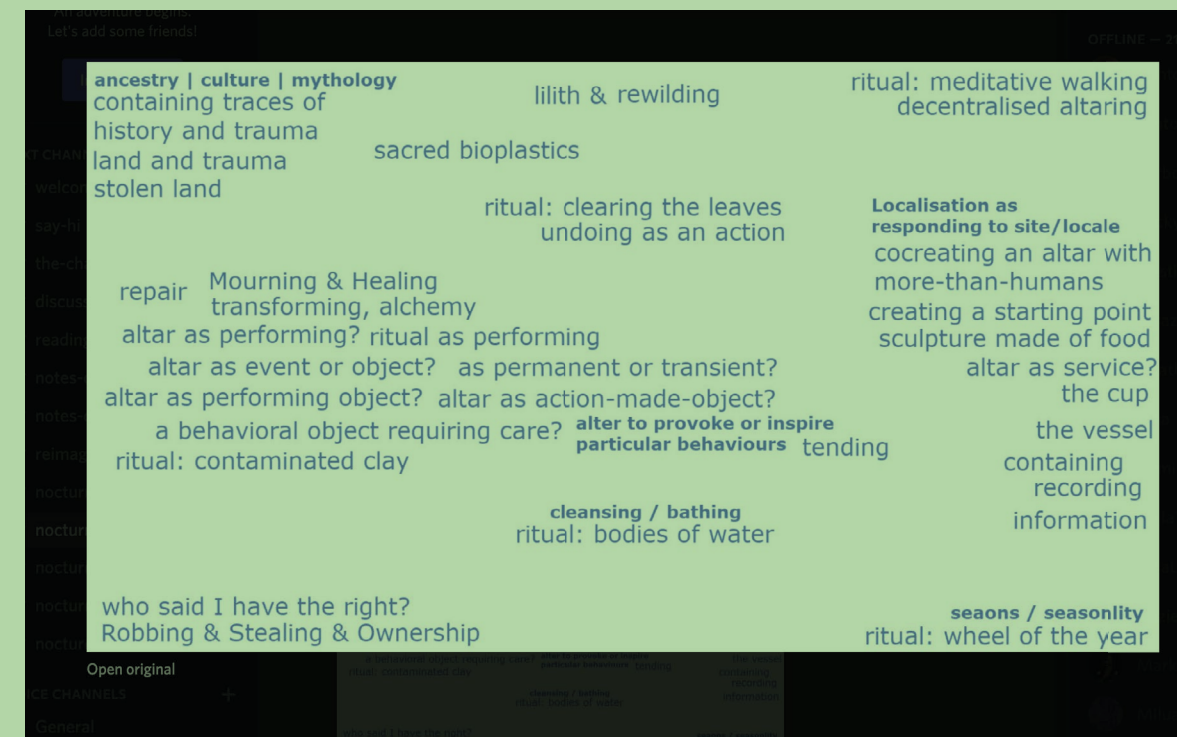
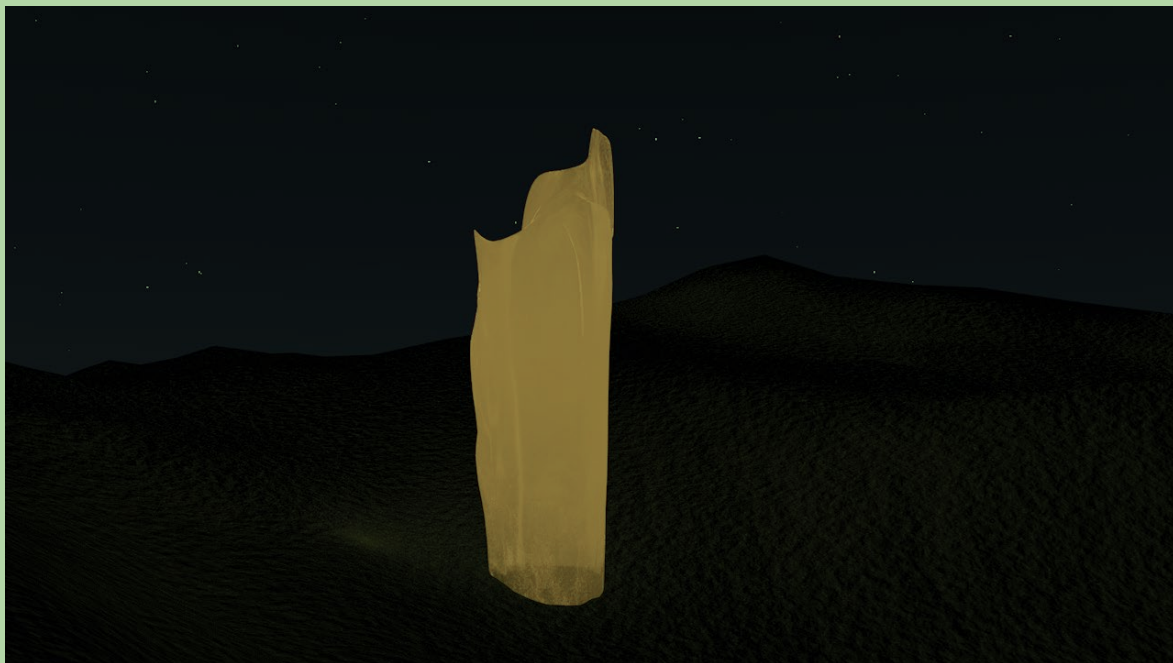
Exhibition Management - Mario Kojetinsky

Partners - Anton Starkl (Gartner Starkl GmbH), SANlight Research (GmbH), Doka

Osterreich (GmbH), Alpenzoo Innsbruck (GmbH), Thomas Krenn, (Saubersdorf

Fire Department), Georg Heinz (Neunkirchen District Forest Range)

Working with the CreaTures team was as magical as the entangled, messy, wild and radical inquiries that came up in the various open calls throughout the CreaTures project. As a wild and messy artist with a propensity for creating art outdoors, lighting up alternative spaces, and consistently finding myself out of place in a typical gallery setting, I found the intellectual and imaginative space created by CreaTures perfect for experimenting and iterating. I found a kindness and openness that softened the academic and critical backbone of the project, generating at once a seriousness for craft, practice, and inquiry while at the same time playfulness, humility, and care.



I entered into my work with the CreaTures project with a wild idea to place altars made from light sculptures up in the mountains to honor our need to be outdoors during the pandemic, and to generate new eco-rituals with the more-than-humans we share the planet with. I found an immediate home with the CreaTures team, who were as up for experimenting as I was, and believed in the small personal and ‘feral’ practices that characterize my creative practice. It was refreshing to find community with a group of creative thinkers, academics, and intellectuals who also value embodied knowledge and the production of knowledge that happens outside of these institutionalized spaces.

Notes from Nocturne: Wild Altar Hack @ Uroboros Festival

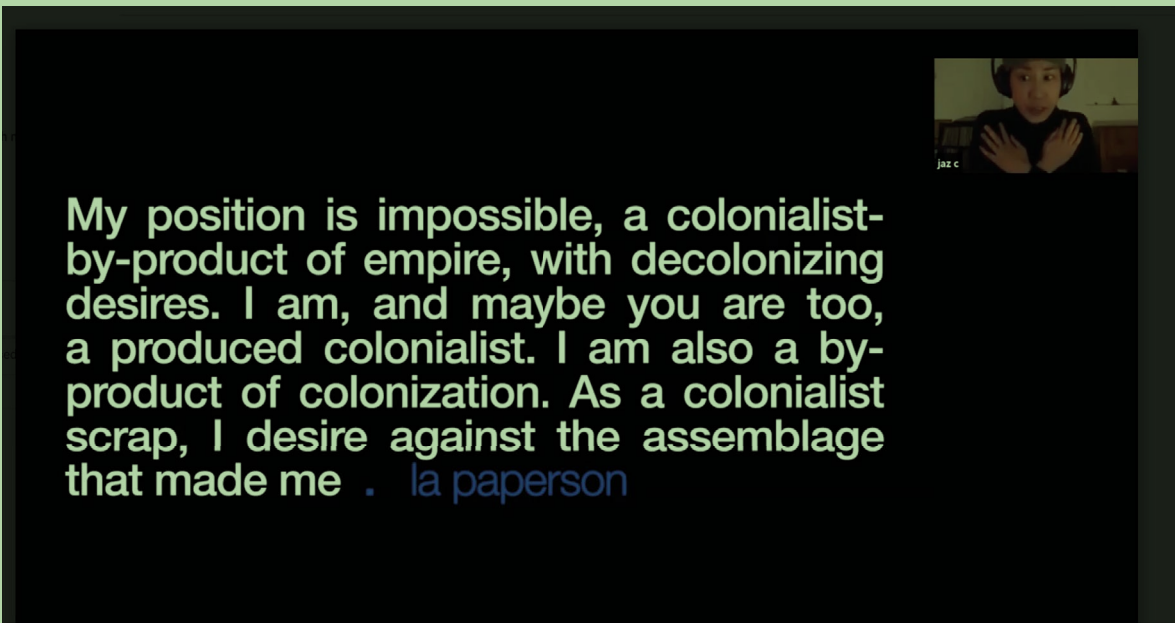
There was time and space for seriousness, for sharing working ideas and processes at the Uroboros Festival, and for thinking through project logistics and planning on a Zoom call. However the hours I spent working with my hands in my studio, wandering the streets of my neighborhood in the spirit of the derive and wondering and imagining how to bring a new eco-ritual to life were more memorable. The feral, wild CreaTures created a supportive structure that allowed for the inherent parts of creativity to emerge: wonder, drifting, curiosity, contemplation, urgency.





Screenshot of group @ Uroboros Festival

Ethics of care are felt deeply across the many interactions I had with the CreaTures team, from warm zoom call welcomes, to generous feedback during production meetings. This spirit enlivens the process of making and sharing the work with many publics, rippling out from the heart of the work. I consider ethics and modes of teamwork frequently in my creative practice, wondering how we can work better together - a necessity for more sustainable futures. As we are challenged to communicate across disciplines and languages, careful collaboration that centers humanness, subjectivity, context, and situation feels the way forward. It was a gift to experience a generative and warm collaboration.



Jaz!

Perhaps most importantly humor was never lacking. I am grateful for the levity we shared in spite of the heavy ecological burden we bear as a species. From hilarious potatoes, to the droopy eyes meeting from across time zones, we shared many laughs.



My 'CreaTures' - the sculptures for my wild altars

Cassie Thornton

What counts when we count!



1/5

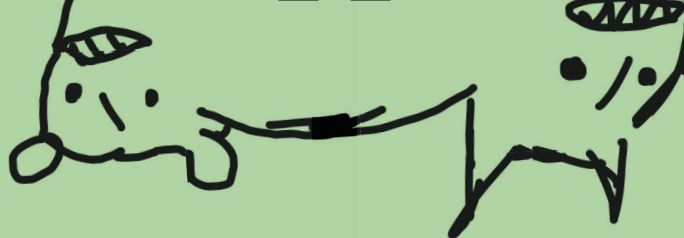
When I ride my bike across town in Berlin, I often pass the Haus der Statistik. This once was a government building of the GDR that recorded data and now it is an experimental art space. On the side there is some very official looking graffiti that reads "WHAT COUNTS WHEN WE COUNT?". Around the corner, on the other side of the building reads "STOP WAR". I think of former politician Marylin Waring and her 1988 book, *If Women Counted*. This book is a foundational text for rogue feminist economists like me. It describes how women's unpaid work and the value of nature are excluded from what

¹ Maternal Gift Economy Movement - Salon #27 - The Transformation of the Gifts of Life into Money!, February 26, 2022, Featuring Genevieve Vaughan and Guests - Miki Kashtan, Vandana Shiva, and Cassie Thornton, Moderated by Letecia Layson, more info: shorturl.at/rzLMT

is considered productive or valuable while the GDP is how we measure whether or not our society is thriving. In two recent talks by Vandana Shiva about the gift economy, she has mentioned Waring and this book has been on my mind. In a panel discussion¹ that took place days after the Russian military invaded Ukraine, Shiva asked why we have money for war but not to keep communities and people alive? Days later, on the occasion of the last International Women's Day I was thinking about what truly feminist accounting would look like if we were to ask "WHAT COUNTS?". Maybe we would measure our needs, and our resources and then make sure the two met. There would be certain things we also would not try to measure. This makes me think of the work of metrics that I often talk about with Lara Houston from CreaTures. Who and what counts when we count?

I am an artist working on a project with many collaborators that aims for a transformation that is a bit beyond *my* imagination's reach. It feels natural to go towards the idea of having metrics that will reveal my and our success or failure, as if it is one or the other. However, working with the CreaTures crew helped me realise what I was born knowing but unable to say: that metrics are for dummies. I mean that most ways of measuring change are made to show only certain types of change, for certain types of reasons. Those reasons are related to proving that things are valuable in a racist capitalist economy that really likes war.

In The Hologram we are working between two poles: we are honing a practice that anyone can do and we are hoping that it leads to the end of oppressive systems like racial capitalism, because these things are harmful and make us lonely and disconnected. The wish is that if enough people practise The Hologram, that a LOT of people experience a new stability, better communication and trust, and altogether better health. Then, that experience allows more people to do the work of producing a new set of living systems that allow for the centering of health and life. It's a big jump between a peer to peer protocol and the destruction of the huge tectonic system



that parented us and the production of a new way of being... but why not?

If we could only get some statistics together, we could prove to the world (including medical systems like the NHS) that The Hologram and what we do is useful and worth spreading. Then if it was approved of and shared at a larger scale more people would be able to transform. I go back to the graffiti I described above: WHAT COUNTS WHEN WE COUNT? The graffiti is correct in asking this question- it is not so easy to know where to start. What matters when we attempt to measure something that we don't understand, like a shift in how we see ourselves and society happening inside of us individually and collectively? Though I still hope we can produce a dataset (for the NHS or anyone else who will look at it), I think that we have learned some very important lessons and skills from seeing CreaTures see us.

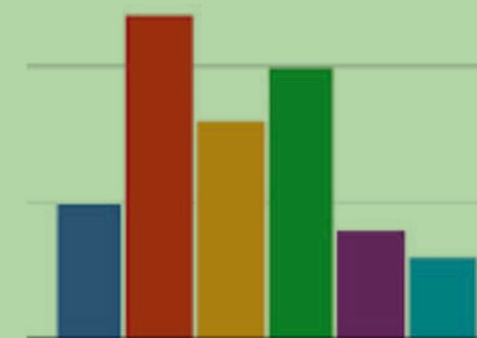


Photo by mini_malist (I'm on or off), CC BY-ND 2.0, <https://flic.kr/p/2hzAyg>

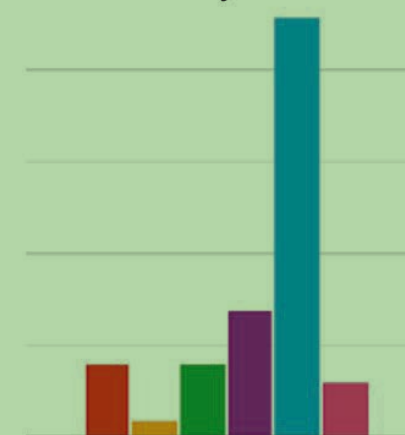
1. Metrics are not going to be easy or complete. All social transformation is messy, but what we do with The Hologram is strategically messy, complex and always changing. There is no way to take the complexity that we have achieved in the name of personal and social transformation and turn it into a dataset that has the meaningfulness of what we do inside of it. That doesn't mean we can't produce a dataset, but most metrics that allow us to produce the datasets that make sense in a medical system are not our metrics.
2. Data analysis and metric making does not need to face outwards. It has been so useful to work with CreaTures to look at what we have learned and how we have learned it. Our research has been truly social and used internally to understand what we are doing and what we want to learn. Being able to present to our own collective what we have learned is as important as making data available to the outside.
3. Even though we ask people how they are doing, we don't easily understand what is happening inside of each person we work with. Transformation looks and feels different inside of each person. It takes trust and time in order to learn from people about how transformation looks for them.
4. Data is used for story telling. Storytelling is a holistic process, and it is quite different to tell a story from within than from the outside of transformation. CreaTures has become very much a part of our project, and have transformed alongside us, and taken notes about it that have allowed us to see us.



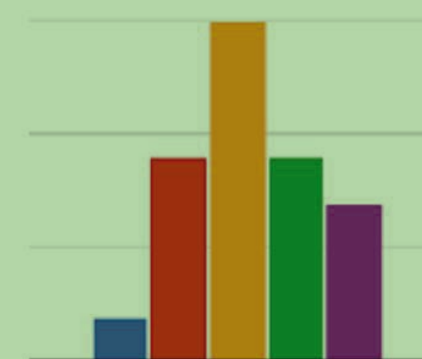
How do you feel when you imagine asking for support for a year from three people?



How do you feel when you are asked for help from one of your friends?



How do you feel when you imagine asking for two hours of someone's time to focus on you?



I will not do this Anxious / overwhelmed Worried about the impact on others Excited and nervous Hopeful No problem at all! Other

**Open Forest Collective:
Markéta Dolejšová, Andrea Botero,
Cristina Ampatzidou, Jaz Hee-jeong Choi**

Stories from Op en Fore sts



The Open Forest project (<https://openforest.care>) is a journey of collective, experimental inquiry into different forests and other-than-human dataflows. As members of the Open Forest Collective, we have vastly different experiences and relationships with forests, but we share a desire to better understand and live with them. The Open Forest project consists of a series of experimental forest walks, workshops, and speculative research instruments including an online portal for sharing of forest-stories that help us to co-creatively explore diverse forest data flows. We have spent time walking in, through and with various forests in Finland, Australia, Spain, the Czech Republic, and Colombia (so far!). These walks vary in forms: we walk physically and remotely, together and apart,

side by side and connected through our digital screens, sometimes in actual forests and sometimes through their data-based representations.

We actively invite various forest dwellers, guardians, scientists, and other creatures to walk with us and share their forest experiences in the form of shortstories. We treat these stories as forest data following the aim to entangle existing forests datasets with data that question and obscure the currently collected and available - mostly quantitative - insights about various forests.

In this short piece, we present some of the stories that we collected during the exhibition Data Vitality: Soft Infrastructures and Economies of Knowledge, which was organized by Aalto University (FI), curated by Edel O'Reilly, and took place at Aalto's Dipoli Gallery, between November 2021 and February 2022.

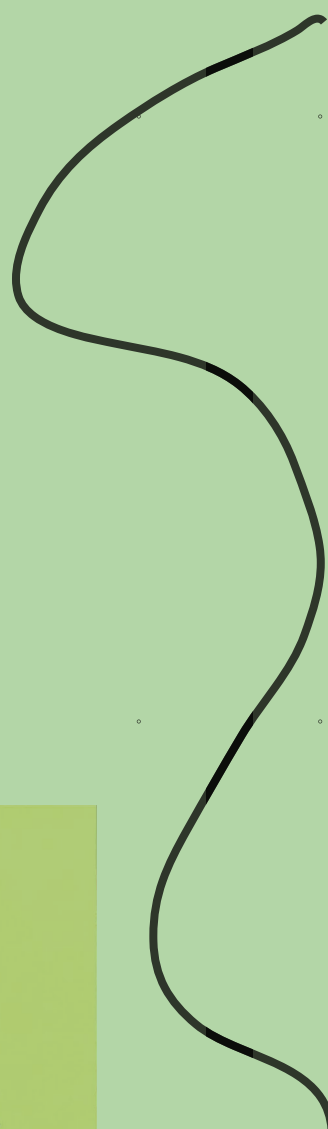
LAST YEAR, SOMEBODY PUT SIGNS NEXT TO THE MUSHROOMS THAT GROW IN THE HYYTIÄLÄ SMEARII STATION, SAYING "PLEASE DON'T PICK UP THESE MUSHROOMS, BECAUSE THEY ARE RESEARCH OBJECTS".

Please
don't
pick

2 // 2 2 2

from interview with UT / SPRING 2021.

THE FOREST AND
THE ATMOSPHERE
"TALK"
IN VOLATILE ORGANIC
COMPOUNDS
VOCs



DATA CATALOGUE #301

I AM A 59 yr OLD SCOTS PINE. I WAS PLANTED HERE SAME TIME WITH THE NEIGHBOURS AFTER THE AREA WAS SLIGHTLY BURNED AND PREPARED. THIS PART OF THE TREE STAND IS QUITE OK, NOT SO WET, NOT SO DARK I HAVE GOOD TIME TO GROW MY ROOTS AND MAKE SOME NICE SOIL.

I LIKE IT BEST IN THE WINTER WHEN THE SNOW SOFTENS A BIT THE HUMMING FROM THE GENERATORS. SUMMER IS NOT BAD EITHER... THE CLOUDS ABOVE ARE BEAUTIFUL I DON'T HAVE MUCH MORE TO SAY... PERHAPS.

FORESTS ARE BECOMING CLIMATE REFUGEES. AND IT TAKES A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TO MOVE AS TREE SPECIES.

SO HOW CAN WE HELP FORESTS TO "WALK"? HOW CAN WE BECOME FOREST STEWARDS? HELP THEM - AND US - SURVIVE?

FOREST IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST THINGS THAT GIVE YOU HOPE REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE.

FORESTS ARE NATURE'S SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE, IN A WAY.

MEISA MÄNTY
MÄNTY

HONKA

AN OLD DRY BUT STANDING PINE
PINES CAN BECOME HONKAS
(BUT NOT ALWAYS)

PETÄJÄ

MAYBE THE ORIGINAL FINOUBRIC NAME
IN EASTERN VARIETIES/DIALECTS IS STILL
CALLED PETÄJÄ IN WESTERN DIALECTS
MOSTLY MEANS A BIG PINE

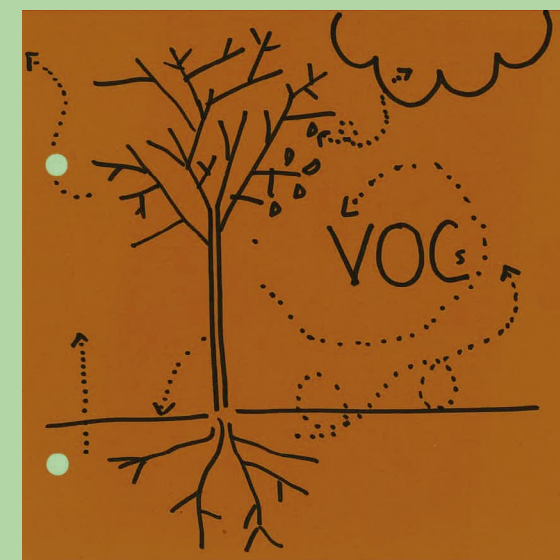
MÄNTY

ITS ACTUALLY A TOOL ^{MÄNTÄ} MADE FROM
A YOUNG'S PINE TIP BRANCH USED
TO MAKE BUTTER OR STIR PORRIDGE

metsän tuoksussa
kuuluu puiden puhe

hajut ovat puiden
viestintää
puiden puhe on
rauhhoitava.

I WORK WITH THESE FOREST
SENSORS AND DATA FOR SUCH
A LONG TIME AND HAVE SEEN
SO MANY BIASES AND ERRORS
THAT I DON'T TRUST THEM
ANYMORE. THAT'S WHY I AM
NOT CALLING MYSELF A
SCIENTIST ANYMORE



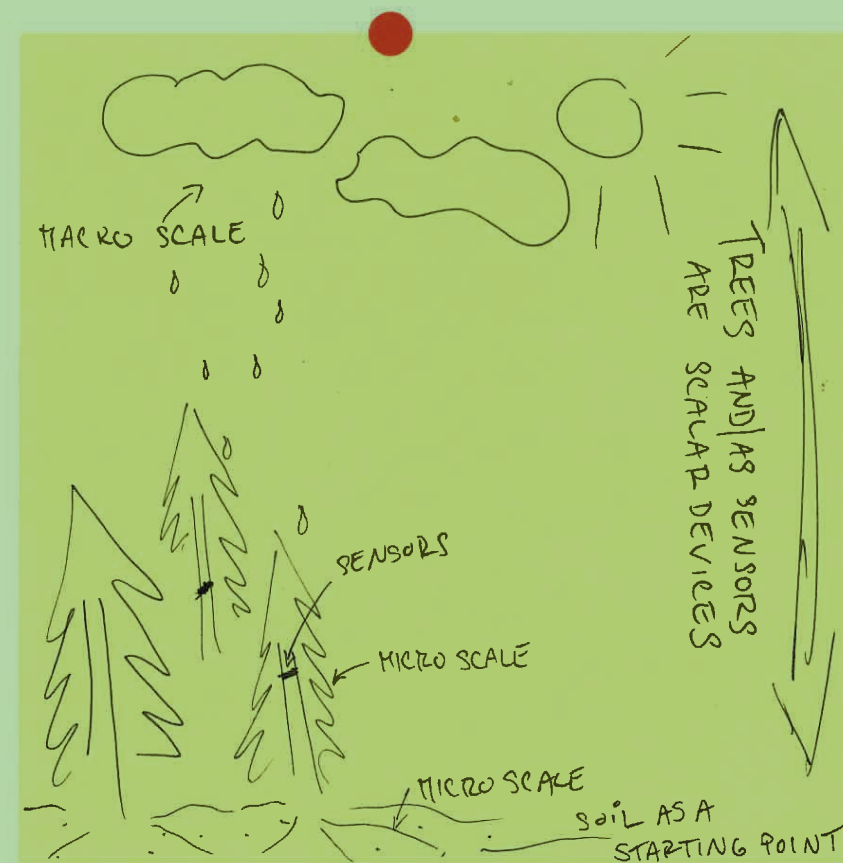
scale
trees as sensors

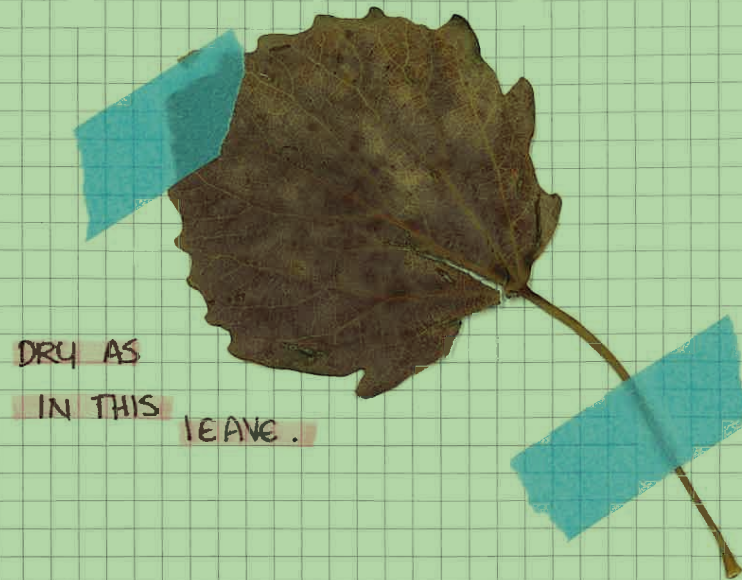


THE VALUE OF FORESTS
SHOULD BE MEASURED
IN A RELATIONAL SENSE,
NOT IN THE GRANTS OF
CARBON THEY SINK.



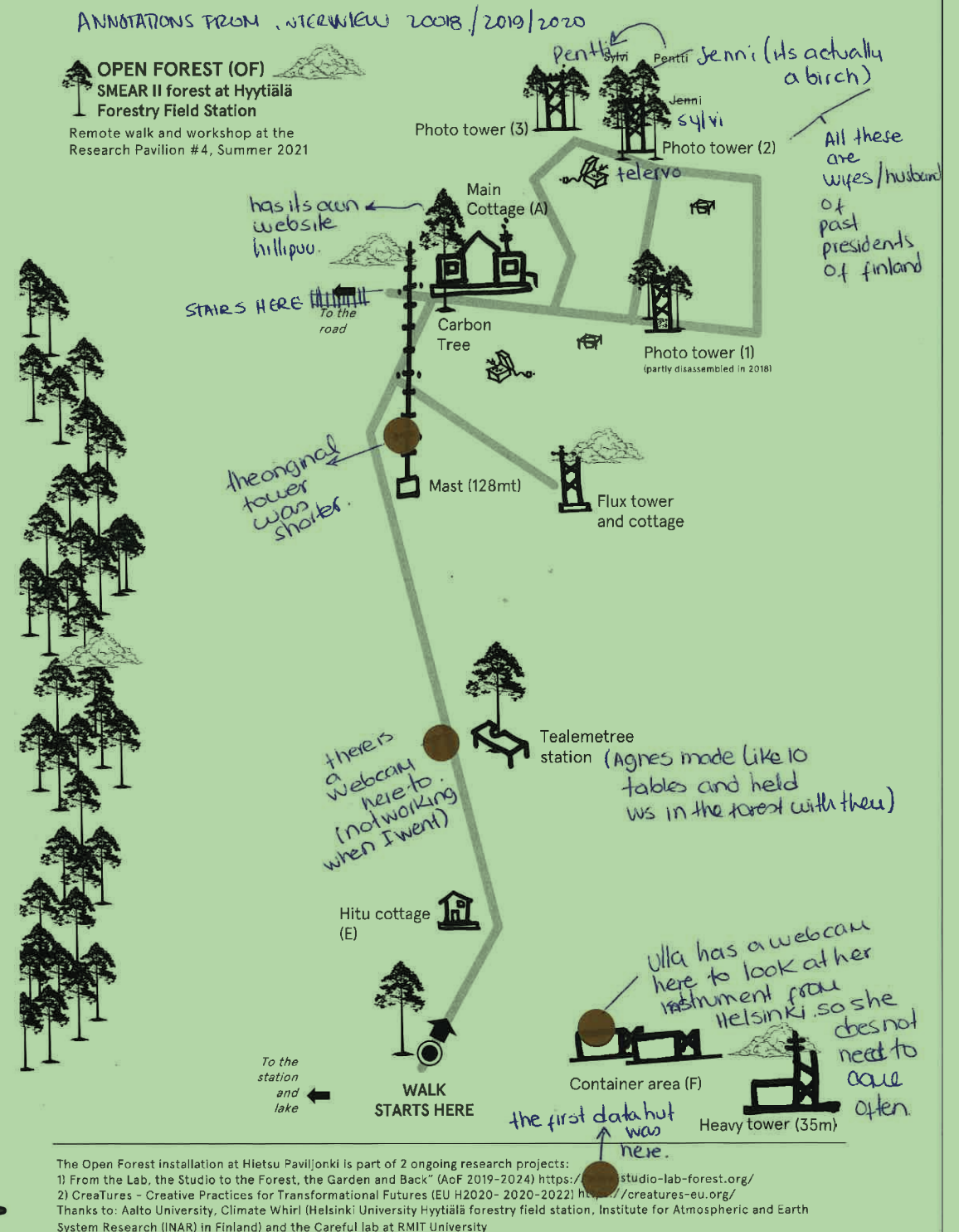
THE INSTRUMENT HAS
ONLY ONE POINT OF
VIEW, IT DOESN'T
KNOW EVERYTHING
ABOUT NATURE.





16.6.20.
old couple:
you must be researching plants? yes.
I thought this will be bilberries
but no...
its like in our path of forest. now I am
worried when is so dry will we have
bilberries at all this year? I thought
the dry weather will kill them!
will they know if it happens?
(the research forest)
it remains to be seen.

YOU CAN EASILY TAKE THE FOREST FOR GRANTED.
I GREW UP IN A FOREST IN FINLAND AND THEN
I MOVED ABROAD. ONLY THEN, I REALISED HOW
FINNISH FORESTS LOOK FROM THE OUTSIDE -
LIKE A FOREST PARADISE. BUT IT'S NOT AS
IDEAL AS IT LOOKS. RECENTLY, LOCAL FORESTS
HAVE BEEN DISAPPEARING VERY FAST. EVERY
TIME I PASS BY, I REALISE HOW MUCH
FOREST HAS BEEN CUT DOWN. FORESTS
ARE SO VALUABLE, AND SO FRAGILE AT
THE SAME TIME.





Felipe Gonzales Gil
Angela María Osorio Méndez
Sandrine Crisostomo

Love letters to Commons

1 / 10

Commonspoly is a non-profit, open-source board game that encourages a culture of cooperation and questions the violent model of neoliberal privatisation. Commonspoly emerged in 2015 as a way to hack and subvert the contemporary version of Monopoly. The game's design principles draw on insights from commoning practices and encourage players to pool their resources together and act collectively against 'speculators' - nefarious game characters advocating privatization.

The game is typically played in public sessions at cultural events, but it can also be purchased or downloaded as print-ready files and played privately. The Commonspoly initiator, Spanish cultural cooperative ZEMOS98, also provides editable game files to encourage collaborative game development, and enable anyone to adjust the game to their specific contexts. To scale out the game distribution and nurture a growing community of practice around the game, ZEMOS98 has initiated a new experiment in the context of their work within CreaTures: a network of 'Ambassadors'. This is, a group of



peers that were tasked with organizing sessions within their local communities and expanding the distribution network of Commonspoly by liaising with bookstores and libraries. So far, the first five Commonspoly Ambassadors have organized gameplays in Turin and Naples (Italy), Faro (Portugal), Thessaloniki (Greece), Helsinki (Finland) and Madrid (Spain). The main goals of these gameplays were, to test and document the social transformation capacities of the game, to expand the community around the game offering the possibility to challenge the rules of the game or even foster new version of it adapted to the local context and to set distribution points with politically friendly bookstores and a place to gather the local community around the game.

We have asked the Ambassadors to send us a letter about their experience in this role and how they imagine the future of a Commonspoly community! Here is what Angela María Osorio Méndez from Italy and Sandrine Crisostomo from Portugal have written to us.

Dear CreaTures,

Here is my love letter to Commonspoly.

I first met Commonspoly when in 2019, after having read the open paper on "Pedagogies of Care" by Zemos98, I visited their webpage. I found this magnificent game, which resonated with my experiences as an activist at l'Asilo, an urban commons in Naples, and in the Italian Network of urban and civic use commons. My motivations for becoming ambassador are multiple: first of all, I wanted to be able to share thoughts with intelligent and interesting people on the use of games for social change. I had participated in Zemos98's event 'Gaming for the Commons' as I am interested on using different kinds of tools (such as games) as ways to enlarge the dialogue on important issues that can be transformative for our society with people beyond activist or academic spaces (sometimes these groups use jargon unfamiliar to people outside their fields, and



this sometimes builds an invisible wall, dividing people to insiders and outsiders). Finally, in the association The School of Losing Time, that I have co-created in 2015, we have always been inspired by the act of playing as a way of commoning.

Ambassadors bring to Commonspoly, as a project, the territorialization and framework that a local person can bring to the presentation of the game. Especially the fact that we are immersed in local networks makes the promotion and diffusion of the game easier. In the future, I see myself finalizing the Italian translation! This will further enable the diffusion of the game around Italy (or at least in the national network of urban commons and commons at civic use) and I intent to be part of that!

More generally, ambassadors could help establish a proto-network of independent libraries for distributing the game. Here in Italy, we have two independent activist libraries, one in Turin and one in Naples, that

have already accepted to have a few boxes and sell the game. Still, I think that activist and independent libraries themselves, would actually be the best actors to take on the role of the ambassadors! In my discussions with people from these libraries, the idea of creating a network of independent and activist libraries around Europe through Commonspoly seemed a great idea!

In short this was a great opportunity; I missed not having had more contact with the other ambassadors but I enjoyed the possibilities and spaces of reflection that were activated by playing the game in Turin and in Naples.

Hugs to all the commoners and gamers around,
Angela María Osorio Méndez



Dear CreaTures,

Commonspoly came into my life and made me rethink and reconsider the concept of value.

In my early years at university, I chose to study economics. At that time, I was fascinated with macroeconomics, the theory of value, economic policies, and their relation to philosophy. Among other things, I was struck by the differences between Friedman's liberal ideas and the Keynesian ones. It opened a world of theories, based on public growth, and/or private investment. However, most of all, I realised that Economics, this science "constantly under development", was ruling the world more than anything else by provoking wealth and equity, or market crash and poverty. Curiously, in my childhood, I always felt an aversion towards Monopoly, not understanding why anyone should „gain“ anything only by „defeating“ the other.

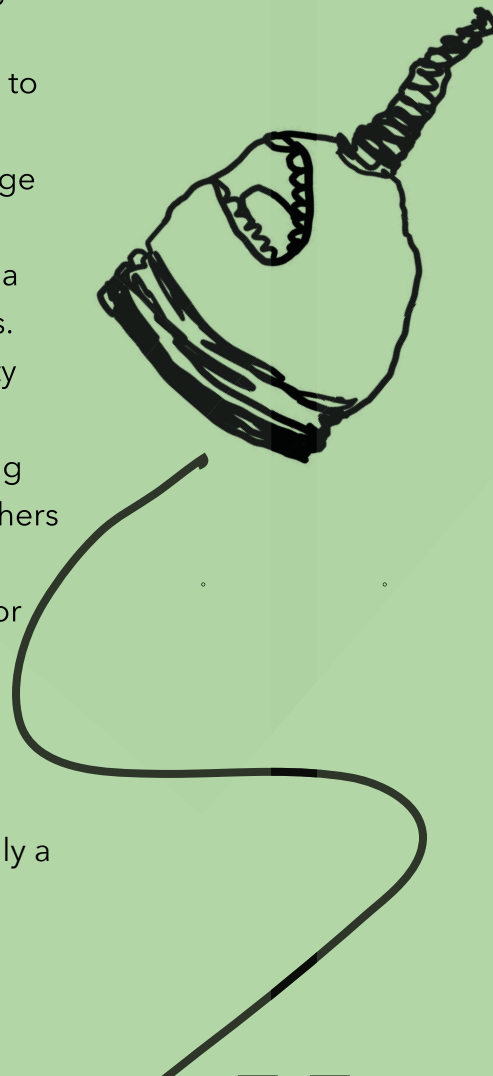
When I discovered Commonspoly through Zemos98 and heard the real background story and original intentions of Monopoly's creator Elizabeth Magie, I realised that there could be an answer to my early age preoccupation and an alternative offered to recover the true origins of the contemporary world-famous game. What if we considered economy as a discipline that teaches access to global wealth through collective action? And what better way for us to provoke change in mentalities and mind set, than through a game? Commonspoly opened, once again, a renewed range of possibilities and thoughts. The entire basis of our education and society rests on competition, so that we need to be better than the others, for instance by getting the best marks at school or defeating the others to win in any sports game. In opposition to that, the invitation to become an ambassador of Commonspoly in Portugal gave me the possibility to creatively foster the ideas I believed in since so long ago.

Being an ambassador of this game is not only a

matter of representing the project, introducing the rules or facilitating the game sessions; it is a political act, it gives one the space to explore with others (the players) the deep notions of organisation in our society, to question our beliefs and the values they are derived from: the relationship between consumption, sustainable development, and the principles of sharing and living together.

In order to fulfil this mission, I dream of a network of change makers, composed of Commonspoly ambassadors and thinkers of social transformation, who would gather and compile testimonies, and who would track people's ideas about the issues that Commonspoly tackles. I'd like to imagine also that we could invite kids to be part of this global thinking, by using their own creative proposals and dreams to propose futures we could build today.

One thing is for sure: we all know that intensive production, capitalism and patriarchy will most certainly destroy all that we have inherited. I shall then quote Lennon: „you may say I'm



a dreamer, but I'm not the only one" and invite you to play and imagine alternatives TOGETHER.

All the best,
Sandrine Crisostomo



Kit Braybrook

Art/Tech/ Nature/Culture Invitation



1/2



You're invited to Join Art/Tech/Nature/Culture, a global community of practice for 300+ creative experimenters across disciplines who are exploring the possibilities of ecological regeneration. Our backgrounds are diverse, but we are united by a shared interest in using creative practices (e.g. arts, design, culture, hacking, research, activism) to explore alternative futures that rethink, rebuild and heal. Get involved at: <https://atnc.persona.co/>

Klelija Zhivkovikj, Anton Poikolainen Rosén,
Kit Braybrooke, Genevieve Rudd,
W. Liebrecht Fick

Moments of meaningful engagement



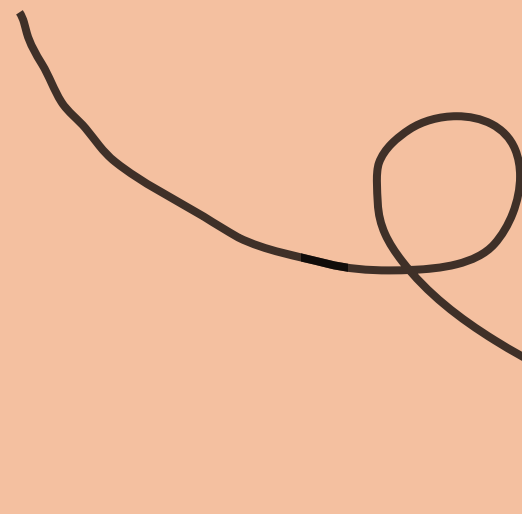
We have asked members of the Art Tech Nature Culture community to share with us one image of their recent work that included meaningful engagement with others. It didn't have to be their most significant or successful achievement, just one which felt very special! Here is what we received!



Klelĳa Zhivkovikj



The audience got to experience communicating with a fictional, sentient creature who only understands communication through changing the intensity of touch. Audience interacting with the Prototypes for mutual pleasure, group show „It’s easier to breathe underground 7” 2019, image by www.popup.mk



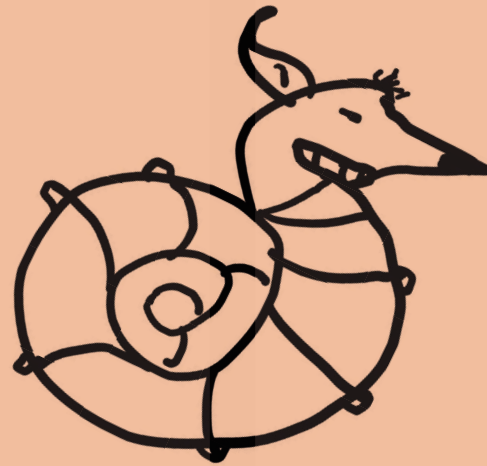
Anton Poikolainen Ros  n



A design suggestion was shown to urban farmers as part of an ethnographic study to characterize and engage with participants’ culture, values, and experiences, and think through their ideas about design. The purpose of the design suggestions was threefold (1) illustrate ethnographic findings (2) serve as a discussion piece (3) suggest design possibilities that are potentially meaningful in the context. The image illustrates sensors worn as rings – and how they could be used in soil. Sensed data is presented through sound (as illustrated by the graph in the collage). Images by Anton Poikolainen Ros  n.



This picture was taken while I was working with makers and craftspeople as a delegate of the British Council in the Sichuan province of China. My collaborators and I went there to explore the circular economy with them, and when we arrived, we realised just how much we could learn from each other, and how little time there would be to do it. Our world is so much richer when these kinds of international encounters are made possible. I hope very much the borders will reopen soon, and we can all meet again.



Yarmouth Springs Eternal is a community arts, walking and nature project born out of the COVID-19 and Lockdown experience in 2020. It offers a space to reflect and re-connect safely through walking and shared creative experiences in Spring 2021 and 2022. We walk, talk and create together, in a hopeful and uplifting way. We look for the signs of Spring unfolding in unexpected places in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk UK.

Genevieve Rudd



Becky Demmen/Supporting Your Art

During this session, we were exploring St George's Park in Great Yarmouth and gathering natural materials to take back to our base, to decorate the exhibition space. We were choosing natural materials as we wanted to bring something from our walking experiences into a space which is devoid of nature - PRIMEYARC, which is an arts venue in an ex-department store at the back of a shopping centre

This image was taken in Spring 2021, in the first year of Yarmouth Springs Eternal. The image shows four women standing together and reaching out towards, or holding, a gathered branch of leaves. Each person is looking in a different direction in mid conversation, with one person only visible by their outstretched hand. It was a bright sunny spring day, but it was still cold, and each person is wearing layers of jackets, coats and scarfs.

Kit Braybrooke



Makers (from craft practitioners to designers, tinkerers to fixers) are creative thinkers and strategists, with a unique understanding of materials and production processes. What if they could play a more active role in reshaping the systems within which they live? In this circular economy workshop 'Rethink the system together' funded by the UK British Council in 2019, Dr. Kit Braybrooke, Sophie Huckfield and Prof. Nicola Thomas worked together with makers in Chengdu, China on hands-on activities which invited them to articulate environmentally conscious action on their own terms, in ways that they found personally meaningful.

In this image, makers and crafters create circular ecological systems together in China, 2019. Photo credit: Sophie Huckfield.

In August 2021, I took a „Reimagining Education“ course as part of the Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the course was presented online. However, for our group work project, my two fellow group members and I decided to meet in-person for a day. Our day together consisted of a „learning journey“ – a series of moments of meaningful engagement. We were especially inspired by Shahjahan’s paper, “Being ‘Lazy’ and Slowing Down: Toward decolonizing time, our body, and pedagogy” (2015) and wanted to slow down and be ‘lazy’ together. We also wanted to focus on learning through our bodies (and not only our minds). We went for a hike in a nearby nature reserve (documenting our excursion with videos, photos, and quick sketches), we reflected about our experiences over a cup of coffee, and, lastly, created an „exquisite corpse“-like drawing while listening to a podcast on slowing down, being lazy, and ‘rest as resistance’. All the while recording our process and progress. This was a great opportunity to play, to not think too much, and just draw. This activity was also an opportune moment to do some more reflection on the day. Plus: we have a great artwork, nice photos, and a fascinating time lapse to remember it all by.



W. Liebrecht Fick



Photo: W. Liebrecht Fick

In a world of online learning and video calls, three students decided to meet in-person for a day. One of the day’s meaningful engagements was creating an „exquisite corpse“-like drawing. This meant we sat around a table and took turns drawing something – anything that came up – on a single piece of paper without lifting the pen or pencil when it was one’s turn to draw. The next person then had to start their drawing at the point on the paper where the previous person made their last mark. The three of us took turns drawing like this while listening to a podcast and reflecting on our day together in person. Creating an „exquisite corpse“-like drawing during a day of meaningful in-person engagements.

Juliette Grossmann

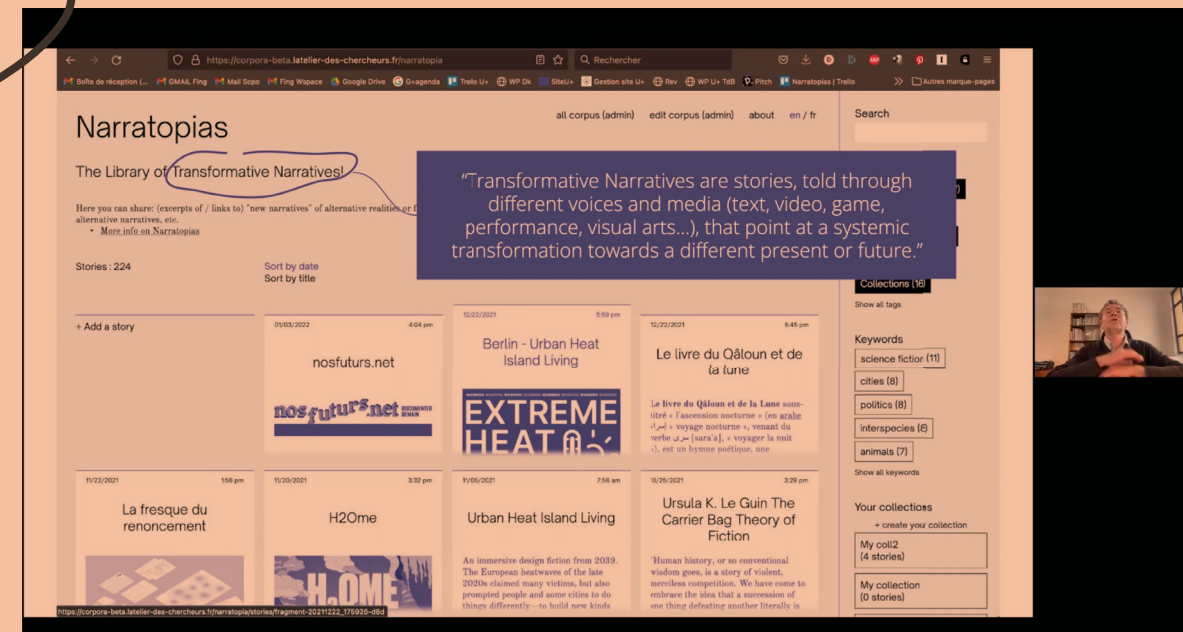
Ingredients for change: collecting and sharing transformative practices

1 / 13



The agora is about to start, rock music resounds in the virtual reunion. Just like Rob, the main character in the 2000 film High Fidelity, we share a moment together waiting to the sound of Bob Dylan and The Velvet Underground. As Cristina Ampatzidou from the CreaTures project points out, we have another point in common with this fussy character desperately trying to find answers to his questions: “We are list-making lovers!” The people gathered seem to share an interest in the art of collecting projects, stories, initiatives, in order to make them visible, to understand their interconnections, or to create communities around them. Eight collectives are here to share and discuss their experience of making different types of libraries, repositories, and other collections of creative and collective practices that pave paths towards sustainability and new narratives. All of them are looking for the answers to the same question: how do we enable positive change?

Daniel Kaplan and Chloé Luchs-Tassé start by presenting the purpose, methods and projects of the Plurality University Network (U+), focusing on their digital collaborative library Narratopias that gathers works of fiction, visual arts, speculation, design, or any other form of what they call “transformative narratives”. How do you identify what is transformative, and what can be considered a narrative? Although a definition is available on the website, U+ chose to enable anyone to contribute directly to the digital library. It is a way of saying: whatever effort we make to formulate a definition and therefore draw the essential outlines of the collection, in the end it’s the people’s understanding and use of it that matters. The openness and collaboration seem to self-regulate in a relevant corpus.



Daniel Kaplan explaining the working definition of a «transformative narrative» that Plurality University Network uses in the Narratopias project.

Kelli Rose Pearson follows with the Relmaginary Project, defined as a “search for practices, metaphors, mental models, and narratives that support ecological regeneration and the well-being of future generations”. They have multiple matters: making visible different types of intelligence, including non-human and marginalized stakeholders, combining pragmatic and “enchanted” approaches, and connecting with the depth of our feelings, values and beliefs. Kelli explains that “change comes from the inside out”, from the enlivening feeling of engagement that certain experiences activate. Relmaginary collects and makes accessible methods (among which a toolkit of arts-based methods) that enable this type of transformative experiments, organized according to the five steps towards change described by Theory U (convene, observe, reflect, act, harvest). Nine transformative mindsets emerged from the research around the project, such as “Expanded spheres of care” or “Intersectionality”. If “creative methods are morally neutral”, as Kelli defends, it becomes essential for a project to assert its political purpose.





One of the goals of the Reimaginary project was to include multiple perspectives, and more-than-human stakeholders in their library of creative methods.

A spectacular Baining fire dancer appears on our screen, with this question written: how can the arts contribute to realizing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? The arts that Diego Galafassi and David Tàbara are looking for include any kinds of arts-based research approaches and creative practices, at the intersection of different types of knowledge: scientific, analytical, and practical, experimental. Starting from an analytical catalogue focused on the climate crisis, the Living Catalogue of the Arts for Sustainability Transformations network adapted the project to the SDGs. "Living" because anyone can submit an entry anytime, and the catalogue itself is enlivened with interviews, portrait films and workshops. Either by making the interface between arts and sustainability science visible, or by looking for different ways of learning and creating scientific knowledge, the catalogue pursues a single purpose: "to turn passive audiences watching the drama of unsustainability into empowered actors engaged in SDGs". Two challenges emerge: how to turn repositories into actionable knowledge? And what is the value of such a



repository for artists and practitioners?

Romain Julliard, from the research project Mosaic, introduces an adorable – and critical – hedgehog, who reminds us that this is not about big data and artificial intelligence, but about quality data and collective intelligence. Mosaic helps collective projects in the conception of data exchange platforms, using participatory science methods. For example, they created a protocol to collect data on hedgehogs' state of health in France, allowing anybody to observe the animal in their garden, share the results on a platform and be part of a collaborative research project. The data is as useful to science as it is fun to collect for the participants, creating a community of people interested in their garden's biodiversity and willing to contribute to citizen science. Romain shares the secrets to their success: encouraging comments on the platform, allowing different kinds of data to be shared (quantitative and qualitative), and having the data validated by other participants. Romain is currently working with Joffrey Lavigne, here to present the Comité de Science-Fiction (CSF) that mobilizes artists and students to produce science fiction art, imagining new relationships between humans and nature. Mosaic and the CSF are collaborating on the conception of a platform for facilitators to share and discuss their methods for creative and collective practices. Using participatory science methods seems like a fertile idea, in view of the emergence of a community of practitioners.

« What do artists know? » The artist embedded into political programs brings new perspectives and creative processes to projects addressing climate change. This answer from the artist Frances Whitehead inspired the creation of the Library of Creative Sustainability that Lewis Coenen-Rowe is now presenting. The main audience for this collection are "those who can take on similar projects" (e.g. local communities, public agencies, community organizers, etc.), by re-using the information from the case studies: all the details of processes, difficulties, tools, etc.. Art-lovers are welcome to use the catalogue, but the real purpose is to encourage non-



art sectors to trust artists on their ability to think differently and practically. "Show, don't tell" is the phrase guiding the elaboration of the library, aiming to show how deep collaborations with artists help achieve efficient – and often surprising – sustainability outcomes.



Lewis Coenen-Rowe of Creative Carbon Scotland presenting a style guide used for writing articles for their Library of Creative Sustainability Project. Accompanying photo credited to DISPLACEMENT: Uncertain Journeys.

"Our project aims to expand the range and diversity of better anthropocenes", explains Garry Peterson, Professor at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. In his eyes, there is an urgent need to propose other visions of the anthropocene than what Mad Max and other popular dystopias offer. "We build the future based on seeds of desirable futures that exist today", explaining how Seeds of Good Anthropocene went from developing desirable scenarios for the future, to collecting existing elements, seeds, that could compose these better futures. To be considered a seed, an initiative must "exist (at least as prototype), be marginal (or not yet mainstream), and contribute to creating a sustainable future (according to

someone)". The term seed is all the more relevant for a project focusing on humanity's connection to nature all over the world. If "big changes come from below, but are crushed by the dominant narratives", as Garry believes, it is essential for these seeds to recognize one another and "catalyze transformation by connecting people". The workshops, organized around "seed cards" created from the project's collection, allow participants to make these connections. But on one condition: that they integrate the disagreements that arise on what the future will look like.

How can creative practices contribute to positive social transformation? In their own way, each one of the speakers above addressed this question, but the CreaTures research project described by Lara Houston focused on answering it directly. Using different methods (literature reviews, sector mapping, networking, interviews) to gather case studies of projects that creative practitioners and interdisciplinary researchers considered transformative, they managed in a second phase to analyze them and identify 25 transformative strategies. From ecological interconnectedness to friendship, these strategies are detailed in articles and interviews, making them more accessible than a cartography of 160 case studies. Sometimes, less is more, even in list-making. This abstract from the Dark Mountain Manifesto (one of the projects identified by CreaTures) summarizes the approach of the different collectives presented: "Together, we are walking away from the stories that our societies like to tell themselves, the stories that prevent us seeing clearly the extent of the ecological, social and cultural unravelling that is now underway. [...] And we are looking for other stories, ones that can help us make sense of a time of disruption and uncertainty."







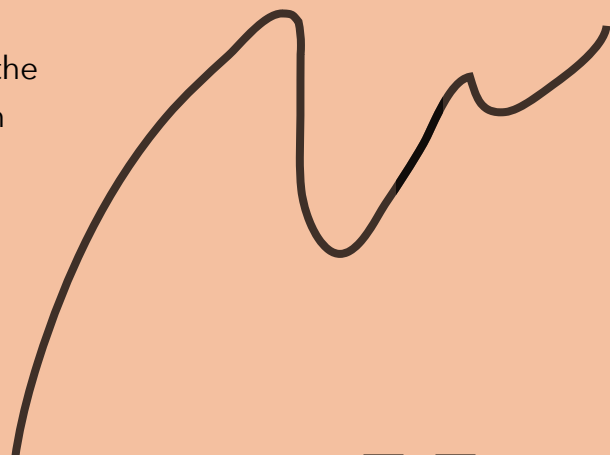
From the discussion after the presentations, five challenges emerged:

#1 Managing a common resource

A catalogue is even more demanding in terms of maintenance when it is collaborative and alive. Alive in the sense that none of the repositories presented are meant to be archives, but rather catalogues of objects that evolve, that we can enter in relation with. All the checking and updating required to keep the catalogues useful and relevant means a great amount of time spent on this particular work. Specific time and skills are rarely assigned to this “laborious work”, depending on the governance and the financing of a project. This means that it is up to the individual to ensure that necessary maintenance occurs, taking into consideration that they “each have different motivations for the time spent working on the library”, as Kelli reminds us.

#2 Placing knowledge into context

What is the difference between a manual and a collection of case studies? Placing knowledge into context. The reusability of the information you find in a collection of projects is not evident: “what type of practices work well, for what, in different contexts?”, Garry asks. The way Lara answers this challenge is to “cut the ties” by pointing out directly which elements can be reusable within each case study. Lewis admits that the difficulty for each project is to find a “fine balance between showing sustainability outcomes (technical, quantitative, what actually happened in a specific context) and lessons,



tips, and advice (qualitative, replicable information)”. Maybe the answer is in the interface: if a scientific or artistic project always responds to its particular context, the purpose of the interface of the repository must be to enable the embodiment of the information presented (using interviews like David does). Kelli salutes the humility of collecting experimental initiatives because the most important thing is to “embrace the uncertainty of experimenting” and stay ready for surprising outcomes.

#3 Evaluating the experimental

Can you collect without evaluating? Garry's answer is a firm “no”: “the act of picking one project versus another is an act of evaluation”, and it goes even further because “as soon as you have a collection, it is a kind of validation”, so it becomes essential to make your criteria visible and look for experiments which satisfy the conditions you set. This appears to be a paradoxical task for people who precisely collect experimental initiatives. Diego and Daniel agree on the fact that it is impossible to judge a project from an external point of view, even less with an objective criteria, so the questions become: “are the projects taking time to self-evaluate?”, “are they verifying the goals that they set for themselves?”. There are no means of evaluation other than the claims of a project's initiators or participants, or maybe looking for secondary sources to triangulate the information collected (which can make sense if pursuing a scientific approach). Or could a qualitative criteria like inclusivity be a way of measuring artistic practices? Lara concludes by reminding us that “it takes time and multiple tentatives for an initiative to be stable enough to be evaluated so it is essential to nurture the experimental, especially in crowdsourced libraries”.



#4 Reaching an audience

Who is actually using the libraries, and what for? Any collection initiator must reach an audience to make sense of his or her work. Some of the speakers started their library to satisfy a surprising interest from different people for methods and examples, like Kelli who “was shocked by the enthusiasm for the toolkit”, and decided to create an abundant website of methods. “Collecting data for the common good is one thing”, qualifies Romain, but to create real engagement around a participatory project (whether it’s a collaborative library or a participatory science project), you must “focus on the process of the crowdsourced deposition”. Participants must find at the same time an immediate interest (learn something), and a sense of belonging to a community of participants. Designing the interface by putting yourself in place of the users is crucial, keeping in mind that possibilities of use often go beyond what the collections are envisioned for. The Narratopias library, for example, is used by practitioners to nourish their practice, for workshops or teaching, or by people who seek inspiration to build upon, but Daniel and Chloé have no idea if it is used for research. “How then can we create spaces that can have multiple uses?”, asks Diego. Two approaches emerge: aiming for the right person in the right place (focus on relevance), or making it as diversified and uncomplicated as possible (focus on accessibility). What better than a spontaneous testimony from the audience to settle the matter: « I’m Inga Hamilton, a practicing artist currently doing my PhD and these repositories are going to be a huge and valuable resource for me. It brings methods and research together from like-minded people and highlights successes and pitfalls. A selection of curated libraries that feel like a gift! ».

#5 Creating a community

Like-minded people, yes, but does that make them a community? Chloé proposes the idea of finding a common language, symbols and typologies, to create a continuity between the different repositories. “I am skeptical”, replies Garry, underlining that “it’s useful that words have different interpretations, it enables comparison and articulation of the differences, making visible the theories of change behind the words”. Identifying different collections with different goals and processes makes them reflect on their own assertions. But if “we want to make transformation happen [...], we have to upscale multiple synergies”, asserts David. Daniel follows: “there is a field of practice that is trying to emerge and can grow wiser and bigger. Behind all these lists there are people and experiments, it’s actually a huge community whose members, in many ways, are pursuing the same goals. How could it lead to collaboration and common visibility?”, he asks. Meeting in an agora seems like a good start. Lara concludes with enthusiasm: “We could organize virtual coffees to share taxonomies, strengths and weaknesses of methods. There is a huge potential for comparison, looking for consensus and dissensus, sectorial and cultural differences. Is there a catalogue of libraries in the making?”. One thing is certain... They truly are list-making lovers!



Cristina Ampatzidou

Behind the Scenes | Be hind the Screens



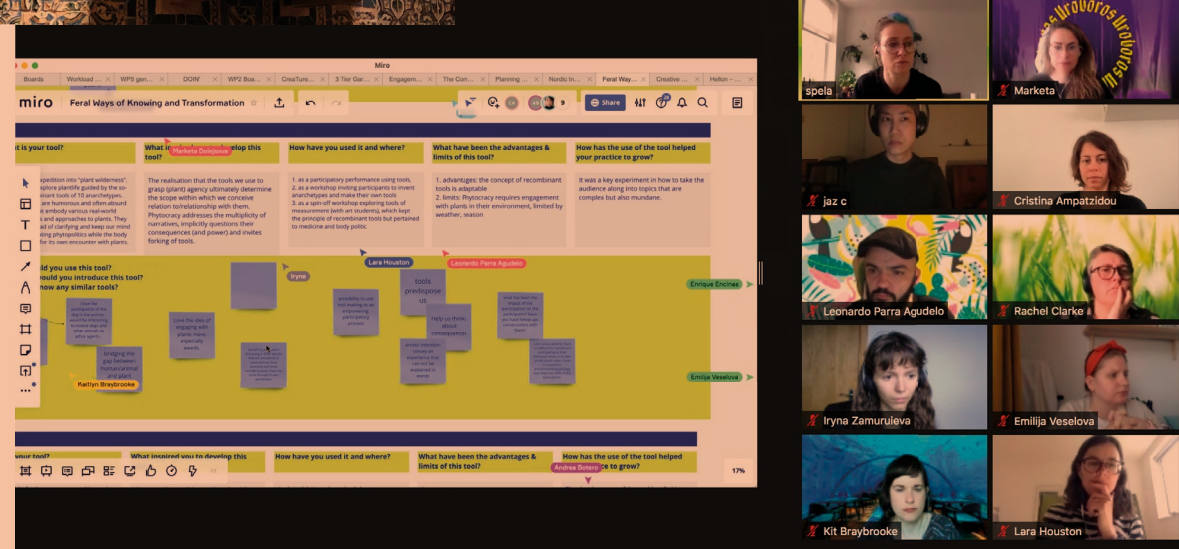
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A collection of CreaTures adventures

Many of the interactions that are fundamental to establishing a sense of community among all these people from different organisations and different countries that are involved in a research project, such as CreaTures, have been pushed behind the screens because of the global covid-19 pandemic, and some of us have only gotten to know each other through little squares on our screens. Even like this, we experienced moments of fun and amusing interruptions of our online meetings, we listened to music together, had lunch meetings and walked through forests and cities alone, together. Research work can be intense and tiring, and CreaTures has been no exception. There were soul crashing moments and the team have reached our limits on more than one occasion. We grew closer to each other and when we did finally meet in person, there was this uncanny yet ubiquitous feeling of being but also not being the first time we meet. We shared food, sun, night walks, workshops in unlikely locations, and a boat trip! This photo album is here to show that what happens behind the scenes can be equally influential with what happens in front of the screens, when it comes to the transformational potential of bringing groups of amazing people together and enabling them to relate to each other in ways that no one could have anticipated before 2020.

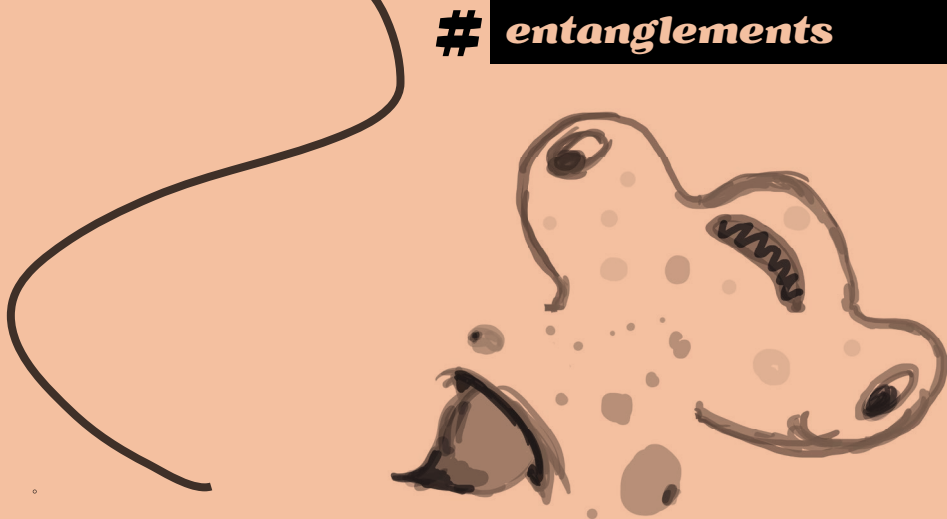




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**Kit Braybrooke
Miranda Marcus
Lydia Nicholas
Anton Poikolainen Rosén
Genevieve Rudd
Klelija Zhivkovikj**

Engage ment T alks

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What are the evolving contexts of engagement within and around creative practices today? We reached out to the members of the Art Tech Nature Culture community with three questions and these are their responses in relation to their own varied practices.



How does the future you are creating through your practice sound, smell, look, feel, taste like?

The future I've been co-developing in recent projects is accessible and welcoming: technology supports and uplifts without controlling or requiring focused attention. Careful, slow methods of nurturing are reflected not only in community governance structures but in shared gardens, and messy wildflowers.

There are accessible green spaces, the gentle sound of conversation, of chickens clucking and buzzing pollinators. We know our neighbours, -including our local animal life. We have time and space to care for one another.

Lydia Nicholas

More than anything, the future I imagine is quiet. There may be all kinds of dangers lurking, it may be a post-apocalyptic scenario, but the constant noise of air-conditioning, news, traffic - all of it is gone. It's easy on the senses. The air contains a crispness and chill which allows you to feel the vastness of the space on the surface of the planet. Like feeling how big the sky is when a thunderstorm is about to start. The fabrics and textures feel alive, breathing and pulsating. Excess has been exceeded as a need, and care has taken its place. Everyone cares for each other, for all life and all objects.

Klelija Zhivkovikj

It tastes like copper wires and gum shields. It sounds like rainfall from inside a tent. It looks like a murmuration. It feels like having your hand

in a bag of dried beans. It smells like compost.

Miranda Marcus

The taste of plants we never thought we could grow in Sweden. Vegetables that taste better than those from the store. The smell of cyanobacteria in wet soil. The sound of the city life in the background. Plants growing in layers upon layers - layered with sensing technology. A feeling of presence.

Anton Poikolainen Rosén

The future I imagine through my practice is a living, breathing entity - a hybrid, a chimera, a being made up of many diverse forms, intertwined - all as one - a space of refuge, of care, of hope, of worldly regeneration.

Kit Braybrooke

Vibrant and glowing, with warmth and energy emanating from within. Like Spring, the future recognises the warmth of the sun, the damp hidden shadows and the abundant marginals, whilst celebrating emerging potential.

Genevieve Rudd

The futures are bright and positive. The smell of fertile soil is everywhere and the feeling of grass and soil between my toes is breathtaking.

W. Liebrecht Fick

What role does engagement play in your work? Where does it happen, when does it happen and with who or what do you engage? Who do you engage with in the process and how?

My work involves engaging with disabled people, chronically ill people, & marginalised

frontline health workers. Being regularly disappointed with the impact of think tank reports, academic research, and political campaigns, I see that engagement has a critical site of political action. It is baked right into my budgets that participants are paid, that they feel safe and supported, and that the experience of participating is positive in itself, no matter what the results of the work are. I've developed a few methodologies to support people who aren't confident in workshop environments through a process of idea sharing and future making which it's been a delight to teach and share. I also do stand-up comedy and comedy podcasts, which helps keep my crowd-work skills sharp, and assists in efforts to make future-making joyful and playful, no matter how serious the subject.

Lydia Nicholas

I always begin by engaging with how the topics at hand are found in my own life. In order to understand how to take these topics outside of my focus and into the world, I always need to understand how they exist in my world. I live

in a country which has always been a country of workers, no empires or monarchies have existed here, so I always try to look at things through the context of labour. What structures of effort are involved in upholding the topic I am interested in into the world? I do not have a specific community with which I am fostering a relationship as related to my practice. As a designer, I often engage with the users: of a space, a product, a service, a tool. I have found that attempting to develop such a relationship with one specific community can very easily cross over into commodification, and I do not think that I should contribute to this already rampant phenomenon. Engagement for me most of the time takes the form of an invitation, as opposed to a request. The other has the opportunity to accept or decline this invitation.

Klelija Zhivkovikj

Significant. It happens online, in South Africa, UK, USA and India. We engage with young people about mental health and technology. We have a deliberative democracy study, professional youth advisors and panels of lived

experience advisors.

Miranda Marcus

I study a context driven by engagement (urban community farming). The participants' engagement rises and falls throughout the seasons and years. They are engaged with the plants and a more-than-human world around them. It is this concrete bodily and sensory engagement that motivates the practice. In this context I aim to design engaging technologies that are not perceived as an obstructing layer between the people and the plants, but instead as engaging mediators of an enriched and expanded experience.

Anton Poikolainen Rosén

Engagement, for me, is an acknowledgement of the fact that our experience of being alive is dependent on the many ecologies - social, biological and otherwise - that we encounter and impact on a daily basis. Engagement is a way of moving through the world, of making the flat landscapes of space into places with intimate contours. Engagement is a means of

building, through our relations, new worlds that consist of „layers upon layers of history“ as the critical geographer Doreen Massey put it.

Kit Braybrooke

I've worked as a participatory artist for 10+ years. I work in partnership with people - communities, artists, communities of artists - and together we create something in the world (and in our inner worlds) that is only possible because we choose to connect together.

Genevieve Rudd

What was one memorable moment that helped you grow as a creative practitioner over the past year?

Honestly these past few years have been brutal. I've heard a lot of traumatic stories and been part of difficult conversations. But a moment that stands out is a participant telling me he didn't care about the specifics of a technology, but about the motivations of those designing and using it- „Doesn't matter how sophisticated a system is that tells you I'm safe and happy, if you can't trust the people inputting data" It led to a lot of conversations and work about power and how we portray that in artworks and make it real, embedded in the roots of the environments and services we are building.

Lydia Nicholas

Over the last year and a half, I have recognized an absence of tenderness in the way I live. It was more like a need to have an alternative boundary between me and the world, one which doesn't function as a fortress defending me, but rather one which can be an embodiment of power through gentleness and authenticity. So, I decided to research the topic

of tenderness for one of my commissioned projects, and in doing so I recognized that I feel guilty when I take time to rest because I need to understand tenderness. But what is more tender than resting when you are tired? It seems really simple, but it made me really understand the specific kind of agency creative work allows. I have rested with less guilt since then.

Klelija Zhivkovikj

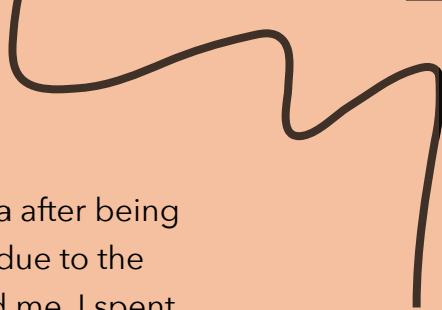
You don't have to be good to start but you have to start to be good. It's a pretty cheesy saying, but I saw it on an advert in my recycling bin and it hit home. I was holding myself back, not starting, not playing around with enough things.

Miranda Marcus

When I really understood somaesthetic design through practicing several Feldenkrais exercises. I bring this sensitivity for the deep nuances of inner felt experiences with me in my future design work.

Anton Poikolainen Rosén

Returning home to the temperate rainforests



off the coasts of British Columbia after being locked out for almost two years due to the covid-19 virus - this has changed me. I spent many days walking alone through these wild places, walking amongst deer ferns and lichens, learning to call old-growth cedars and spruce and sequoia trees by name, swimming on shores thick with seaweed, seashells, and algae blooms... and in each of these encounters, there was a new threat. The realisation that many such lands are burning as a result of the actions of my species, and that many more will still. Moving through such richness and wisdom and beauty, witnessing the intricate connections between life, death, rot and regrowth that the forests and oceans show us if only we stop to listen - these are learnings I now carry with me into my art. Such lessons are difficult to put into words, and equally difficult to un-see.

Kit Braybrooke.

In a strange way, whilst the first COVID-19 Lockdown was devastating, it aided growth. When you have your community arts practice take away from you, you're left with yourself

as artist. It gave me the chance to review and reflect on what was most important to me as we moved through this experience. It's made me think about the nitty gritty of how I work (the hours, expectations, pay, energy levels etc) but has also caused me to think more about the bigger picture, such as my impact on the world, and immediate community.

Genevieve Rudd

The realisation that visual arts can play a significant role in enriching narratives of positive futures.

W. Liebrecht Fick



slowbrewingconversations

entanglements

peerlearning



Cristina Ampatzidou
Jaz Hee-jeong Choi

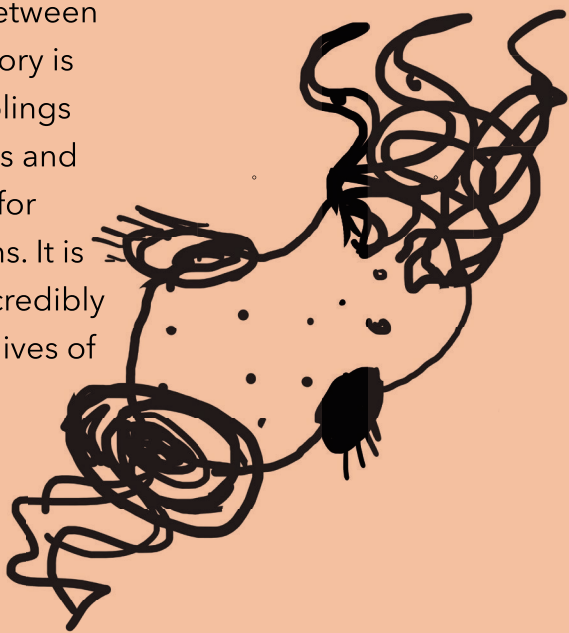
About Unders tories

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Engagement

Understories is a zine that reveals the worlds beneath the canopy of the CreaTures project or what's mostly seen from the outside. It presents lively conversations, uncurated thoughts, and chance encounters that have nourished and grounded our project exploring the power of creative practices to move the worlds towards more sustainable eco-social futures. Rainforests are generally made of four layers or storeys: At the very top is the emergent layer, most exposed to the sun, rain, and wind. Just below it is the canopy, with abundance of sun, food, and animals but less exposed to weatherly harshness. At the bottom is the forest floor, dark, covered with what's fallen from above, turning that into nutrients that feed the forest. Between those two is the understory. The understory is a diverse mixture of seedlings and samplings of the canopy trees, other bushes, shrubs and herbs. It provides shelter and resources for many different animals, including humans. It is adaptive, accessible, familiar, and yet incredibly complex and important in the everyday lives of different creatures in the forest.

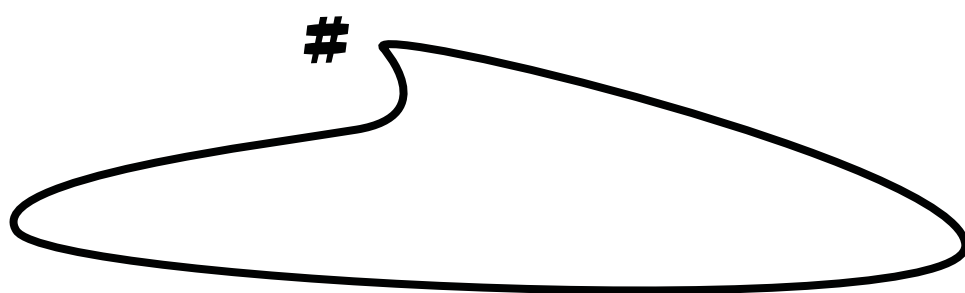


Like the understory, CreaTures has been a complex and exciting project to be part of. It has an ambitious goal of identifying and explaining the aspects of creative practices that contribute to positive eco-social transformation; It has an equally ambitious approach of working closely with multiple creative practices, ideas, projects, and people through direct engagement and co-creation. As a zine emerging from a transdisciplinary, practice-based research project it serves multiple goals: Understories is an outlet for ideas that are not fully formed, that are intuitive but perhaps not yet substantiated, or for different reasons, that could not be developed further into conventional research outputs like scholarly papers. It's messy and informal. We hope that it also acknowledges the many ways engagement can happen, help draw attention to entanglements that occur through many forms of coming together – for example, conversation, exchange, and play with and through uncertainty, and as such, a medium to reach people from all walks of life beyond those immediately connected to CreaTures. Understories is for anyone wishing to engage

with CreaTures, looking to find out more about how engagements are imagined, practiced, and understood in and around creative practices that strive to move worlds towards eco-socially transformational futures.

Remaining true to the messiness and entangled way we have been working with CreaTures, Understories invites the readers to explore and re-create the content in non-linear ways, to create their own stories and connect parts that make sense together. For now, thank you for joining the CreaTures journey!





CREATURES