



Gift

SUSTAIN

making space
for art in
transitions
that matter

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SUSTAIN

SUSTAIN explores the role of Spacemakers: parties that aim to contribute to systemic change by creating space for art in unusual places such as within the economy, science, or technology. The goal: to work with art towards a sustainable and just society - ecologically, economically, and socially.

About Sustain

There's a lot going on in the world. There are almost as many conflicts as there are countries, more people on the move, a climate disaster looms, and inequality among people only continues to increase. Huge challenges where quick solutions are of very limited significance. But how do we find our way out of the current polycrisis? How can we work on systemic transitions? The urgency is palpable, yet, encouragingly, we see more and more initiatives aimed at transitioning to a sustainable future.

We also see more and more artists trying to shape a future based on a different sustainable model. The role of the artist is undeniably unique. SUSTAIN examines the role art can play in visualising, driving, and shaping the transition to a world where we would actually want to live. More precisely: with SUSTAIN, we look at the collaboration between artists and other parties and the role of so-called Spacemakers in realising that collaboration.

Artists inquire into the unknown, they question what seems logical, and connect seemingly disparate elements. Precisely those qualities are of great importance for realising systemic transitions. However, accessing the spaces where artists seek to make an impact is not always easy.

Spacemakers see a clear role for art in transition issues. Whether it's about collaborations with science, technology, economy, or other domains, Spacemakers strive for a prominent role for art in those contexts to achieve meaningful transitions. Therefore, they try to create space for art in places where art often does not easily or naturally come to the table. With this practical research, SUSTAIN offers

more insight into the exact role, methods, and added value of Spacemakers in the transition to be made. The research and the results contribute to the further professionalisation of this emergent sector.

SUSTAIN is a collaborative project between The Hague University of Applied Sciences and Avans University of Applied Sciences. The research was conducted by Jacco van Uden (Professor of Change Management), Godelieve Spaas (Professor of Economy in Common), Olga Mink, Marga Rotteveel, and Kim Caarls. Additionally, we have collaborated closely with six Spacemakers: Art Partner, Circus Andersom, Future of Work, In4Art, V2_, and Waag. The box below introduces these Spacemakers further.

SUSTAIN has yielded two main outcomes:

1. **The Spacemaker Toolbox** (see also Cahier The Help), a practical tool for Spacemakers to explore and professionalise their work internally.
2. **The Spacemaker Stories**, a series of cahiers where we look at the Spacemaker practices from a distance, helping Spacemakers articulate more clearly what they do, why they do it, how they do it, and the value they create.

In short: where the Toolbox focuses attention inward (strengthening the Spacemaker practice), the Spacemaker Stories consist of a collection of stories, reflections, experiences, images, concepts, and ideas that help give Spacemaking a place in the realisation of systemic transitions. The Spacemaker Stories also serve as a tool for artists and parties wanting to work with art to clarify what the possibilities with Spacemakers are and how to make choices that suit the situation, stakeholders, and issues.

The Spacemaker Stories

What motivates Spacemakers? What are their dreams? How do they connect art with other domains? What are their stories?

Each Spacemaker has a unique story, with each Spacemaking process having its own dynamics, approaches, and outcomes. The various cahiers aim to inspire anyone looking to make space for art, providing building blocks for crafting individual or collective Spacemaking narratives. They don't impose a strict framework but offer ingredients with which Spacemakers, artists, and organisations can develop their own narrative: what change do we want, what is the role of art, how can we leverage the tension between art and other domains, how do we create space for art, and what can that lead to?

These questions, loosely based on the structure of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*, form the foundation of the five cahiers. The protagonist in this journey is the Spacemaker:

1. **The Calling:** This cahier addresses the call to adventure, or what motivates Spacemakers to create space for art in other contexts to effect systemic change. It explores the difference they aim to make and the values and beliefs that drive them. What's at stake?
2. **The Promise of Art:** Building on the calling, Spacemakers share their vision of art's promise for systemic change. Why is it important to create space for art? What role does art play in the transition?

3. **The Tension:** Spacemakers navigate the relatively unknown territory of art in other contexts, encountering tension between different worlds. This tension can be both constructive and obstructive. This cahier delves into the nature of this tension, its origins, and its manifestations.

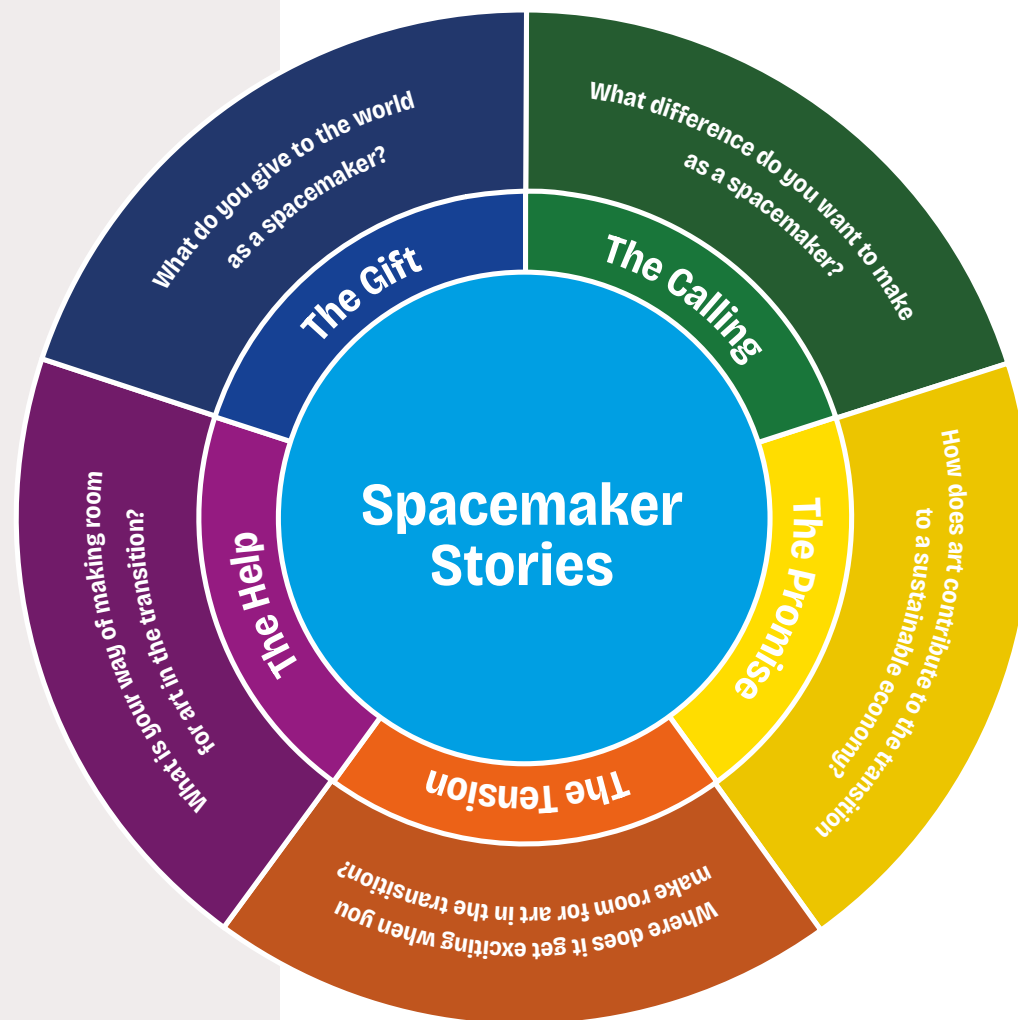
4. **The Help:** How do Spacemakers create space for art in the transition? What kind of spaces are created? And where does the Spacemaker position themselves within this space?

5. **The Gift:** What do you leave behind as a Spacemaker? How do the gifts of Spacemaking contribute to the transition towards systemic change? And how do you know or measure the value of what you leave behind?

Whether you're a Spacemaker, artist, client, funder, or simply curious, these cahiers offer inspiration on how art can collaborate with other domains and highlight the significance and value of Spacemakers in these collaborations. Discover, learn, and contribute to system transition through embracing art and Spacemaking.

Welcome to The Spacemaker Stories, where you travel with Spacemakers creating space for art on the path to a sustainable future.

*Kim Caarls
Olga Mink
Marga Rotteveel
Godelieve Spaas
Jacco van Uden*



The Space-makers

ART PARTNER, founded in 2008, is an organisation that mobilises highly educated creative thinkers, such as theatre makers, artists, and philosophers, to use artistic interventions as catalysts for change in organisations. They believe that art can reveal the hidden aspects of systems and processes and collaborate with leaders who recognize the value of imagination and the artistic mindset. With their Creative Catalyst Cycle, focusing on artistic research, they develop tailored interventions that stimulate profound changes in organisations. Sandra Boer and Jetske Freeve, the current partners, act as 'Spacemakers' and facilitate collaboration between clients and artists to achieve impactful change.

CIRCUS ANDERSOM

brings Disruptive Connection. Circus Andersom is the collective of autonomous project developers Esmé Calis, Martijn Engelbregt, and Allard Medema, supported by a variety of creative makers under the business leadership of Linda Koene. With location-specific research trajectories, they entice places and people who (un)consciously yearn for change. With installations, performances, workshops, and alternative research methods, Circus Andersom awakens and invites dreaming. A range of direct artistic and disarming work forms reassures participants while simultaneously challenging them to become more human. Under the banner of Physical Philosophy, Circus Andersom unravels body-oriented wisdom to enable the restoration of the connection between heart, head, and gut. Participants are encouraged to look afresh at so-called certainties. They do not shy away from friction and deliberately seek wonder because they believe in unexplored paths within our compartmentalised society. People should feel more space to be themselves.

FUTURE OF WORK

under the artistic leadership of Olga Mink and Godelieve Spaas, is a hybrid platform for artistic research and co-creation. The foundation establishes new forms of collaboration and sustainable strategies around work and the economy, proposing visions that promote dialogue about an economy where our needs are subordinate to the requirements for a healthy ecosystem and a just society. They recognize the need to rethink the economy and artistically connect social, economic, and cultural ecosystems, giving co-ownership to creators, designers, citizens, knowledge institutions, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

V2_ Lab for the Unstable Media, led by Michel van Dartel (director), is an interdisciplinary centre for art and media technology in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Since its founding in 1981, V2_ has provided a platform for artists, designers, scientists, researchers, and developers to present, produce, archive, and publish their work at the intersection of art, technology, and society. V2_ aims to ensure that art and design play an essential role in the societal embedding of technological developments. Through critical dialogue, artistic reflection, and practice-oriented research, V2_ explores issues related to the social impact of technology.

IN4ART operates as an independent institute for art-driven responsible technological innovations. Connecting science, technology, and art, In4Art focuses on creating space for experiments that enable responsible innovations. They seek unexpected solutions to bring about positive global changes. In4Art aims to reconsider ideas about societal and economic structures by prioritising circularity, biodiversity restoration, and inclusivity. According to In4Art, the potential of art in our society and economy must be utilised to transform our current economy with new thinking and to realise responsible innovations.

WAAG promotes critical reflection on technology, develops technological and societal design skills, and stimulates social innovation. Together with a team of designers, artists, and scientists, Waag applies public research methods to technology and society, aiming to involve as many people as possible in designing an open, fair, and inclusive future. Waag Futurelab contributes to sustainable research, design, and development for a just society by exploring emerging technologies, questioning cultural assumptions, experimenting, designing alternatives based on public values, and working with society to build an inclusive future.

Editorial

In this cahier, we explore one of the most intriguing topics associated with art. Even the choice of words is delicate. We've chosen to call it 'the gift.' A gift implies leaving a mark, initiating momentum, and aspiring to create change. It's an elegant term, signifying a noble gesture, yet in opting for 'gift,' we sidestep alternative expressions. Terms such as impact, effectiveness, or added value spring to mind—words that carry significant weight and complexity within the world of art. Nevertheless, we must grapple with them.

In essence, the concept of 'impact' is multifaceted. For some, it offers a pragmatic way to address the question, "What achievements can we identify relative to our objectives?" For others, 'impact' symbolises the stark neoliberal drive for accountability, blamed for eroding the true meaning of 'value.'

In this cahier, the term 'impact' will be frequently used, not just because of its complex and compelling nature, but also because it embodies a rich historical

narrative. Some argue that 'impact' is the ideal term for a nuanced exploration of 'how things work,' including within the arts.

So, what 'things' are we set to discuss here?

In our series of cahiers, we seek to guide Spacemakers in articulating their story: explaining what they do, why they do it, how it's done, and—central to our discussion here—what they aim to accomplish. This necessitates examining impact from two distinct perspectives.

Firstly, our focus is on art itself. Spacemakers create room for art across various domains. As advocates of the arts, Spacemakers must become adept at discussing a phenomenon renowned for its elusive nature. Art thrives on unpredictability, embraces ambiguity, and often defies expectations. The challenge of defining art is compounded by its apparent delight in remaining elusive and difficult to quantify. This elusiveness poses a significant challenge for Spacemakers advocating for the arts in environments that might not

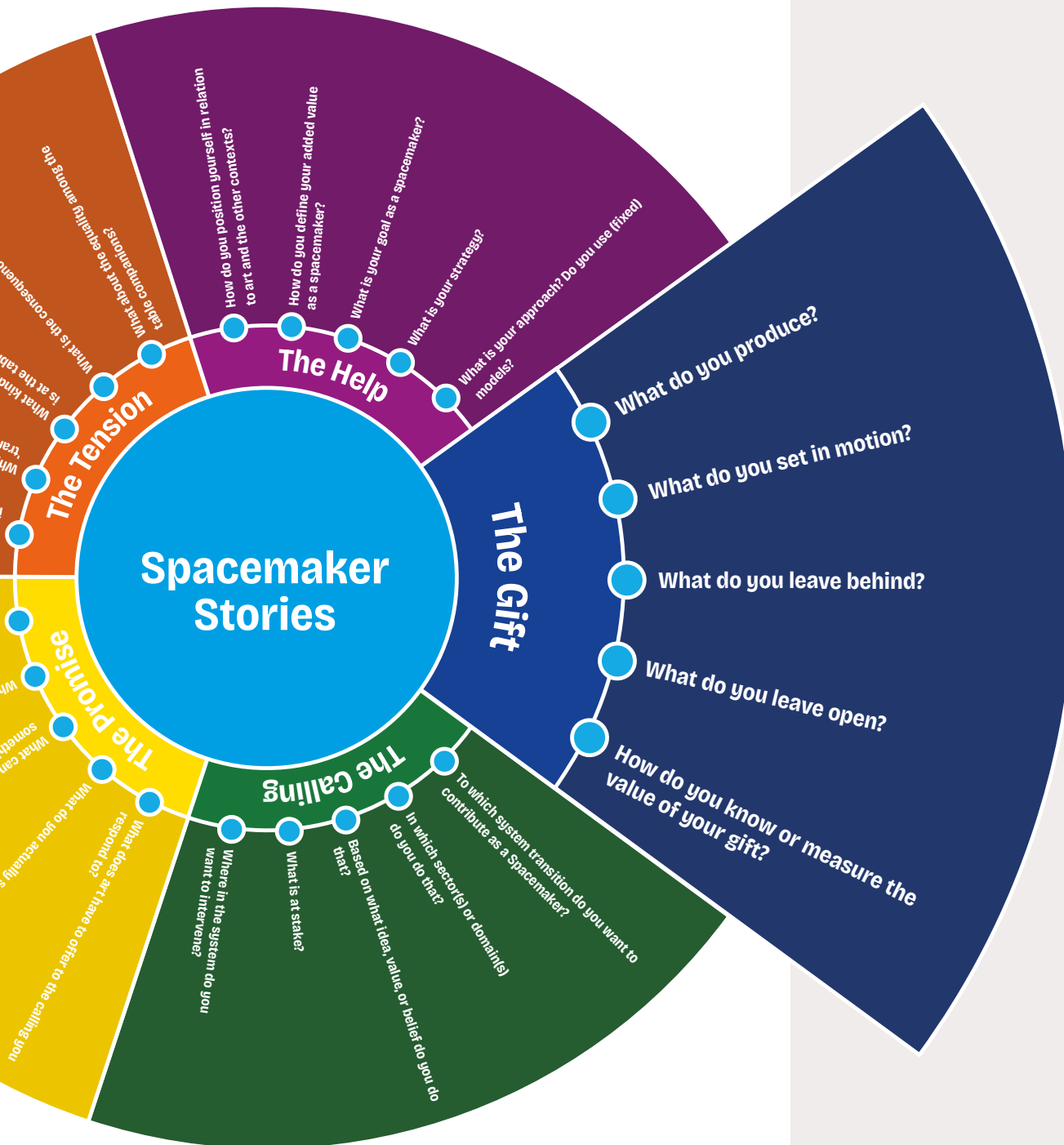
readily acknowledge their value. So, the question arises: how do we articulate the impact of art?

Secondly, we turn our attention to the Spacemakers. As they facilitate the integration of art across various fields, it's inevitable to question the distinct value they contribute. If art inherently possesses unique qualities beneficial to other areas, then what is the necessity of the Spacemaker's involvement? What unique contributions do Spacemakers offer?

This is what we'll explore in this cahier.

Jacco van Uden

*Spacemakers
create room
for art across
various domains*



Spacemaker Stories

Every Spacemaker has a unique story. These stories are about the changes they wish to see, the meaning of art, how the tension between art and other domains can be utilised, how space for art can be created, and what this can lead to.

We posed questions to six Spacemakers about their story. The cahier on **The Gift** discusses what you leave behind as a Spacemaker. How do the gifts of Spacemaking contribute to the transition towards system change? And how do you know or measure the value of what you leave behind?

We asked the Spacemakers to articulate the gift.

We help people envision how things can be different

- ART PARTNER

Art Partner initiates change in challenging issues, a change that endures. Their clients see an opening emerge, a conversation that never stops, and they experience that things can indeed be different. Organisations become more humane, and the pioneers, drivers, and changemakers feel empowered. Employees feel heard.

Art Partner initiates movement by conducting artistic interventions in organisations. This yields many tangible outcomes. An experiential learning module, documentary, theatrical lecture, special gatherings, programs, and training. Hundreds of employees are involved in all these activities, giving such interventions a massive impact on the organisations involved.

Art Partner plays a pioneering role in creating space for the artistic mindset of artists. Since its founding in 2008, Art Partner has championed the value of this mindset for organisations. This vision is increasingly gaining traction, partly because Art Partner proves that it is possible. And that is hopeful.

Tools to embrace not knowing

- CIRCUS ANDERSOM

Circus Andersom provides tools to embrace the unknown, creating space for doubt, uncertainty, and the realisation that control is an illusion. They often use anti-methods, called 'demethoden,' which are not aimed at specific outcomes but rather unfold and deconstruct. The core of this gift is introspection, with a focus on the body, encounters, and curiosity.

Circus Andersom leaves space and time for those left behind to approach matters in alternative ways, without strict instructions on how these gifts should be received and applied. The value is not only measured by practical evaluations and feedback but also by the inner compass of Circus Andersom, which serves as the most valuable feedback mechanism.

We aim to make visible what is invisible and to give voice to unheard voices

- FUTURE OF WORK

Future of Work produces various outcomes, including exhibitions, presentations, workshops, applied research, collaborations, interactive spaces for dialogue, installations, grant applications, and facilitating connections between individuals. They bring change by introducing new perspectives, encouraging experimentation, facilitating collaborations, and promoting ideas and practices for an economy not driven by competition and profit margins.

The contribution of Future of Work is manifested in several ways: through new art projects, interventions, and collaborations; by inspiring people to understand the economy as a narrative rather than a natural law; by creating opportunities for encounters between people from different backgrounds in a continuous, artistically collaborative action research.

The value of their contributions is seen in the co-creation of new stories and experiments. Enthusiasm, cutting-edge conversations, challenging encounters, and people getting into motion are viewed by Future of Work as indicators of change.

Inspiration and problem-solving capacity for transition issues

- IN4ART

Driven by their calling to contribute to transition issues, In4Art initiates a new way of working within the innovation domain, based on art-driven innovation and multidisciplinary collaboration with artists.

In4Art pays close attention to the impact question. They recognize and acknowledge the need to approach impact in a structured manner and to make it measurable wherever possible. With their own PESETABS analysis, they attempt to describe the effects of art-driven innovation as precisely as possible and to determine the value of those innovations for various domains and sectors. In4Art is constantly looking for new ways to create and share impact, for example, through storytelling.

We hope to create a space where people primarily care about each other and the world

- V2_

V2_ aims to offer the world art, in line with their calling, and the associated conditions required to create relevant art for a high-tech society. This includes aspects such as talent development, space for experimentation, solid support, professional exchange, networking, audience reach, and funding.

V2_ wants to stimulate different thoughts about technological innovation than those typically promoted. They aim to leave behind a space where people primarily care about each other and the world.

The value of their contribution is not measured solely by formal criteria such as audience reach, audience research, and performance numbers, but rather based on the inspiration that they themselves, the artists they collaborate with, the involved partners, and the audience derive from the work.

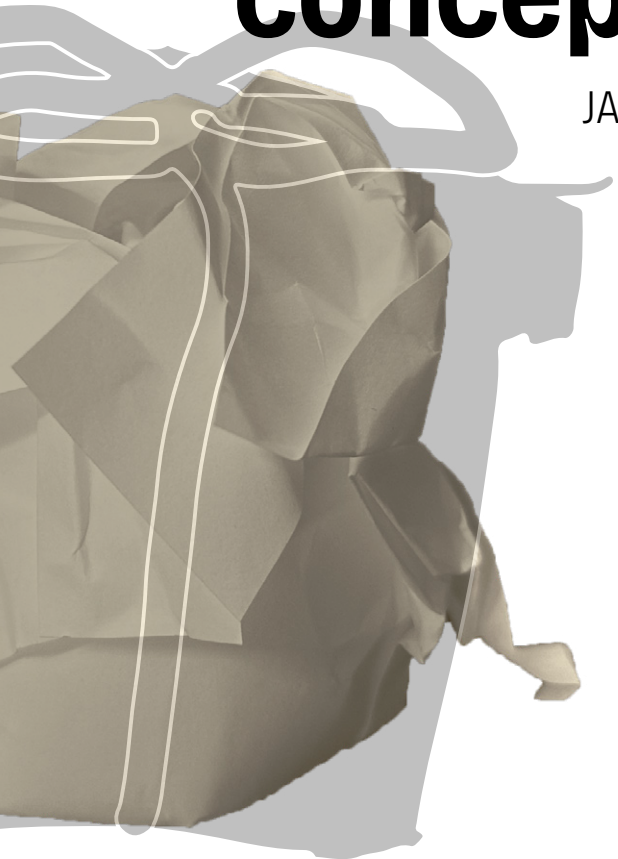
We leave behind a hunger for more

- WAAG

As Spacemakers, Waag aims to contribute to the world: the production of relationships, networks, methods, and knowledge in contexts focused on shared concerns about a fair present and future for humans and more-than-human entities. They initiate dialogues and curiosity, hoping to leave behind a hunger for more. Their legacy also includes new research questions. The value of Waag's contribution is not measured in a conventional manner; it is instead reflected in the growing demand for Spacemaking that comes to Waag.

Impact: on the added value of art, Spacemakers and a concept

JACCO VAN UDEN



In this article, we explore the challenge of articulating the impact of those who create spaces for art in other spheres. Answering this question necessitates a brief detour. Before we can discuss the impact of Spacemakers, we must first confront the complex relationship between art and impact, a dynamic fraught with tensions inherent in any effort to link the two.

In “Het Streven”[1] (“The Pursuit”), Hans Den Hartog Jager, a Dutch art critic, contemplates whether contemporary art possesses the capacity to enact positive change in the world. He traces the roots of this complex question to the archetype of the romantic artist. Den Hartog Jager suggests that by the late eighteenth century, a growing number of Western writers, thinkers, and artists began to critique the heavy emphasis on reason, a hallmark of the intellectual and technological advancements of the preceding centuries. In response, circa 1780, art started to embrace “more room for emotion, for the uncontrollable, and, almost automatically, for the individual.”[2] This moment heralded the birth of a previously unknown type of artist: the romantic, for whom personal freedom, both in form and content, would become the ultimate pursuit.

Den Hartog Jager posits that the ideal of romantic art has constructed a ‘wall’ that segregates the art world from broader society. This barrier exempts the realm of art from the ordinary expectations, norms, and limitations that govern the outside world. Artists,

therefore, inhabit “a world of their own, a universe where their own laws and rules apply, and where they pay as little attention as possible to the (objective) outside world”[3].

Artists who choose to detach from society thereby carve out freedom for themselves and their work. However, this freedom comes with a price: beyond the wall, their creations risk being perceived as detached from reality, irrelevant, or merely ‘just art’.

In contrast, the artists featured in SUSTAIN aim to dismantle these barriers. They seek to extend their influence beyond the confines of the art world. Consequently, these artists find themselves navigating the ‘non-artistic’ demands, standards, and expectations of the broader world.

Numerous questions arise when art aspires to effect change beyond the confines of the art world. Fundamental questions such as: what unique contributions can art offer to the external world? In practical terms, how is artwork characterised when its primary intention isn’t to be recognized as art? Moreover, how do the effectiveness and efficiency of an artist’s work compare to others striving to enact significant change? Questions, in short, that focus on the impact of art.

Attempting to address these questions, it may be beneficial to differentiate between the various schools of thought regarding impact.

Impact in perspective

One perspective - let's refer to them as the Autonomists - contends that the impact of art beyond its own realm shouldn't even be a topic of discussion. According to this view, art owes nothing to anyone or anything except itself. Art exists for its own sake; its engagement with other domains, if any, serves merely to contemplate the world, not to conform to it. While the Autonomist stance offers considerable insight and its echoes are often heard in dialogues about art initiatives like those in SUSTAIN, we will not delve into their fundamental critiques here. Our focus is instead on art that actively seeks to dismantle barriers and cross boundaries.

Therefore, we turn our attention to a second school of thought, which we might term the "Functionalists." This group acknowledges the social and economic worth of art, embracing discussions on art's impact beyond conventional artistic parameters. Functionalists highlight, for example, the pivotal role a thriving cultural scene—a dynamic community of artists, musicians, designers, and other creatives—can play in urban development[4]. They posit that art's impact is tangible when it meets the performance criteria of the field it engages with—be it boosting the local economy, enhancing social cohesion, improving the business environment, or sparking technological innovations. For Functionalists, the value of art is largely determined by the artist's alignment with the norms and standards of the targeted domain. Success, from this viewpoint, means art must conform to established norms rather than challenge them. However, since SUSTAIN is dedicated to art that strives to effect meaningful change without yielding to the status quo, we will explore a third perspective.

The third perspective is embodied by the "Contrarians." In this view, art neither isolates itself from other fields nor critiques them from a detached, safe distance. However, Contrarians also believe it's not suitable for art to merely conform to the expectations of the areas it engages with. Instead, art

adopts a 'critical-affirmative' approach: it recognizes and engages with the other domain, yet it simultaneously rejects the acceptance of what is typically deemed obvious, logical, normal, or inevitable within that sphere. Contrarians operate under the belief that change is possible and that art can be a catalyst for this transformation. This perspective is central to SUSTAIN, where the question of impact unfolds as a deeply complex and nuanced inquiry.

Searching for meaningful impact

For the Contrarians, the inquiry into impact starts with an optimistic view of the arts' potential. Thus, the primary question isn't about the significance of art, but rather how art can harness and convey its transformative powers. [5]

While it's appealing to immediately tackle the 'how-to' question and seek clever ways to showcase art's added value, it's crucial to first take a moment to contemplate the nature of impact itself: what exactly is it?

A good starting point for addressing this question is offered by Lynn Berger in the Dutch online newspaper De Correspondent. Already in 2016 [6], she observes that the concept of impact is popping up everywhere:

"You might say that it's simply a new, sexier term for what used to be called 'engagement', 'improving the world', 'agenda setting', or 'making a contribution'. Or 'effect' or 'outcome' or 'consequences'. That humanity once in a while gets tired of its old words and needs new ones to get enthusiastic about itself again."

Berger suggests that the growing fascination with 'impact' hints at deeper shifts in our worldview: "It tells us something about how we experience the world: as increasingly complex. It also indicates what we're a bit done with: linear measurement methods

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and simplistic scoreboards." In this vein, Berger references Sadik Harchaoui from Society Impact: "Before impact, other terms were used: 'output', for example, or 'outcome', or 'effect', or 'efficiency'. But those concepts quickly acquired an 'instrumental character': that output or outcome had to be measured, and that often meant counting."

Berger finds it quite striking that our desire to acknowledge the world's complexity has led us back to a term once primarily associated with cataclysmic comets or the predictable trajectories of billiard balls. This return marks a "language elasticity," Berger argues: over time, 'impact' has evolved to shed its connotations of linearity, predictability, and simplistic cause-and-effect logic, emerging anew as a concept fundamentally distinct from its origins. The most profound transformation in how we understand 'impact' lies in its focus on the reciprocity of influence: "where 'impact', in its original meaning, seems quite simple, predictable, and measurable - I say or do something, you experience the consequences - the term is now used precisely to denote complexity, exchange, and interaction."

Indeed, this observation holds true within the sphere we're focusing on. Berger notes: "Also in the art world, 'impact' often turns out to be a way of talking about collaboration and interaction, especially between artists and non-artists ... Not a one-way street, but an exchange; not a hit, but 'a collision of methods and of what is considered important'."

Berthoin Antal and Strauß emphasise this very argument. Drawing from their studies on artistic interventions, they critique the perspective that views art as the active force imprinting itself upon a passive application area, merely awaiting impact. These researchers contend that the responsibility for generating impact should never rest solely on the arts.[7]

Berthoin Antal and Strauß's research into artistic interventions in organisations suggests implications that reach far beyond these specific contexts. They

underline that art's potential in other domains can only be realised if it encounters an atmosphere of openness, willingness, and receptivity. Indeed, artists need to deeply engage with their new environments and cultivate the necessary skills and attributes to be impactful within them. However, it's equally crucial for 'the other side' to contribute to the success of the endeavour. This contribution manifests as a commitment to the project, evident through the allocation of sufficient time and resources, along with a genuine interest in the artistic intervention: questioning whether there is collective seriousness and ownership. Berthoin Antal and Strauß highlight that without the stakeholders' readiness and bravery to partake in processes that are by nature unpredictable, no meaningful impact can be achieved.

Committing to impact also involves dedicating effort towards 'shared sense-making' in response to artistic interventions: are we willing to invest the time and effort required to grasp the dynamics initiated by the art or artist? This becomes even more critical when the outcomes are not immediately apparent, or when the revelations are unsettling or difficult to confront. Yet, perhaps the most crucial condition for artistic interventions to have a significant impact is the mutual adaptation among stakeholders. Berthoin Antal and Strauß argue that meaningful impact becomes a feasible outcome only when everyone involved is prepared and able to contribute what the process necessitates.

On the added value of Spacemakers

But reciprocity and mutual commitment do not come easily. Berthoin Antal [8] suggests that artistic interventions frequently gain from the participation of intermediaries—third parties dedicated to bridging the 'cultural divide' between the realm of art and other domains. Skilled intermediaries grasp the values, codes, and practices of both worlds, enabling them to unify these distinct environments. To effectively link these realms, intermediaries fulfil several

roles, including identifying and maintaining focus, establishing a framework for collaboration, resolving conflicts, overseeing progress, and assessing results.

Intermediaries come in all shapes and sizes, Berthoin Antal observes, and this diversity in approach leads her to conclude that prescribing a one-size-fits-all formula for being a 'good intermediary' is futile.

Rather, the focus should be on observing the array of intermediary practices and drawing insights from their varied experiences.

With SUSTAIN, we have tried to do just that. Our investigation into six Spacemakers revealed considerable diversity within the sample group. Through our series of cahiers, we strive to honour the individual quirks arising from unique origins and distinct trajectories in organisational growth. Each Spacemaker has its own calling, a personal interpretation of art's promise, distinct strategies for merging different realms, and individual approaches to navigating tensions and conflicts. Unifying these distinctive traits, each has its unique method of generating added value.

[The Spacemaker Toolbox](#) was conceived to accommodate the wide spectrum of Spacemaker methodologies. It enables Spacemakers to critically assess their current strategies and explore new directions. This aligns with Berthoin Antal's suggestion: the Toolbox is not about providing standard recipes but rather aims to recognize, celebrate, and enhance the distinctiveness of the diverse Spacemaker approaches.

But given all that variety and uniqueness, what unites the Spacemakers?

As 'Spacemaker industry', where do you stand and what do you stand for? How do you define and distinguish yourselves as a sector?

According to the above-mentioned Lynn Berger, impact is all about interaction, mutual influencing, and reciprocity. Berthoin Antal and Strauß, in turn, found that artistic interventions only work when all parties

get to it and adapt to each other. But how do you maintain this commitment?

For different worlds to meet is not easy, much less sustaining a strong and fruitful relationship between them. It is precisely in this challenging intersection that the Spacemaker assumes a crucial role.

For a long time, the SUSTAIN researchers grappled with finding an appropriate name for the subjects of their study. Common terms like 'broker' and even 'intermediary' were deemed inadequate, as they conjure up the image of an entity positioned between others—an entity whose very necessity might be questioned ("cut out the middleman") and which might therefore benefit from maintaining a separation between the parties it connects. Enter the Spacemaker. The unique contribution of the Spacemaker, as revealed by the SUSTAIN research, isn't found in *capitalising on the distance* between parties but rather in *organising their proximity*. The core of Spacemaking involves bridging different realms, creating the conditions that allow for new connections to lead to 'something', and keeping the parties together when that 'something' does not immediately lead to spectacular results – that seems to be the essence of Spacemaking.

Spacemaking centres on creating space for art, yet it may be more fundamentally about maintaining enduring openness. It's about preventing the essential space for initiating meaningful transitions from becoming restricted. When art seeks to engage with another domain, and that domain is genuinely open to exploring how art can spark significant change, maintaining that space proves challenging.

While anyone can initiate introductions and connect disparate parties, ensuring the continual movement and interaction—keeping the 'flow' alive—represents perhaps the most profound impact a Spacemaker can achieve.

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Impact on our living environment

MYRIAM VANDENBROUCKE

"Perhaps art is just an excuse to connect on a deeper human to human level with one another?"

- Narges Mohammadi, artist, program maker and DJ

Art derives its significance from our engagement with it. This is the magic of art. It's this interaction that defines art itself. Devoid of our presence, art loses its meaning, and would therefore not exist. This notion mirrors the philosophy of ubuntu, which articulates our existence through others: "I am because we are." Extending this concept to art, we might ponder: Does art represent an intrinsic aspect of our humanity?

We humans give meaning to art. This happens instinctively and often with dedication. We interpret art individually, influenced by our experiences, knowledge, genetics, and education. It is precisely this uniqueness that renders the impact of art unpredictable—unable to foresee how, where, and on whom it will exert its influence, or the nature of that impact.

For several years now, I've offered my freelance services in 'impact management and research in the cultural sector', a role that sometimes sits uneasily with me. My hesitance stems from the belief, as discussed earlier, that the specific impact of art cannot be precisely predicted. Yet, I hold the conviction that reflecting on the role of art in our lives—it's how, where, and when—is crucial. As Philip Yenawine, founder of Visual Thinking Strategies, wrote: "The role of art has shifted over the last centuries from depicting deep-seated shared values to expressing ideas and feelings

of individual artists. As a result, it feels far removed from our daily lives." My aspiration is to reintegrate art into the fabric of our daily lives for all, within our own environments. Impact research can contribute to that.

Conducting impact research on art within our everyday surroundings poses intriguing questions. There's a rich conversation to be had around this topic. A key insight I've gained is the importance of shifting focus from solely 'deliverables' to also embrace 'discoverables'. 'Deliverables' are often outlined in activity plans, spreadsheets, or Theories of Change. They are evaluated through a set of indicators and predetermined data sources. 'Discoverables', in contrast, are the unexpected insights and outcomes that emerge through the process, encounters, or the final product itself. These do not require preemptive definition or active pursuit. Instead, recognizing 'discoverables' demands an openness to experience, setting aside predetermined expectations, and approaching the project with humility—sometimes stepping back from the role of The Researcher. In other words, when you look with an open mind at potential impacts, you will discover even more places affected by art.

Dr. Myriam Vandenbroucke assists initiatives and organisations within the cultural sector to understand impact, making impact measurable, and when needed, to enhance it.

Recognizing 'discoverables' demands an openness to experience, setting aside predetermined expectations, and approaching the project with humility

The industry is already under considerable pressure to perform. It needs to innovate, constantly produce new products, and continuously justify the economic value of its endeavours. When an artist collaborates with a small or medium-sized enterprise, it's important to recognize that these companies are perpetually in survival mode. Understandably, this raises questions about the value of engaging with an artist. Such a scenario places significant pressure on the artist. If my feedback sometimes seems biased towards supporting the artist, it's because I'm striving to convey the artist's perspective to the industry as well.

- The Spacemaker

With our projects, we deliver a certain type of value that is difficult to measure, but I do think it is financially much more valuable than what we generally get paid for it.

- The Artist &
Spacemaker

The smoother it runs, the more invisible your work becomes.

- The Spacemaker

As an artist, if you can't make yourself understood, you're making bad art.

- The Artist

Mapping impact

IN4ART ON E-MISSIONS



JACCO VAN UDEN

In the featured article of this cahier, we explored the 'evolution' of the notion of impact. The term has evolved to acknowledge that advocating for direct, bold assertions about the effects of art rarely make sense. In discussing impact, our aim is to honour the subtlety of art's influence across various fields. Yet, employing 'impact' also signifies a persistent quest for precision and clarity. Despite the challenge of defining art's exact effects, what assertions can we confidently make about art's achievements beyond its traditional confines? The concept of impact serves as a mediator, striving to reconcile the desire to 'make things visible and demonstrable' with the understanding that 'not everything of value can be measured, and not all that can be measured holds value.'

How do Spacemakers navigate the nuanced landscape of impact thinking?

We explore this question through a dialogue with Lija and Rodolfo Groenewoud van Vliet of In4Art.

Our interview centres on E-missions, a project that provides insight into the sustainability of 'digital lifestyles': what is the hidden ecological impact of our digital behaviour? E-missions reflects on the CO2 emissions from activities such as emailing, online gaming, using blockchain, or streaming videos. The project was developed by In4Art, in collaboration with artist Leanne Wijnsma, creative developer Yoeran Luteijn, and scientist Jens Gröger.

Our discussion focuses on E-missions, a project shedding light on the environmental footprint of 'digital lifestyles': What is the hidden ecological impact of our digital behaviour? E-missions delves into the carbon footprint associated with activities like emailing, online gaming, engaging with blockchain, or streaming videos. This initiative is a collaborative effort by In4Art, artist Leanne Wijnsma, creative developer Yoeran Luteijn, and scientist Jens Gröger.

E-missions encompasses a variety of subprojects, each with a distinct aim. For example, the Sensing CO2 tasting experience transforms carbon dioxide—an odourless, invisible gas—into a tangible taste sensation. It employs the fizziness of carbonated beverages, in which the CO2 bubbles activate the tongue's taste receptors, and the level of carbonation determines the strength of the sensation. A slight increase can shift the sensation from enjoyable to uncomfortable. Sensing CO2 seeks to bridge the gap between abstract numerical data and personal experience, merging scientific findings with the human senses to foster awareness. Additionally, the Emissions.nl platform empowers users to assess their digital footprint and provides advice on reducing it. Finally, the Digital Etiquette tool offers a framework for organisations, teams, or employee groups to discuss, establish, and implement a digital conduct code, enhancing their digital practices towards greater sustainability. For further details, please visit: www.e-missions.nl/

Image 1: E-missions

In In4Art's initiatives, art serves as the catalyst. To more deeply understand the inherently open nature of artistic projects, Lija and Rodolfo developed the PESETABS model. This diffusion model is designed to evaluate the results of art-centric experiments within multidisciplinary collaborations and to spread awareness of their innovative contributions. PESETABS investigates the (potential) impact of projects by analysing their spill-over effects across eight distinct 'overflow areas': Policy, Ecology, Society, Economy, Technology, Art, Business, and Science.[1]

Lija and Rodolfo employed the PESETABS model to create a comprehensive E-missions infographic. This endeavour aimed not only to delve into the particularities of this project but also to contemplate more broadly the concept of impact within In4Art. What qualifies as impact? How is impact manifested in tangible forms? Whom and what do you explicitly incorporate into this visualisation? As Spacemakers, where and in what ways do we contribute to achieving impact?

The infographic documents the search for answers to a series of interconnected questions: Who engaged with the project, and in what roles? At what point did these stakeholders join, and in what specific ways did they contribute? Moreover, what tangible outcomes resulted from their involvement? Lija and Rodolfo chose to meticulously reconstruct the E-missions journey. They explored the project's archives in depth, engaged in thorough discussions with each other, and consulted with stakeholders, including 'end users', to gather insights into their experiences with the project.

The reconstruction underscores that detail and the broader picture are often at odds when it comes to impact: dedicating time to honour a project's complexity inevitably requires including more elements in the overarching narrative, complicating the task of defining the project's impact in clear-cut terms. Lija and Rodolfo discovered that impact is neither a tangible outcome nor a static product. Instead, impact represents a dynamic process that evolves

and manifests in various ways across different settings. This insight leads to many questions: Which manifestations of impact are you aware of? How do you identify them? Furthermore, how much time should we 'allow' for a project to generate impact, and for how long can its effects be felt? These are all critical considerations that converge on a central question: What impact can we justifiably associate with E-missions?

Deciphering the exact sequence of events in E-missions posed challenges, yet engaging in discussions proved immensely valuable for Lija and Rodolfo. Did we possess a unified understanding of the underlying reasons for the project's progression? Were we consistently pivotal actors throughout E-missions' evolution? Through the construction of the infographic and collaborative reflection on the interconnectedness of events, occurrences, and individuals, Lija and Rodolfo gradually attained deeper comprehension of the project's trajectory, the ramifications of E-missions, and the role In4Art played.

The infographic illustrates E-missions' journey to Dutch television (featured on an episode of VPRO's De Dikke Data Show [2]), government platforms (as a policy checklist), and academic settings in universities and colleges. Rodolfo reflects, "The reconstruction distinctly highlights the gradual evolution and maturation of ideas before they find resonance in a particular context. At times, stakeholders require repeated exposure to a project—three, four, or even five instances—before taking action. Occasionally, it may initially be shelved, only to resurface later on."

As you delve deeper into constructing the infographic, you begin to grasp, as Rodolfo puts it, "the serendipitous, winding path of ideas" that often elude orchestration. Crafting an infographic prompts contemplation in terms of dotted lines—representing processes within the impact narrative that are documented with a hint of uncertainty: "a dotted line from a ministry to God knows who, who will then do God knows what with it."

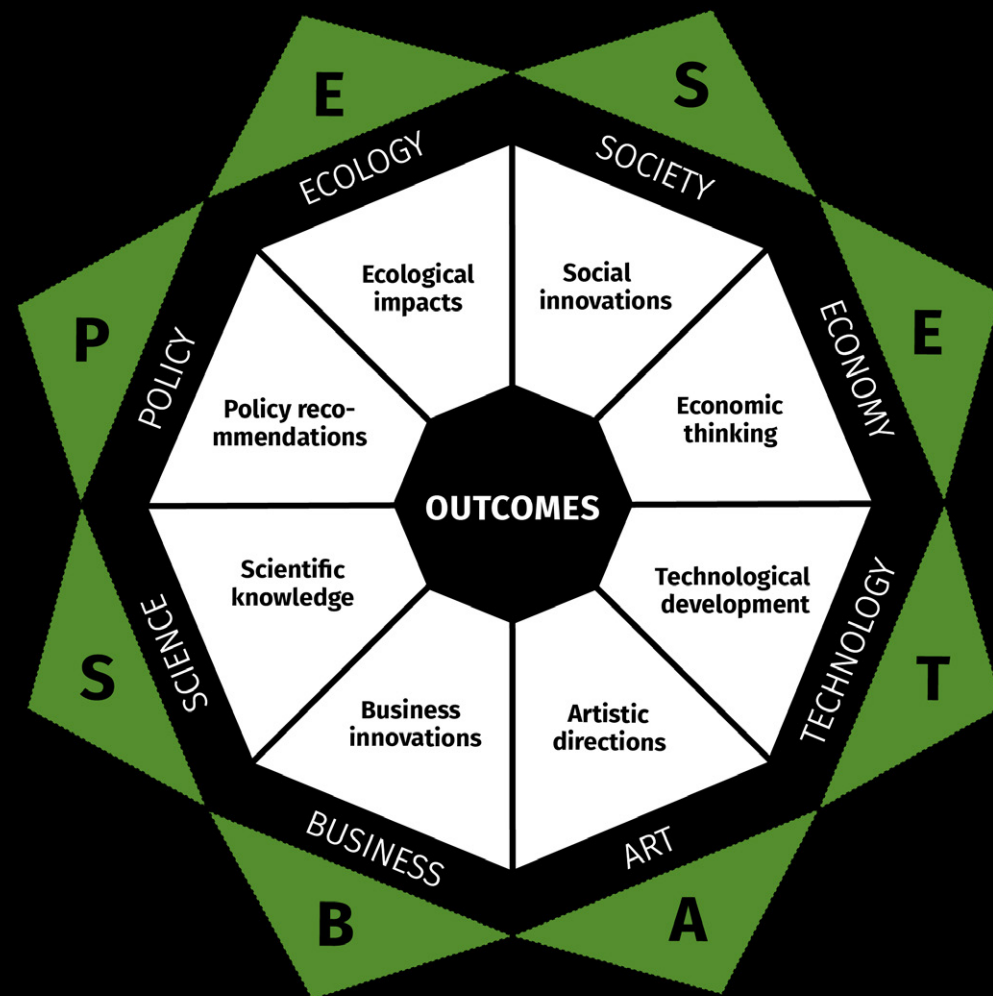


Image 2: PESETABS

E-Missions.nl



7.4 µg CO2

Image 4: E-missions.nl, the hidden ecological impact of our online behaviour

As we reconstruct the intricacies of E-missions, with a focus on how stakeholders from various PESETABS domains have engaged with the project, we uncover numerous insights that only become apparent in hindsight. Lija reflects, “The diverse effects of E-missions that we retrieved in 2023—those were completely unforeseeable at the project’s inception in 2019. Looking back reveals the nature of impact. Our aim has always been to generate spillover effects across different domains. The reconstruction visually illustrates how this unfolds. We carry this knowledge and experience forward into future projects. It helps us remain focused on our objectives and prompts us to consider who else could contribute to the process at different stages.”

During the reconstruction of the E-missions project, a specific moment emerged as pivotal. Lija explains, “Although we had a website online, its effectiveness depended on people being able to find it. That’s when we strategically decided to write an opinion piece about E-missions for the Dutch national newspaper NRC[3], aiming to gain traction. This step was crucial, particularly for awareness projects like E-missions, where visibility is paramount.”

The publication of the opinion piece in February 2023 marked the beginning of a new phase in the project for In4Art, particularly in terms of impact. Rodolfo explains, “It was a deliberate choice. You could say that everything before the piece was planned and organised by us. We wrote the opinion piece hoping to steer the project in a new direction. We weren’t sure exactly what it would trigger, but we hoped it would spark change. We didn’t have any follow-up actions planned. I can’t say for certain if the subsequent developments in the project were directly caused by the opinion piece, but they certainly wouldn’t have happened without it.”

And looking to the future? Rodolfo reflects, “We know that with E-missions, many seeds have been planted. What we don’t know is what will happen next. There are many parties saying, ‘I want to do something with this project, but I don’t know exactly what yet.’ This

burgeoning interest in the project raises the question of what In4Art envisions for the future. Rodolfo elaborates, “We’re currently discussing this. What’s the trajectory for E-missions? Is it fizzling out, or are we on the verge of a new wave? Do we have a role to play in a potential new chapter of the E-missions story?”

By literally mapping out various stakeholders in different roles (termed as ‘contributors’ or ‘collaborators’ in In4Art’s lexicon) within the infographic, a scenario unfolds wherein stakeholders continue to advance the project independently, with or without In4Art’s involvement. Lija: “We remain receptive to parties interested in bolstering the mission underlying E-missions or even incorporating it into their own initiatives. That’s why everything was developed as open source, enabling others to take it up.”

Rodolfo: “We are no longer at the forefront. There are now various ideas circulating in the world that are starting to gain traction. At times, In4Art still provides guidance in an advisory capacity, while other times we are merely acknowledged and cited. Occasionally, we discover that we were the primary source without even realising it. In practice, E-missions is no longer exclusively ours.”

Lija: “The fact that multiple parties are now engaging with the project in their own ways indicates that we have made progress on the impact ladder. E-missions was initiated because there was insufficient discussion about the sustainability of digital lifestyles. We succeeded in raising awareness. Artist Leanne Wijnsma is now receiving invitations to speak about Sensing CO2, even from businesses. That’s really gratifying. If our work resonates with other organisations, then the project has achieved its goal, making E-missions a success for us.”

Rodolfo: “In the end, it’s about nurturing a variety of ideas and releasing them into the world. We lost control and that’s a good thing.”

References

- [1] The complete white paper of PESETABS: <https://www.in4art.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pesetabs-in4art-whitepaper-january-2023.pdf>
- [2] https://www.zapp.nl/programmas/de-dikke-data-show/gemist/VPWON_1350398
- [3] <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/02/28/denk-na-voor-je-op-post-share-of-like-klukt-a4158268>

A photograph of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore under a cloudy sky. The image is split vertically: the left half shows the beach and ocean, while the right half is a solid light blue background with a white, torn-paper-like shape containing the title and author information.

Art and climate change

JACCO VAN UDEN

Between 2020 and 2023, ten European art institutions united under the banner of ACT: Art Climate Transition. Funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, this initiative sought to delve into the critical role of art in confronting the climate crisis. The Hague University of Applied Sciences contributed as a research collaborator, with Jacco van Uden of the Change Management research group and independent researcher Arie Lengkeek examining the notion of 'impact'

within artistic practices. Without adhering to a rigid definition of impact, their exploration involved dialogues with various artists and collectives, pondering whether the concept of impact shapes their work and, if so, its manifestation.

Contrary to expectations of scepticism or reluctance, the artists displayed remarkable openness and willingness to discuss the concept of impact, approaching the subject with curiosity, nuance, and humility.

The insights gleaned from these conversations reveal [1]:

- Many artists accept and emphasise that the impact of their work defies straightforward definition. Impact is fluid, doesn't follow a fixed path, and is difficult to quantify, track or influence, even in hindsight.
- There's a deliberate avoidance of explicit, explanatory, or sensationalist expressions of impact. Many artists prefer to invoke subtlety, ambiguity, and non-spectacular qualities in their work.
- Artists emphasise that genuine impact avoids quick fixes. Impact requires time and perseverance. A single artwork won't change the world.
- Impactful art often necessitates stepping out of traditional settings—such as

the museum's 'white cube' or the theatre's 'black box'—embracing integration with the broader world and striving for 'radical accessibility.'

- For impactful art, collaboration emerges as crucial—not just among artists but with stakeholders and allies in the sectors targeted for change.

There is something intriguing about the 'impact strategies' of the artists we interviewed. Faced with the vast challenges of the climate crisis, these engaged artists appear to deliberately avoid the path of quickest impact. They favour question marks over exclamation marks, subtle gestures over bold moves. Frustrating, of course, given the urgency of the matter. But then again, isn't that precisely what we expect from art – that it doesn't meet our expectations, even when things call for immediate action? Or especially then?

[1] For more information on Art Climate Transition and the full interviews, visit: <https://artclimatetransition.eu/>





"We normally don't explain our work too much. We like for the public to be open-minded and to create their own relation with the piece. The work has no message, 'I'm trying to say this to you'. We believe that change happens when you create your own relation to the things, and not to our ideas."

- BERRU

"We need to force poetry onto the language of politics and even our daily conversations. We need to refresh the way that we look, talk, and make decisions. Poetry is a way of making room for otherness because only in poetry we can speak in the name of frogs, trees, water, and try to imagine their position and needs."

- PROTA, ŠKART

"This young girl from the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka wrote me a letter after I did a performance in Montreal. She reflected on the work as she interpreted it. She related it to her own pain, and her fears and desires around environmental catastrophe and human relationships with technology. I keep a copy of the letter. And actually, that particular one I really think about a lot because I keep thinking: I've traveled to the other side of the planet.... and I can still connect to people."

- JUSTIN SHOULDER

"I still believe that there is a difference between the political or activist discourse, on the one hand, and the artistic, on the other. I am not an activist. Through and in the theatre, I work on the level of aesthetic experiences. I apply simple, minimalistic means to try to achieve some form of sensibility to the subject."

- DAVID WEBER-KREBS



"It came from my frustration with the art world. In the 'white cube' of the museum or the 'black box' of the theatre we express critique on contemporary society, but basically everybody who sits there already agrees. I felt misplaced there ... I asked the theatres who booked my work to organise 'The Lecture For Every One' as a 'guerilla performance'. We looked for instances where people were already together in a certain group: a board meeting, an HR meeting in an enterprise, a choir rehearsal, a football training. I would then interrupt this meeting and give my 'Lecture For Every One'. Always with one accomplice in the group, for the others it was a totally unexpected intrusion of the agenda or programme of their meeting."

- SARAH VANHEE

"Traditionally, there's the play and then there is the conversation with the audience afterwards. Pretty standard and straightforward. In a way it is a shame that soon after the performance, the conversation comes to a stop. I would really like for the dialogue that is triggered by the play to linger for a longer period of time. My ambition is to extend and enrich the engagement with the audience. Get more people on board in the production process and find ways to ensure that the play itself falls on fertile ground. That the play keeps on playing, so to say."

- DAVY PIETERS

"My work is difficult to define as an artistic practice only, because it has a lot of social and activist dimensions embedded in it. I see a lot of potential in transdisciplinary work. As an artist you struggle when it comes to impact. When you join forces with other disciplines, your impact gets stronger as a transformative and complementary process. This way of working has grown on me."

- MARIA LUCIA CORREIA

It's like we were supposed to solve the issue – but that's not really the job of art. It's a bit of a ridiculous premise if you ask me. All the experts have been scratching their heads for years on this issue. We're not solving, we're not fixing the world – we're not. Maybe we're asking more questions than solving anything. We sometimes refer to ourselves as “public amateurs” or the “expert amateurs”. These amateurs ask different or stupid questions – questions that don't presume a right answer.

- The Artist

How do you assess the value of your contributions as a Spacemaker? Traditional measurements fall short, lacking relevance and realism. So, what's my metric for value? It's seeing an increased demand for Spacemaking.

- The Spacemaker

If you just let the artist go, they tend to diverge and go all creative ... It's been quite a tough process to continually keep artists really on track. [The Spacemaker] is very good at translating between the very concrete things we do and the artistic-creative aspects of the artists.

- The Client

ANALOGY BETWEEN SPACEMAKERS AND THE REED PLANT

An alternative perspective

MARGA ROTTEVEEL & INE MOLS

In her quest for a clear understanding of the characteristics of Spacemakers, researcher Marga Rotteveel has utilised an analogy: the reed plant. In a personal manner, she delves into the comparison between the unique attributes of the reed plant and the practice of Spacemakers. Employing this natural metaphor, Marga casts an alternative light on the role and functions of Spacemakers. Through the power of imagination, she seeks to contribute to a clearer comprehension of the complexity inherent in their work.

Many analogies can be drawn, a few of which are outlined below:
Similar to how reeds provide stability and protection to shores, Spacemakers play a comparable role by fostering a stable and protected environment for artists and the development of their projects.
The flexible stems of reeds symbolise the adaptability and resilience demonstrated by Spacemakers in their practice.
Just as reed seeds spread through water to new areas, Spacemaking represents the dissemination and exchange of art across various domains.

The resilience of reeds, influenced by fluctuations in water levels, mirrors the dynamic nature of Spacemaking, where external forces are met with a flexible and adaptable approach.

Comparable to reeds acting as host plants for insects, Spacemakers nurture the growth and development of diverse art projects. Spacemakers demonstrate care towards artists and collaborating parties by providing support, symbolically reflected in the protective hairs on the plant's ears. These hairs act as a parachute for the fruit, safeguarding it and allowing it to float on the water surface until it finds fertile ground.

Just as the roots of reeds spread horizontally to foster new connections, Spacemaking establishes cross-links between art and other disciplines and domains.

Spoken-word artist Ine Mols, inspired by Marga Rotteveel's photos and the reed's characteristics, has composed evocative texts for each theme of the five cahiers. These texts are designed to stimulate reflection on the practices of Spacemakers.



The gift

The invisible value beneath the water
that only
emerges later

Hidden, embraced
protective for tomorrow

Alone, it offers nothing
Alone, no strength
only beauty

But together, the value grows

Of which so much remains unseen
The meters-long rhizomes
pulled together into a network
Where the runners
became pioneers



BOOK: Ways of Seeing, John Berger

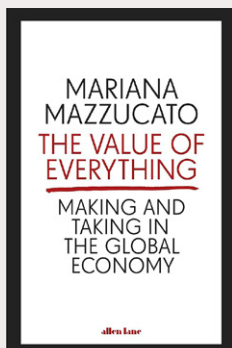
Art critic Berger on what we see, how we look, and how meaning emerges.



PODCAST: Tussen de Regels (NRC)

<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/04/07/welke-boeken-gaan-de-wereld-veranderen-a4161568>

Novels, viewed from the perspective of impact. A podcast series on which books changed the world, but mainly about the question: how can you actually tell so? (in Dutch)



BOOK: The value of everything, Mariana Mazzucato

Economist Mazzucato with a new perspective on value creation and value destruction.



WEBSITE: Het Dossier 'Impact van Onderzoek en Innovatie' van Rathenau Instituut

<https://www.rathenau.nl/nl/dossier-impact-van-onderzoek-en-innovatie>

How can you promote the societal impact of scientific research and innovation, and how can you evaluate that impact? (In Dutch)



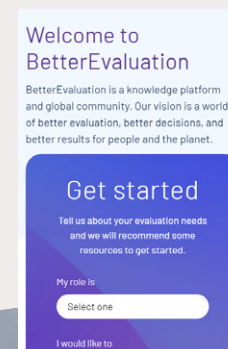
BOOK: Maakkracht: Een nieuwe benadering voor complexe vraagstukken, Tabo Goudswaard & Jetske van Oosten

On "how everyone can address problems like a maker in five steps and initiate real, lasting change." (In Dutch)



BOOK: Innoveren met kunstenaars: hoe ondernemers en kunstenaars elkaar versterken, Julie Vandenbroucke en Piet Verhalen.

On how artists and entrepreneurs can join forces to make successful innovations happen. This book takes a great interest in the question of how to make an impact that lasts. (In Dutch)



WEBSITE: Better Evaluation

<https://www.betterevaluation.org>

A very rich knowledge base, with hundreds of tools and methods for (impact) evaluation.

Research team



Kim Caarls

Kim has a background in migration research. She prefers to delve deep into the life courses of migrants, because only then can you fully see the impact of migration. Additionally, she likes to explore other global themes, such as climate and social inequality. The SUSTAIN research, focusing on the role of art in the transition to an ecologically sustainable and socially just world, aligns well with her interests.



Olga Mink

Besides working as the artistic director of the Future of Work Foundation and conducting research within SUSTAIN, Olga also holds the position of Head of the Maastricht Academy for Interdisciplinary Arts.



Marga Rotteveel

Marga is part of the 'Economy in Common' research group at the Centre of Expertise on Wellbeing Economy and New Entrepreneurship at Avans University of Applied Sciences. Her research focuses on the role of art in domains beyond art itself and its contribution to transitional issues. Additionally, she advocates for recognition of the value that artists bring, broadening the traditional focus from financial compensation to a more inclusive, collective approach. Marga has a deep-rooted connection to the visual arts, which consistently forms the foundation of her work as both a researcher and educator.



Godelieve Spaas

Since 2018, Godelieve has been serving as a Professor of Economy in Common at the Centre of Expertise for Wellbeing Economy and New Entrepreneurship at Avans University of Applied Sciences. Together with her research group, she aims to transform our current economic system, which is based on 'Taking', into one of 'Care Taking'—a system focused on nurturing each other and the Earth. By collaborating with researchers, artists, and entrepreneurs, they develop alternative narratives, equitable and sustainable regulations, and practical experiments within an economy that prioritises the well-being of all life on Earth. Their research approach is participatory, visual, creative, situated, and experiential.



Jacco van Uden

Jacco has a background in organization studies. In 2013 he was appointed professor of Change Management at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (NL). A significant portion of the research conducted within the research group takes place at the intersection of organizational studies and art. For more information, please visit: www.lectoraatchangemanagement.nl.

Colophon

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