

Care Beyond Crises: Proceedings of By: Design or By Disaster Conference 17—19 December 2020

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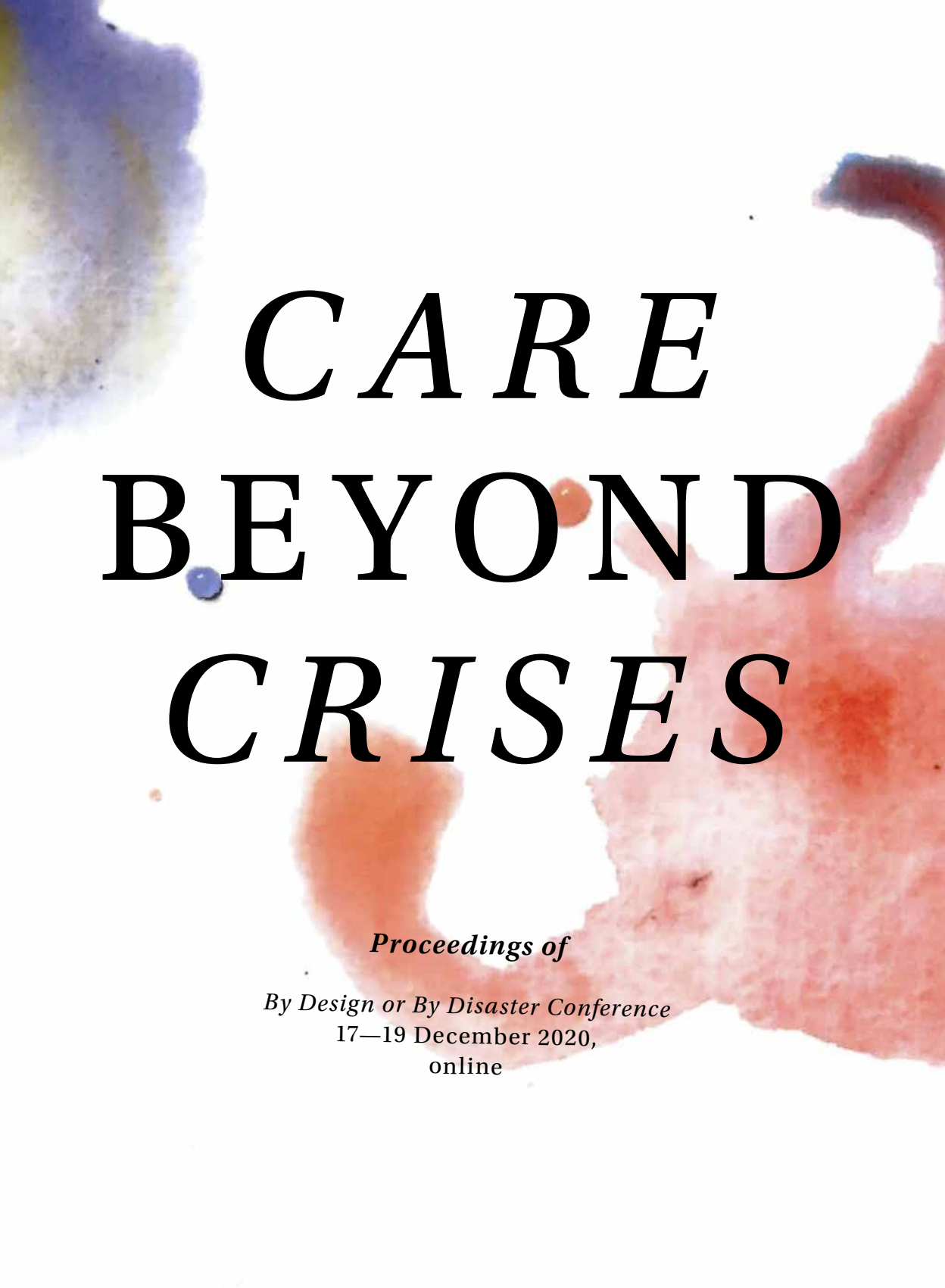
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# *CARE* BEYOND *CRISES*

*Proceedings of*

*By Design or By Disaster Conference*  
17—19 December 2020,  
online





*This series of conferences is co-developing with the Master in Eco-Social Design.*

*It is an opportunity for a lively exchange on the creative practices  
contributing to social-ecological transformations.*

*Both speakers and participants come from diverse fields of practice,  
ranging from progressive local farmers to internationally acclaimed  
designers, researchers and activists. The conference offers a mix of inputs,  
collaborative formats and excursions  
in a convivial atmosphere.*



*Introduction*

# **CARE BEYOND CRISES**

*BY*

Kris Krois\* | Faculty of Design and Art -  
Free University of Bozen-Bolzano | kris.krois@unibz.it

\*corresponding author

**Keywords:**

*Care, multiple crises, transformation, commons*

**“On the most general level, we suggest  
that caring be viewed  
as a species activity that includes everything  
that we do to maintain, continue, and repair  
our ‘world’  
so that we can live in it  
as well as possible.**

**That world includes our bodies, our selves,  
and our environment, all of which  
we seek to interweave  
in a complex, life-sustaining web.”**

Bernice Fisher & Joan C. Tronto

## *Introduction*

**T**HE conference *Care Beyond Crises* took place on 17–19 December 2020. It was the second online conference we organized during a pandemic lockdown. We held the first Beyond Crisis conference at the beginning of the pandemic, on 17–18 April 2020. Saskia Hebert called it a “social un-distancing-experience” (Krois 2020). The exceptional situation, the many acts and expressions of solidarity, the creative challenge of facilitating an experience of inspired online dialogue gave rise to an almost euphoric spirit among the organizing team, the contributors and the participants. This went along with imagining the crisis as a chance for rethinking things and reshaping them when overcoming it. We had the privilege of doing so on the grounds of the safe material situations in which most participants found themselves (predominantly more or less privileged persons from Europe).

The second conference felt totally different: online fatigue outweighed the still creative online facilitation. The spontaneous acts of solidarity during the first lockdown had been replaced by a mix of fatigue, depression and other psycho-social and economic impacts of the pandemic. The utopian hopes also vanished during the summer break, when it became clear that the majority just wanted to turn back to business-as-usual. *It was time for care.*

I am writing the introduction to these proceedings more than two years later. Finalizing this publication took so long, because the team has been and is still even more overworked than before the pandemic. We belong to those segments of society, for which the transformation of work and life into online activities generated an unhealthy load and type of work, while others lost their

jobs. The transition back to in-person activities via hybrid forms did not however decompress our calendars.

The acceleration gained through the hyper-efficient online tools continues as “the system” tries to return to business-as-usual at all costs, as by its very capitalist nature it enforces continued acceleration, according to the sociologist Hartmut Rosa (Rosa 2013).

*It needs time for care.*

Most of the so-called “Recovery” policies and measures maintain the capitalist compulsion for growth, and the exploitation of people and nature that go along with it <sup>1,2</sup>, whether or not sustainability or (global) solidarity are increased by it. Extreme weather as an effect of the climate catastrophe is creating more and more damage even in the presumably safe harbor of central Europe. War is getting closer, too. Inequalities and exclusion are on the rise. Disastrous realities that people in the exploited global south have had to deal with so long, are now threatening the so-called first world as well.

*It is time for a care revolution* – aiming at “a care economy where instead of maximizing profit, human needs are the priority, and where care resources are not allocated through racialized, gendered or class-based structures.” (Network care revolution). This goes beyond the care sector, but involves all “matters of care as something we cannot keep our distance from. [...] When I care, I feel an urge to (inter)act and engage with the situation in order to actually contribute to transform it into something that is more desirable for everyone involved”, as **Bianca Elzenbaumer** formulates in her contribution (p. 94–107) referring to Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (de la Bellacasa). Such practices of care are restricted by the competition into which capitalism is forcing everybody, whereas “commons, i.e. shared resources that are taken care of ►

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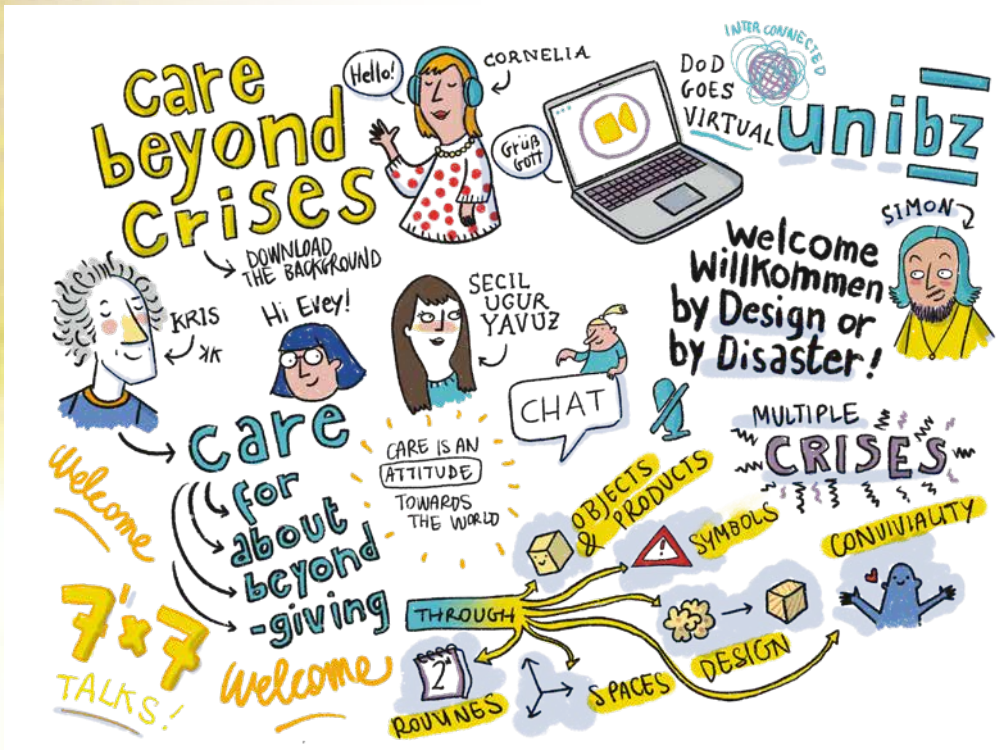
According to the Global Recovery Observatory at the Oxford University (O’Callaghan et al. 2021) and the Green Recovery Tracker by Wuppertal Institute and E3G (2021) only a fraction of the investments for “Recovery” account as “green”. Both studies are analyzing only quantitative and primarily environmental indicators.

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2

GHG emissions went down during the lockdowns, but soon after rose sharply again (Le Quéré et. al. 2021)

## Introduction



► by a collective of commoners through constant acts of commoning, are seen as a pre-condition for a good life for all as they are based on care for people, care for nature and fair share” Bianca continues. She describes the development of her thinking and practice as a designer and commoner over the past roughly 2.5 decades together with her partner Fabio Franz, the collective Brave New Alps and other co-commoners. She demonstrates how feminist, marxist and “common-ist” theory can inspire practices of designing, commoning and caring. *Commons as (infra)structures for and by care.*

“.. how do we have informal modes of communication and how do we create spaces for those [...] to be fertile?” asks **Amy Francescini** in the conversation with **Eric Whyte** on her conference contribution (p. 108-117). *Spaces for care.* Amy curated a collection of works from diverse artists and designers highlighting “some of the frameworks [...] common in the projects”. In particular she points to *duration, time, the long term, persistence*, and the “methods of enacting this persistence”, including presence “in your location, where you are” instead of “traveling all over and doing projects”. Presence and proximity for

care, – “and a network of friends” contributing their time and competencies. In the case of the project “Oil”, it was only thanks to the time and competences of several friends that Mel Henderson was able to create an image that “triggered [...] a bit of confusion for a moment, and then a dialogue, and action around [an] oil spill [in the San Francisco Bay area].” Amy holds up the activating power of images with another case as well: *The Farm* by Bonnie Sherk, working with a *group* of artists who, acting as urban farmers, created images that “captured the imagination of city officials to think about how they could use under-utilised spaces in the city to grow food. ... image making is really important” Amy concludes.

“... not only what you design, but also the way you design (your design practice)” matters, writes **Niels Hendriks** (p. 80–93). What seems to be true for all care-ful design, matters in particular when designing artifacts and services for and with people with dementia. Several of Niels’ thoughts and observations on designing in this very specific field, do apply to other areas of design as well. In the case of a bus stop, where persons with dementia and care-workers meet to prevent persons with dementia from getting lost, a space for care is created (instead of equipping persons with kits, which trigger an alarm when the persons

with dementia are at risk of getting lost). Care-enabling spaces. And, again time matters: care workers need to have the time to give care. At end of his contribution Niels asks questions, which also matter in contexts beyond that of dementia, such as: “How will you use your design skills and expertise to take ‘care’ of people with dementia (or others) so that they can take on an active, engaging role in the design process?” Seeing the other as equal prevents technocratic design and supports care-oriented design. Niels quotes Ramia Mazé: “Design practices are not neutral – there are always critical-political issues, others, alternatives and futures involved”. He concludes his contribution with this question: “Do you design for conformity or do you design for contestation/antagonism?”. Becoming a caring designer does not only require empathy and equality, but also opposition against an economic system that fosters technocratic “solutions”, and hinders caring practices by taking away time and space for care. *Care revolution.*

Along with the 4 keynotes, 14 workshops were at the core of the conference. Refreshers were served by two sets of 7 short talks, each 7 minutes long. Altogether the wide range of care-related topics illustrated how care is needed “to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well ▶

## ***Introduction***

► as possible.” (Tronto and Fischer). This included among many others: social design and activism at the European borders, spaces for young refugees, permaculture, solidary and sustainable agriculture, food communities, regional development, social movements, caring education, cargo bikes as a commons, urban ecologies, bottom up self organisation and mutual aid, post-capitalist shared economies, participatory planning, fair homes and social connection in neighbourhoods. “The online workshops that took place during the *Care Beyond Crises* conference became a digital assembly in which participants could reflect on new ways of care by defining a collective call for action.” **Seçil Ugur Yavuz** writes in her summary and reflection on the workshops (p. 120–129). Most workshops were using a template and process she designed based on an analysis of the workshops within the first Beyond Crisis conference (Fuad-Luke et al.).

More interconnections among the contributions across all formats are drawn by **Alvise Mattozzi** in “Connecting the Dots” (p. 12–17). Since the very first By Design or by Disaster Conference in 2013, Alvise has provided this transversal analysis of the first conference day at the beginning of the second one, often supported by visual recordings, which this time have been drawn by Chiara Rovescala (elements of it are spread throughout this publication). *Enjoy.*

Across many contributions, the interrelation of care practices, (infra)structures and institutions emerged. To make care the “new normal”, care-enabling (infra)structures and institutions are required, and (infra)structures and institutions need to be created by, with and for care. *Spaces* for care are crucial. And *time* is. All these are contested in times of the compulsion for growth and acceleration, based on an expanding and

intensifying “imperial mode of production and living” (Brand and Wissen). Care calls for a “system change”, because “*Capitalism doesn’t Care*” as Solidaritree named their workshop. A care-ful world needs a transformation towards solidary modes of production and living (ILA Kollektiv). Reversing the perspective, care is a driving force for such a transformation. *Care Beyond Crises*. ■



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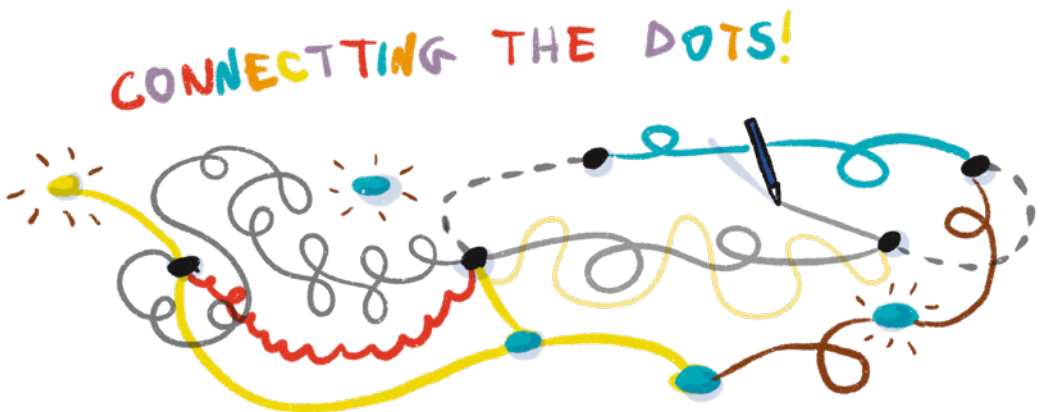
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*Introduction*

# CONNECTING THE DOTS

*BY*

Alvise Mattozzi | Faculty of Design and Art -  
Free University of Bozen-Bolzano | [alvise.mattozzi@unibz.it](mailto:alvise.mattozzi@unibz.it)



**T**HE DOD 2020 conference, Care beyond crisis, intended to explore possible answers to the issue of “[h]ow to use the virus-induced situation to build up momentum for social-ecological transformation” by focusing on care. Care as a practice and attitude leading beyond crisis. At that time, among the multiple crises we experienced, the title referred mainly, but not solely, to the Covid crisis and the consequent lockdowns. Indeed, this DOD conference was the second one in 2020 that, despite the lockdowns, had nevertheless taken place online, like the first, held a few months earlier.

That notwithstanding, it sought to remain a “hands-on conference”, as we defined the first DOD held in 2013, combining, as you will see from these proceedings, keynotes and workshops.

As is usually the case in DOD conferences, I had the task of “connecting the dots”, i.e. connecting the first and the second day by summarizing what happened on the first day, highlighting certain aspects and connecting the various presentations to the overall topic. During the second 2020 conference, my job to connect the dots actually took place on the third day, since the second had been dedicated to workshops – some of which are presented and discussed in these proceedings.

I will try to reproduce my job connecting the dots here, though not exactly as I did it then and there. Then and there, I also relied on the excellent work in visual minuting by Chiara Rovescala.

In order to provide you with not just a summary, but with a taste of the stakes discussed and experienced at the conference, especially on the first day, I will focus on ►

## ***Introduction***

► the issue of care, by retrieving the voice of Elke Krasny, editor, together with Angelika Fitz, of *Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet* (The MIT Press, 2019). Krasny was supposed to be the first keynote speaker, but unfortunately could not make it.

Of course, I cannot presume to know what Krasny would have said, but I read her contributions in the aforementioned book and I extracted some features that can actually work as threads to connect the various contributions to the conference and its main topic – care.

Relying on Bernice Fisher and Joan C. Tronto's definition of care – also used as an incipit to the conference's website (<https://designdisaster.unibz.it/2020/>) – and on Joan Tronto's proposal (2019) for a "Caring Architecture", Krasny underlined, in her contributions (Fitz and Krasny 2019; Krasny 2019), three aspects of care that are relevant for architecture and more in general for design:

- the idea, taken from Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, 70), that "interconnectedness [...] is a condition", from which design must necessarily start;
- strictly related to that, the idea that caring design has a different relation with the future than modernist design: for the latter the issue was always to design from scratch, from a blank slate which, if one did not exist, had to be created by clearing everything that was before to build anew, and thus create a future that was unaffected and uncontaminated by the past; for the former the issue is instead to grant a future for us and our broken planet by taking care of what is there, of the condition of our interconnectedness with the present and the past;

— the idea that taking interconnectedness into account implies overcoming a series of dualisms on the basis of which modernist design was conceived, such as nature/culture, thinking/execution, mind/body, freedom/determinism, independence/dependence, art/craft-vocation, productive/reproductive.



By recovering the various contributions of the first day of DOD2020 Care beyond crisis, I will try to show how they assume (often implicitly) and translate these three aspects.

The first keynote was offered by **Amy Franceschini and Lode Vraken** (p. 108–117) of Future Farmers. After a reflection on the work of curating as “care”, they addressed the works of various women artists, authors and environmental activists that pushed reflection and actions related to care, especially within the urban environment. Franceschini and Vraken introduced Public Smog by Amy Balkin, Love Canal by Lois Gibbs, American Cities by Jane Jacobs, Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, Bending the river back into the city by Lauren Bon, Not a cornfield by Metabolic Studio. Love Canal, American cities and Silent Spring are seminal works that have led to the development of attitudes and practices of care toward industrial environments, cities and agriculture. They are well known and I will not focus on them here. Public Smog, Bending the River and Not a Cornfield are instead more recent works aimed at repairing the damage caused by modernist design and development, by recreating connectedness among things that had been disconnected (especially Bending and Cornfield) and providing a future for areas that had died, beyond the division between nature/culture, given that the artists’ interventions ►

## Introduction

► make it possible to reconnect with elements of what would be considered “nature”.

**Niels Hendriks** (p. 80–93) of the LUCA School of Art in Belgium presented the work of Dementia Lab, a forum and workshop for designers interested in working with people affected by dementia – you can also read his contribution in these proceedings. After a reflection on what designers can do for patients affected by dementia and how care can be made appealing and interesting, Hendriks introduced several of the projects that were able to build on the interconnectedness of patients, their desires and the territory of the house where they are taken care of. Two projects in particular captured my attention as being especially sensitive to the patients affected by dementia: a set of cards depicting sexy men for a female patient who expressed a sexual desire, against the desexualization of people with dementia, and a fake bus stop where patients can wait when they try to leave the house and may thus be easily found by the caring personnel.

These two keynotes were followed by five **7x7 seven presentations** – seven slides for seven minutes, some of which are also present here.

**1. Johanna Padge and Nuriye Tohermes** (p. 20–29) introduced the PARKS project in the outskirts of Hamburg, as a way of caring for common spaces and giving them a future, by caring for the old interconnectedness (local actors) and creating a new one (new users).

**2. Emma Kaufman and Lauro Nächt** (p. 66–71) presented the project Infrastructures of Regeneration, which looks at and maps what is growing spontaneously in a city such as Vienna, as a way to take care of an interconnectedness that demonstrates the possibility of life in Capitalist Ruins.

**3. Marguerite Kahrl** (p. 72–77) presented a project promoting permaculture in refugee camps around which communities and a new interconnectedness can be built, providing a perspective for the future of people stuck in the limbo of the refugee camps.

**7x7' Talks!**



4. **John Bruce** (p. 30–37) addressed the very delicate issue of dying, and how he and his graphic design colleagues created a support network for dying people, along with the figure of the End of Life doula, pushing the issue of care, interconnectedness and the creation of a future through care to the individual limits of a person.

5. Finally, **Ottavia Buonomo** and **Lorenzo Di Stasi** of Macao introduced the activities of the Brigate Volontarie per l’Emergenza, developed during the pandemic, based on the project Recup, aimed at recovering food which would have been wasted. In this case too, existing interconnectedness related to food has been taken care of in order to create new interconnectedness and provide a better present – and a new normality – and hence a future for people affected by the pandemic, including and beyond the provision of food.

The third day, two other keynotes by **Andrea Vetter** and **Bianca Elzenbaumer** (p. 94–107) deepened and enlarged the framework for thinking and practicing care beyond crisis. Seven other 7x7 presentations (by **Jan-Christoph Zoels**, **Florian Egermann** (p. 60–65), **Marlene Franck** (p. 38–41), **Bernardo Robles Hidalgo** and **Maria Anita Palumbo**, **Alastair Fuad-Luke**, **Lea Luzzi** and **Xenia Trojer**, **Roberto Gigliotti** and **Nina Bassoli** (p. 42–51)) completed the conference. ■



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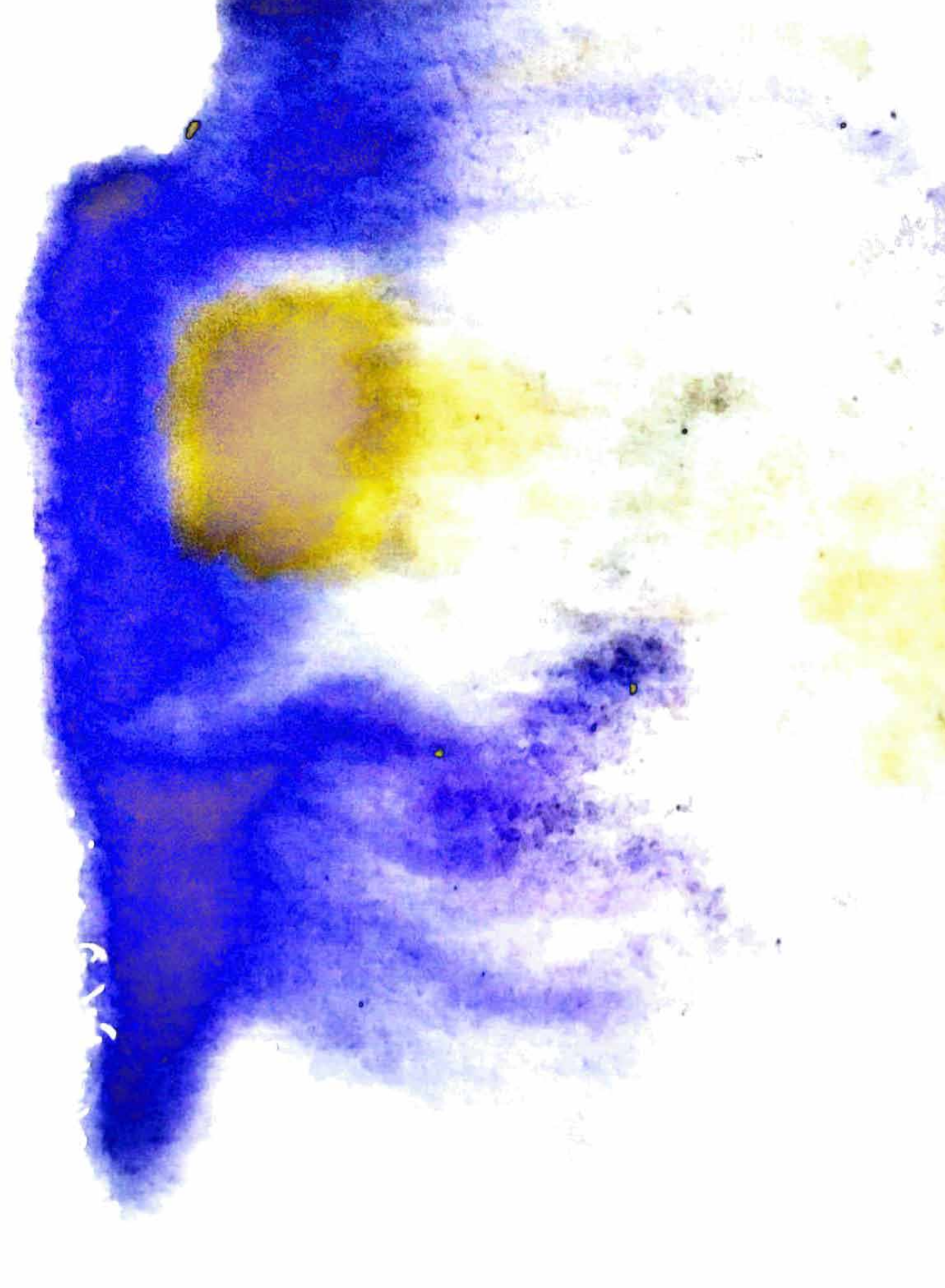
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# 7X7

*7 minute inputs on art and design for/with care*

7 x 7 Talks

# PARKS

–

# CARING FOR A COMMON SPACE

BY

Nuriye Tohermes, Dorothee Halbrock,  
Johanna Padge and Julia Marie Englert



**Abstract:**

*With the 'Alster-Bille-Elbe Grünzug', the city of Hamburg is planning a 4 km long green passage in eastern Hamburg, crossing nine very different neighborhoods. In 2019 the environmental authority commissioned an interdisciplinary group of local actors, the association HALLO: e.V. and the landscape architects of atelier le balto to design areas of the green passage and to set up local structures for community use.*

*PARKS is the resulting project, creating a vision for parks of the future – starting today. By implementing different spatial designs and uses mainly on the area of a former recycling yard.*



WORKSHOPS  
WITH EXPERTS = LOCALS



Photo: PARKS

## *7 x 7 Talks*

**PARKS** represents the work of many different actors in a neighborhood stressed by urban development. We understand Common space to be a public space, designed, cared for and used by a (diverse and open to access) group of people.

The PARKS process is an interplay between moderation, condensing and translation. Involved are the neighborhoods, active individuals as well as social associations, sports groups, local companies and artists, universities and the city authorities in charge.

All together they negotiate what PARKS could be, including the discussion on how to distribute responsibilities for caretaking between municipal authorities and the broader neighbourhoods on-site.



Photo: Antje Sauer



Photo: Antje Sauer

Care is also a way to design, a key approach in transforming a former industrial area into a public green space. The forms and diversity of the PARKS-landscapes are enabled and realized through care work.

PARKS bases its work on the resource-saving approach of working with existing buildings and materials, local actors and existing vegetation. This means that we implement a form of radical recycling for our design. To do so, we begin with detailed research into existing resources, lots of conversations with the ‘specialists of the space’ – the neighbours, and workshop-based design and building sessions. ►



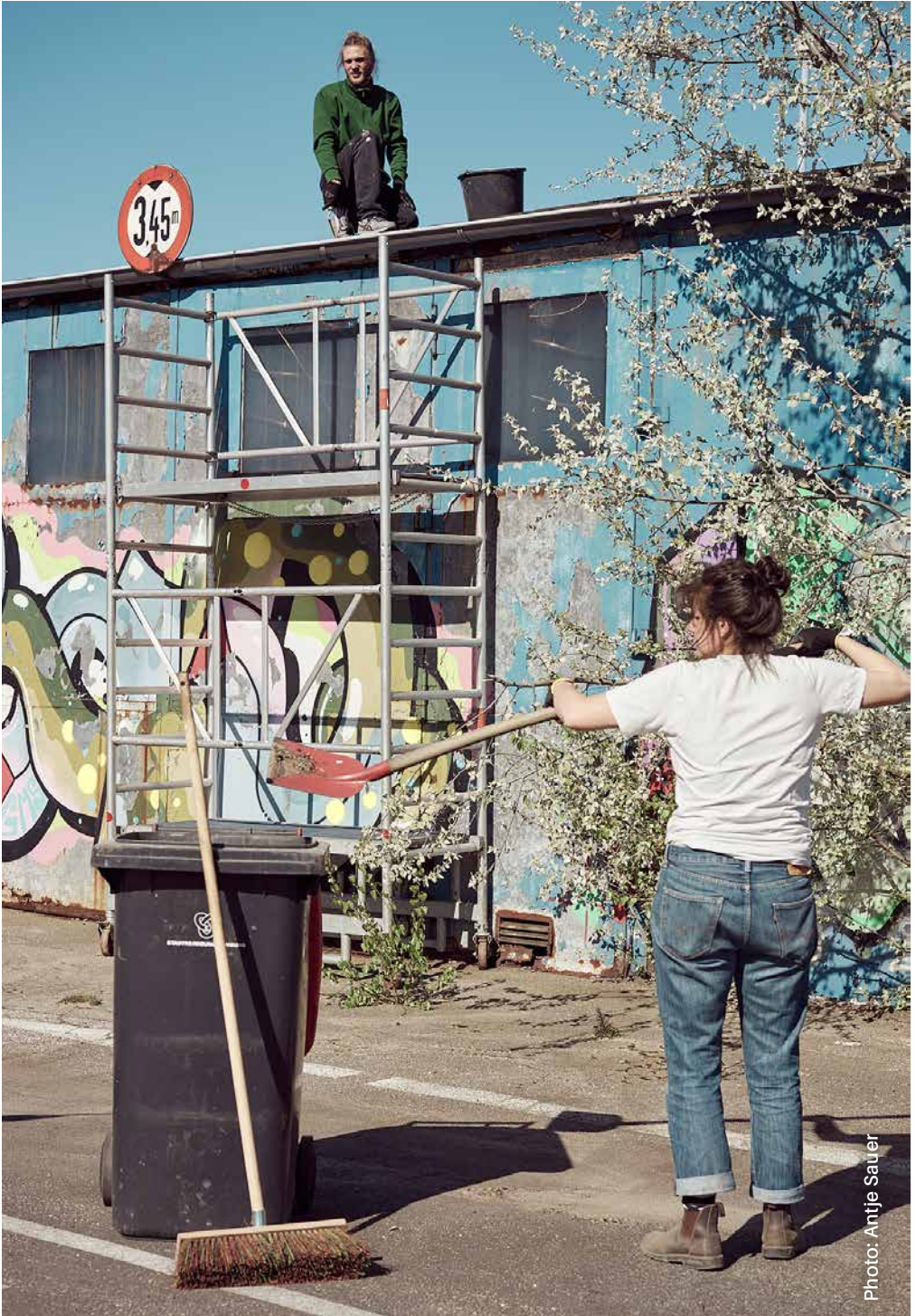


Photo: Antje Sauer

► PARKS is creating areas for different usages rather than one-size-fits-all-designs. These areas also represent and are taken care of by different groups – the Kümmer\*innen. As of today, some have already been completed, but we plan more to allow space for as yet unknown usages to come.

One example is the so-called ‘Pionierfeld’, a field of pioneer plants located on an area where a building was torn down. In the process, the concrete ground was broken and fast-growing pioneer plants were planted. They will recreate the volume of the former building, inviting visitors to experience the beauty of this generally overlooked vegetation.

By involving a diverse group of local actors and inviting new users, the social dimension of care became a focus: caring for each other and the commonly used

space. In 2019 alone, about 1000 people were involved and about 4500 used the area of the former recycling yard.

The negotiation of spatial design and usage is the focal point of moderation. One challenge for us is to manoeuvre on the thin line between informality and institutionalisation in designing and maintaining the public spaces of PARKS:

**“the tyranny of structurelessness”**  
 VS.  
**“over-organisation and institutionalism”**

In the process of strengthening local networks, PARKS attempts to keep the structures open to outsiders and not bound to individuals. ►

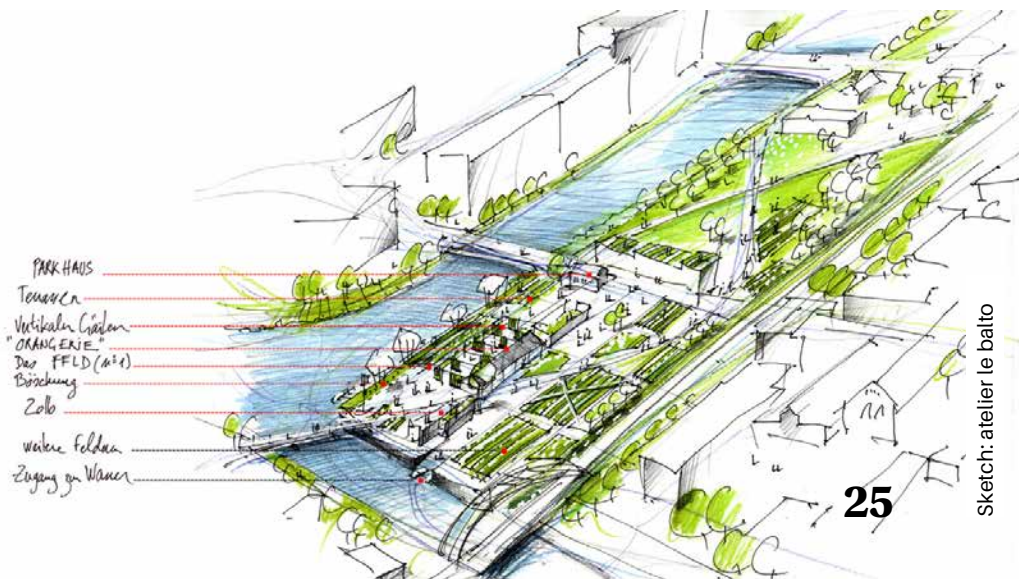






Photo: Antje Sauer

► PARKS currently works on becoming a model project for citizen-supported development. We want to use the given time to further develop two concepts: Parkmeister\*innen und Kümmer\*innenschaft. Parkmeister\*innen – which could be translated as Parkmanagers – is a position that coordinates the care and use of the common space. They ensure that the social and green maintenance of the space is as continuous as possible and thus provide it with a certain framework. Kümmer\*innenschaft describes the totality of the maintenance and design of the space by different actors.

We now have the special situation in which the use of the recycling yard by PARKS has been extended to five years, and we have found a common language and objectives with the neighbourhood and most of the city's contacts.

By becoming a model project, and further developing the concepts of Parkmeister\*innen and Kümmer\*innenschaften, the PARKS process can set the example for open, neighbourly development and the use of common open spaces, which contribute to a liveable city and promote biodiversity. ■



### Links:

Website: <http://www.alster-bille-elbe-parks.hamburg/>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/alster\\_bille\\_elbe\\_parks/](https://www.instagram.com/alster_bille_elbe_parks/)

Short documentaries: <https://vimeo.com/user115861187>



*7 x 7 Talks*

**LEARNING  
FROM  
EXPERIENCES  
AT THE END  
OF LIFE:  
EXPANDED  
NOTIONS OF  
CARE FOR ALL  
TRANSITIONS  
OF LIFE**

*BY*

John A. Bruce, Parsons School of Design, The New School,  
JohnBruce@newschool.edu



**About the author:**

*John A. Bruce is Assistant Professor of Design Strategies at Parsons School of Design where he serves as the Director of the Transdisciplinary Design MFA program.*

**Abstract:**

*Learning from experiences at the end of life holds great promise for designing co-creative approaches to expanded notions of care. How might we effectively mediate confrontations with mortality in ways that address, and ideally collapse, the distances – geographic, physical, psychological, emotional, and social – often created around dying? Privacy as conflated with marginalization – othering – can remove the dying person from social exchange, resulting in their loss of dignity. The practices of the “end of life doula” embrace emergent acts of co-creative participation – of seeing and being with situated knowledges – and thus honour and celebrate possibilities, beyond rescue, for ways of being alive during the end of life.*

**Keywords:**

*mortality, co-design, participation, proximity, temporality*



## 7 x 7 Talks

**THIS** paper, “Co-creative Practices of the End of Life Doula” draws upon my research from the End of Life project (Bruce, Wojtasik 2017).

The End of Life project addresses the inquiry: How might we learn from experiences at the end of life in order to consider expanded notions of care for all stages of life and life’s transitions? In preparation for this research, my collaborator Pawel Wojtasik and I trained to be end-of-life doulas.

Sarah Grossman was a children’s book author and an activist. In the image we see her reading from one of the books she has written. How might we honour

and support comfort, presence, and dignity beyond efforts of recuse? In what ways might we be present in different contexts of dying and acknowledge sacred spaces along the various stages of being alive while experiencing a process of the end of life?

The end-of-life doula works with the dying person and those surrounding them to help co-design and guide their wishes for whatever a “good death” might mean for them (Fersko-Weiss 2017).

Carol Virostek was a literature professor and activist. She brought us with her to lunch gatherings with friends and meetings where she served as a mentor to young academics and activists.





Performing service as an end-of-life doula might involve different kinds of activities, such as guiding creative visualizations and meditation in order to alleviate anxiety and promote peace and comfort, or collaborating with the dying to create a vigil plan.

Doris Johnson and her son Rich Rickaby were comrades, pals, and had a deep understanding of each other's needs. Together they navigated a joyous and peaceful path during Doris' end of life.

How might we be present, useful, supportive, and comforting in ways most aligned with the person and their needs and desires as they approach dying? ►



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► The vigil plan is a set of instructions or a guide for what comfort might mean for the dying person –the particular atmosphere one might inhabit in the final days and hours of life – the light, colours, textures, sounds, smells, the kinds of touch one prefers, the idiosyncratic details of objects and actions of pleasure, joy, or soothing transcendence. Such guides prescriptively and creatively support the dying person as well as their loved ones.

Ram Dass was a spiritual teacher and author of the book *Be Here Now* (Ram Dass 1971).

The end-of-life doula works co-creatively with the dying person in ways that embrace a variety of rhythms, activities, occurrences, or emergences, while this might be in stillness or silence, to be present for what might happen or not happen, for what might be said or not said, and to inhabit sacred space with profound grace.

These acts are beyond the gestures of rescue or actions that might be employed in distancing from the dying in defensive postures to avoid consciousness of our mortality (Chappel 2010).

Matt Freedman was an artist and performer who told stories while drawing, upside down, on a pad hanging around his neck – illustrating anecdotes about his very real experiences with terminal illness, creating and collapsing distances of disavowal for the audience. He tears completed drawings from the pad, carelessly dropping them to the floor, posing questions around temporality, commodity, and value.

The final days and hours of living are not the only phases of the end of life. We might be dying for months or even years. How might we identify expanded notions of support for these earlier phases of the end of life?

How might we be present in ways that honour, celebrate, support and co-create ways of being that acknowledge and value the present moment as one transitions from roles, means, abilities, etc. that had previously been primary or expected roles in life? The phase of life that is the end of life is nevertheless valuable, brilliant, and meaningful. The end of life can indeed be creative and full of vitality in new ways.

Proximity affords capacities to sense and be sensitive to nuanced gestures and requires participation in relational, reflective, and reciprocal negotiations. These spaces demand responsibility for being attuned and responsive. ►



## 7 x 7 Talks

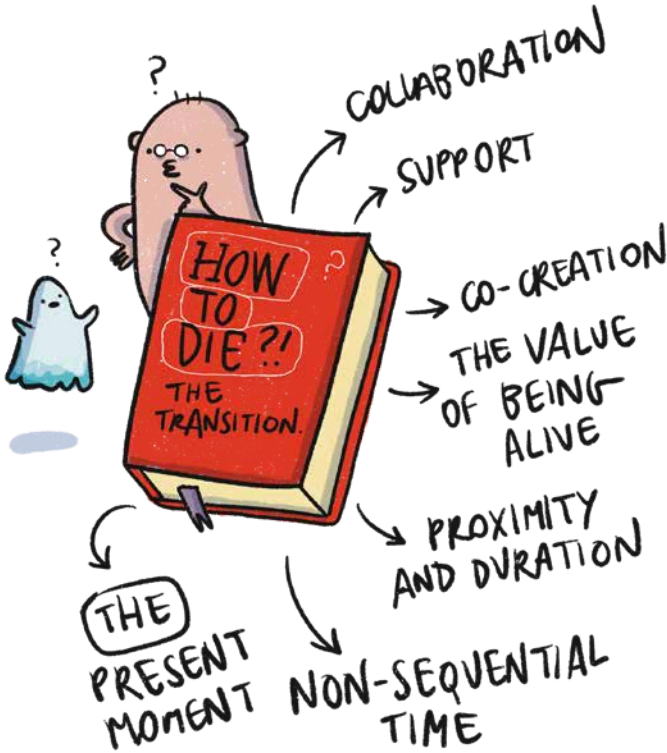
► Duration – ways of being with time in different kinds of rhythms – and non-sequential time as in the Greek word Kairos, as opposed to chronos or clock time, refers to a supreme moment. How might we honour time during the end of life in ways free from typical (perhaps neoliberal) measures and logics of counting?

The doula works co-creatively with the dying person to address, and ideally collapse, the distances – geographic, physical, psychological, emotional, and social – often created around dying. Privacy is often conflated with marginalization, thus removing the dying person from social exchange, and reducing the person to a body in decline.

Co-creating with a dying person might serve as an invitation to be present with dying in visceral, sensorial modes of embodied learning and knowing regarding one's own body, senses, and consciousness of mortality. These kinds of experiences ideally provoke expanded notions of care for all stages of life.

As end-of-life doulas, we could be present and open to whatever might emerge. This is an act of co-creation and an act of collaboration – of seeing and being with situated knowledges – and avoiding gestures that might normalise the situation or infantilise the person (Haraway 1988). How might we refrain from turning away, and instead find ways of genuinely being with dying? ■





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*7 x 7 Talks*

# ***SOCIAL DESIGN IN THE PANDEMIC: TRANSFORMING OPEN SPACES FOR YOUNG REFUGEES***

*BY*

Marlene Franck | Hans Sauer Stiftung  
[m.franck@hanssauerstiftung.de](mailto:m.franck@hanssauerstiftung.de)



**Keywords:**

*Social Design, Refugees, Habibi Dome*



**Abstract:**

*Covid-19 brought huge challenges, especially to vulnerable groups. Education was difficult to access and young refugees were even further segregated from the social space. In the midst of this crisis, the „Sommerzelt“ project was developed in collaboration with different stakeholders. The spatial intervention created a framework for activities led by many actors. Between August and October 2020, three parking lots were transformed into a space for young refugees. The Habibi Dome was designed to adapt to many usages and evolved into a place where learning, exchange and encounter became possible during the pandemic.*

## 7 x 7 Talks

**T**HE social design lab (sdl) of the Hans Sauer Foundation is a laboratory for social transformation processes. It addresses societal challenges and initiates participatory and collaborative transformation processes aimed at finding new structures and responses. Methods from different disciplines, especially the social sciences, Innovation research and design are used to develop creative and transdisciplinary solutions.

### Situation

The pandemic brought major changes for everyone. Nevertheless inhabitants of the refugee accommodations faced special burdens. Access for visitors to their site was prohibited and all social programs were suspended. For school children with non-German speaking parents, the hurdles to fulfil the required tasks in isolation were especially high, because their parents were unable provide the support they needed.

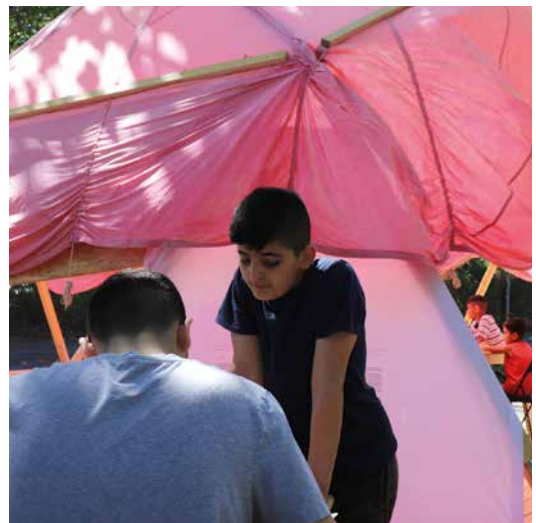
### Approach

To support young people in this challenging situation, home not shelter! initiated a process to transform an open space into a platform for activities led by various stakeholders. Therefore relationships of cooperation were built and existing institutions were involved in the development of the project. A separate volunteer

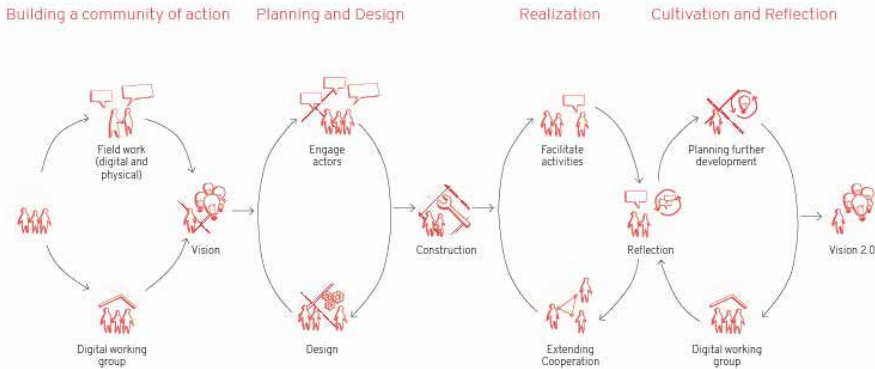
program supporting professionals in the implementation of activities was also initiated.

### Process

The process is structured in four different phases: Building a community of action, Planning and Design, Realization and Cultivation & Reflection. In the Building a community of action phase, the main goal was to get different stakeholders onboard and develop a joint vision. In the Planning and Design phase, the vision was translated into a feasible design and more stakeholders were involved. Following the construction of the “Sommerzelt”, various activities were facilitated. More participants joined over time and the activities were extended.



# Process



Meanwhile, a proposal for funding a similar intervention in 2021 was written jointly by the stakeholders and paved the way for a continuation of the project. The social design lab (sdl) of the Hans Sauer Foundation is a laboratory for social transformation processes. It addresses societal challenges and initiates participatory and collaborative transformation

processes aimed at finding new structures and responses. Methods from different disciplines, especially the social sciences, innovation research and design are used to develop creative and transdisciplinary solutions.

## Conclusion

The project was very successful in working in collaboration with diverse stakeholders ranging from city authorities to civil society, social institutions and sports clubs. The intervention turned the three parking lots into a valued space easily accessible for young refugees.

The design and the people created a warm and welcoming atmosphere, attracting many participants and drawing attention to the situation of young refugees in the pandemic. For the subsequent development of the project, lessons learned and points for improvement were identified and integrated into the proposal for the coming year. ■



**EXHIBITIONS  
AS CARE DEVICES.  
CAN AN  
EXHIBITION EVENT  
BE THE TRIGGER  
FOR CARE AND  
TRANSFORMATION?**

**BY**

Roberto Gigliotti | Faculty of Design and Art,  
Free University of Bozen Bolzano | rgigliotti@unibz.it\*

Nina Bassoli | Faculty of Design and Art,  
Free University of Bozen Bolzano | cbassoli@unibz.it



**Keywords:**

*Architecture exhibitions, collaborative processes, public space, performance*



**Abstract:**

*Beyond mere display, the architecture exhibition is a thing in itself: it is research, knowledge, content and even space production as much as it is representation of something that lies outside the exhibition space.*

*Transgressions (not only in the format of the exhibits but also in the aims they wish to achieve as well as the public they address), which can often lead to Transformations, should certainly be considered among its effects.*

*In 2012, Toyo Ito presented the contributions of his recent experience in the areas affected by the 2011 tsunami in the Japanese Pavilion at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale. The exhibition was conceived as a catalyst for future interventions, and it has, in fact, become the trigger for a more extensive project of architectural and social transformation in the areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami. This well-known paradigmatic case represents an opportunity to address further examples of exhibitions that proved capable of activating processes of care for cities, communities and urban fabrics.*



## **CRISIS 1 - Japan earthquake and tsunami 2011**

In 2012 Toyo Ito presented his installation for the Japanese Pavilion titled “Architecture. Possible Here? Home-for-All” at the 13th Venice Biennale. The project focused on his recent experience in the areas affected by the 2011 tsunami in Japan. Coordinated by the architect, with the participation of architects Kumiko Inui, Sou Fujimoto, Akihisa Hirata and photographer Naoya Hatakeyama, the pavilion was awarded the Golden Lion and became the trigger for a more extensive project of architectural and social transformation in the areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami.

The operation launched by Ito sought to propose an alternative to the government plans for reconstruction after the earthquake, which – in his words – would be imposed from above, relying on projects based on civil engineering technology, and ignoring the memory of the place and the relations between people and the natural world. Ito’s idea was instead to use the opportunity represented by the Biennale to build a collaborative process between architects, networks of associations and local communities, aimed at the construction of a pavilion on a site that

had been destroyed but was still desirable: a “Home for All”, a place where local people could go back to their roots, and a place to start a new course as well, in which to compare, observe and question old and new paradigms.

The unusual result of the process is a small, hybrid-shape building that reflects the exchange of ideas between the different poetics of the architects, the expectations of the people, and the decision to work with locally available materials after the tsunami. Neither the finished form of the building, nor its uniqueness represent a “clear solution”, but they are both endowed with the attributes that can define a work of architecture: character, material, meaning, location, relationship with the context, function and use.

The experience of the “Home for All” was not limited to the small building at Rikuzentakata. It prompted the participation of other architects who wished to contribute to the design and construction of many more buildings in order to observe, share and discuss the emergency.

Toyo Ito, "Architecture. Possible Here? Home-for-All", 13th Venice Architecture Biennale, 2012, Installation view, photo credits Nina Bassoli



## **Crisis 2 - Conflicts related to the transformation of a neighbourhood**

**A/B:** "Ladies and gentlemen, we are two salesmen! Maybe a bit peculiar but we are estate agents!"

**B:** "You see, my dear lady, we are not going to talk today..."

**A:** "About three rooms with two bathrooms, garage and cellar, two balconies, kitchenette, a terrace for sunbathing, modern quality building, energy saving housing, floors doors and windows..."

**B:** "...but of how mankind, by informing space, makes it become a place."

**A:** "And you can also like places. Do you want to buy the whole neighbourhood?"

**B:** "Every place is made of relationships. Relationships of space and time. Relationships! Relationships between theatre and church, between church and square, between square and street, between street and garden, garden and building, building and house, house and inhabitant, between inhabitant and neighbour. Here is the neighbourhood!" ►

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Campomarzio, "Bolzanism Museum", 2020, Performance view, photo credits Roberto Gigliotti

► A: “And living becomes a pleasure!”

[...]

B: “Real estate agents, yes! But what we sell is not really real estate, because it changes all the time. It changes shape, space and colour. It changes relationships and even the smell. The architects’ designs change, all the projects of the municipality. History changes! And we change too ... You have to open your eyes wide and look, because by looking, we educate our senses to the multiplicity and differences of forms. Observe because observing reveals the reasons for the differences and reveals the rules, and to see, because by seeing we can trace meanings and values. And now let the dancing begin!”

During the summer of 2020 the group of architects Campomarzio activated a performative guided tour through some of the housing neighbourhoods in Bolzano that have been the stage for conflictual

episodes in the history of the city, and called it the “Bolzanism Museum”. One episode in particular involved the identity of the community of Italian migrants transplanted to Bolzano during the Fascist period. Nevertheless, today the neighbourhoods are a lively melting pot of different cultures and represent great potential in the societal development of the city.

The project is both an in-depth study into the social and architectural history of the city and an inclusive theatre performance accessible to a variegated public. It is a lens offered to inhabitants and visitors through which to reinterpret familiar places in everyday life, but mediated in a way that augments their reality by adding a performative, narrative layer. “Bolzanism” is an actual exhibitionist performance: like in an exhibition, artefacts are extrapolated from their context and re-combined into the narrative of the show. The buildings explained during the tour are re-contextualised into the script of the theatrical narration. ►

### ► Crisis 3 – The shock of a spreading pandemic. If the public space is put in standby

2020. The spread of Covid-19 forces the world population to abandon the physical public spaces of our cities and to retreat into the interior of our homes. Digital means can offer only a pale surrogate for the possibilities of gathering and exchange represented by the public space. Lungomare is a Bolzano cultural association that views the public space as a place in which to share differences, experiences, opinions and desires, a space in which to link cultural production with the political and social dimension.

In 2020 Lungomare established a one-year residency project inviting Orizzontale, a Roman collective whose work ranges between architecture, landscape planning, public art and the production of homemade urban furniture. The exhibition spaces of the association would not have been accessible anyway, so Orizzontale chose to leave the spaces of the gallery and started an adventure to explore the wounded public space of the city of Bolzano. A series of interventions were planned remotely during the first lockdown in spring. Shortly after the re-opening, Orizzontale came to Bolzano to enact three actions aimed at exploring the physical and perceived public space of the city:

1. As an initial approach to abandon the state of captivity, they gave shape to an environment delineated with signal tapes to reflect upon borders as zones of protection and exclusion;
2. It then played with the social distancing rules, using a drawing tool that measured and visualised the space.
3. Finally, it collected fragments of conversations with the inhabitants that were projected onto building façades as shared visions.

### Conclusions

These three examples are contemporary architecture exhibitions. In addition to mere display, the architecture exhibition has now become a thing in itself: it is research, knowledge, content and even space production. While exhibitions were once just a reference to something else, the exhibition itself is now the referent, the effects of which become more important than the event itself. They contain Transgressions in the format of the exhibits and in the aims they wish to achieve, which can often lead to Transformations. As far as Transgressions are concerned, in any form that it takes, an architecture exhibition always represents a privileged terrain for experimentation.

This also means a transgression of the disciplinary rules and traditional tools, devices and media used to produce the



Orizzontale, "Atti pubblici en plein air. Atto pubblico #2 Spazi liberi. Possibilità o negazione? ", 2020 photo credits Claudia Corrent, courtesy Lungomare

artefacts presented in the show. Freed from both the constraints of representation constraints, and the standards and norms connected to construction, the "exhibition architect" – a figure that can easily be identified in studying the production of architecture exhibitions over the last twenty years – shows space using space and produces hybrid results that he/she deliberately exposes to the influence of other disciplines. Connecting architecture to other disciplines leads us to see it through different eyes: one discipline reveals the other.

Once the disciplinary boundaries are questioned, there is no pre-defined medium or format for the exhibits contained in an architecture show. As stated in a recent publication about Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation – taken here as an example of the ►

## *7 x 7 Talks*

► generation of “exhibition architects” – «the objects of architecture are [...] complex entities that unfold their potential agencies (whether political, social or environmental) in equally complex ways [...] and Andrés Jaque and the Office for Political Innovation, in addition to their built works, pursue a research practice through the main other media of architectural production.“ (Jaque, 2020)  
As far as Transformations are concerned, the experiences of Ito, Campomarzio and Orizzontale described above belong to the production of those architects “who consider themselves to still be working with architecture, but who are stretching the boundaries, redefining what is possible. These are architects who are working with the public sector, designing social housing, enabling communities, designing with nature, tackling the climate emergency, advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, working in post-conflict zones and more.” (Harriss, Hyde, Marcaccio, 2021)

The three projects are examples of exhibitions that can activate processes of care in cities, communities and urban fabrics. Their performative agency gives them the capacity to literally influence the behaviour of their actors. In the ephemeral character of these exhibitions lies one of their greatest strengths. They concentrate an enormous amount of energy in a certain place at a certain moment, and this phenomenon has great transformative potential. In this context the exhibition may be understood as an activist’s tool capable, for example, of strengthening community interactions. ■



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***HABIBI.WORKS  
NOTES FROM A  
SOCIAL DESIGN  
LAB AT THE  
EUROPEAN  
BORDER IN  
IOANNINA,  
GREECE***

*BY*

Mimi Hapig | Soup and Socks e.V., Co-founder and project lead  
Habibi.Works | [mimi@soupandsocks.eu](mailto:mimi@soupandsocks.eu)

Franziska Wirtensohn | Habibi.Works, Soup and Socks e.V.  
(supporting organisation Habibi.Works) | [franzi@soupandsocks.eu](mailto:franzi@soupandsocks.eu)

Michael Wittmann\* | Habibi.Works, Soup and Socks e.V. and PhD  
candidate UFG Linz | [michael.wittmann@ufg.at](mailto:michael.wittmann@ufg.at)



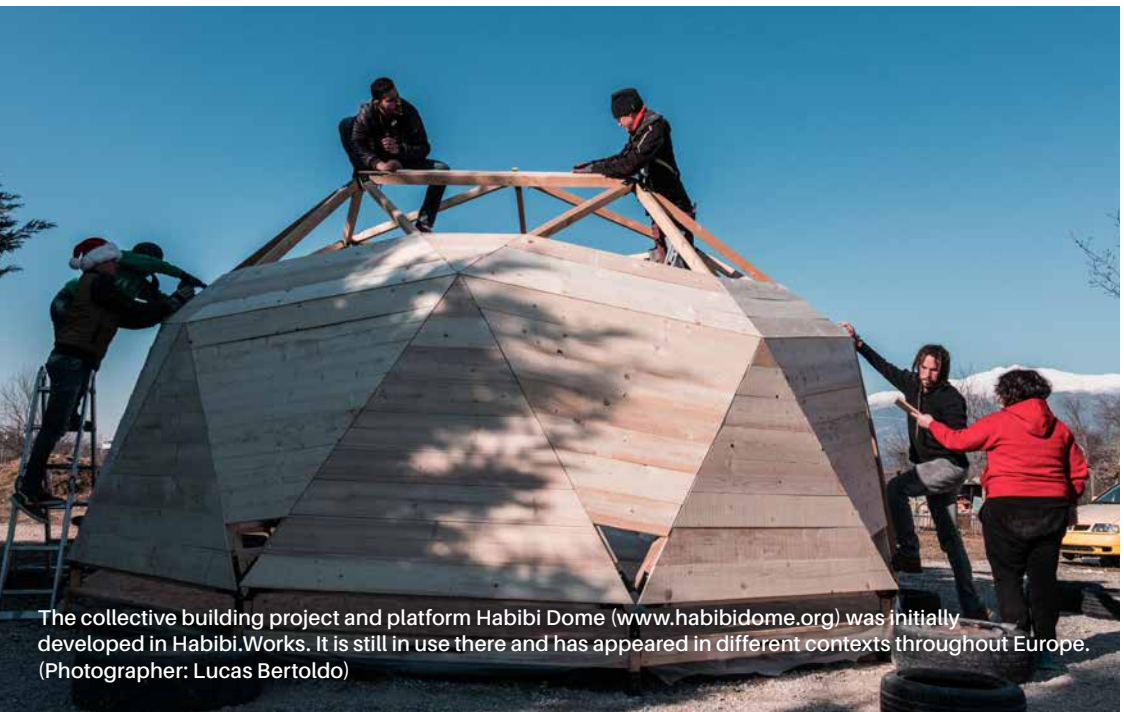
**Abstract:**

*In a context of increasing criminalisation and precarisation of humans arriving in Europe after fleeing their home countries, the social design lab Habibi.Works was funded as a platform for education, empowerment and encounters.*

*Habibi.Works aims to counteract this precarisation by offering support on a daily basis, and by generating information and counter-narratives. This contribution introduces Habibi.Works and reflects upon the (un-)intended impact of social design labs in the context of socio-political fields, as this was the main question raised in the workshop held at Care beyond crises: Which aspects of support and care can lead to empowerment, rather than to reinforced inequalities?*

**Keywords:**

*Social justice, equal rights, social design lab, European Border, support rather than help from above*



The collective building project and platform Habibi Dome ([www.habibidome.org](http://www.habibidome.org)) was initially developed in Habibi.Works. It is still in use there and has appeared in different contexts throughout Europe. (Photographer: Lucas Bertoldo)

## **1. HABIBI.WORKS – context and objectives**

Habibi.Works (<https://habibi.works>) is an open intercultural workshop, a makerspace, founded by the German association Soup and Socks e.V. (later SaS) in 2016 in Epirus (Northern Greece). Habibi.Works consists of 11 working areas (for example wood, metal, sewing, digital fabrication, bike repair, kitchen, library, sports area), which are open to residents of the surrounding so-called camps for refugees, Greek locals and (international) volunteer experts. Today, in addition to Habibi.Works, only one other international grassroots organisation remains involved in this infrastructurally poor region and in the context of this intersectional crisis, which expresses itself in phenomena such as semi-permanent camp constructions for refugees.

SaS' convictions are that national borders must not be borders to keep out people in search of freedom and safety or their right to self-determined and dignified living conditions (Soup and Socks 2016). The main principles guiding Habibi.Works' implementation of these visions are as follows: people who come to Europe enrich our societies, if social, economic and political structures are accessible. As these accessibilities are currently unavailable, Habibi.Works aims to be a counter-

part by providing space focussing on self-determination as opposed to paternalizing or excluding structures.

Habibi.Works aims to generate impact on five levels:

- (1) Living conditions: Repairing and producing what is needed in day-to-day living;
- (2) Education: Pursuing personal interests, sharing knowledge and learning skills;
- (3) Well-being and mental health: (Re-)gaining self-confidence and experiencing self-effectiveness in this workshop setting
- (4) Social encounters: Getting to know people from other contexts and reducing prejudices;
- (5) Political awareness in Europe: Establishing positive counterpoints against populist right-wing narratives.

## **2. Methods of social design and socially-engaged art**

(1) As an open workshop, Habibi.Works considers support and care as the attempt to set up a framework within which participants can generate self-determination, access to (informal) education and social participation, by themselves. As they find themselves in the politically-induced situation of having to wait, with very little information about their future, the participants shall be encouraged to create a perspective of self-effectiveness in



Screenshot of a blogpost on [www.soupandsocks.eu](http://www.soupandsocks.eu): Habibi.Works and its supporting association regularly inform readers about the situation on-site. This newsletter reports recent changes in the asylum regulations that threaten several thousand people with homelessness, as the 6-month-period for recognized refugees to leave their accommodations in camps and apartments was reduced to 30 days.

(Photographer: Mimi Hapig)

their daily lives. This approach has an incomparable impact on people's current living situations (for example, hanging curtains to create privacy within the containers, so that women can take off their headscarves or change at ease), on their motivation to continue or to use their education (for example: experts sharing their skills, students continuing their education online, teenagers who have never had access to school being encouraged and empowered to build skill sets and follow their interests), and on their confidence to build an independent life within European societies (growing a personal and professional network with locals and Europeans, gaining a sense of confidence).

(2) In the attempt to foster this active, self-determined perspective in the participants, Habibi.Works explores non-competitive, empowering ways of working together. Participants are invited to bring in their own ideas, to partake in decision-making, to take over responsibili-

ties and to generate ownership (for example, offering a guided activity within one of Habibi.Works' workshop areas, committing to participate in bigger projects or providing feedback and advice at the monthly community meetings).

(3) The situation at the European borders is marked by inequalities and uncertainties for newly-arriving people. Habibi.Works and its supporting association SaS regularly inform audiences throughout Europe about these conditions and counter right-wing narratives in creative, engaging, yet clearly critical ways. The channels vary from monthly newsletters over social media campaigns to speeches at the European Parliament, as part of the SickofWaiting initiative (Sick of Waiting 2017), participation in the academic discourse and public presentations in different European countries.

For Habibi.Works, to care beyond crisis means expressing their disagreement with the term "refugee crisis". The carrier of ►

► a symptom is rarely the cause of the crisis. A more systemic overview is required: the symptoms along the European borders are not caused by the people who flee their countries. They are the consequence of global interrelations and conflicts, which lead to exploitation, war, persecution and poverty. These conflicts are at least partly the offspring of the colonial legacy, of racism and of the exploitation of human and natural resources (Brand and Wissen 2017). The most obvious symptoms in this humanitarian and political crisis – the conditions in camp constructions for refugees and specific events, such as the catastrophe on Lesbos – are caused by political unwillingness to provide more suitable, dignified and sustainable solutions. Thus a relevant aspect of care can also mean re-framing discriminating terms in (everyday) language.

### 3. Challenges and reflections

(1) Inequalities and power dynamics: Habibi.Works operates within a context in which basic human rights are not granted and opportunities depend on factors such as nationality. Initiating an open workshop in this context generates power dynamics between initiators and participants (Terkessidis 2015), between persons with or without a EU passport, and between competing organisations within the humanitarian sector. Well

aware of these circumstances, SaS intends to counteract patronising structures: the Habibi.Works team aims to make the power dynamics visible and to deconstruct them wherever possible, e.g. through transparent conversation structures that strengthen feedback and through adaptability that doesn't continue to foster a tyranny of structurelessness (Freeman 1970).

(2) Participation and prejudices: The mere fact that a project aims to be participatory is no guarantee that participants will gain any form of co-determination or empowerment (Bishop 2012). Within the context of this intersectional crisis, a project can easily reinforce prejudices and inequalities if critical reflections are missing (Demos 2019) – despite all the well-meaning intentions that may have led to the project (Buchmüller 2013). Reflections about hierarchy in decision making, but also about the language that is used around the project and the participants are crucial (Arnstein 1969).

(3) Possible compensatory effects: Habibi.Works was set up as a political statement against the current EU asylum policies and as a social initiative to support the people who are affected by them. The practical, daily support however is, to some extent, compensation for a structural failure on a pan-European level. Compensations such



Impressions from the social design lab Habibi.Works and its different working areas. (Photographers: Buff, Margot: top centre; Hapig, Mimi: top right, bottom centre and bottom right; Horsch, Florian: top left; Sanchez Brox, Andrea: bottom left)

as these relieve the pressure on authorities and decision-makers, and might in the worst case incentivise them to avoid further responsibility. Banz (2016) draws an analogy for (social) design with Rancière's (2007) analysis for the fields of social or politically-engaged art: social design and art projects could take over the role and responsibilities of reticent politics and state institutions. The Habibi.Works team is aware of this risk. One of the intended impacts of the project is to create awareness of the situation along the European borders. This goal, the aim to be a critical voice within European society, acquires additional importance in view of the above-mentioned risk. ►

► **4. Conclusion**

Habibi.Works considers a main aspect of care to be the awareness of power structures, of discriminating structures rather than the naïve idea of non-existing hierarchy or non-existing inequalities. In a way, this awareness is a precondition for critical reflection and possibly for countering inequalities.

**Similarly, support means  
that people are the experts  
on their own lives and  
should be in  
the position to make  
decisions about them.  
One's own decision,  
one's own story  
or knowledge should be  
the crucial  
and essential point.**

In the context within which Habibi.Works is working, the above-mentioned reflections also mean self-critically addressing and questioning one's own situatedness: Who speaks for whom? Who can speak for themselves? (Tsoumou 2018) How can "migratory situated knowledge" (Tribunal NSU Komplex auflösen 2017 and Güleç, Schaffner 2017) become visible? And how can structures such as an open workshop be of support? In that manner Habibi.Works attempts to work with critical rather than affirmative forms and strategies, which often end up perpetuating inequalities and causes (Pinther 2015). ■

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*7 x 7 Talks*

**COMMONS  
CARGOBIKES.  
DONATION-  
BASED  
CARGO BIKE  
SHARING FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
CITIES**



*BY*

Florian Egermann | wielebenwir e.V. | [hallo@fleg.de](mailto:hallo@fleg.de)



We (wielebenwir e.V., a Cologne-based non-profit) founded "KASIMIR — your cargo bike" in 2013 to enable access to sustainable mobility for everybody. Pictured is "Kasimir", the first cargo bike in our service.

### **Abstract:**

*"Commons Cargobikes" are more than 100 grass-roots initiatives in Europe providing cargo bikes to the local community on a donation basis. First implemented in Cologne in 2013, the sharing concept has spread quickly, with almost 400 cargo bikes currently available to lend.*

*Our goal is to make this sustainable method of transportation available to everybody. We use local institutions (community centres, cafés, shops) as rental stations to facilitate community cooperation. We provide the bikes based on voluntary donations to enable low-threshold access.*

*We believe in sharing resources with the community, and that we can work together to improve our cities.*

## #CommonsCargobikes

- Free (donation-based) cargo bike sharing
- A „common good“: to be shared instead of individually owned
- Local multipliers host the bike(s), personal contact establishes the service as part of the community
- Low administration effort and cost-effective to run



#CommonsCargobikes — Florian Egermann, wlelebenwir e.V. (@tafkaf)

## CARE, COMMONS & CARGOBIKES

What does it mean to care for your city? For us, in 2013, it meant thinking about how the city space is distributed, and who can access it. In Cologne, like in most cities, a disproportionate percentage is dedicated almost solely to cars, in the form of roads and parking infrastructure. Add the problems of noise, exhaust fumes and energy consumption by cars, and it was easy to imagine a much-improved city — by getting rid of cars.

People may agree that it is possible to travel through the city by bike, but what about transporting goods or multiple kids? This is where cargo bikes come into play:

they can replace cars while being virtually silent, sustainable and space-efficient. We just need them to be visible and accessible.

There are activist projects already in place addressing the cars vs. humans issue, such as parking day (“temporarily repurpose street-parking spaces and convert them into tiny parks and places for art, play, and activism”), or the street blockades by “Fridays For Future” today.

Our approach, however, was to fold our political/activist agenda into a project in which anyone can participate, and is perceived foremost as a service by and for the community. Lending cargo bikes for free is our Trojan horse (or Trojan

cargo bike): people using our service put cargo bikes on the streets, they become “influencers” for alternative, sustainable mobility in the city.

We designed the service to be free, not only because it is important to us that it be accessible to everyone, but also because everybody profits from fewer cars in the city.

Care can mean implementing a service for others to use, and bike by bike, ride by ride, getting closer to achieving a more sustainable, human-friendly city.

### **Our principles:**

- we make cargo bikes available to all, free of charge (donation-based)
- our bikes are a „common good“: to be shared instead of individually owned
- we are advocating for a change of mind in urban transportation, resource conversation and sustainable traffic
- we rely on neighbourhood cooperation: Cafés, private citizens and social facilities all act as pickup locations ▶



Since 2013, we have grown from a single initiative in Cologne to 131 initiatives throughout Europe, mostly in German-speaking countries.

## 7 x 7 Talks

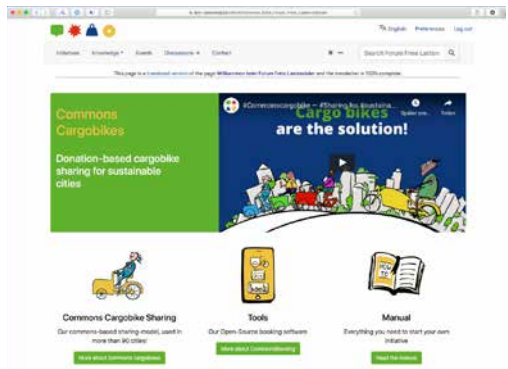
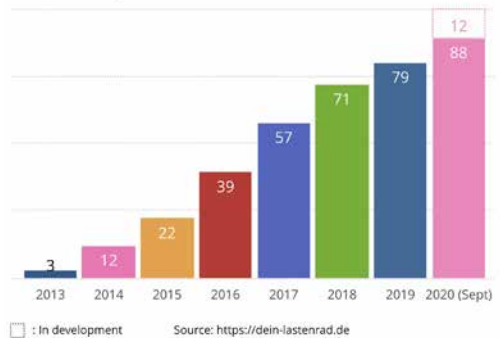
► We facilitated that growth by providing initiatives with everything they need to get started:

- Tools
- Knowledge
- Network

Our open source booking system (“CommonsBooking”) allows initiatives to easily share their bikes. Like the project as a whole, it is meant to be shared and adjusted for the individual needs of each initiative. It is freely available from Github or in the WordPress plugin directory.

Our WIKI collects the knowledge and best practices from initiatives in a wide range of cities. It contains information about the concept, an introduction to the tools and the handbook covering everything you need to start your own Commons Cargo-bike initiative. 80% is available in English, anybody can translate into any language.

Commons Cargobike initiatives





Over the years, a fantastic community has grown. We meet every year and exchange experiences and trade tips about creating/running projects. Commons Cargobikes are not a „formal“ association but an open community – you can join us by adding your project to the WIKI. ■



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**Further information:**

WIKI (Manual, initiative list, events):  
[commons-cargobikes.org](https://commons-cargobikes.org)

Questions? We would love to hear from you!  
[mail@commons-cargobikes.org](mailto:mail@commons-cargobikes.org)

7 x 7 Talks

# **TOLERANT URBAN ECOLOGIES. PERSPECTIVES FROM BENEATH THE PAVEMENT**

**BY**

Aurora Zordan | [aurora.zordan@gmail.com](mailto:aurora.zordan@gmail.com)  
Emma Kaufmann LaDuc\* | [ekaufmannladuc@gmail.com](mailto:ekaufmannladuc@gmail.com)  
Lauro Nächt | [lauro.naecht@gmail.com](mailto:lauro.naecht@gmail.com)  
Technische Universität Wien



**Abstract:**

*An alternative design of care begins from sites of urban ecologies, where tolerance leads to negotiations of coexistence. Beginning with a definition that is borrowed from the sciences, the concept is expressed in an architectural language as a medium of critique, before expanding upon social and political frameworks. The negotiations seek to shift away from an anthropocentric narrative and toward a novel discourse, where ecologies reveal the processes of urbanism and become manifest in a tolerated co-production of space.*

**Keywords:**

*Ecologies, urbanism, built / unbuilt environment, climate crisis*



Fig. 1: An Allanthus altissima grows between facade, pavement, and two electric boxes.

**URBAN ECOLOGIES** are indicative of the Anthropocene. The city as a site of ongoing fragmentation, construction and maintenance of infrastructure becomes increasingly hostile to preexisting ecologies in a notion of disturbance, or trauma. In a process of regeneration, ecological succession gives way to the emergence of disturbance-adapted, early-successional species (Fig. 1, 2, 4 and 5), part and parcel of urban ecologies.

As a final resistance against the smooth city, novel ecologies occur within sites of

most and least convenience. In the context of urban planning, nature (or a perversion of it) is reintroduced into the city under a form of control: the tree is rendered as an element and object, with highly-regulated infrastructures clearly delineating the extension of its space. In the same motion of the hand, nature in the residual form of novel ecologies is neutralized on-site (Fig. 3).

The problem is not a matter of lack of knowledge, but of the conditions of existence. Breaking down the infrastructures of intolerance, notions of dominance and control fall away to make space for urban coexistence. Through practices of mapping and speculation, sites of novel ecologies are given a platform to negotiate between human and non-human entities in a co-creation of urban space.

From beyond the human, novel ecologies challenge the right to the city in its anthropocentric agenda. The city as a site of constant negotiation and interspecific co-production of space redefines the role of the political, especially as it is relevant to urban theory. Public space becomes subject to constant change, negating notions of hierarchy and control. From this urban space, the process of regeneration inherent to novel ecologies becomes a mode of speculative and spatial production: design for the post-Anthropocene. ►



Fig. 2: A young silver birch emerges beneath a parked car, temporarily protected from removal.



Fig. 5: A family of ailanthus trees on a construction site show signs of emergent urban ecologies.

## 7 x 7 Talks

► The concept of urban ecologies seeks to ground the Noosphere of modern philosophical practice by observing the complexity of the Earth beneath (Fig. 6). Bringing together perspectives from across disciplines – environmental, social and political sciences, architecture, landscape and urbanism - the notion of tolerance manifests its relevance for the age of the climate crisis. Regeneration, in turn, reveals the earth as infrastructure – *sous les pavés, la terre!* – latent beneath the trauma of the city. ■

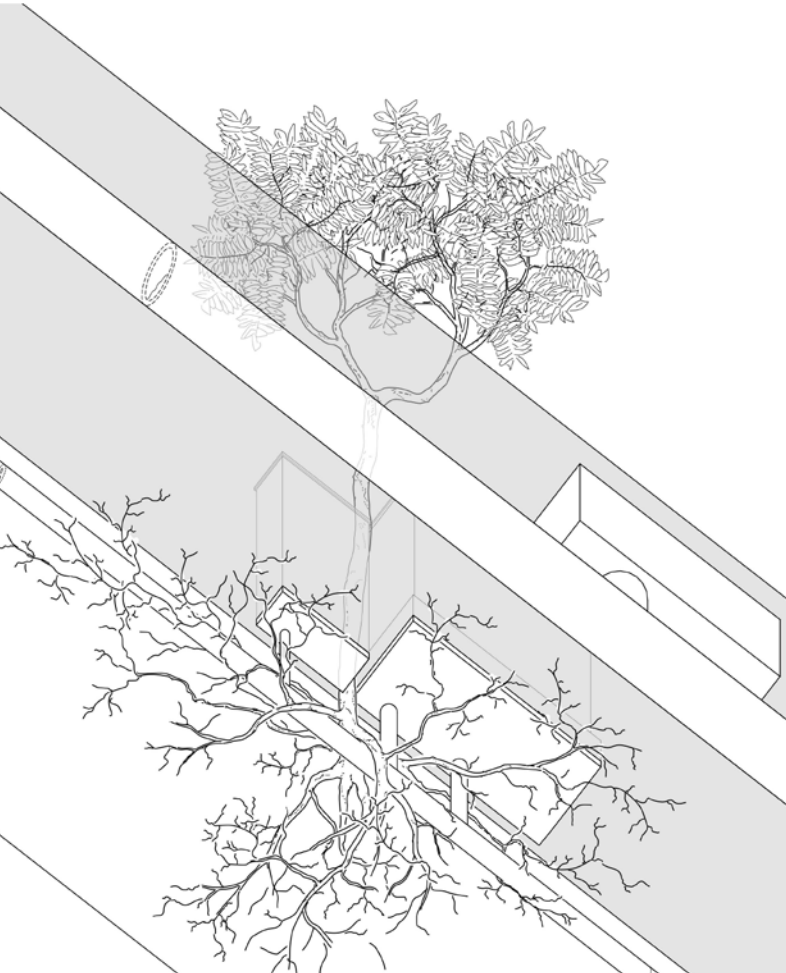


Fig. 6: A different perspective on spontaneous growth reveals the earth as infrastructure.

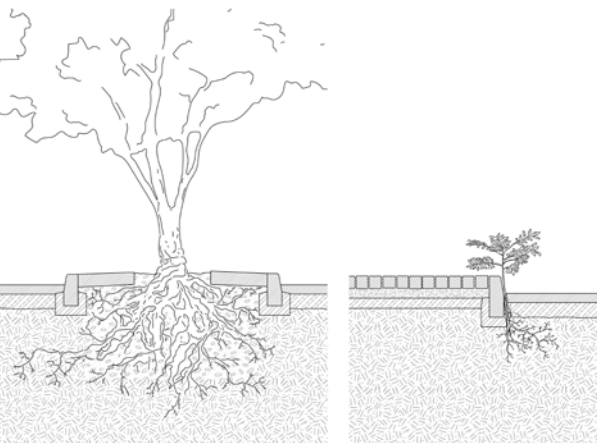


Fig. 3: Existing typologies for urban landscapes reinforce a bureaucratic model of intolerance.



Fig. 4: The *Ailanthus altissima* is a fast-growing species pre-adapted to the environment of the city.

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7 x 7 Talks

# SHIFTING DEGREES OF UNCERTAINTY

BY

Marguerite Kahrl | advisor and cofounder of  
Permaculture for Refugees  
<https://www.permacultureforrefugees.org/>  
[marguerite@kahrl.com](mailto:marguerite@kahrl.com)



**Abstract:**

*Refugees face uncertain futures. Often they are forced to live in makeshift accommodations, in crowded settlements, and lack essential resources.*

*Permaculture offers an approach that supports refugees in working together to help themselves and their host communities. The application of permaculture strategies and design principles assists them in designing and rebuilding their communities and livelihoods collectively.*

**Keywords:**

*Participatory design, urban ecology, permaculture, deep ecology,  
Permaculture for Refugees (PAR)*



Permaculture  
for Refugees





**THIS** 7x7 presentation introduces two cases relative to permaculture applications, participatory design and asylum seekers; Con MOI in support of west Africans in an occupied settlement in Turin, Italy, and Permaculture for Refugees (P4R), with a design course for Syrian refugee women in Turkey.

My research is illustrated with contextual insights and participatory practices which transform the idea of care into practical applications for and with refugees. Permaculture design principles help reframe negative thinking and can be applied equally to individual, social, and environmental contexts, allowing for healthier and more effective solutions to support sustainable lifestyles. Permaculture ethics include care for the earth, care for people, and a fair share of surplus; they serve as guides for trans-formational strategies.

### **Con MOI, Participatory project (2014-2016)**

An informal group of “migrants” and Italian citizens formed in an occupied settlement in Turin’s Lingotto district. For over four years, 1,200 people, migrants and refugees from many different countries, lived in the former Olympic buildings in the so-called Ex-MOI area on Via Giordano Bruno. Con MOI collaborated with area residents in this delicate and complex environment to develop a collective identity and transform deeply rooted habits.

### **Community Resiliency**

We used a process-oriented study of urban ecology employing permaculture and deep ecology to form a collective, later an association, of active citizens and refugees. As a group, we held participatory workshops in community building, food sharing, and alternatives to the market economy.





Photo credit: Marguerite Kahrl, PDC for Syrian refugee women, P4R, Turkey (2019)

### Creative workshops

Con MOI members made individual self-portraits by transforming donated fabric into hand-sewn sculptures - Mini MOI. This shared activity was a relational response to transforming and redefining identity within the community.

The Mini MOI videos show the process of making the self-portraits, with accompanying audio created by each maker. In the 90-second videos, we hear their stories and songs as we see their hands weaving the fabric of the community.

Produced and directed by Marguerite Kahrl, music by Giuseppe Gavazza, portraits by Con MOI.

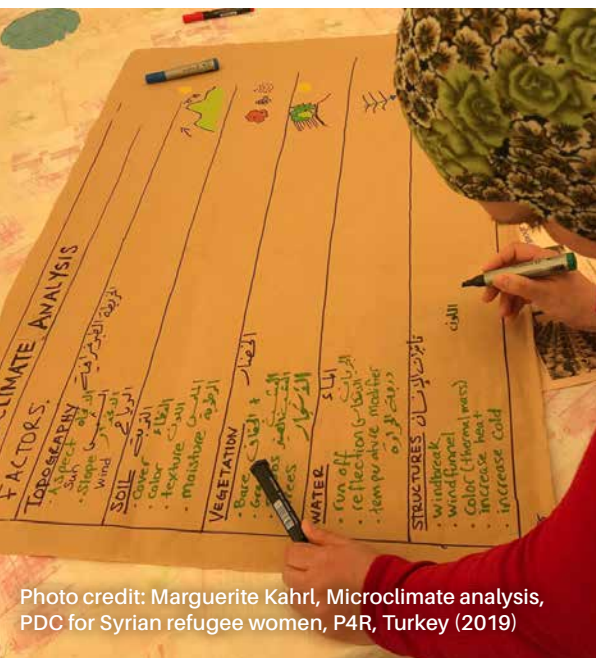


Photo credit: Marguerite Kahrl, Microclimate analysis, PDC for Syrian refugee women, P4R, Turkey (2019)

### Permaculture for Refugees (2015-present)

Together with a small group of permaculture practitioners, we formed the collective Permaculture for Refugees (P4R). While we were convinced that training refugees in permaculture could offer them a springboard to build confidence and access other long-term social and economic integration opportunities, it was unclear if the training would be valuable to refugees. To find out if the project would work, we needed substantial evidence.

The P4R team planned a programme to hold a series of Permaculture Design Certification (PDC) courses to train ►



Photo credit: Marguerite Kahrl, Design principles, PDC for Syrian refugee women, P4R, Turkey (2019)

► refugees in the skills and techniques they needed to raise their nutrition quality with gardens, animal husbandry, community building, small-scale production, economic autonomy, and alternatives to the market economy.

We held eight PDCs in refugee camps across three continents (Bangladesh, Turkey, Greece, Philippines, Malaysia, Afghanistan, and Iraq). This programme substantiated broad evidence that permaculture education transforms refugees' lives and land over a wide range of situations.

The courses helped to reframe the period of limbo in camps of enforced idleness and desperation to a time of learning and building relationships to the land and to

each other. Some key design principles which students value include:

- catch and store energy: apply to resources such as water.
- apply self-regulation and accept feedback: self-control allows us to be accountable and feedback helps us to improve our work and lives.
- integrate rather than segregate: complex connections between elements result in a more resilient system. This can be applied to communities of plants, animals and diverse people.
- guild: groups of people living near each other & supporting each other. Also refers to plant species that are stronger together, such as basil/tomato, carob/olive/grape.

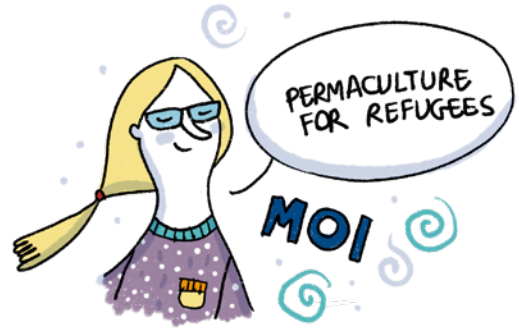
## Teaching tools

P4R members are adapting to the global pandemic context, which has dramatically impacted our ability to hold courses in refugee camps and communities. We are currently focusing on making educational content more accessible, relevant and responsive to refugees, including exploring different applications for educating diverse people and cultures in such media as radio, comics, books (clear illustrations with simple language), animation, simple mobile-phone applications, online courses and workshops, written materials, and posters.

## Conclusion

We live in a time of accelerating change and global challenges that impinge brutally on poor and disadvantaged people. Refugees are impacted by both, with the added psychological stress of uncertainty and statelessness. Climate change, war and natural disasters mean that more people than ever are forced to flee from their homes and seek sanctuary. We anticipate the numbers will increase.

Refugees are sometimes passive, powerless or angry, with limited options for changing their future. Permaculture and participatory design can make a huge difference in their lives, no matter their background or circumstances in refugee



camps and/or settlements. In each case study, the topic of care is translated into the potential of community-building through education, practical experience, and participatory workshops. P4R continues to develop projects in different bioregions supporting local and displaced people and the ecology they inhabit. ■

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# *KEY NOTES*

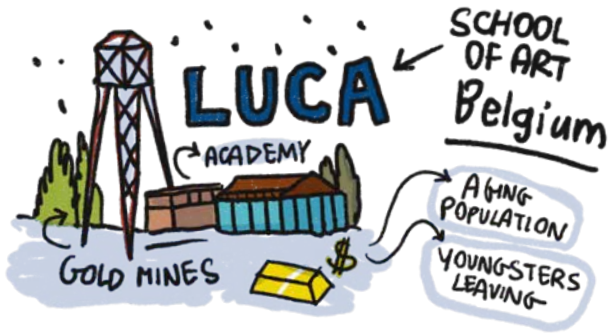
*on creative care practices beyond crises*

*Keynote*

***WHY INVOLVING  
PEOPLE WITH  
DEMENTIA IN THE  
DESIGN PROCESS  
IS A NECESSARY  
CHOICE TO MAKE***

*BY*

Niels Hendriks | Dementia Lab, Inter-Actions, LUCA School of Arts  
niels.hendriks@luca-arts.be\*



**Abstract:**

*It is widely known that the number of people with dementia is rising. With no medical solution on the horizon and with prevention measures hardly making an impact on this number, the design of artifacts and services to make life and the care of people with dementia more pleasant, can be seen as a possible third route. However, not only what you design, but also the way you design (your design practice) will heavily influence how you and others (those without dementia) perceive a person with dementia.*

*This paper seeks to offer some critical questions to consider when starting to design for and hopefully also with people with dementia.*

**Keywords:**

*Participatory design, design practice, people with dementia*



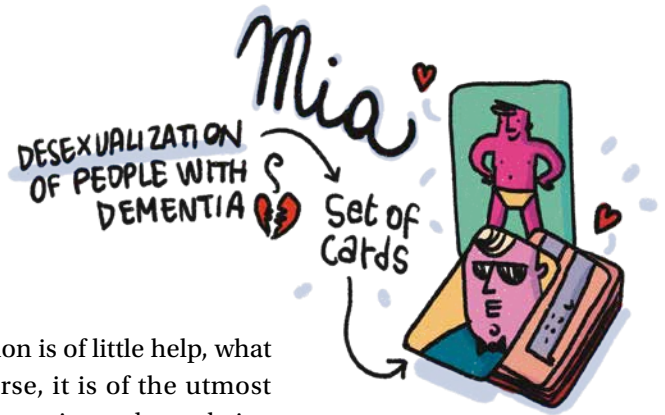
## Keynote

### 1. DEMENTIA: THE PROBLEM WITH MEDICATION AND PREVENTION; THE ROLE OF DESIGN

Dementia is a well-described condition that affects 50 million people worldwide (WHO, 2020). In 2050 this number will have risen to 152 million people worldwide (almost similar to the current population of Russia). For every person with dementia, a series of other persons, from partners, to sons, daughters, neighbours or other relatives are affected. Dementia has a variety of ways to affect a person with memory problems (euphemistically called 'forgetfulness'), this being the one symptom that is commonly known. People with dementia have to deal with memory loss, but can also experience disorientation in time and place, impaired reasoning, difficulties with language and in performing motor tasks. These issues are as frequent as memory problems. What dementia does, over time, is make it impossible to carry out basic daily tasks. On top of that, the way dementia affects one person might be totally different than the way it affects another.

In 2018 Biogen, Pfizer and other pharma concerns communicated they would (temporarily) stop research on a cure for dementia, as it seems not to be effective enough (Alzheimers.org.uk). Despite a renewed interest in searching for a cure, a potential breakthrough is not to be expected in the coming decades (Mayo Clinic). Next to that, all prevention measures are quite like those for other diseases, such as the advice to not smoke, consume little alcohol etc. and could be perceived as common sense more than as a good preventive measure.





So, if no cure is near and prevention is of little help, what other options are there? Of course, it is of the utmost importance to give people with dementia good care: being clothed, being fed, being cared for in a warm, welcoming and respectful context comes first. But, what lies beyond that, and, we should ask, what can be the role of design in all this? In this sense, this essay tries to make the claim that design can and should play a role in the lives of people with dementia. It should support them and their partners and professional caregivers in daily life and care. Design, since its inception, has played a role in answering societal challenges. The industrialisation and growing consumerism at the beginning of the 20th century helped support standardisation and production for the masses as one of the features of design. Standardisation and mass production was the designers' response to a changed society. Similarly, after the World War II, there was a belief in rebuilding the world differently. Designers were urged to abandon the modernist styles in favour of more open and democratic ways of designing. The rise of Scandinavian Design can be seen as an example of this phenomenon. Likewise, the exponential growth of people with dementia, combined with the socialisation of care and community-based care includes a shift to where much of the control and responsibility lies in the hands of family and the people with dementia themselves. This shift requires a response from design at large and more specifically, it requires individual designers to respond to this changing societal landscape. ►

## Keynote

### ► 2. DESIGN RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGE OF DEMENTIA: ALARM KITS VS. BUS STOPS

But in what way should this response be formulated? Figure 1 shows a series of ‘care alarm kits’ for people with dementia. Figure 2 shows a bus stop right outside of a German residential care centre. Both figure 1 & 2 show examples of objects designed for people with dementia. The bus stop is located in a forested area of Germany in which the inhabitants are used to using public transport as their main means of communication. The care residence in this forested area, next to the bus stop has no closed doors. Instead, all the people with dementia can walk in and out of the care facility. What happens quite often is that they sit near the bus stop and wait for the bus to come to take them home. When a caregiver notices a resident sitting at the bus stop, the caregiver will walk outside, have a small chat with the persons sitting outside, indicate that the bus is not coming anywhere soon, and, as this bus is not coming, maybe they would like to come inside and drink a cup of coffee.

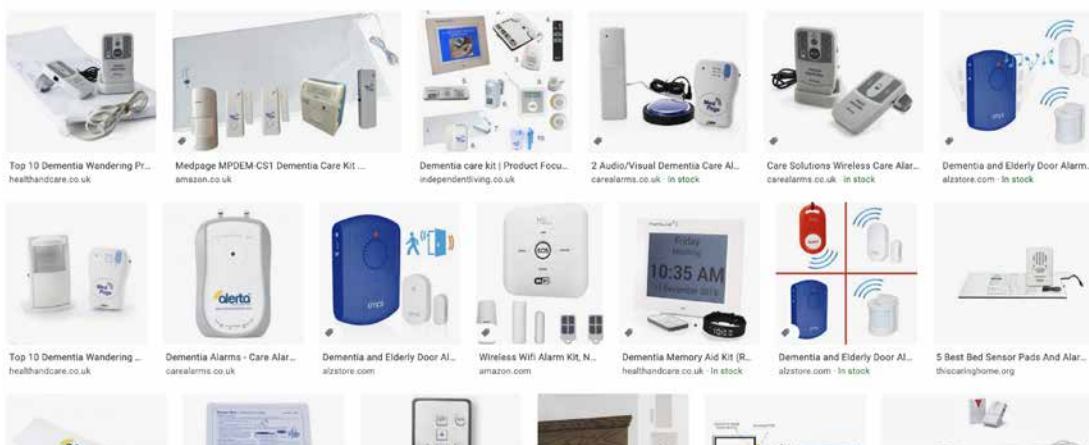


Figure 1. Screenshot of Google image search for care alarm kit for people with dementia

As you might have understood, the bus stop is not real. It was placed there by the caregivers of the care centre. It will attract residents who then can easily be brought back inside. I contrast this example with the designs shown in figure 2. These objects are so-called wireless care alarm kits. These types of objects are needed and I do not think they are useless, however, one could reflect on what they indicate about our vision of people with dementia. An alarm kit is what is used for burglars who enter your house. It is a way to monitor something from a distance without being involved or engaged. The bus stop, though it is a contested design (Lorey, 2019), is what, in my vision, can be seen as a more human approach to design: it takes in the lived reality, the way a person perceives their environment, and designs according to this reality; it uses 'design' in a way that shows an understanding of the person with dementia. In that sense, a bus stop is a much more 'human-like' solution than an alarm kit. ►



Figure 2. Bus stop at the Benrath senior centre Germany (source: desonance.wordpress.com; no known copyright)

## *Keynote*

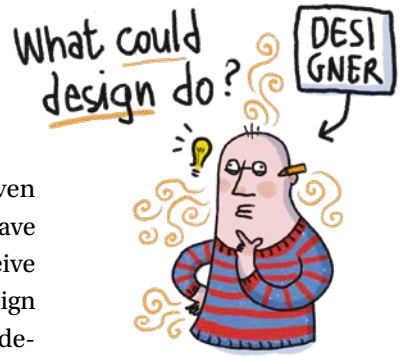
► Coming from this perspective, I am convinced that designers should design more in line with the bus stop and reflect on what will make things more pleasant for a person with dementia. Making life more pleasant is hard to verify, but seems more like a utopian ideal to strive for and should stand in opposition to many of the things designed in the same vein as the alarm kits. These alarm kits are essentially solving the problems of those without dementia: it gives them an option to keep track of people without being there, without communicating with them. It also defines the behaviour of a person with dementia as problematic (an alarm bell will go off when they act in a way they are not allowed to). The bus stop on the other hand is showing a warm design approach: a design that is in line with the way the person with dementia perceives his or her surroundings.

### 3. WHAT DOES YOUR DESIGN PRACTICE SAY ABOUT HOW YOU PERCEIVE A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA

**“Design practices are not neutral - there are always critical-political issues, others, alternatives and futures involved.”**

(Mazé, 2018)

The next section will elaborate on the fact that to achieve a design that makes life more pleasant, that feels more human-like, the important thing is not only ‘what’ is designed (the artifacts or services), but also ‘how’ the design practice is set up. The above-mentioned quote from Ramia Mazé indicates that those ‘how’-s, the design practices, are not neutral. Of course, the way you practice design will heavily influence the outcome of the design process, the resulting



artifact, it will influence its functions and aesthetics. Even more interesting is that the chosen design practice will have a strong impact on how we, as designers, view and perceive the person with dementia (and this will influence our design again). Next to that, the way we design for people with dementia will also influence how others see the person with dementia: imagine going to a store where you can buy objects for a person with dementia. How differently will you perceive your own mother with dementia if the store is full of alarm kits versus if the store was full of warmer, more human-like designs (like the bus stop or others).

**“There is this grotesque thing in the corner ... an uncollected corpse that the undertaker cruelly forgot to take away.”**

(Miller, 1990)

The question then is, what is your design practice and what does it say about how you, as a designer, view a person with dementia. The quote you see above is from 1990. It conveys a very de-humanizing vision of people with dementia. This was a provocative statement by Jonathan Miller, a president of the Alzheimer Society, to depict how people with dementia were being perceived. What this quote says is in line with how (most) people would respond to people with dementia at that time: as a body without a mind, no longer human. If we think like that, how do we perceive those with dementia? Indeed, as people who do have much of a right to speak, to whom we do not grant a lot of opportunity to have their voice heard. ►

## *Keynote*

► Of course, Jonathan Miller said these words in 1990. More than three decades have gone by and the vision of people with dementia must have changed, in part thanks to campaigns such as the Belgian “Onthou mens, vergeet dementie” (“Remember the human being, forget about dementia”) or the Irish “Forget the Stigma” (using “I have dementia. I am still me.” as a slogan) that try to encourage the general public to maintain a positive attitude towards people with dementia. Generally speaking, there is a lot more acceptance towards people with dementia, and this change must have been reflected in design practices. However, acceptance does not mean we value people with dementia as equal and valued contributors to society. This is unfortunately clear when investigating the way design deals with people with dementia. In 2013 (Span et al, 2013), a series of design projects were analysed, looking into how people with dementia were being involved in the design process, how they were valued as equal contributors (or not). The analysis showed that out of the 26 projects that designed something for people with dementia, only 2 of them had a person with dementia involved. In the other projects, people with dementia were observed from a distance or were spoken for by a proxy, a family member or professional caregiver who would say what they thought was relevant in the design choices.

The choice a designer should make is how they perceive a person with dementia and how this is reflected in the design practice. Do you value or disregard a person with dementia as an equal partner or not? I believe that the choice to make is to see a person with dementia as equal and thus as an equal partner in a participatory design process as well.



Figure 3. Collect for Later  
(Eva Zohra)

#### 4. A PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PRACTICE TO MAKE LIFE MORE PLEASANT FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

A group of researchers, Morrissey (2017), Rodgers (2017), Branco et al. (2017), Kenning (2018) or my own work (Hendriks, Huybrechts, Wilkinson, Slegers, 2014; Hendriks, Slegers, Duysburgh, 2015; Hendriks, 2019) has explored a variety of methods, tools and techniques to make that choice, to create a participatory approach that involves people with dementia in the design process. One can easily find their work and see how similar tactics to involve people with dementia can be integrated in one's own design practice. To show the practice of participation and how a participatory approach will lead to relevant outcomes for people with dementia, this essay concludes with one of the artifacts resulting from a participatory approach. The project shown in figure 3 is called 'Collect for Later' ►

## *Keynote*

► This project shows how through the antagonistic qualities (the quality of being contested, the quality of causing friction) of a design, a design (and its process) tries to change society's vision of people with dementia. 'Collect for Later' was created by a person with dementia, Mia, and a designer, Eva. For 4 years, Mia had been living in a nursing home. Even though she was at ease in the care home, there were moments that she felt alone and became emotional. After being with Mia for quite some time (joining her for dinner, conversation, etc.) designer Eva noticed that Mia would be distracted every time one of Eva's male colleagues, Rik, passed by: Mia would eagerly observe all of his movements, smile as he smiled and comment on his presence both verbally (e.g. "That is a guy I like!") and non-verbally (e.g. by giggling, winking multiple times at Eva in a conspiratorial way, etc.). Mia expressed that she missed a man in her life. Eva then worked out a design process in which she created several magazines with pictures of men, clothed, nude or wearing swim suits or boxers and used Mia's response to select among them. In the end, Eva developed a set of cards and a colourful folder in which to collect the cards. The set of cards had attractive men (a nice balance between clothed men and more 'erotic' pictures of men in underwear) photoshopped into scenes that depicted other themes that were of interest to Mia (scenes of popular holiday places, animals, etc.). The cards were given to Mia at times when a negative mood would overtake her. She had a colourful folder to keep the cards in (hence the name, 'Collect for Later') and would keep the folder nearby most of the time.

The design stirred quite a bit of discussion with Mia's family and the caregivers, who were unsure whether they were pleased with the 'erotic' pictures of males in their underwear being given to Mia. Amongst the group of caregivers, the

design also generated debate on how to deal with the longing for intimacy and sexuality at a dementia ward, and initiated a first step in setting up a protocol on this point. The feeling of 'awkwardness' that a design such as 'Collect for Later' brings, confronts us with our vision of the person with dementia as an ill, frail or 'lovely' old person, but not as a human being who feels desire or lust. The design outcome 'works' because it helps Mia to overcome boredom and to prevent her from falling into a melancholic or bad mood. But it is also critical towards society's attempt to 'desexualize' older people, and certainly people with dementia (Ward, Vass, Aggarwal, Garfield, Cybyk, 2005) . To stir the discussion this and similar projects were showcased at care facilities and in places where the general audience policy makers come. These showcases not only zoom in on the outcomes, but also highlight the process of participation: why were certain design decisions made and how they could not have been made without the help and collaboration of people with dementia. 'Collect for Later' and other projects like these show a design outcome that some of us find uncomfortable (lust, passion, sexuality in relation to people with dementia), and in this way it also shows how we and thus society might think about people with dementia; If we accept feelings of lust and passion in, let's say 22 year old students, why do we experience some difficulty when we see the same in people with dementia?

Working with a participatory approach not only helped Eva to create something that supported Mia in the moments when she felt emotional, it also offered a critical vision of how society perceives people with dementia. This type of work and multilayeredness would probably not have been possible without Mia's participation. ►

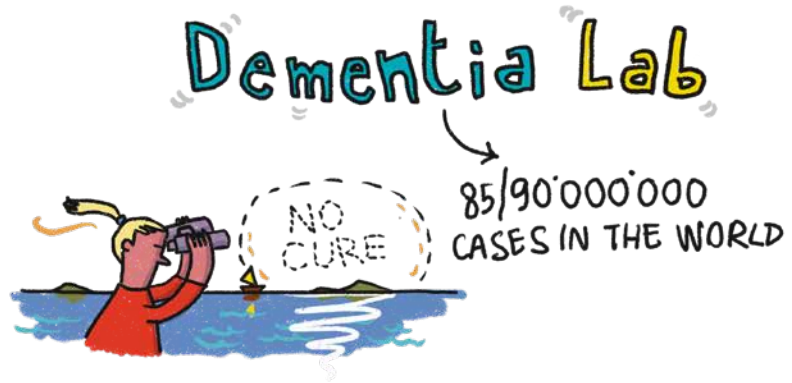
## ► 5. CONCLUSION

The choice one needs to make does not start at the creation of a designed artifact or service, but begins with the practice or process of which the artifact or service is the result. It is a well-considered choice to make, to either value people with dementia (and others whose voices are seldom heard in design) or disregard them. To support this choice, the following questions might aid a designer:

(1) What type of designer are you and what is your practice of design? Consequently, one could also ask what your practice of care is? How do you exert power 'over' those who might be less powerful, how do you make space for those who hardly have a voice? How do you care, in your design work, for the other?

(2) What role (in society/design) do you foresee for those who are not always able to speak up, get a voice? How is this reflected in your design (practice/process/result)? How will you use your design skills and expertise to take 'care' of people with dementia (or others) so that they can take on an active, engaging role in the design process;

(3) What type of vision of a person with dementia do you inscribe into your design practice/designed object? What does the way you design tell about your view of those we take care of or of what is normal/what is accepted? Do you design for conformity or do you design for contestation/antagonism? ■



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*Keynote*

***MOVING FROM  
CRITICAL TO  
CARING DESIGN  
PRACTICES IN AN  
INTERDEPENDENT  
WORLD***

*BY*

Bianca Elzenbaumer | Eurac Research & Brave New Alps  
biancaelzenbaumer@eurac.edu | bravenewalps@gmail.com



**Abstract:**

*What can it mean to shift from a critical to a caring design practice? I raise this issue as urgent and significant within the interdependent planetary dynamics of climate breakdown, rapid species extinction and the vertiginous exacerbation of social inequalities spurred by the Covid-19 pandemic. To explore this question, I take my own participatory and research-led design practice as a reference point that helps me to reflect on how care can be central to design practices today.*

**Keywords:**

*Care, design, economies, commons, nested-I*

## INTRODUCTION

What can it mean to move from a critical to a caring design practice? I raise this issue as urgent and significant within the interdependent planetary dynamics of climate breakdown, rapid species extinction and the vertiginous exacerbation of social inequalities spurred by the Covid-19 pandemic. To explore this question, I take my own participatory and research-led design practice as a reference point that helps me to reflect on how care can be central to design practices today. ►

## *Keynote*

### ► SITUATING MYSELF

To begin this exploration, I will roughly situate myself and my practice so you as a reader can see more clearly where I speak from. This situating is also a way to support myself in sharpening my awareness of the personal circumstances and social privileges that co-shape my practice and approach to care. I am a 40-year-old white cisgender able-bodied woman with an Italian passport, but am part of a German-speaking minority within Italy. I am the mother of a healthy five-year-old child, I am in a long-term stable relationship and have pursued academic studies to the level of a PhD. I grew up with a single mother who ran a small but all-absorbing café in a rural skiing area of the Italian Alps. Because I lived in a ski resort, I was able to spend my winters on our local mountain and become very good at snowboarding. This skill set reached a point where, from the age of fourteen onwards, various sponsorships and my mother's confidence in my ability to self-organize would allow me to travel across mountainous areas of the Northern hemisphere on numerous adventures. Since childhood I have been a vocal and action-oriented environmentalist and feminist, even if back then I did not know that something like feminism existed.

### SITUATING MY DESIGN PRACTICE

I came to design at the age of 22, when I decided to use the money I had saved up through sports and working in my mother's business to go to university. The choice of design as a field of study had been rather random: when I needed to choose between biology and something more hands-on, my mother heard that our new local university was about to launch a BA in Design and pointed me to it. She said she always thought I would do something creative in life. Upon hearing this, I thought why not and gave it a try. This is how

I ended up studying design, with no real idea of what I was actually getting into. In fact, I very soon ended up feeling frustrated in relation to my environmentalist and feminist concerns. Luckily, in my study course I met Fabio Franz, who shared my concerns. This meant that suddenly, we both found a discursive space in which to elaborate our critique of the discipline we were trained in. Together we then met Kris Krois, who was a tutor for the course, and who helped us to understand that we could use our design skills not only to make or sell more stuff, but to sharpen, channel and communicate our critique of the world. In this process, during the last year of our BA in 2005-2006, Fabio and I started to work together under the collective name Brave New Alps. Working together made us both more courageous and resilient but also made us ask better questions about the world.

By the time we graduated with our BA, we were both quite good at what we could call a “critical design practice”. We were unhappy about social injustices and angry about environmental destruction and mobilized our newly acquired design skills to take things apart, to critique them. Already as students we knew that we did not want to put our skills at the service of the hegemonic economy, but had to ask what designers do when they don’t want to follow the call their profession has been shaped for? This question set us on a research and learning journey across Europe – completing an MA and PhD in the UK – and the Middle East – working with Decolonizing Architecture – to figure out what approach to design and to the world we wanted to make our own.<sup>1</sup> Within this journey, it soon became important to us to move beyond critical analysis and deconstruction, and to begin contributing to the multiplication of practices and worlds that are more just, livable and future-proof. To enable this intent, we began looking for inspiring theories and practices with which to engage in ►

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In large part this journey was also dependent on the funding we could get, as on our own we did not have the money to travel and study. So for anything we did, we always needed to look for funding, but also in part to adapt our journey to the kind of funding we could get. In the CV part of our website [www.brave-new-alps.com](http://www.brave-new-alps.com) you can read the details of who funded which part of our journey.

## *Keynote*

► a practical conversation. In what follows, I will introduce some of the theoretical coordinates that have become key for us so far, and will reflect on how they helped us to move Brave New Alps from a critical to a caring design practice.

### BEING CRITICAL VIA MATTERS OF CARE

We are very much inspired by the work of Spanish-British feminist philosopher Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, who in 2011 captured our attention by defining “matters of care” as something we cannot maintain our distance from.<sup>2</sup> When I care about something, I cannot just critically analyze it as it might be when I am concerned about something. When I care, I feel an urge to (inter)act and engage with the situation in order to actually contribute to transform it into something that is more desirable for everyone involved. Puig de la Bellacasa prompted us to focus very clearly on imagining how different our design practice would be if it generated care, while also reminding us that every situation requires specific modes of care. Caring design practices can never use a “cookie-cutter” approach, applying the same methods and ways of working no matter where and with whom.

Through a continued engagement with feminist philosophy around care, we also began to see that for the kind of worlds we want to create repetition is key: emerging practices and worlds need care and nurturing, so the hit-and-run approach we were introduced to in design schools was something we decided to leave behind us. In fact, we don’t think that as designers we have the capacity to (co-)create other worlds with just one project. Gestures, care and engagement need to be repeated over and over again. The realisation that longer time spans are required for the kind of change we

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María Puig de la Bellacasa, ‘Matters of Care in Technoscience: Assembling Neglected Things’, *Social Studies of Science* 41, no. 1 (2011): 85-106.

work for, pushed us to thoroughly consider where – geographically – we are most likely to be able to guarantee such long-term engagement despite precarious working conditions. Our logic and affect drew us to the mountain area we grew up in, because this is where we have our family ties, and where we suppose that, were we to need to move abroad for work, we would periodically come back and be able to tend to long-term processes of transformation. So from about 2012 onwards, we worked for several years towards settling in the valley we now live in. This valley has since become the space where we desire to situate our work and where we want to live, at least for the next 40 years (or rather, until we transition).

## CARING THROUGH COMMONS

In our attempt to give direction to the worlds we co-create with our work, we came across feminist and autonomist Marxist theorizations of the commons, which were incredibly inspiring to us.<sup>3</sup> Here commons, i.e. shared resources that are cared for by a collective of commoners through constant acts of commoning, are seen as a pre-condition for a good life for all, as they are based on care for people, care for nature and fair share, i.e. making sure that the surplus generated through the commons is shared fairly amongst people and earth-others. This approach stands in stark contrast to the logic that reigns within a capitalist economy, based on the exploitation of nature and people in order to generate profits for the very few. Design practices are often asked to act in more or less close alignment with the logic of capital, in support of generating profit for a small group of people and without regard for the well-being of other humans and earth-others. But as designers we can choose to shift our energies toward the commons – and in fact be inspired by permaculture design principles, which invite us to act in concert with principles of ecology, ►

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Massimo De Angelis, 'On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides', ed. An Architektur, E-Flux Journal June-August, no. 17 (6 May 2010): 1-17; Massimo De Angelis, *The Beginning of History: Value Struggles and Global Capital* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); Silvia Federici, 'Feminism and the Politics of the Commons', 2011, <http://www.commoner.org.uk/?p=113>; Midnight Notes Collective and Friends, 'Promissory Notes: From Crisis to Commons', 2009, [www.midnightnotes.org/Promissory%20Notes.pdf](http://www.midnightnotes.org/Promissory%20Notes.pdf).

## *Keynote*

► energy transformation and care for all the beings and processes that we are part of. Through our engagement with the commons, we have begun over time to perceive ourselves not so much as part of the design community but as part of a social movement that reclaims material justice from below by creating new kinds of material worlds.<sup>4</sup> This shift in perspective has been important to us in two ways: it removed the competition amongst ourselves, because within a social movement, every success story enables everyone involved.

Moreover, it helped us to become more aware of what specific as well as transverse skills we can mobilize within an ecology of transformation actors. It thus gave us a stronger sense of self-efficacy, i.e. of being able to shape the world around us and start creating the world we desire here and now, with what we have at hand. These won't be perfect worlds, but they become important points of reference in a web of actions and groups that reclaim material justice. In our local work, we currently act towards this end by co-creating a community academy at the local train station, which acts as a commons resource center.<sup>5</sup> We are part of a venture that makes fizzy drinks as tools for engagement through practice, with questions involving what kind of economy and agriculture we want to see.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, we are working on establishing an accessible forest kindergarten together with a forest school teacher, an activist farmer and six other families. On a trans-local level, we continue to be in conversation with fellow researchers and practitioners who are part of the Community Economies Research Network and the Commission International pour la Protection des Alpes. Here we reflect and act together on issues of scale – especially through an initiative called The Interdependence – and on issues that define where we can

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### **4**

Dimitris Papadopoulos, 'Generation M.: Matter, Makers, Microbiomes::Compost for Gaia', 2 October 2014, <http://eipcp.net/n/1392050604>; Dimitris Papadopoulos, 'Worlding Justice/ Commoning Matter', Occasion: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities 3 (2012), <http://arcade.stanford.edu/occasion/worlding-justicecommoning-matter>; Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2004).

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### **5**

'La Foresta', accessed 23 February 2021, <https://laforesta.net/>.

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### **6**

Brave New Alps, 'Comunità Frizzante', 2019, [comunitafrizzante.it](http://comunitafrizzante.it).

act for change from a local to an international level. These are all spaces of commoning we contribute care to, in which we try to enact a different way of being in the world, while contributing with our design skills whenever they seem useful.

## CARING THROUGH DIVERSE SOLIDARY ECONOMIES

In our critique of the hegemonic economy and our growing desire to co-construct just ways of providing for humans' livelihoods, we were fortunate to come across the concept of diverse economies developed by US-Australian feminist economic geographer J.K. Gibson-Graham.<sup>7</sup> The diverse economies concept provides an empowering outline of what the economy is: it consists of everything we do to sustain our livelihoods – whether this involves the exchange of money or not. Gibson-Graham invites us to conceptualize the economy as an iceberg, of which the small tip alone consists of capitalist economic practices (such as salaried work, exchange in the capitalist market, capitalist finance), while the larger lower portion of the iceberg, which is submerged underwater, consists of the many things we do in life to sustain ourselves and others that are based on solidarity (for example, raising children, taking care of our gardens and environment, gifting, informal solidary lending, maintaining libraries).<sup>8</sup>

This iceberg approach to the economy makes me very hopeful for design(ers), as it clearly shows that we can interact not just above the water line in the conventional market, but that we can be part of the nurturing activities below the water line and contribute to constructing economies that have the well-being of people and earth-others at their core. We can contribute to creating the fabric of relations and infrastructures that allow us to live well, while defying ►

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J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It)* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

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J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It)* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

## *Keynote*

► capitalist logic. We are no fans of the idea that designers who wish to be agents of transformation should engage mainly in conventional work, driven by the demands of the capitalist market, and then do some pro-bono work on the side. We can be – we need to be – more creative and risk-taking than that. There are many collective, inventive and perhaps still unconventional ways out there to sustain our livelihoods. There is much we can learn from workers, co-operators, anarchists and commoners, but first and foremost from people who for centuries have developed solidary and creative ways to resist the oppression and violence of capitalism and colonialism.<sup>9</sup>

For our own design practice, discovering the diverse solidary economy approach has led us to decide that our design practices should not be the one and only thing that sustains our livelihood. We have chosen to mobilize the multiple resources we are privileged to have access to, so that we can be more radical in our design decisions. First, this meant moving back to the geographical area where our families have lived for centuries to share resources with them. For example, while I was working on my PhD in the UK, Fabio and I both lived off my bursary so that Fabio could spend three years working with his father to convert the top floor of his mother's house into a flat we could live in rent-free, thus allowing us to reduce our monthly costs dramatically compared to our life in a city such as London.

Following this experience, we decided that we would continue to live with one (more or less stable) income only, so that we might have significantly more time to contribute to the creation of commons and community economies that support us and others in breaking out of the tyranny of wage labour.<sup>10</sup> Currently, our livelihood is supported, for example, by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship by the

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### **9**

Caroline Shenaz Hossein, *The Black Social Economy in the Americas Exploring Diverse Community-Based Markets, Perspectives from Social Economics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

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### **10**

Kathi Weeks, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 7, no. 1 (2007): 233–49.

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### **11**

Donna Jeanne Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

European Commission, rent-free living in Fabio's parents' family home, very occasional low-paid commissioned work (mainly for lectures and texts), project grants which provide a monetary income for the commoners we work with and which cover the material expenses of the commoning processes we are part of, plus our diverse economic activities such as growing much of our own food, cycling, repairing, recycling, backyard camping, sharing, and so on. Moreover, our decision to stay in one place – which we also perceive as a giant privilege – has allowed us to become part of a support network that helps us in many small and big ways to sustain our lives while mobilizing for change.

## CARING THROUGH AN EXPANDED WE AND NESTED-I

While trying to center care in our design practice – both in relation to humans and the environment – we entered into the realm of the environmental humanities, where prolific conversations are taking place around the decentering of the human (especially as it overlaps in the Western world with white male hetero cis able bodies) and the placing of humans amongst a multispecies assemblage. Engaging with the work of US-American feminist philosopher of science Donna Haraway,<sup>11</sup> Australian feminist philosopher Deborah Bird Rose,<sup>12</sup> Canadian feminist anthropologist Natasha Myers<sup>13</sup> and again with the work of Maria Puig de la Bellacasa<sup>14</sup> amongst others, helped us to understand community as never confined to humans alone, but always extended to earth-others as well. We are sharing and co-creating this world with plants, animals, fungi, bacteria and viruses. To be in this world means to be interdependent: we assume that such a figure as an independent individual does not exist. We are always interdependent with others, near and far, and it is this relatedness that makes us who we are. As Haraway puts it: “to be one, you must be many.”<sup>15</sup> This is ►

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### 12

Deborah Bird Rose, ‘Shimmer: When All You Love Is Being Trashed’ (Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet, Santa Cruz, USA, 2014), <https://vimeo.com/97758080>.

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### 13

Natasha Myers, ‘How to Grow Livable Worlds: Ten Not-so-Easy Steps’, in *The World to Come*, ed. Kerry Oliver Smith (Gainesville, Florida: Harn Museum of Art, 2018), 53–63.

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### 14

María Puig de la Bellacasa, ‘Ecological Thinking, Materialist Spirituality, and the Poetics of Infrastructure’, in *Boundary Objects and Beyond. Working with Susan Leigh Star*, ed. Geoffrey C. Bowker et al. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016).

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### 15

Donna Haraway, ‘Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene: Staying with the Trouble’ (Anthropocene: Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet, University of Santa Cruz, 9 May 2014), <https://vimeo.com/97663518>.

## *Keynote*

► a powerful ontological framework, i.e. framing a theory of being, which we are working to activate in our everyday lives: what does it mean for us, in very practical terms, to live in this place and to care for and with all living beings that co-constitute it, through local or trans-local interdependence? In attempting to center this ‘expanded we’ in our lives and work, we also refer strongly to the concept of a ‘nested-I’ proposed by German and US-American commons theorists Silke Helfrich and David Bollier. The nested-I – which we refer to in its German version “Ich-in-Bezogenheit” (literally translating as I-in-relatedness) – helps us to approach our own needs and desires from a perspective of relatedness. For a caring design practice, such an understanding of being is pivotal, as here the I and the we only make sense in relation to one another.<sup>16</sup>

In very basic (yet, still species-focused) ways, developing a caring design practice within an ontology of an extended we, for us has meant that we are very much interested in doing things together with others: supporting the transformational ideas of others but also taking care of each others’ livelihoods and well-being. So, whenever we can, we activate our skills, resources, energy and time to support the diverse economies that sustain the commoners we act in concert with. Currently, this takes the form of acting in four main ways: supporting people in getting access to projects and training funds to sustain their work, mentoring and coaching, sharing our material resources, and conceptual, affective and administrative support for the implementation of commoning initiatives. These actions help to relieve us from the very individualized and individualizing burden of needing to make ends meet, and from the feeling of isolation and exhaustion we all can feel when working for what is yet to be. It is about opening this discussion on care up to others, and working hard to reinforce one another and to

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### 16

Silke Helfrich and David Bollier, *Frei, Fair Und Lebendig: Die Macht Der Commons* (transcript Verlag, 2019), 44–47.

make change happen together – something that has become all the more urgent with the Covid-19 pandemic, as so many people around us have lost their sources of income and are looking for new ways to make ends meet.

In terms of a multispecies – which for us is practically a far more challenging realm – we decided to begin to grapple with it by caring for multispecies relations where we are: having taken a course in permaculture, we have put ourselves in touch with our garden and are now caring for the multispecies garden-assemblage in symbiosis with ourselves (growing, watering, mulching, composting, creating humanure); through our web of friendships with agro-ecologists, witches, activist farmers and “fermentationists”, we continue to learn about care in agriculture, woodland management and food production in collaboration with microbes and many more creatures. Most recently, we embarked on a journey to learn about forest pedagogy, because despite the fact that we grew up and now live in the second largest biodiversity reservoir in Europe, the modes of living that reign here are mostly estranged from the forests that surround and sustain us. In terms of multispecies relations, we are very curious as to where our journey will take us. It feels like we are slowly beginning to grasp what exciting and radical changes it can bring.

## CLOSING

When our journey towards a caring design practice began, Fabio and I felt rather alone, yet over time we banded together with allies – within but especially outside the field of design. Experience after experience, new and transformational points of orientation and supportive others have been placed on our conceptual and affective map. The journey is not over, even if we have decided that we want to stick to the same geographical area over a long period of time. ►

## *Keynote*

► We are curious to see where the world and our allies will lead us next, while actively working on our ability to sustain our livelihoods in ever more commons-based (infra)structures.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Keynote & Interview*



# CARE

*BY*

Amy Franceschini | Futurefarmers | amy@futurefarmers.com  
www.futurefarmers.com



**Foreword:**

*This contribution highlights Amy Franceschini's keynote talk at the 2020 By Design or By Disaster Conference: Care Beyond Crises, recalled and documented through an interview with student Eric Whyte in November 2021.*

*The format of this contribution follows the casual nature of their interview-based exchange.*



**Abstract:**

**ERIC**

*It's been quite some time, but if you're able to give an oral abstract of your keynote talk, that would be a beautiful way to get us started.*

**AMY**

*I created a curation of work by artists and designers that I thought resonated with this topic of care. Specifically, I would say, interwoven-care that dealt with the coexistence of human and non-human entities, altogether looking at possible feedbacks of that care.*



**Keywords:**

*Duration, presence, persistence, interference, interwoven-care*



Screenshot from interview between Eric Whyte (left) and Amy Franceschini (right)

## INTRODUCTION

*AMY*

I started the talk off with the definition of „curate“, because I feel like that’s often what we do in the Futurefarmers work: we curate other practitioners’ practices into our work; we create a situation. If you look at the etymology of „curate“, it comes from this idea „to care for“, and quite specifically, it says „the one responsible for the care of the souls, from the Latin curatas: to take care of“. Or you can also say “to cure”, but I didn’t go into the whole world of curing. I just thought that it’s interesting to think about this role of the curator.

So I started with that, and then highlighted some of the frameworks I thought were common in the projects I presented. One of them was duration—that these projects I presented happen over a long period of time. Something to take into consideration in the work we’re doing is that we need time. Another thing was presence—that we, as designers and artists need to be present in the process. I often think of an idea and then it’s enacted by other people. It is important for us, as actors, to be present. This presence also takes time.

*Persistence* was something I had in the presentation, knowing that these are often



long term projects and that we need to be persistent and find methods of enacting this persistence, which you can see in some of the projects I showed.

I also think we need to build networks, and one thing I had in my slides was “gossip”—that we shouldn’t underestimate the role of gossip (or hearsay) in how we connect with each other, and where gossip happens. There are these places like the coffeeshop or the bakery or other gathering places, where people come together—maybe not with the intention of gossiping—but the gossip happens. And so, how do we have informal modes of communication and how do we create spaces for those two to be fertile?

This was where I laid things out, and then I went on to show some projects. I showed projects that were very performative, which included performative acts as a way to excite people’s imagination of how to be engaged with these long term projects. I also briefly spoke about interference, how interventions are literally interfering

in the logic of a situation and how that moment of interference can open one's imagination up.

## PROJECTS

### *AMY*

I gave an example of a bookstore where an artist changed all the books in the bookstore by colour, so when you walked into the bookstore, all of the red books were on one shelf, all of the orange on another shelf, the yellow, light green, and blue were on their own shelves. While on the other side of the wall he placed all the black and white books, and set them up like a dark sky with white stars in it.

I would say that interference also frustrates; it confuses. But in that moment of breaking your habitual status, that pause makes you recalibrate and makes you rethink. It was interesting in this bookstore example, because the bookstore sold more books than they ever sold. For several reasons—some people wanted to buy a whole shelf as an artwork, and others had just browsed the collection in a way they never had browsed before. Normally books were organised by category—poetry, philosophy, fiction, nonfiction, etc. but when they'd go to the poetry section and there was a book on philosophy, nonfiction, or gardening, they were disoriented

and looked at things that they would never have looked at before. So this rescrumbling is a really important point of entry and the point of finding a common space.

### *ERIC*

So the theme of the conference last year was Care Beyond Crises. It was no surprise that it included this underlying theme of the fact that coronavirus was still in a state in which there were many unknowns and in many ways it was disrupting life as we knew it.

You just shared these examples of intervening in daily rhythms or habits. Were there any other specific projects that you felt were good examples of that sort of disruption, maybe on a person-to-person level, considering human to human care, or human to non-human care?

### *AMY*

One example was a project by two American artists named Mel Henderson and Joe Hawley, developed in reaction to constant oil spilling into the Pacific Ocean and along the coast of California. In the late seventies there was a massive oil spill in San Francisco Bay.

It was from a refinery, which takes really thick oil and refines it into gasoline, but the really thick oil leaked into the Bay and a lot of sea life was affected. ►

## Keynote & Interview

► The shores were covered with black—and several things resulted from this spill. One thing was this action by Mel and Joe, where they took phosphorescent material; bright green—which did not endanger the water—and they borrowed a boat from a friend and spelled the word “OIL” into the Bay. They had a friend who was a helicopter operator who filmed and photographed the whole thing, and it ended up on the front page of both the local and state newspapers. At first sight, people were like, “Oh, what’s going on? Someone’s spilling a toxic substance in the water, writing the word ‘oil’ in the Bay” and they’re upset about this green stuff in the Bay, when in reality—this massive oil spill just happened, and was much more serious than this little action. What that action triggered was a bit of confusion for a moment, and then a dialogue, and action around this oil spill.

Simultaneously, people started cleaning up the shorelines, and many people came from Southern California to help clean up. These action groups formed and a whole town, named Bolinas, was formed out of this movement. Current day Bolinas was an unincorporated area of the coast, and was completely contaminated. People came there to clean the birds and the seals and get oil out of the tributaries. People were so mobilised there that they stayed, and they incorporated this place as a small town. To this day it is a very special spot that produces its own power.

It has its own gas station and a quite open, communal way of living. People remained there, working mostly as activist groups around the protection of both the Bay and the land-use along the shore. So, to me, that was a long term project that was triggered by many factors. But this role of

# Oil

Actor:

Mel Henderson

Medium:

Film,  
Mass  
Media

Concern: Environmental Impact

Strategy:

Creating images that float into the mainstream.

OUTCOME:

Media Coverage  
Amplifying concerns,  
building a  
movement.



the artists, in a way to even trigger it a bit further, was important. I think this is important for our students—not to underestimate your network of friends. In this instance, Mel and Joe had friends with a boat, friends who were helicopter operators, and a friend who was a filmmaker. They were able to bring all of their network together to create this image. It is also important not to underestimate the role of images as an important tool in the ways we work.

#### *ERIC*

Considering the fact that it's been eleven months since you gave this presentation, are there any aspects of what your context looked like at the time that you think have changed drastically in good, bad, large, or small ways considering care in general?

#### *AMY*

I think this idea of presence remains, and has been amplified even more. During this conference, I was stuck in Ghent, Belgium—I could have been in San Francisco, but we chose somewhere to be stuck. I found myself wanting to commit to a project that was very local, because previously I'd been travelling all over and doing projects in Oslo, in Belgium and in San Francisco—inserting a lot of energy into these places where I don't live.

So I was like, "Okay, I'm living here right now. What can I connect to and give energy to that makes sense?"

There is a social artistic project called "de Koer" in Ghent, and I basically just volunteered there. They were remodelling a building, and through that, I met people who are farming on a local farm. So I went to help on that local farm, and now that presence has continued into a longer term project that we're developing right now, called "Short Chain for International Stomachs". We're currently writing a proposal with people that we worked with at that time to continue a dialogue between the city and what we call "peri-urban farms". This dialogue is about how, in Ghent, there is an influx of migrant communities who have stomachs that are eating food from many different countries. Then there's a demand to have that food in the city, but how can we actually grow it and not import it from long distances? So I think just trying to be mindful about how you can work in your location, where you are. That, for me, is really important.

In my presentation I gave an example that I love of this beautiful moment—so maybe I'll just give an anecdote. Futurefarmers had a residency in Sweden in 2010 and while we were in Stockholm someone said, "Oh, you must go to this bookstore. ►

# Folklore Center

Actor: Izzy Young

Medium:  
Storefront

Concern:  
Cultural  
Preservation  
Strategy:  
Presence



► It's a bookstore of folklore and folk music." At the time we were researching folklore and folk music around the making of flatbread, so I went with a friend of mine who was a conceptual artist to this bookstore.

This bookstore was really just one room with not much inside, other than an old man and a young man who were almost arguing in English with very thick New York Jewish accents. These two men were bantering, bantering, and stopped to tell us to "have a seat", at the single table in the shop. So we sat down and one of the men ran by and said, "Do you want a cup of coffee?", to which I replied "Sure". So he left the table, and he made us each a cup of coffee. Then the other man joins us, so we're all seated at the table. He asked me, "What are you doing here?" and I replied, "We're artists". "Artists? What kind of artists?", he continued. So I pointed to my

friend and said, "he's a conceptual artist". "Concept artist? What's that?", he said. Then the other man chimed in, "Oh, isn't it kind of like this thing that's at the New York MoMA right now? There's this artist who sits at a table, and it's called 'The Artist is Present', and people can

come and sit with the artist, and she looks at them and she's there all day long. Marina Abramović?" Then I said, "yeah, sort of like that." So then the man who ran the bookstore, named Izzy, said, "Table!? Presence!? I've been here for 30 years and I have a table. I think I'm a conceptual artist. I should be called, 'The Shopkeeper is Present'".

I really do think shopkeepers are an interesting actor in neighbourhoods. They know so much about what people's patterns are, what people are eating, what their family life is like. I was teaching a lot in San Francisco in a school called California College of the Arts, and we did work with storekeepers and corner stores a lot. In America, these shops have a very specific presence in neighbourhoods—the corner store. That situation with Izzy was about this type of presence, again—to connect ourselves with people who are

present to learn how to be present in our everyday life and that context.

**ERIC**

Thanks for this really great answer—such a fun and meaningful example with Izzy’s story. Considering those who will be reading this publication, with an understanding that some are likely to be students or prospective students of the MA Eco-Social Design, are there any tangible examples of practically finding that presence for designers who may find themselves outside of their typical context?

**AMY**

To find something that translates between your local context and your home context, let’s say, if you’re travelling from a different country to Bolzano. Locate a connective tissue—which may even be water, air, or gravity—and think about the things we share in common. To find that thread which can connect on a very hyper-local level and then somehow in another context.

I gave an example of this lake in Rome which is again about being present. There is a project by a group I really love in Rome, named Stalker, which is made of a group trained architects and urban planners who use walking as a way of practice. They’ve been walking Rome for years—I think over 20 years now—sometimes with a goal in mind, but really just for the purpose of experiencing, being present, and seeing what concerns exist and what’s going on. The team at Stalker knew about a place in the neighbourhood where their studio is located, which was formerly a car factory, then abandoned for several years. At the time, the owners wanted to turn it into a supermall. There was a lot of contention around this plan. People were saying things like, “No, it shouldn’t be a supermall, it should be a park” or something that supports the common interest in the city instead. It came to a point where the owner wasn’t allowed to begin development because there was a discussion about preserving it as a green space, because of the green area surrounding it.

The owner didn’t listen, and he started to demolish the building, take up the earth and build the supermall. As he was digging, he hit a spring. This spring started to fill the area until it was a lake, which—under federal law—meant that he wasn’t able to develop on it and that it then had to be preserved and protected. ►



## *Keynote & Interview*

► So the Stalker flipped this, and said that the lake became the urban planner. In that mindset, it really meant that it was dictating how the space could be used. Since then, they've created a group with the neighbourhood to transition this place into a public park and preserve the lake.

At the time, I was in Rome and was able to go on walks and visit the lake. Thereafter I came back to Brussels—where I often am—and there was a similar situation with a body of water in the city that had filled up a derelict property. The neighbours organised themselves, and now it's become a protected zone and green space. I think I wouldn't have tuned into the story of this lake in Brussels if I hadn't been part of this process in Rome as well. This idea of bodies of water in the city, and the laws related to their protection is something that's in common right now.

### *ERIC*

Agreed, these were both beautiful examples.

### *AMY*

I would like to circle back to a quote that I read out loud during the talk, which was basically a mode of being as a designer-researcher. The quote also has to do with this idea of caring for the soul; curating.

“Imagine yourself as transparent as glass and everything that is inside you can be seen by the environment that you are in. You do not need to offer words or thoughts or change anything. Just imagine that everything that is inside you can be seen by whatever is outside of you. This is an offering, and what is being offered is your soul.”

This text was written by Cooley Windsor, for a New York based project that Futurefarmers did, and I really think that when we enter into a new project, we need to be attentive and open—as open as we can be, without any assumptions. I think that's the best starting place that we can be in, and for us to be as transparent to ourselves and to our environment as possible.

### *ERIC*

I'm glad you circled back to this quote. Your presentation slide deck in general is really beautifully visual, containing many photos. Other than those that we've already spoken about, are there one or two more that you feel are a good representation of the general feeling that you've been sharing over this exchange? These frameworks you've shared.

### *AMY*

Yes, there's a project called “The Farm” by an artist named Bonnie Sherk, in San Francisco. It has to do with presence,

persistence, duration and also proximity. So she lived in a very strange neighbourhood in San Francisco where a lot of artists live, because it was cheap. The Neighbourhood was underneath three freeways which come together in that area. Around the freeways was a large unrealised space, where a group started to grow a farm. Following this, an earthquake happened and the freeway fell down around the area.

One part of the freeway was left, and they decided to plant a farm up there. They brought cows and really turned it into an image. This image of cars, the farm, and palm trees which they even brought up to the freeway. Again, this image of the farm-which was in the local newspaper-captured the imagination of city officials to think about how they could use under-utilised space in the city to grow food. This farm had been under the freeway for ten years, but nobody really knew about it other than the very close neighbours. Only until after this image was produced did the city take urban gardening really seriously and started an urban gardening program called “San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners”.

Bonnie Sherk-she was an artist who worked with a group of artists to create this image. So I think again, this image making is really important.

## NOT A CONCLUSION

Though the keynote talk by Amy Franceschini was shared many months ago, and the interview exchange between Amy and Eric is over, the conversations posed by their content are far from finished. Rather than leave this conversation in the past, we invite you to gather, share, and speak with one another about the role of care, vision making, and everything in between. Draw together for conversation-over a picnic blanket or coffee table, walking along the seaside or busy street. Gather to share and continue this discourse alongside us.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This contribution was compiled from the output of a casual interview between Amy Franceschini as she recalled her keynote talk from the 2020 conference, and Eric Whyte, student of the MA Eco-Social Design. ■

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### ***Bibliography:***

All supporting imagery is sourced from Amy Franceschini's slide deck and the interview. All written content is a revised and edited version of the interview transcript, formatted for the context of this publication.



The page features abstract, painterly shapes in shades of blue and red, primarily located in the top-left and bottom-left corners. The main text is centered on a white background.

# ***WORK SHOPS***

*virtual workshops for hands-on practices*

*Summary*

**CALL TO CARE:  
SUMMARY OF THE  
ONLINE WORK-  
SHOPS DURING  
THE DOD CARE  
BEYOND CRISES  
CONFERENCE**

*BY*

Seçil Ugur Yavuz\* | Faculty of Design and Art -  
Free University of Bozen-Bolzano | [secil.uguryavuz@unibz.it](mailto:secil.uguryavuz@unibz.it)

\*corresponding author



**Abstract:**

*We are in an era in which we have started unfolding the meaning of care in order to reconsider our relations between humans and other-than-humans and rethink our ways of imagining better futures for our planet and society, which are falling apart due to multiple crises.*

*The online workshops that took place during the DoD-Care Beyond Crises conference became a digital assembly in which participants could reflect on new ways of care by defining a collective call for action. Although the workshops deal with a variety of topics ranging from agriculture to education, from industry to mending clothes, the collective message that was emerged invites us to urgently act by being aware of the crises, changing our attitude, doing-it-together and finally using the power of the present.*

**Keywords:**

*Action-centred design, call-to-care, design workshop, multiple crises*



## *Summary*

### **1. GOING BEYOND CARE**

with an action-based design approach

Since we are living in a world of crisis, care becomes a central point for us to reconsider our relations between humans and other-than-humans. de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 2) says that “care is a human trouble, but this does not make of care a human-only matter”, therefore we need to urgently come up with new ways of caring, which go beyond the conventional modalities of a human-centred approach and offer us alternative solutions.

This can be done with active engagements, entanglements and collective actions that foster social-ecological transformations. Starting from the “action-centred design” (Fuad-Luke et al, 2020) approach, we can focus on actions that connect actors - humans and other-than-humans to envision new types of care by forming new alliances and strategies. Moreover, collective envisioning is also a key aspect, bringing different voices and utopias together to “design for the pluriverse”, (Escobar, 2018) rather than one way of knowing and acting. Manzini (2019, p. 9) underlines the impact of collective initiatives ranging from “mutual-help groups to care communities or small-scale production to the regeneration of urban commons” as the form of new communities made of “people, encounters and

conversations” (Manzini, 2019, p. 16).

The DoD – Care Beyond Crises conference offered the online space for this type of encounter, and brought people together to share, discuss, reflect and finally come up with actions to be taken, a call to act, a call to care. Within the conference, we dedicated the second day to the online workshops, which tackled diverse issues and concerns around care topics.

The workshops became a digital assembly in which participants could unfold what care means and imagine how we can form new ways of care by defining a “call to care” with its actors and actions. The workshops were defined on the basis of an open call from which 15 proposals were selected. Based on their content, the workshops were categorized into three main themes (figure 1).

#### **1.1. Caring For “Diverscapes”**

Diverscape means “an ecology or/and socially diverse landscape” (Petty, 2002, page ix) offering diverse stories told by different actors coming from different landscapes, such as rural communities or agri-food systems. Under this theme, the workshops tackled issues about food production & consumption, permaculture, agri-culture systems, small-scale farmers

# 15 workshops

97 participants 25 conductors

- **Slot A**  
*re/designing for the moments in-between: a participatory design approach in creating 'books' for people with dementia*  
Niels Hendriks
- **Caring for a resilient regional development. How to get started?**  
Armin Bernhard and Carolin Holtkamp
- **Designing with care in an interdependent world**  
Blanca Elzenbaumer and Martina Dandolo
- **Earth Care - Ethics in Agriculture**  
SejaProject, Salvatore Giaccone
- **Future Terre Alpine**  
Lisa Zellner and Federico Bertacchini
- **Lokall**  
Marla Nichele and Angelica Cianflone
- **Creating visions for farm transformations**  
Camilla Carlioli and Meike Holtnacher

- **CARING FOR "DIVERSCAPES"**
  - **CARING FOR PEOPLE & OTHER THINGS**
  - ▲ **RE-ORGANIZING OUR CARE**
- 
- **Slot B**  
*perMA - Caring Education*  
Celeste Meisel, Hannes Wilke and Melanie Scheer
  - **A guide to: Careful Language and redesigning communication**  
Pia Deppermann, Marie Romeijn
  - **Mnemosine, what did you forget in your wardrobe? A sustainable fashion experience**  
Adele Buifa and Aniko Gal
  - ▲ **Political perspectives on care, from a social design lab at the European Border**  
Habibi.Works
  - ▲ **South Tyrols Network for Sustainability, Climate-circles for a co-created change**  
Daniela Delmonago, Judith Hafner, Manuela Prantner
  - ▲ **Writing SustIndustry**  
Daniele Basso, HBI Group
  - ▲ **Capitalism doesn't Care**  
Solidaritree

and how to collectively build actions that reach beyond care and open new sustainable transformation processes with these actors.

## 1.2. Caring for people and other things


Does care only involve people? Can we also care for systems, communities, economies or artifacts? To answer these questions, we should start thinking in a more systemic way, mapping diverse actors including human and non-humans (Latour, 2005). The workshops within this theme reflect on care from different perspectives by tinkering on who cares for what. The workshops address issues such as community economies, people with dementia, gender bias language, alternative education and sustainable wardrobes.

## 1.3. Re-Organizing Our Care

In this thematic group, the main focus is to address socio-political dimensions of care which involve not only personal actions but also collective ones. Problems on a large scale such as climate change or exploitation of humans and nature for production and profit are becoming more and more difficult to tackle on a personal level and need collective actions to be taken. Therefore, re-organizing the way we create care structures can empower collective initiations and give ground for eco-social transformations. The workshops under this theme focus on climate change, sustainable industries and the crisis of capitalism. ►

Fig 1. Diagram showing 15 workshops within the three main themes.

## Summary



**Title**

---

**PARTICIPANTS**  
*Name Surname, Name Surname, Name Surname,  
Name Surname, Name Surname, Name Surname,  
....*

---

**THREE MAGIC WORDS**  
# WORD 01  
# WORD 02  
# WORD 03

---

**CALL TO CARE**  
Define your key message, motto or principles of your workshop in one or two sentences.

---

**KEY ACTORS & ACTIONS**  
List your 3 key actors and their actions to answer your call to care

1. ACTOR: describe the action.
2. ACTOR: describe the action.
3. ACTOR: describe the action.

---

**CONTACT**  
*insert workshop conductor/s name and contact.*

Use this board to insert pictures, words, sketches that visually summarize or symbolize the workshop outcomes

Figure 2. The template used in Miro.

### ► 2. Workshop format & tools

The workshops were conducted by 25 facilitators and participated by 97 conference attendees. Based on the previous experience of the DoD-Beyond Crises online conference (Fuad-Luke et. al, 2020), the workshops followed a similar structure using Miro (miro.com) as an online platform on which the workshop participants could collaborate and bring their ideas together on the same page (figure 2).

The organization team developed online templates for workshop conductors in order to facilitate the discussion and idea

generation during the workshop. Furthermore, the templates asked questions of all the workshop participants, to come up with a collective answer to the main question posed by the conference: “How to use the virus-induced situation to build up momentum for social-ecological transformation?” within and beyond the care context.

Each working group had 90 minutes. Some workshop conductors preferred using their own format, while still adopting the final template to present their results and answering the main questions leading them to a “call to care”. This was collectively defined by the participants to



form a statement inviting actors for concrete actions. The workshop structure was divided into four steps. In the introduction, the participants introduced themselves, their backgrounds, their interests, and from where they participated in the workshop. This warming-up session to get to know each other was followed by the discussion part, in which participants briefly presented their opinions around the questions posed by the workshop conductors.

Following the discussion, the participants moved on to a more generative session by collecting ideas, opportunities and alternative solutions generated by the discussion. Based on their ideas, in the next session they started formulating a motto/message for a „call to care“, while defining the key actors (human and beyond-human) who would take action to answer the call. After this conclusive part, they collectively prepared the final presentation sheet representing their outcomes visually, by using images or sketches done during the workshop. The final presentation sheet included the following sections: three magic words, call to care, key actors and actions and a representative image.

### 3. Workshop Results

#### 3.1. Workshop results within “Caring For “Diverscapes””

The workshop *“Caring for a resilient regional development. How to get started?”* (by Armin Bernhard and Carolin Holtkamp) aimed at discussing the resilience of rural communities during and after the crisis. They asked questions such as: “How can a caring economy support resilience? What role do social networks play? And how can each one of us start to contribute to a more resilient rural development?” In a group discussion, they mapped structural factors that determine the transformation. To foster this transformation, they came up with certain actions for citizens, cooperatives and communities, such as taking responsibility for their region, making changes together and engaging in discussion to work out compromises.

In the other workshop, *“Earth Care - Ethics in Agriculture”* (by SajaProject and Salvatore Giaccone), the participants were invited to discuss permaculture as a method, focusing on the Dirt-Soil-Earth ecosystem with an ethical perspective in order to redefine our relationship with nature through care. As actions, they ►

## Summary

► came up with some tasks for the participants: collecting soil samples, exchanging seeds within a community and trying out permaculture in a pot plant.

The “*Future Terre Alpine*” workshop (by Lisa Zellner and Federico Bertacchini) aimed at using utopia as a tool to reflect and speculate upon our present situation in order to imagine new and alternative processes of sustainable transition. The workshop conductors used an animated video on resilient, future scenarios of the agri-food system in South Tyrol in 2030 to trigger a generative session in which the participants imagined sustainable transformation processes with defined actors, roles and actions. Some utopias they created were about bringing kids and senior citizens together, making farms to be educational places and converting hydro-energy into a local distributed network.

In the “*Lokall*” workshop (by Marla Nichele and Angelica Cianflone), the workshop conductors shared their experience on how to create an alternative food network – Lokall – with the participants, while opening a discussion on how to define the crucial steps in actions to give rise to such alternative networks and make them sustainable. They came up with actions for neighbourhoods and local


producers, such as connecting and sharing their knowledge to grow and take care of plants.

The workshop “*Creating visions for farm transformations*” (by Camilla Carioli and Meike Hollnaicher) focused on the topic of small-scale farms as a means for eco-social transformation. The participants were invited to speculate on future visions of a farm that can create such a transformation, starting from existing farmers who had already experienced challenges and succeeded in generating sustainable practices. The participants made a call to care to experiment, transform and make farming attractive by involving landowners and permaculture farmers to take action.

### 3.2 Workshop results within “Caring for people and other things”

The workshop “*(Re)designing for the moments in-between*,” (by Niels Nendriks and Lieke Lenaerts) aimed at reflecting upon how to (re)design books for people with dementia for the moments in which they feel upset or alone. The workshop participants developed scenarios of books starting from five different stories of people with dementia, deriving from their needs. As an outcome, they highlighted





the importance of the designers' role as a connection between the people with dementia and their loved ones, by calling designers, design educators and researchers into action, to include more empathy into their practice.

The *“Designing with care in an interdependent world”* workshop (by Bianca Elzenbaumer and Martina Dandolo) opened a collective reflection around the question: “What can it mean to move from a critical to a caring design practice?”, while focusing on community economies. The group used the word “dare to” rather than “call to” to formulate their message as the outcome of the workshop. They invited people to dare to take an intersectional perspective on care in their project, to mobilize their privileges to create caring situations for others, to take on activities of care even if the social privilege allows them to not care, to take time for self-care, to focus on building relationships rather than focusing on productivity, to defend their boundaries and invite others to take on care as well and finally dare to cultivate spaces of care beyond their kin.

The focus of the workshop *“perMA – Caring Education”* (by Celeste Meisel, Hannes Wilke and Melanie Scheer) was about alternative education systems and the participants were invited to collective-

ly envision desirable futures for a sustainable educational system concerned with care. They identified three actor models: dreamer, maker and storyteller who would work together to shape the future of education by making it caring, desirable, feasible and inspiring.

The workshop *“A guide to: careful language and redesigning communication”* (by Pia Deppermann and Marie Romeijn) aimed at exploring language to ‘care’ through communication. The workshop began with a presentation of existing ways to use non-violent language, and was followed by a co-creative session of thinking of actions that could be taken in communication on a daily basis to make it more inclusive.

The workshop *“Mnemosine, what did you forget in your wardrobe?”* (by Adele Buffa and Anikò Gàl) focused on our wardrobes as a place in which we could take care of our garments. They asked the question “How might we take more care of our clothes?” and through the creative session in the workshop, they came up with several actions. The action for taking care of garments starts with reconnecting with them through emotions, then physically taking care of them - cleaning and repairing them, and finally reflecting on our consumption habits to become more aware of what and when we buy new clothes. ►

## Summary

### ► 3.3. Workshop results within “Re-Organizing Our Care”

*“Political perspectives on care, from a social design lab at the European Border”* (by Habibi.Works) was a workshop that reflected on the role and impact of social design labs, starting with the example of Habibi.Works. Looking at current humanitarian crises and European politics, the participants discussed and tried to answer the question: “how can we develop political and empowering dimensions of care?” The outcome message was about considering impact, be it positive and negative or unintended, and empowering people to shape the context they live in.

The workshop *“South Tyrol’s network for sustainability, climate-circles for co-created change”* (by Daniela Delmonego, Judith Hafner, Manuela Prantner) focused on climate circles and reflected on what we need to create these kinds of circles in South Tyrol. Together with the participants, they came up with a call for action that begins with personal change and connects with others to fight against climate change through circles.

In the workshop *“Writing Sustindustry”* (by Daniele Basso, HBI Group), the main aim was to hack the concept of sustindustry which was invented by HBI during the lockdown, to collectively write the first

Sustindustry Manifesto. Together with the participants, they envisioned alternative, new approaches for sustainable developments in industry. They then came up with actions that involve education and new generations to foster sustainable businesses.

The workshop *“Capitalism doesn’t Care”* (by Solidaritree) aimed to reflect on care within the crisis of capitalism and invited participants to discuss “how to make our communities not only sustainable and strong, but also politically effective and radically solidary”, by tackling the needs and concerns of people affected by the current crisis, such as care-workers. They stressed the importance of forming alliances and the power of collective actions to make radical shifts in the system to make it more caring.

### 4. Collective message and reflections

In our analysis of the various call-to-care statements developed during the workshops, we found that four different core messages were emerging: “Be aware of!”, “Change your attitude”, “Do-it-Together” and “Power of the present”. “Be aware of!” invites us to be conscious and responsible for our actions and their consequences locally and globally. This action involves all individuals and calls upon them to see the bigger picture of their impact in the multiple crises. Moreover, the “Change your attitude” message calls upon us to



start from personal actions, moving towards a consistent behavioural change to create a ripple effect for wider impact. So, this adds a next step to “being aware” and calls for change from the bottom up to find alternatives. The “Do-it-Together” motto proposes collective actions and urges us to work together to handle bigger problems. This shows us that the bigger the problems get, the more collectiveness is needed. Finally, the “Power of the present” message reminds us that we urgently need to act now by focusing on what we have and what we need to change immediately. While crises generate complex problems, they may also be seen as opportunities to think and act differently.

In addition to these statements, the participants came up with a list of actors that need to take these actions into practice: they range from human to non-human entities, such as designers, citizens, communities, cooperatives, neighbourhoods, local producers, plants, landowners, farmers, makers, dreamers and storytellers. Analysing the magic words that were generated at the end of the workshops, we observed that co-creation, connection, cooperation, inter-connectivity, sharing, inclusion and diversity were the main keywords that were repeated in many workshops. This demonstrates that for design with

and beyond care, we need to form alternative communities, networks and collectives to act together. This collective intelligence could help us rethink our care systems, re-build our relationships and re-imagine our utopias to heal the cracks in our planet and in society, which are becoming increasingly critical as a result of these multiple crises. ■

### **Acknowledgements:**

*The analysis of the workshops' results was done together with Alastair Fuad-Luke and presented during the DoD Care Beyond Crises Conference.*

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*Workshop*

***MNEMOSINE,  
WHAT DID YOU  
FORGET IN YOUR  
WARDROBE?***

***A SUSTAINABLE FASHION  
EXPERIENCE.***

*BY*

Anikò Gàl | Fashion Designer | [galaniko@live.com](mailto:galaniko@live.com)

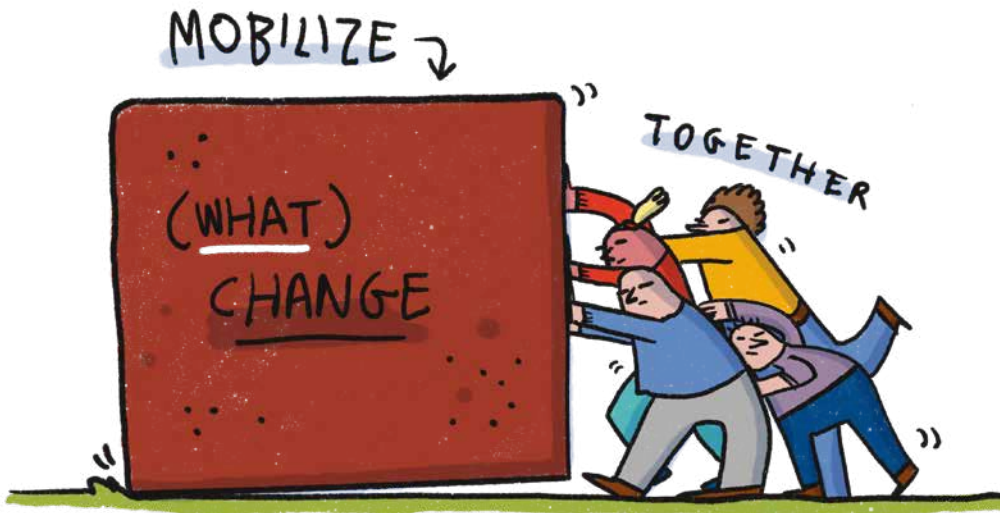
Adele Buffa | Free University of Bozen | [adbuffa@unibz.it](mailto:adbuffa@unibz.it)

**Abstract:**

*Within the general theme of the conference, the notion of care was addressed in this workshop involving the participants in an exploratory-creative way (Sufi et al. 2018) with the main purpose of investigating the concept of care in relation to sustainable fashion design strategies. The methodology for this workshop was chosen to build a co-design experience in an academic context that enables turning specific strategies into action (Fletcher and Tham 2019) and at the same time to evaluate the possibility of collecting qualitative data through online activities. This article summarizes the experience from a methodological point of view and explores arguments for further research.*

**Keywords:**

*Co-design, workshop, sustainable fashion, online participation, action research*



# Workshop

## 1. ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGY

### 1.1. Introduction

This workshop was designed to create a group that interacts around guided arguments related to sustainable fashion and circular design strategies. The urgency and relevance of the topic of sustainability in fashion (Schor 2005) makes “none of this work for shelves” (Fletcher and Tham 2019, 40): action should be integrated into research, making it action research (Fletcher and Tham 2019). Following this call, the workshop’s activities were planned to be interactive and to leave participants with a concrete takeaway.

Two types of workshops were incorporated: an exploratory workshop, focusing on better understanding a topic “and its associated problems, current solutions, and future challenges” (Sufi et al. 2018, 2) and a creative workshop, oriented towards problem solving

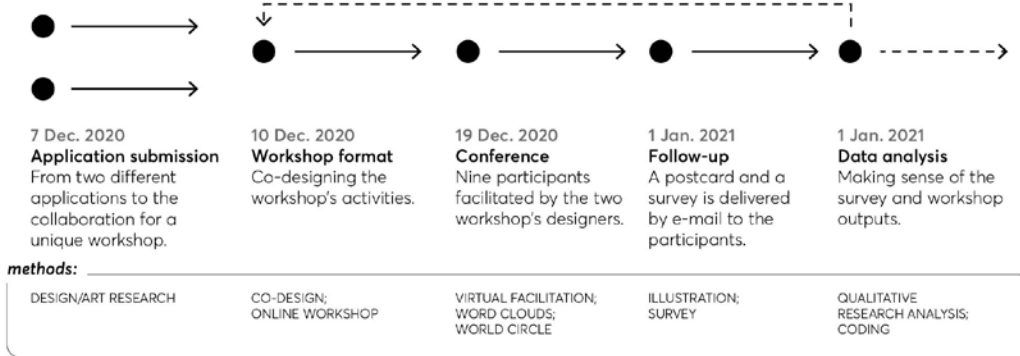


Figure 1. Timeline for the development of the workshop.

“by collectively building something” (Sufi et al. 2018, 2). The development of this ongoing project started from the cohesion of two different workshop ideas. (Fig.1)

According to Bella Martin and Bruce Hannington, “design workshops are efficient, compelling, fun ways to gain the creative trust and input of stakeholders through activity-based research” and they “are worthwhile for their strength in collecting a wealth of insight from participants” (Martin et al. 2012, p.62). Martina Caretta and Elena Vacchelli state that even though data collection via workshops for qualitative research are less frequent in the literature, workshops and focus groups could be considered as two parallel approaches (2015). Based on this perspective workshops, as well as focus groups, can activate the memory of forgotten details, can lead to the consideration of new aspects of a given situation (Accella 2011) and can also inspire a sense of belonging that helps to share one’s opinion (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009). This context facilitates a collaborative process which is at the core of the definition of co-design (Mattelmäki et al. 2011).

The facilitators guided the activities in a way that “everybody feels included and accepted” (Creighton 2005, 169). Limitations and challenges include the issue of time management which was considered when planning the workshop. The activities were modular and priority was set among them to enable flexibility during the event (Safi et al. 2018). ►

# Workshop

## ► 1.2. Online workshop

The 2020 DoD Conference was presented online with general guidelines that recommended using the web-based platform Miro<sup>1</sup> for all activities (miro.com). On the one hand, keeping the workshop online prevented the action of crafting together, but on the other it let the participants present their creative ideas without any physical limitations. The “graphic guides” (Sibbet in Creighton 2005, 161) were specially co-designed by us to stimulate the participants to envision a new scenario for their garments and “to make assumptions about the future explicit” (Creighton 2005, 161). The digital board (see Fig. 2) was integrated with links to external software to generate word clouds and statistics (mentimeter.com)

After the check-in, participants shared wardrobe stories choosing one garment that they had a long story about and a second garment that they wanted to get rid of.

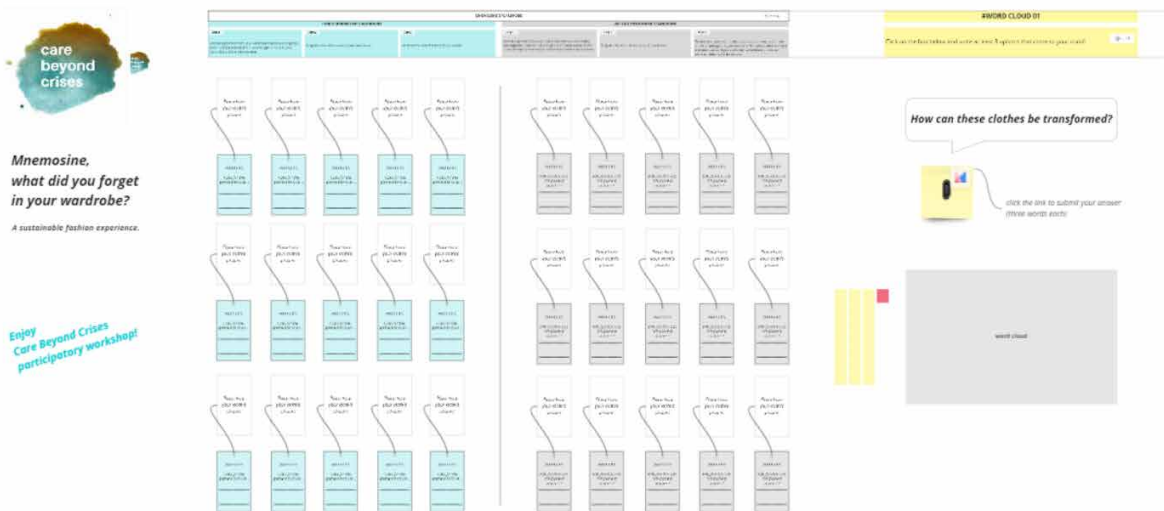


Figure 2. Part of the Miro board.

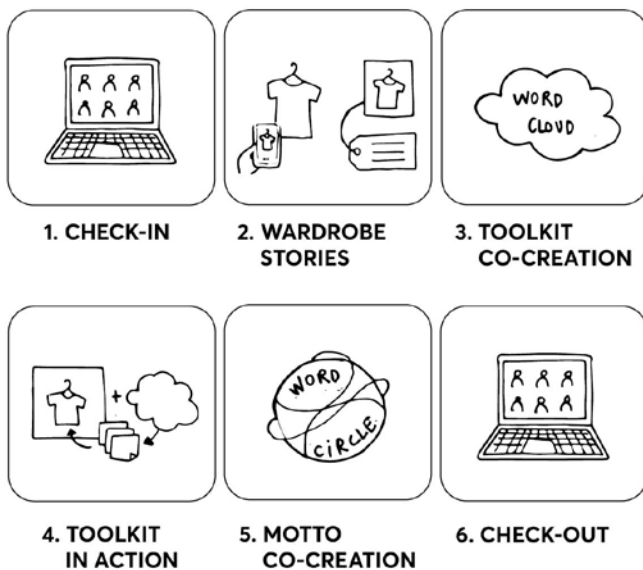


Figure 3. The workshop's activities in keywords.

The participants shared their ideas and practices about transforming or getting rid of the garments they no longer wanted to keep, formulating word clouds.

This activity introduced the central part of the workshop that focused on co-design practice (Mattelmäki et al. 2011) in action (Fletcher and Tham 2019): participants picked ideas to transform their garments using as a toolkit the word cloud containing co-created strategies. After the workshop, these transformations were visually elaborated and sent via email to all the participants.

In the final section participants were asked to co-create a concept to enact care for clothing through the word circle technique. The motto elaborated together through this exercise connected and aligned the results of this workshop to the conference's process template presented at the "report-back session" (Creighton 2005, 154). This technique was chosen to "encourage participation, give everyone a 'voice', help delineate synergetic and divergent views and, most importantly, create a sense of collective and individual 'ownership' of the ideas expressed" (Fuad-Luke 2009, 182) (Fig. 3). ►

### ► 2. PRIMARY CONTENT ANALYSIS

#### 2.1. Coding

The participants wrote the stories of their garments on the Miro board. A primary coding analysis of these descriptions shows some repetitive patterns (Saldana 2013, 5). In particular, in the category of a garment they cared for, 33% of the participants chose a second-hand piece and another 33% chose a garment they received as a gift. Emotional attachment and longevity were explicitly cited as features of the garments they care for (44%), confirming the starting point of Jonathan Chapman's design strategies described in *Emotionally Durable Design* (2005). In the perspective of a further level of analysis based on grounded theory, two cases were identified to be evaluated as "potential indicators of phenomena" (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 7): one participant chose an upcycled garment referring to its uniqueness and another chose a shared garment.

In the category of a garment they wanted to get rid of, 44% of the participants mentioned low material quality being an issue and 44% expressed a dislike for the colour. It is noteworthy that one of the guests did not have underused garments. Two word clouds and the word circle technique were used as tools to generate data about the participants' strategies for specific situations, respectively: transforming, outsourcing ('get rid of') and caring practices for their clothes. Notably, re-purposing, connected to the concept of redefinition in the propulsion model of types of creative contributions (Sternberg et al. 2002; Ruppert-Stroescu et al. 2015),

is seen by participants as a strategy to deal with all three challenges.

In a following phase of the research, the collected strategies can be taken to a further level of examination: for example, following “versus coding” (Saldana 2013, 115), the ideas on transforming a garment can be additive or subtractive (e.g. adding patches vs. making it shorter). The outsourcing strategies detected through “process coding” (Saldana 2013, 96) were: donating/gifting, repurposing, selling, throwing away and swapping.

## **2.2. Survey**

After the event a follow-up email was sent to the participants with a survey to gather data and feedback. The workshop was attended by eight participants from 5 countries. According to the results of the follow up questionnaire, the participants were mostly millennials (63%), women (75%), students (63%). Women’s waste impact is higher than men’s and both shopping for and disposing of garments are behaviours that may be attributed more incisively to women than to men (Lang et al. 2013). Millennials are “techno-literate, materialistic and particularly receptive to new products” (Colucci et al. 2013, 2) and research suggests that this generation is particularly fashion oriented (Ruppert-Stroescu et al. 2015). Based on questions formulated according to the model of Berné-Manero et al., 31% of the participants can be identified as responsible consumers (2014). ►

## Workshop

### ► 3. Conclusions

According to our results, developing a workshop as part of a research methodology makes it possible to combine action and qualitative data collection. Workshops serve as useful tools to spread sustainable design strategies. Our primary analysis confirmed that the data gathered through the workshop is suitable for further studies. The workshop is a valuable tool for fieldwork especially in research where immediate action is required, like sustainable fashion. Further studies are needed to explore the possibilities of integrating workshops into research. ■



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*Workshop*

***DESIGNING WITH  
CARE IN AN  
INTERDEPENDENT  
WORLD:  
COMMUNITY  
ECONOMIES AND  
SITUATEDNESS.***

*BY*

Martina Dandolo | MAGARI Organization  
martinadandolo@gmail.com

Bianca Elzenbaumer | Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow,  
Eurac Research / Brave New Alps  
Bravenewalps@gmail.com

**Abstract:**

*How to create an economy that cares?  
Where is your community of care?  
What happens when we move en masse from  
a critical to a caring design practice?  
To explore these questions, the workshop aims to take  
our own design practices as a starting point and to reflect together  
on how they have been transformed through  
the ongoing attempt  
to make care a central point of reference.*



**Keywords:**

*#caring design #community economies #diverse economies*

► **TAKING CARE OF AND IN PROJECTS**

The main goal of this 90-minute workshop was to explore how planning and working practices can be changed to take into account personal and existential needs, interweaving and configuring them with a situated and continuous approach to care, i.e. an approach that starts from one's own daily experience and develops over a medium to long period of time. We started by analysing our current situations and tried to understand how caring can offer a way of re-imagining our relationships with others. ►

## *Workshop*

► To do this, the workshop focused on creating a space for care and reflection, where this moment was proposed not as a form of content production but of mutual support in the spirit of the economies of care. It was an attempt to consider how to bring caring economies into the networks of people, groups and institutions we are part of. To help us, we read some of the quotes in this text as a point of inspiration for the conversation:

**If we work, where we work,  
with whom we work, what we do  
at work, and how long we work  
are social arrangements and hence  
properly political decisions,  
how might more of this territory  
be reclaimed as viable terrains of  
debate and struggle?**

(Kathi Weeks, 2011)

How can the actors of transformation act in solidarity and support each other? There are many practices and forms of cooperation and collaboration within the worlds of design. Many are aimed at production and only a few at re-production. Caring makes us vulnerable but at the same time strong too. It helps us to consider other perspectives and enable other practices. This pandemic brought us forcefully back to the cooperative

forms of practices that are not only productive but linked to people and to their domestic context, thus giving visibility to the work of re-production.

Adopting an idea of (re)productive economy, we organized the meeting based on practice and focused on individual connections, combining the search for shared solutions based on common resources with meaningful activities and caring relationships. In the search for a better framework within which to act and work, based on feminist critiques, we focused on the needs and the resources that are in the re-production spectrum and could be brought into play. As pointed out at the beginning, the workshop deliberately did not want any structure or guidelines to frame the discussion and exchange between the participants. It was a space for re-production and mutual attention. We have tried to adopt an approach to care that does not come in the form of assistance, but as a strength that can make our actions reproductive and regenerative. As we read in Mia Mingus:

**We must not only fight against  
the world we currently have,  
but also be working to create the kind  
of world that is inspired by our  
deepest desires for ourselves,  
our families (whomever they may be,**

**including chosen family) and our communities. And it is from this place, where I would like us to always start. From the world we want, the world we collectively desire. I always think it is important to say that I'm here today as a queer, disabled, Korean woman, transracial/transnational adoptee, raised in a US territory in the Caribbean. None of which are more or less important. For me, these are not just descriptive terms; they are political identities, based out of my own and other people's lived experiences, and I understand them—all of them—to be powerful ways of moving through and understanding the world...**

(Mia Mingus, 2011)

In our reflections we agreed that we are looking for alternative and different forms of economies. We consider them to be crucial, both to support us in imagining new possibilities and to put into practice supportive and enabling relationships to make care a central point of reference, from different points of view.

### **Conclusions**

The workshop ended with an invitation to care, as each participant was asked to define a key message or motto; this is the sum of the principles that were shared and the ways in which they have chosen to dare:

– dare to cultivate spaces of care beyond your kin

- dare to defend your boundaries and invite others to take on care as well
- dare to focus on building relationships rather than focusing on productivity
- dare to take time for self-care
- dare to take on activities of care even if your social privilege allows you to not care
- dare to mobilise your privilege to create caring situations for others
- dare to take an intersectional perspective on care in your projects ■

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### **Recommended readings:**

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*Workshop*

**WRITING  
SUSTAINABLE  
INDUSTRY  
CO-DESIGNING  
THE NEW  
SUSTAINABLE  
INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT.**

*BY*

Daniele Basso | HBI Founder and CEO, GreenX Project member  
info@hbigroup.it

Jacopo Deidda Gagliardo | GreenX Project @ HBI  
jacopodgagliardo@gmail.com

Giovanni Venegoni | GreenX Project @ HBI  
giovannivenegoni@gmail.com

Ivana Bertola | GreenX Project @ HBI | bertola.iv@gmail.com

**Abstract:**

*The aim of the workshop was to hack the concept of “Sustindustry”, in order to write the first Sustindustry Manifesto. The goal was to take advantage of the transdisciplinary curricula of the participants in the DOD – Care Beyond Crisis Conference to imagine new approaches, alternatives, innovations, that could lead to unexplored and pervasive solutions for a sustainable development of industry. In doing so, the GreenX Project team asked participants in the workshop to be proactive, to present their point of view: we wanted to co-create value, and sharing thoughts is always a good way.*



**Keywords:**

*Sustindustry, sustainable development, 2030, innovations, new paradigms*



## ***Workshop***

### **1. SECTION TITLE**

The workshop counted 15 to 20 participants who logged on during the approximately 90-minute meeting: a relatively small, but proactive and interested audience.

The workshop focused on “Sustindustry”, a concept that was created by a team led by HBI during the lockdown, and sought to identify “sustainability applied to industry in a world aligned to the 17 SDGs”. Since April 2020, the team has been discussing this concept with academics, entrepreneurs, consultants, and others. Many of the topics emerged as crucial for the future of sustainable industry: resiliency, ESG funding, end-of-life laws, new indicators, and evaluators.

The topic is obviously new; indeed, the very purpose of attending the “DoD – Care Beyond Crisis” conference was to test, for the first time, what the reaction of a ‘different’ audience – one not made up of pre-selected members – might be. Apart from the discussion between the organizers and Enrico Gribaudo (one of the first theorists of Sustindustry), the audience’s contribution was limited but effective: several of the contributions made it possible to address relevant aspects of the theme.

Jacopo Deidda Gagliardo stimulated the audience by suggesting three key questions:

- What are the key drivers of sustindustry? While there is general agreement on the first two items (participants agreed on the growing role of consumer willingness to buy as one of the strongest drivers of change worldwide, and companies are priority players when it comes to the sustainability of production and the supply chain), the

issue of the law arouses heated debate. There are two divergent approaches: on the one hand, a vision in which companies must act autonomously, anticipating the intervention of regulators and focusing on the response to market needs, a broad vision that considers environmental protection to be a real community need; on the other hand, the idea that the law, when conceived with a positive and not a repressive intent, plays a fundamental role in favoring change and accompanying the transition towards more sustainable business models.

- What are the next steps? Jacopo's question sought to engage the workshop participants not only in commentary, but in an exercise of planning, imagination and vision. The participants were basically unanimous in defining what the next, first steps for Sustindustry should be: individual commitment, promotion of sustainable business and industry models, sharing of experiences and peer-to-peer collaboration. To help these areas emerge, it is important to take action on: education and training (to create a cultural basis from which to start - see next point); communication (sustainability must be properly explained, in a scientifically irrefutable and communicatively appealing way); and dissemination (it is necessary to build networks, chains of companies and economic activities that cooperate to reduce trade-offs and maximise returns).
- What is the best territory? No territory is better than any other. Or rather, certain economic contexts and cultural environments seem to be more advantageous: Gribaudo mentions Japan, Venegoni ►

## **Workshop**

► France and the Trentino-Alto Adige region. These are places where entrepreneurial, cultural, political, and economic-financial approaches positively affect the development of a new industry, favour to the activation of economic activities that experiment, that take risks and are skilled in building effective multi-stakeholder relationships.

### **2. Conclusions**

The complexity of the results may be seen on the Miro page that the DoD tutor, Stephanie Hobmeier, set up during the workshop (see image on the right).

As seen, the small number of participants did not prevent the emergence of a meaningful and enriching debate.

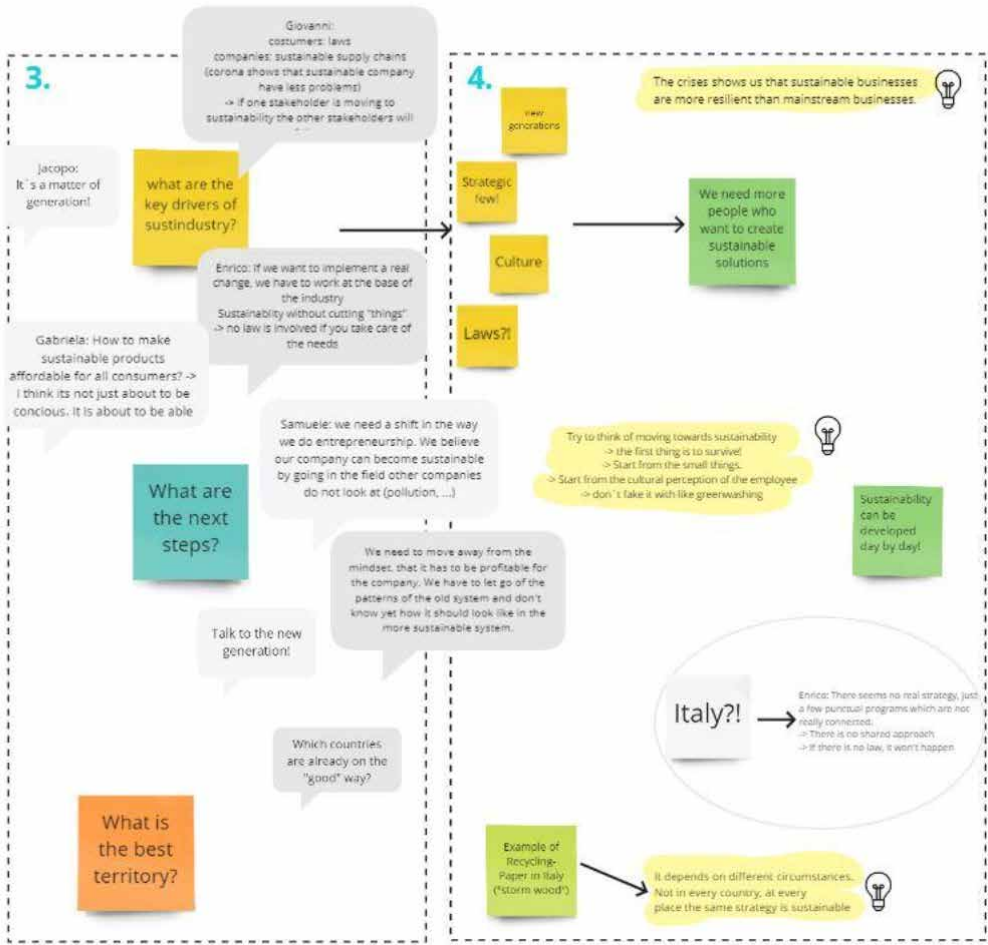
In summarizing the results of the workshop, we can focus on three points:

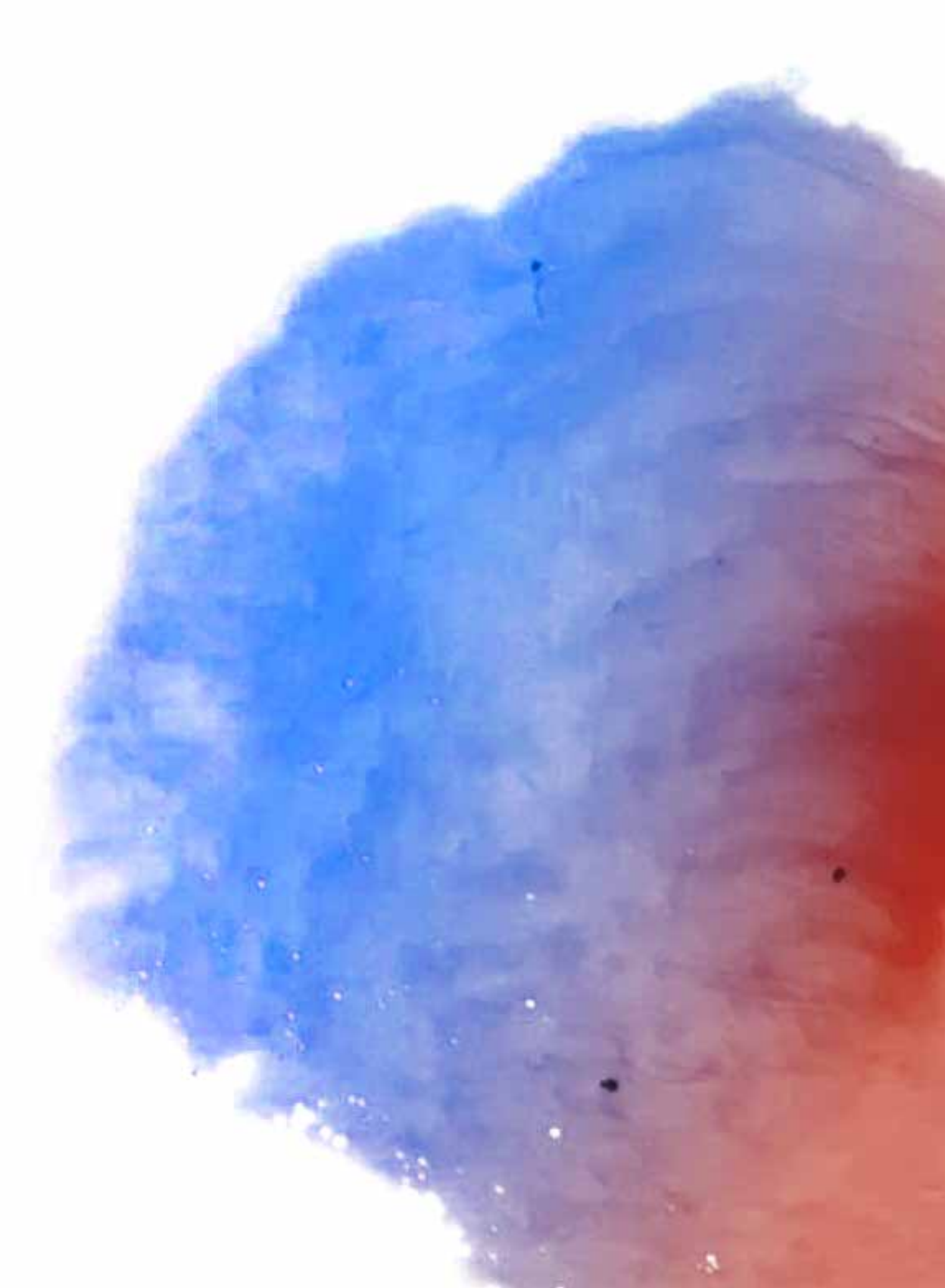
#### **1) Rethink the education concepts (culture):**

How do you “teach” sustainability? If we expect many of the paradigms that have marked the development of the ecumene in past centuries to be challenged in the decades to come, we must start by teaching change in schools. This will, inevitably, entail adopting new ways of (doing) schooling and teaching sets of new disciplines and approaches.

**2) Profitability and Sustainability must work together** (forget the idea that sustainability does not have to or cannot be profitable). Often, adopting low-impact, more sustainable solutions entails higher costs and a greater offer of products and services. This is the main obstacle to the spread of virtuous models. Breaking this „barrier to entry“ requires the collaboration of all parties: the State must support the transformation; consumers, change their choices by preferring sustainable solutions; companies, adopt approaches to production and business models with limited trade-offs and externalities.

**3) Communication is the basis for promoting sustainability.** Communication is key. Communication between companies and consumers, to raise awareness with regards to the choices made for the production phases and along the supply chain, to share the efforts made by entrepreneurs and workers to reduce impacts; communication along the supply chain, between operators and stakeholders, to identify long-term strategies that can reduce impacts and contain the costs of change; communication that is always clear, transparent and honest, because without transparency, there can be little trust between operators and with consumers, and this can cause enormous damage that may be difficult to reverse. ■







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***THANK  
YOU!***

**Link of the Website**

<https://designdisaster.unibz.it/2020/>

**Contact & Channels**

[designdisaster@unibz.it](mailto:designdisaster@unibz.it)

[designdisaster.unibz.it](https://designdisaster.unibz.it) | [fb.com/designdisaster](https://fb.com/designdisaster)

**Conference team:**

Simon Barthmuß

Merve Bektas

Adele Buffa

Andrea Gaidano

Katharina Kloss

Kris Krois

Caterina Laruccia

Cornelia Reindl

Martina Spinelli

Seçil Ugur Yavuz

**Consultants:**

Alastair Fuad-Luke

Alvise Mattozzi

Sabina Frei

**Review Committee:**

Seçil Ugur Yavuz

Alvise Mattozzi

Davide Ferrando

Andrea Facchetti

Kris Krois

**unibz event management:**

Massimo Eccli

**Curation:**

Kris >< Krois

*Imprint*

# CARE BEYOND CRISES



**Editors:**

Kris Krois, Seçil Ugur Yavuz, Alvise Mattozzi and Eric Whyte

**Art Direction and Layout:**

Julia Reindl

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Chiara Rovescale

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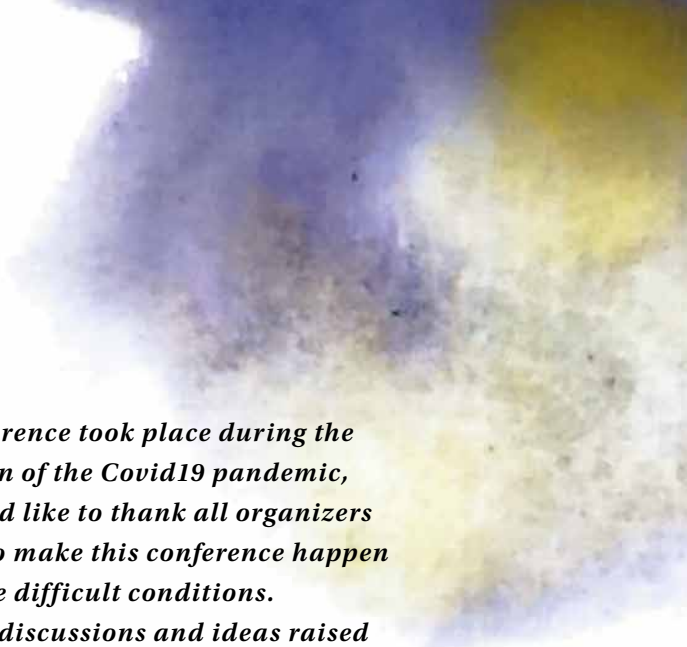


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*Nevertheless, the discussions and ideas raised in the conference became a way out to imagine alternative presents and futures within the multiple crises through focusing on care.*