

**SUSTAIN**

making space  
for art in  
transitions  
that matter

**Aligning**



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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.

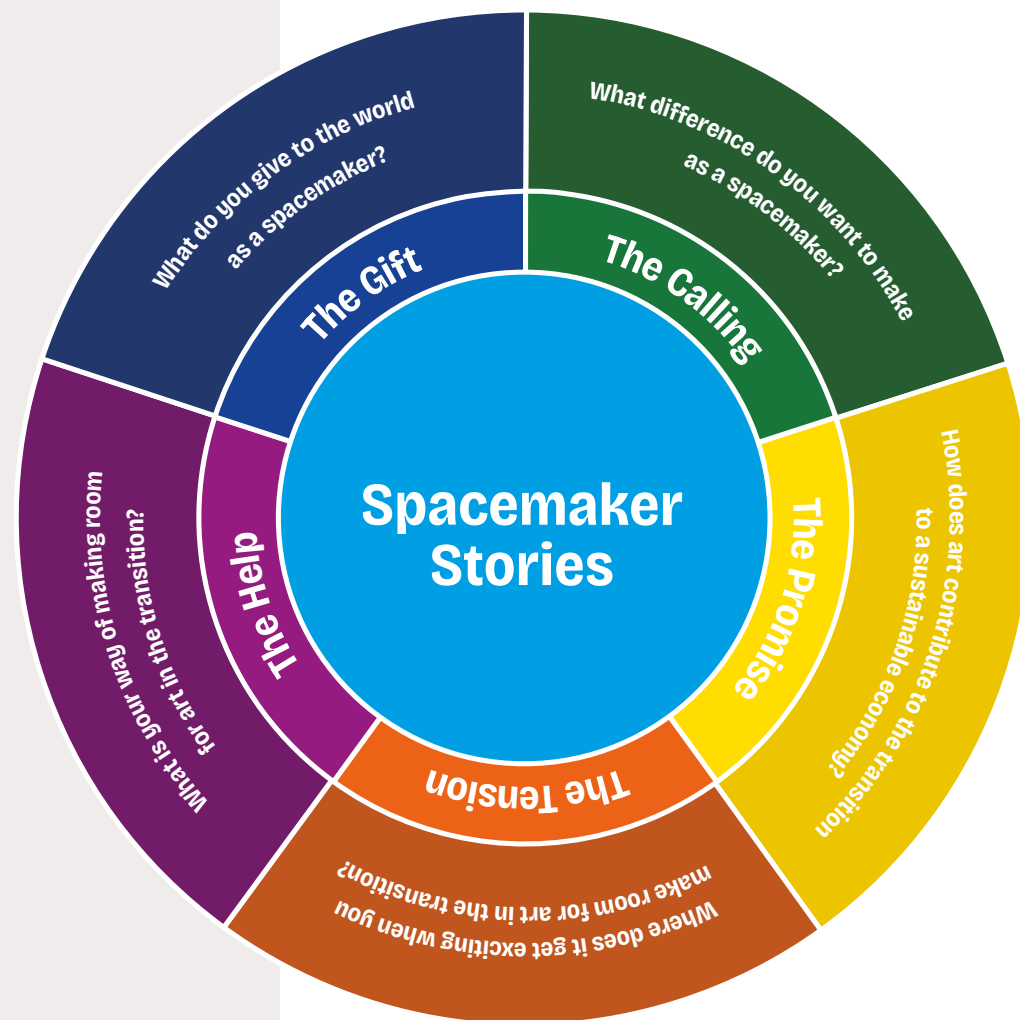
- 4. The Help:** How do Spacemakers create space for art in the transition? What kind of spaces are created? And where does the Spacemaker position themselves within this space?

- 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

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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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

*As a Spacemaker,  
you are called,  
or feel called, to  
make a difference  
and contribute to a  
systemic transition*

## A Call to Change

Welcome to the first issue of The Spacemaker Stories, dedicated to 'The Calling.' In this cahier, we explore the deeper calling of Spacemakers: the people and organisations that utilise art as a lever to transition to a sustainable economy.

What difference do you want to make? This fundamental question lies at the heart of The Calling. As a Spacemaker, you are called, or feel called, to make a difference and contribute to a systemic transition. Which transition do you wish to contribute to? In which sector or domain do you want your impact to be felt? In this cahier, we explore how Spacemakers, driven by a calling—whether it be an inner drive, a loud call from outside, or a soft whisper—consciously choose to make a specific contribution to the transition towards a sustainable economy.

Behind every calling lies a deeply rooted idea, core value, or conviction. The Calling delves deeper into the motives of Spacemakers. Why do they make the choices they make? How do they translate their inner convictions into concrete actions that pave the way for a sustainable future?

## What's at stake?

This journey comes with its challenges. We delve into what's at stake for Spacemakers: the obstacles they encounter and the sacrifices they make to fulfil their calling. It's a quest for meaning, grounded in the understanding that there's more at stake than mere personal success.

Systems are complex, yet Spacemakers navigate them with expertise. We investigate their points of intervention within the system, be it in science, the economy, technology, healthcare, or areas that lie in between. This cahier highlights how Spacemakers initiate change by integrating art into the system.

In an inspiring feature, we highlight Future of Work, a Spacemakers organisation that recently organised the festival 'Who Owns the Economy?' in Den Bosch. The artistic leadership of Future of Work is in the hands of Olga Mink and Godelieve Spaas, who together bring about new forms of collaboration and sustainable strategies around work and the economy. Discover their visions and stories, which prompt discussions about envisioning an economy that prioritise the needs of a healthy ecosystem and a fair society. And how they use art to tell this story.

Also, read the interview with Kees Klomp, in which he shares how he felt called from a young age to contribute to a sustainable world, and how he passionately commits to a radically new economic narrative to face the great challenges of our time. He understands all too well that these can make us feel despondent. By writing a children's book and embracing art and craftsmanship in education, he wants to offer us hope, and perhaps a way out.

Besides the economy, healthcare is an area where a lot is at stake, and where art can play a role in envisioning a new narrative. Tineke Abma writes about her calling, leading us into the world of elderly care, where, as a professor of Elderly Participation (LUMC) and director of Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, she bridges the worlds of art, healthcare, and science. Through art and artistic methods, individuals can be touched, seen, and heard. "Art touches and connects beyond words," according to Tineke Abma, and it is precisely for this reason that it can connect people. And being connected, feeling a sense of belonging, is ultimately what it's all about.

Tom Maassen, as a researcher in Care Aesthetics, advocates in his column for more space for art in healthcare. His column serves as a call to artists to feel inspired to contribute, alongside healthcare workers, to a caring society, and for Spacemakers to facilitate this process.

I spoke with Marcel Kampman about his motivations and his research into creators of spaces. With his Happyplace Project, he seeks to understand all dimensions of space and how people create a 'Happy Place' within it. He interviews a variety of individuals, from artists to scientists, about their motivations, ideas, methods, opinions, and insights on finding their happy place.

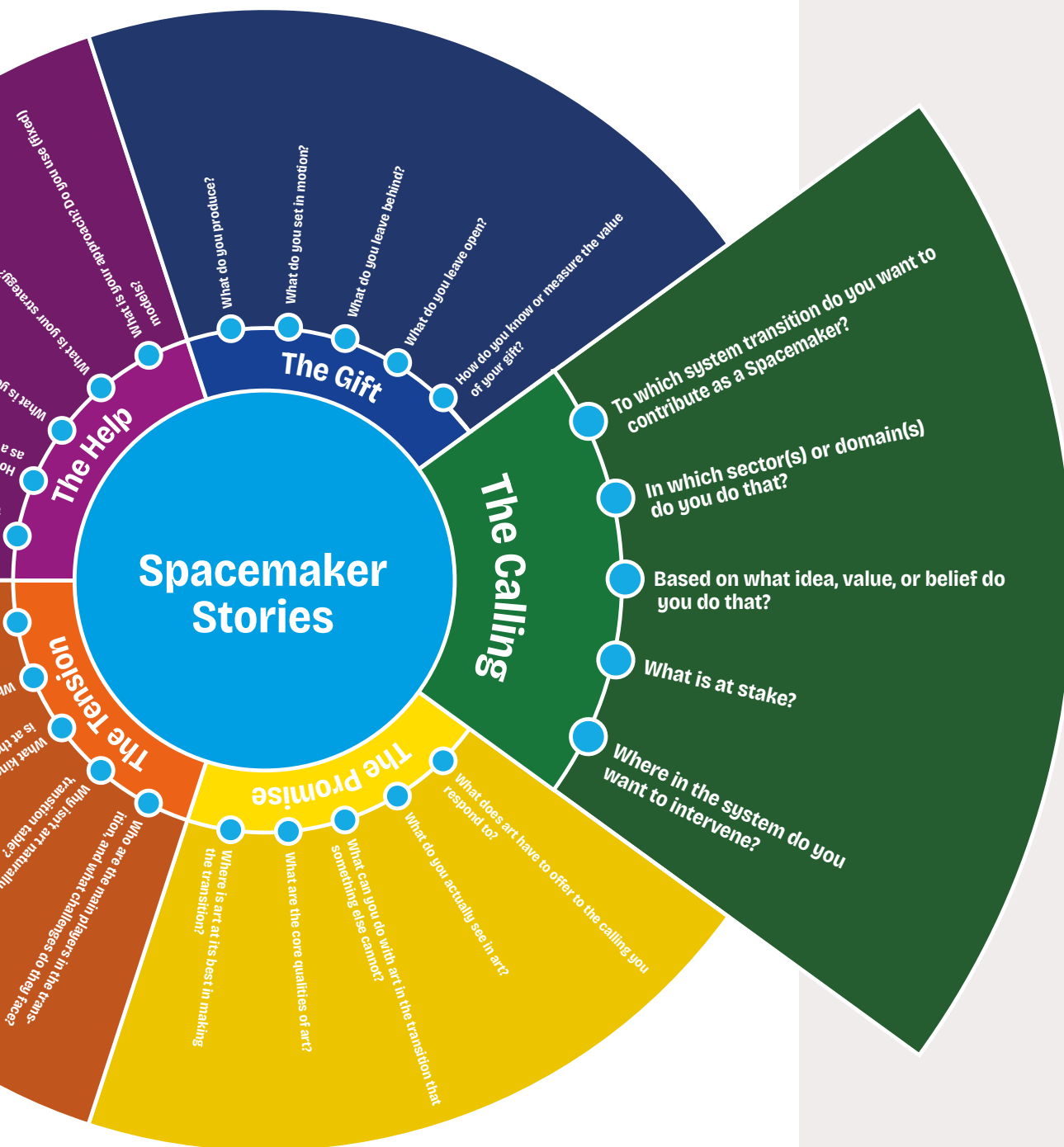
Additionally, you will encounter quotes from the interviews and discussions we conducted within SUSTAIN with Spacemakers, artists, and other stakeholders. Allow yourself to be inspired and discover how diverse perspectives deliver a compelling message on the importance of creating space for art, for all those aiming for a more equitable and sustainable world.

Further inspiration is available on our bookshelf, featuring reading and listening recommendations from Spacemakers and our team. Researcher Marga Rotteveel employs the reed plant as an analogy to comprehend the traits of Spacemakers, thereby offering an alternative viewpoint on their role. Her photographs, alongside the texts from spoken-word artist Ine Mols, inspired by the reed plant, strive for a greater understanding of the complexity of Spacemakers' endeavours.

But in the following pages, we begin with insights from six Spacemakers: Art Partner, Circus Andersom, Future of Work, In4art, V2\_, and Waag. As part of the SUSTAIN research, they have shared their reflections and experiences regarding the call to action that motivates them. Discover how they, in their distinctive ways, create space for art, thereby contributing to the transition towards a sustainable and just world.

Prepare to question yourself, delve deeper, and be inspired by the callings of Spacemakers, artists, and others in this cahier.

*Kim Caarls*



# Spacemaker Stories

Each Spacemaker has a unique story. These stories revolve around the changes they wish to see, the significance of art, how the tension between art and other domains can be utilised, how space for art can be created, and what that can lead to.

We posed six questions to Spacemakers about their stories. The cahier on **The Calling** delves into the call to adventure, exploring what Spacemakers feel compelled to do to create space for art in various contexts, aiming for systemic change. What impact do they seek to have? And what ideas, values, or beliefs motivate their actions? What is at stake?

We asked the Spacemakers to articulate their calling.



## *We want to make visible what is invisible and let unheard voices be heard*

- ART PARTNER

How is it that in the Netherlands, a large group of highly educated, talented, creative thinkers and doers are overlooked while we face enormous societal challenges? This question led to the founding of Art Partner in 2008.

Art Partner believes that art reveals what systems and processes conceal. They collaborate with over forty creative thinkers, including theatre makers, visual artists, dancers, filmmakers, musicians, philosophers, and anthropologists.

Merely approaching issues from a rational standpoint can never create real change. We need both intellect and emotion, as well as love, attention, and space, to genuinely address issues. This can be achieved through artistic intervention. Such an intervention marks the beginning of something greater, sparking a movement that results in enduring change.

An artistic intervention can be carried out in any organisation and within any industry. From this viewpoint, Art Partner is equipped to work anywhere. The only requirement is the courage to step off the beaten path.

## *From Frustration to Wonder*

- CIRCUS ANDERSOM

Circus Andersom aims to unveil an alternative world in an accessible manner—not merely a single world, but a kaleidoscope of realities that reinforce each other. In a time when traditional religions are diminishing in relevance, they champion a new interpretation of calling: a calling that every individual can discover and unfold. This approach highlights the importance of not blindly adhering to institutions but rather creating space to redefine personal beliefs.

As Spacemakers, they are dedicated to developing new ways of experiencing the inner world and connecting physically with the Earth. They strive to transition from frustration to wonder, moving beyond technological determinism and utopian solutions. The emphasis is on fostering 'autonomous dialogues' that inspire wonder, even amid conflicting interests and growing frustrations. Circus Andersom primarily nurtures the inner being of humans, the inner world, facilitating transformative encounters with others, animals, plants, the sky, and the Earth.

## *Pushing back and creating space for what we value*

- FUTURE OF WORK

Future of Work seeks to intervene in the economic domain by uncovering deep-seated beliefs and myths together with artists, researchers, and the public, with the goal of fostering systemic change. They do this by searching for underlying patterns in society.

Future of Work aims for a sustainable, just, and fair economy and questions the foundations of the current neoliberal system. Much is at stake: growing inequality, depletion of humans and nature, climate change, rising fascism, fear of the unknown, and the dominant role of the 1% in a globalised world. What would an economy look like that is rooted in values such as generosity, friendship, kinship, and trust and care for all life on Earth? Art is used here to experiment with alternative economic perspectives.

Future of Work conducts artistic participatory research. They try to make people aware that the economy is not a natural law but is created by us, and therefore we can also change it. The goal is to create an economy that cares for all people, species, and the Earth.

## Approaching technology with ethics before it scales up

- IN4ART

As a Spacemaker, In4Art aims to make a positive difference by contributing to both the climate and digital transitions. In the climate transition, their focus is on rendering industrial processes more sustainable and preparing for the impacts of climate change. In the digital transition, their efforts are directed towards humanising technology, with an emphasis on principles such as privacy, agency, transparency, ecology, and empowerment.

The underlying idea is that while it may not be possible to initiate or halt all developments, it is feasible to guide them. This is achieved through multidisciplinary projects that bring together diverse perspectives. In4Art underscores the importance of engaging with technology ethically and taking the time to thoroughly assess the potential unintended consequences of complex technologies before proceeding with their expansion.

## There's a need for imagination in the high-tech society we live in

- V2\_

What distinguishes V2\_ is their independent thought and action from positions deeply embedded in society, thereby acknowledging the complex societal backdrop against which technological innovation gains its relevance. V2\_ is active in spacemaking within the Digital Culture sector, where they carve out spaces for a wider audience and aim to forge connections with societal domains influenced by technological innovation.

V2\_ pursues this path because they recognize the significance of imagination in our highly technological society. There exists a risk that artists and designers are allotted less space and support to ponder the societal implications of technological advancements, even as the demand for such critical reflection continues to increase.

## Stay with the trouble

- WAAG

As a spacemaker, Waag wants to do things differently by engaging in various types of conversations. They find it important to really stay with the problems, which can sometimes be a bit uncomfortable. They try to follow a human approach, bringing about positive change in what happens.

Waag's goal is not only to tackle difficult things but also to promote understanding, empathy, and collaboration. They do this primarily by having artists collaborate with scientists and businesses, focusing on making things, how people and machines collaborate, and on sustainability. They often focus on equality, emphasising collaboration from equal positions.

# Through the eyes of art: who owns the economy?

Interview with Olga Mink & Godelieve Spaas, by Kim Caarls

'Who owns the economy?' In the spacious, industrial exhibition area of Willem Twee in Den Bosch, the audience is engaged with this question through art at the Future of Work festival (October 5 – 22, 2023). Artistic director Olga Mink and curator Godelieve Spaas share their motivations and describe their calling to contribute to a collective economy that promotes well-being for all, in harmony with the earth, through their artistic festival.

The festival is no place for passive spectators. Encircled by a collection of artworks, each making its own statement or inquiry about who really owns the economy, visitors are encouraged to challenge conventional economic perspectives. The festival is designed to spark a process of economic awareness. Olga states, "It's about providing visitors with the chance to actively engage through reflection and dialogue. Engaging with a theme and establishing a personal viewpoint are the initial steps towards active participation."

All artists challenge visitors to reflect, ask questions, and become aware. For instance, consider the towering quotes with stimulating and provocative propositions about the economy. Or Klaas Burger, who engages the audience with his action research in pursuit of a fair employment agency for Bulgarian workers. At the same time, Carlijn Kingma provides insights into the workings of our monetary system and its impact on economic equality (or the lack thereof) through impressive maps. Oddkin ponders the sound of our voice in the economy and how we can influence it. Otobong Nkanga delves into our relationship with water and earth, while Paola Cirio confronts companies that disguise crimes against nature and humanity. Teresa Feldman reflects on how a world led by women of colour, transgender individuals, and indigenous peoples could foster a world of abundance, thereby contributing to the earth's healing. Arne Hendriks explores the concept of shrinking towards abundance, not just literally by becoming smaller as humans but also by embracing a lifestyle centred on less. Meanwhile, the Exchange project, by 100Hands and researcher Falk Hübner, experiments with alternative forms of exchange as a pathway to a fair economy.





With the festival, Future of Work seeks to challenge the unquestioned acceptance of the existing economic system and explore alternative ways to structure the economy. Godelieve notes, “We gradually observe economic thinking and behaviour asserting dominance in other areas: healthcare, science, culture, and art. The economic system is increasingly shaping the world, rather than the other way around. This gives us all the more reason to resist and create space for what we value, aiming for an economy that nurtures all people, species, and the earth.”

## Space for art

As Spacemakers, Godelieve and Olga strive to genuinely create space for art with their festival in such a way that art is not commodified, not made to serve a functional purpose, but allowed to exist as itself. “This also relates to my deepest motivation: to counteract the commodification of society, culture, and everything we do,” Godelieve says.

She speaks from experience. Godelieve shares, “I allowed myself to be consumed by the economic domain, both as a consultant and as a dancer and creator. I always believed that something was only valuable if it was worth money. It took years for me to find space within myself, as I was so saturated with economic thinking, to really examine this and act differently.” This realisation motivated her to become a Spacemaker.

Godelieve observes that the economic world is becoming increasingly grim due to the threats of climate change, resource shortages, and the relentless pursuit of making everything cheaper and more efficient, which leads to the further exploitation of people and nature. More and more people, she notes, agree with her that change is necessary. She argues that for the significant changes needed, ‘positions must be relinquished’. Specifically, we in the West need to give up our positions. This has become a new focus in her work and life: “How can you occupy a different space? How can you give back, give something away, let go, or stop doing something? And then see what emerges in the rest of that space.” She recalls a recent conversation with a colleague from South Africa about white people not wanting to relinquish what they have, clinging to their positions,



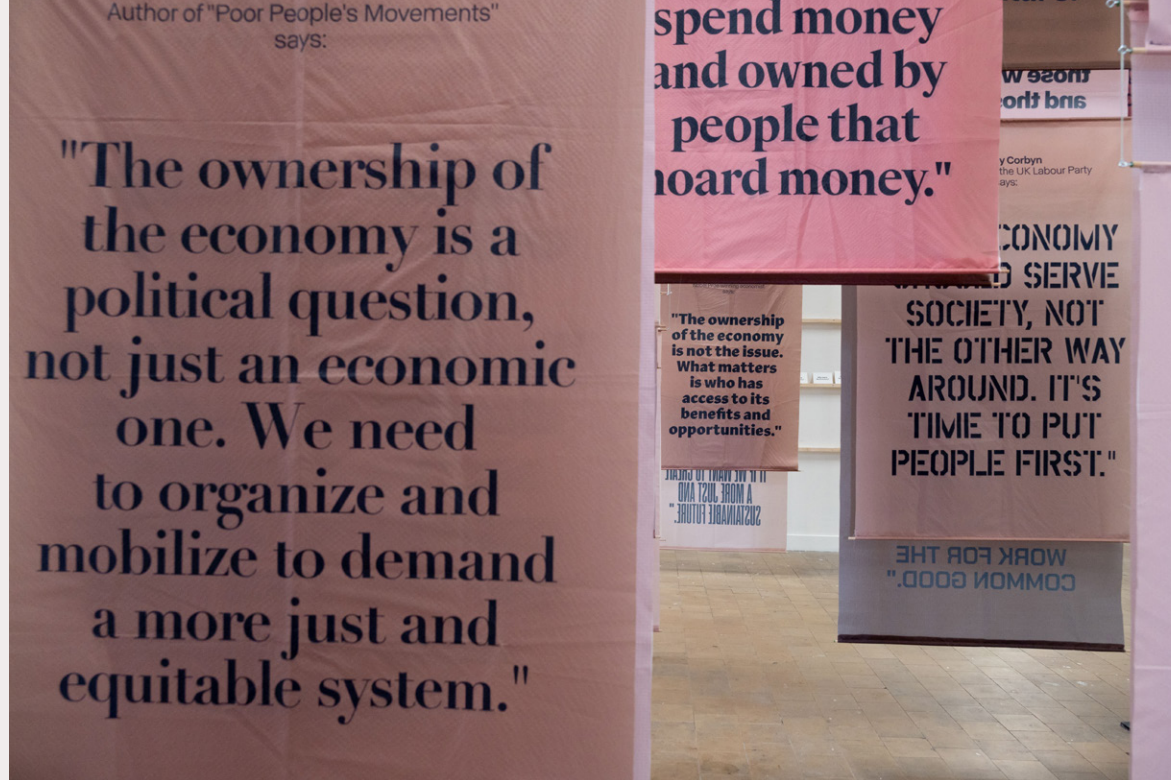
Image 1: Still from Klaas Burger’s work from his action research into a fair employment agency by and for workers from Bulgaria. Photo credit: Ben Nienhuis

Image 2: Still from the video installation by Terasa Borasino about the complex entanglement between ‘human, other-than-human, and more-than-human’ beings. Photo credit: Ben Nienhuis









which leads to significant conflicts. And then black individuals claim the same positions of power, which are equally corrupt. Rather than engaging in a battle for power, Godelieve advocates for redefining these roles by making space. It's not about simply seizing power but about collectively seeking new positions and explicitly avoiding a power struggle. "Who owns the economy?" thus also serves as a call to explore who all can enter the field, who dares to step in, and what can then unfold. "Can we then act differently from how we've acted before?" she questions. "I believe this is a crucial step towards adopting an approach unlike any before."

## Calling

"There's a hole in our economy where our heart should be." This quote, which prominently features on Godelieve's profile picture, encapsulates her mission: "My calling truly lies in counteracting the commodification of everything dear to me and in making space again for art and for what is sacred. My core values (...) are ultimately about healing and love. How can we together, with the earth, create a good life for all of us?"

Olga seeks to understand the deeply rooted ideas about the economy in society, especially regarding economic growth. She aims to expose the core values of the current economy. Here, artistic practice plays a central role. Since she aims for systemic change, understanding these underlying values is essential for her: "If you were to ask where we intervene in the system, I think Future of Work primarily focuses on the foundation of the system. We are increasingly realising that existing beliefs and myths sustain the system. Everything is completely intertwined."

The idea for the festival emerged in 2020 as a response to the consequences of the current capitalist system, which overlooks the depletion and exploitation of people and the earth. We need to move towards a system where degrowth and sustainable consumption are central. Viewing the economy as the way we collectively organise our household, the creators of Future of Work aim to work from a collective responsibility towards alternative proposals and practices for an economy that radically cares for all life on earth. The festival thus strongly emphasises co-creation, where artists, curators, the festival team, partners, and the audience actively contribute to a dynamic exhibition.

Image 4: Installation 'Who Owns the Economy?'. Photo: Ben Nienhuis

Image 5: The interactive and participative environment in the Werkwarenhuis of ConstructLab. Photo: Ben Nienhuis







Godelieve believes in the power of many people committing to change. She feels supported because this aspiration is so widespread: "If I were the only one called, then I don't think I would do it, but it's so broad and in so many places that experimentation is happening. And somewhere, there will be one that is the tipping point. Well, that won't be me, but I will have helped ensure that this tipping point can come."

## Collectivity in practice

In addition to Willem Twee, the festival also unfolds at Werkwarenhuis. The artworks at this location centre on action, creation, and 'practising collectivity'. At the heart of this venue is the pivotal question: 'If the economy is ours, what kind of economy do we want to create together?' By emphasising collaborative art practices, where artworks are not just passively observed but actively shaped with the audience, the public is urged to partake in collective experiences. Together, they forge the groundwork for a new economy based on collectivity, sustainability, and equality. The artworks act as probes into the potential that emerges when we work together toward an economy that is beneficial for both humanity and the planet. Olga states, "Culture shapes the economy and vice versa. In this arena, we engage in artistic and participatory action research to discover alternative rules and narratives for the economy of the future."

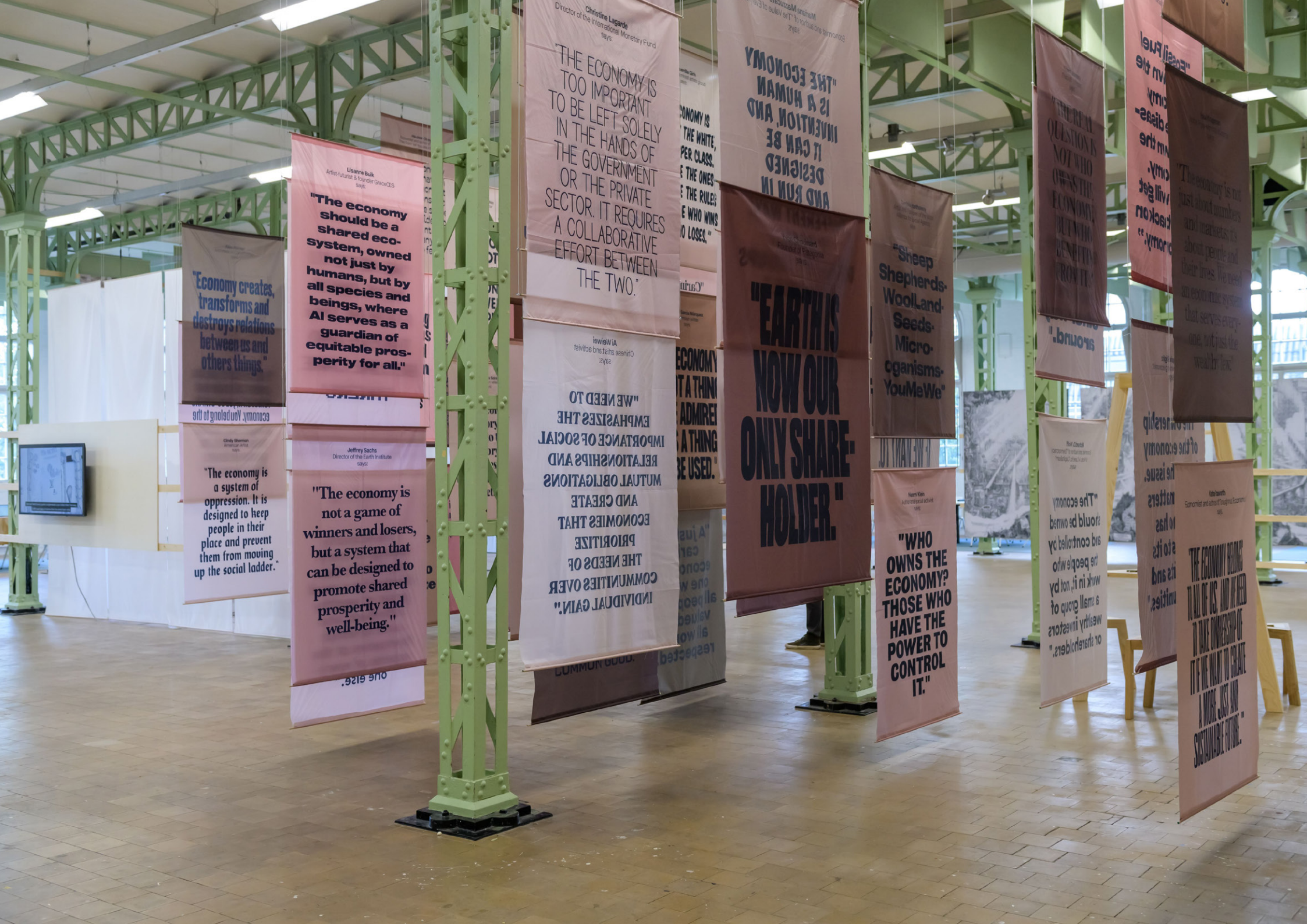
One challenge as a Spacemaker, particularly when collaborating with parties from vastly different sectors, is the need to overcome real barriers. Godelieve describes her approach: "I am someone who creates pathways, akin to mycelium, between these diverse realms, through language, imagery, and form. I navigate between art and economy, science and art, science and economy, and practical application."



Image 6: Workshop, led by artist/designer Cynthia Hathaway: a hands-on experience, working with local wool to discuss the current wool system and its potential as a golden fleece. Photo: Ben Nienhuis

Image 7: Waterworks of Money by Carlijn Kingma. During the festival both her representation of our money system now and three possible scenarios for the future were shown: The valley of debt-free money, The republic of a thousand coins, and The agora of democratic money. Photo: Ben Nienhuis





"The economy is not just about numbers and markets; it's about people and their lives. We need an economic system that serves everyone, not just the wealthy few."

"THE ECONOMY BELONGS TO ALL OF US, AND WE NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT IF WE WANT TO CREATE A MORE JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE."

"THERE ARE QUESTIONS NOT WHO OWNS THE ECONOMY, BUT WHO BENEFITS FROM IT."

"THE ECONOMY IS NOT A GAME OF WINNERS AND LOSERS, BUT A SYSTEM THAT CAN BE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SHARED PROSPERITY AND WELL-BEING."

"Sheep Shepherds- Wool and Seeds- Micro-organisms- YouMeWe"

"WHO OWNS THE ECONOMY? THOSE WHO HAVE THE POWER TO CONTROL IT."

"THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN INVENTION AND IT CAN BE DESIGNED AND RUN IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL."

"EARTH IS NOW OUR ONLY SHAREHOLDER."

Christine Lagarde  
Director of the International Monetary Fund says:  
"THE ECONOMY IS TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LEFT SOLELY IN THE HANDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IT REQUIRES A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE TWO."

"WE NEED TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS AND CREATE ECONOMIES THAT PRIORITIZE THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES OVER INDIVIDUAL GAIN."

Ursula Bauer  
Artist, Activist & Founder Grace4US says:  
"The economy should be a shared ecosystem, owned not just by humans, but by all species and beings, where AI serves as a guardian of equitable prosperity for all."

Jeffrey Sachs  
Director of the Earth Institute says:  
"The economy is not a game of winners and losers, but a system that can be designed to promote shared prosperity and well-being."

"Economy creates, transforms and destroys relations between us and others things."

Chedy Sherman  
American Artist says:  
"The economy is a system of oppression. It is designed to keep people in their place and prevent them from moving up the social ladder."





## Irony

If an organisation aspires to an alternative economy, it inevitably must question whether its own economic practices contribute to that change. The curators asked themselves if hosting one large annual festival is the most effective way to build a growing community working towards an alternative economy. Might it be better, more robust, and particularly more sustainable to distribute this effort throughout the year and connect with existing events, congresses, and festivals? Moreover, considering the energy required from people to organise that one festival, it represents a form of exhaustion that is hardly sustainable for a small team.

Godelieve explains that all works are essentially strategies for effecting change in the economy. "We have amassed an entire collection of strategies, which were only further enriched throughout the festival weeks. The question remains: can we continue this dialogue? Not just at an annual event, but through an ongoing discussion in various places in the city, other cities, and the countryside, always circling back to the question, 'if the economy were yours, how would you shape it?'"

Systemic change also necessitates intertwining with other projects, activities, and institutions. Hence, Future of Work is advancing with a series of meetings that spontaneously arise in various forms and locations. This series of encounters between art, economy, and the public during congresses and festivals utilises a travelling multimedia installation that serves both as the conversation's starting point and its summary.

This initiative was launched in Jatiwangi, Indonesia, and in Rotterdam during the exhibition of the 004-collective – 1 SQUARE METER at Borgerstraat Studios from February 2-4, 2024, alongside ART ROTTERDAM.

With this, they intertwine stories from every corner of the Netherlands and the world, linking them back to the artistic endeavours and economic pioneers in 's-Hertogenbosch.



Image 8: Installation 'Who Owns the Economy?'. Photo: Ben Nienhuis

Image 9 and 10: Workshop Olga Mink at PKN Jakarta in collaboration with Jatiwangi Art Factory. Photo: Jatiwangi Art Factory



# The art of (be)longing

TINEKE ABMA

*Prof. Dr. Tineke Abma serves as Professor of Elderly Participation at the Leiden University Medical Center, within the Department of Public Health & Primary Care Medicine, and is the Executive Director of the Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing.*

We inquired about her calling, her journey to its discovery, and the ways in which she embodies it.

## My calling

Who or what calls me? It's a question that sets everything in motion. I don't have an immediate answer, but through this understanding, I experience a sense of space. This is probably what Spacemakers embody: artists or non-artists who create space within the established order for creativity, imagination, and the undefined.

My first association: As a girl, I aspired to become a nurse. Was that a calling? In part. It was primarily an expectation for girls. I even had a nurse's uniform to rehearse the role. I later realised that it wasn't truly a fit for me. Perhaps this was mainly due to the organisations in which this role was so rigidly defined?

My second association: I feel called when someone appeals to me directly. I recall co-researcher Annyk, who had experienced crises, challenging me in a study on Crisis Intervention with her commitment to genuinely participate in the research. Could we accommodate her psychiatric vulnerability, even if it disrupted our schedule? I felt compelled to honour her request.

This scenario is encapsulated by Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas's concept: 'the face of the Other' appeals to you. The individual who has 'chosen' you





gazes into your eyes and disconcerts you. You are moved from the centre, experiencing a de-centering. It's not about you but about that one Other. In that moment, your moral identity unfolds; a bond emerges from closeness and empathy. Contributing to this connection is my deepest calling.

## Staying close

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman talks about 'moral distance' as the phenomenon where an action is disconnected from its consequences. This occurs regularly within modern organisations. Consider decisions made from boardrooms without the executives seeing the consequences. Or think of the statistical models researchers work with; humanity is far removed there. Screen-based science.

I am reminded of Kinke Kooi, a Frisian artist who has been building – or rather, drawing – a body of work for years and has only recently been discovered. She shares that she felt too much distance from her subject at art school. It was only when she sat directly on her work and disappeared into it that something unique emerged. Kinke creates pastel-coloured works with numerous folds and endless vistas. Through her work, she aims to fill a 'visual vacuum'; to show what is usually not seen in the art world. Her work lacks a wider perspective; it immerses you in domestic, intimate worlds.

One piece particularly speaks to me: 'Under the surface.' Because the underwater world refers to undercurrents in our lives. Like all her work, it features endless details, such as a mini-living room with curtains that part, which can be likened to the womb, a pill strip referencing sexual freedom, a pearl necklace that connects everything, tissues for drying tears or wiping away snot, and minuscule texts. Besides the underworld, there is an overworld with voluptuous flowers.

Like Kinke, I prefer to stay close to reality in my research work because it allows me to be moved

and experience the consequences of my actions. Moreover, by reducing the distance, a different perspective on reality emerges, and phenomena that are not typically investigated come into view. Like Kinke, I enjoy making the invisible, the other, or the abject visible in our society. What do we not see or prefer not to see, yet it exists? Whose lives do we actually know very little about, yet we have constructed various images about them? From or for whom do we shut ourselves off; from whom or what do we not want to be moved by?

Consider the lives of older migrant women. We do not see them because they are distant from us, and we are not truly interested in their lives. We assume that they only take care of their families indoors and do not make a societal contribution. We assume they do not speak the language well, and we do not know how to connect with them. An example of this is Afifa's story. By being very close to her, she entrusted me with her life story.

## Afifa and Othering

Afifa Tadmene is 73 years old and a strong-willed woman who, at a young age, decided to come to the Netherlands from Morocco for study. She tells me that she has never shared her life story with others before. Time and again, she is told that she does not speak the language well, that she has an accent, and perhaps her headscarf also played a role? Eventually, this leads to her no longer sharing her story openly with outsiders.

Women like Afifa experience processes of Othering. These are social construction processes in which an us-versus-them opposition is constructed by attributing certain characteristics to a minority group, thus emphasising the superiority of the majority. Older migrants are thus portrayed as a homogeneous category with stereotypical characteristics. These characteristics overlook the differences within the group and make it more difficult for those who are a minority to participate.

*By reducing the distance,  
a different perspective  
on reality emerges, and  
phenomena that are not  
typically investigated come  
into view*



Image 2: Dancing together at Sfera. Photo: Janine Schrijver

I see how Afifa enjoys being in the centre of my attention. She radiates. She embraces me, wrapping her arms around me for minutes. I also see this with the migrant women in Amsterdam-Oost. A group of twelve elderly women participated in a Photovoice project: they told their stories through photos. Finally, they found a communicative space where they felt safe and familiar. They bear witness, they experience, and they interpret their own lives; in this way, we contribute to epistemic justice.

Epistemic justice means that every person has the right to be a bearer of knowledge. Ethicist Miranda Fricker speaks of a fundamental human capacity that is violated when we exclude someone on a structural basis from the process of knowledge production based on their social position: "To be wronged in

one's capacity as a knower is to be wronged in a fundamental human capacity."

Conceptually, we now see a logical four-step process. First, there is moral distance. We shut ourselves off and are not moved by the Other. We are untouchable. Secondly, this moral distance leads to a process of Othering. The Other appears to be nothing like us, thus creating an us-versus-them binary. Thirdly, this Othering leads us to no longer see people as knowers of reality. Finally, this process leads to feelings of non-belonging. The experience of an uncanny world where you as a human do not belong.

To break this negative chain, proximity in research is necessary, enabling epistemic justice that fosters belonging. Proximity allows for the possibility of being moved.

## Sfera and belonging

From this proximity arises an understanding of the world of older migrant women and what is meaningful to them. Remarkably, they feel so at home with the dance group Sfera, a neighbourhood initiative led by Tadiana de la Fuente. There, the women feel safe and nurtured, experiencing the healing power of dancing together (See image 2). It is remarkable that they allow us into their world, a world that has so far been shielded from the outside world.

What stands out is that these women do not necessarily have the desire to participate in society; they primarily want to be heard and seen and to belong: (be)longing. They find this at Sfera.

## (Be)longing

Back to the need to belong. I find this universal value of belonging echoed in the thoughts of great thinkers and philosophers reflecting on *La condition humaine*. Peacemaker and Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, "We are because we belong."

Belonging is a beautiful but also difficult-to-translate word, which, when pronounced slowly – Be Longing – sounds like a combination of two verbs: being and longing. In other words, the human desire for connection, *longing*, is ultimately necessary for our *being*. In other words, we cannot do without each other and are mutually involved and dependent. Dependency is thus not merely something negative, limiting our freedom and autonomy, as we often assume, but enriching.

Furthermore, I find it remarkable that in English, the words for longing and belonging are very close to each other. They are, as it were, in line with each other and thus seem to express the same thing. Writer Joke Hermesen puts it in her latest book "Onder een nadere hemel. Over heimwee en vertepijn" like this: "Each desire is thus not only fueled by an absence but also by a desire to belong to someone or something."

Belonging thus refers to a desire - a longing to belong - a deep human longing to belong without compromising on individuality. As an (older) person, you feel dependent on the recognition and respect from your environment for your sense of belonging. Belonging therefore presupposes a reciprocal movement between context and person; between welcoming and being welcomed; between giving space and taking up space. Feeling secure, according to Black feminist bell hooks, depends on the extent to which the environment is willing to build communities where self-worth is not derived from superiority over the Other, but from relationships between people who belong to each other.

Belonging is thus not passive. It requires relational work where the binary schema of Us versus Them is questioned. Because precisely there, in the middle ground, in the relationship, inclusion and exclusion take place.

## Art touches and connects beyond words

Artists and designers have much to offer in this regard. They are, in a way, masters of engaging with others; they open themselves to what presents itself with all their senses. They are responsive and receptive, practising moral proximity by allowing themselves to be moved. In doing so, they realise belonging. They are not so much focused on the lack or illness (a form of Othering), but rather look at everything that emerges, the whole person. Their focus is on a creative process where essential experiences and feelings are expressed, and they do so with care and from a place of caring. My aim here is not just about art with a capital 'A,' but about sensory experience as in the original meaning of the Greek term 'aisthesis.' In this view, there is an artist in every person.

A good example is Marc Vlemmix's inclusive dance group. Marc developed Parkinson's disease at a relatively young age. The worst part is feeling reduced



to being just a patient. Dance liberates him from the confines of the patient role. Suddenly, his body can do more, boundaries are pushed, the disease is no longer an enemy, and he can embrace himself and others again through dance. Through dance, he persists: 'I dance, therefore I exist' - a nod to Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. In dance, wordless emotions and memories stored in the body are expressed. They offer an indescribable beauty, recognition, and solace for participants and spectators.

## No effect without affect

What makes dance, theatre, or singing together so valuable, and how does such an activity differ from, for example, physiotherapy? In seeking an answer to that question, we cannot ignore the proximity

and embodied experience of art and its affective dimensions. Here, the work of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze is helpful. He describes affect as being physically touched by an event, where reason is sidelined. This means that the intense experience takes place before reason or intellect can interfere, showing that our consciousness extends over a much broader range than that of cognition. "Affect is connected to ... a sense of aliveness," says Professor of Applied Theater Studies James Thompson.

In art, it's not so much about the transmission of information or meaning, but primarily about sensual, sensory perception. There is an intensification of experience, and people are temporarily drawn out of their everydayness. Something resonates within people, and that "emotional tone" brings about inspiration. That is why art touches and connects

beyond words and realises belonging. And that is why my team and I study affects in our research on art with older adults.

We do not focus on measurable effects and clinical outcomes such as reduced stiffness or improved mobility but instead look at the experience at the moment when older adults participate in an art activity (See image 3).

## Conclusion

"We are because we belong," said Desmond Tutu. We may pretend to be independent, but in essence, we are deeply connected to the world around us. In the call that the Other makes on us and the connection, we become human; we are seen, heard, comforted, and recognized, and in turn, we can experience meaning and significance by being there for others. Artists know better than anyone how to create a space where participants meet each other from human to human, thus contributing to my calling: to contribute with my work to a world in which people feel secure and belong to each other, in short, belonging.



Image 3: Dancing together at Sfera. Photo: Janine Schrijver



We do not live in an era of change, but in a change of era.

- Jan Rotmans

The world is on fire and I would want to extinguish it, but the fire is bigger than me.

- Froukje Veenstra

We [as Spacemakers] pinpoint the pressing matters or concerns in society, particularly regarding the environment or societal ecological conditions. Based on these issues, we formulate questions. Artists contribute with their own inquiries, integrating them into these clusters of activity.

- Spacemaker

Later, people will look back at this period and ask: where were you when it mattered? Did you just stand by and watch, or did you enter the arena and try to make a real change?

- Jan Rotmans

The concept of self-organisation, or emergence, is intriguing because it isn't inherently positive or negative. As a Spacemaker, you need to consider ethical, moral, and societal values and needs. You can then combine these elements in a petri dish to foster collaboration and growth.

- Spacemaker

As a Spacemaker, you're an integral part of the interactions and relationships that are unfolding. Akin to the dynamic between materials reacting in a petri dish. Shapes and patterns emerge organically through this process, which is iterative in nature. While you may develop an intuition for guiding the growth of minerals, it's important to note that the minerals themselves are growing autonomously. Rather than commanding them to grow in a specific way, you observe their natural growth patterns, find them intriguing, and continue to iterate based on the ongoing relationship with the materials.

- Spacemaker

# Do the work

Interview with Kees Klomp,  
by Kim Caarls

On a very mild December day (one that breaks all previous climate records), I spoke with Kees Klomp online about his calling and his activism. We immediately start with the weather: 2023 was the warmest year ever recorded since measurements began in 1850. A confronting fact for those concerned about climate change, and the associated loss of biodiversity, increasing poverty, and inequality. I find these major issues overwhelming. Kees understands well how this kind of news can grip us. It affects him too. Yet he believes that we can make a difference.

In this cahier about The Calling, it revolves around the difference you want to make, how you feel called to contribute to a systemic change. Although I also feel the call to contribute myself, I notice at the same time that when we talk about systemic change, it becomes grand. Sometimes too grand. Not because the necessity of that systemic change is unclear to me, but because the scale of the crisis is so overwhelming: it's about the climate, about all the children dying daily from war, violence, or poverty, while elsewhere in the world people don't know what to do with their money. It's about all those people drowning at sea in search of a better life because we are so desperately trying to protect our borders that we have lost all sense of humanity.

How can you prevent yourself from losing all courage? That's what I asked Kees Klomp. To avoid becoming completely hopeless himself, he wrote a children's book. Because big changes can sometimes be very overwhelming, Kees thought, "Could you make that big systemic change that is needed smaller, more personal, and closer?" He shows that it is possible in his bedtime story 'The Rainmaker', in which the little bird Olla demonstrates the power of small steps. Through small steps, you can achieve great things. A hopeful book in dark times, if you ask me.

## Activism

Like Olla, Kees is committed, but to a radically new economic narrative: the Meaning Economy. His narrative goes beyond prioritising the well-being of all people; it places nature as a whole at its core. Kees advocates for creating an economic ecology in which humans adapt to nature, rather than the other way around. I am curious about his journey and asked him where his activism comes from.

*The process of being moved, that's what purpose is about. It's the conscious choice to make your life bigger than just your own interests and your own world.*

Laughing, he says: "I think I was born an activist! No, not really. But I have always been someone who cares about things. And I had a very special grandfather. On Saturdays, when I went to my grandparents' house on my bike, we would spend the whole afternoon talking about the state of the world over a cup of tea. My grandfather was one of the most social, empathetic beings I have ever met. He did everything for other people and could also explain very well why it was important to be an activist, to make a difference. And yes, that has shaped me, you know, that's personal development."

Kees shares that the question of calling, about what drives people to contribute to change, has also preoccupied him. He has interviewed social entrepreneurs, finding a common thread that people are moved by the misery in the world, feeling a purpose, as Kees calls it.

"Many people oversimplify 'purpose' as a kind of noun. Something that organisations claim for themselves after a day in the countryside with a white flip-chart full of fancy words, with the idea that you find your 'purpose'. That's total nonsense. Purpose finds you, and in my opinion, social enterprises are the living proof of that. In every founding story of every social entrepreneur, there is a calling. It's in a story where the entrepreneur is personally addressed by a societal issue. No social entrepreneur starts their enterprise with 'I've got nothing

better to do, so let's eradicate poverty or something'. Never. There's always a specific moment, and it's also quite remarkable that the entrepreneur in question often vividly remembers that story. So, the process of being moved, that's what purpose is about. It's the conscious choice to make your life bigger than just your own interests and your own world."

I remember the moment I first felt called. It was around 1988, I was about nine, and I saw a segment on TV about factory farming. I was so shocked that I immediately decided to stop eating meat. In the village where I grew up, where a factory always wafted the smell of animal feed across the village, my decision was not immediately embraced. My grandmother did her best but thought it was unsociable and unhealthy, and she always tried to convince me to eat at least 'a little bit' of meat. Kees also felt called for the first time in his early youth:

"There was a very defining moment. I was about ten. We were eating, and I remember that a special news bulletin was on about Nigeria, because there was a disaster happening there [the Biafra War]. I can still vividly remember that image. On TV, I literally saw a child dying, and I remember pushing my plate away. I couldn't eat anymore. I was so touched by what I saw. And I also remember my mother telling me: 'yes, but eat your food, boy, because what's happening there is terrible. But that's there and this is here, and you can't change anything about it here.'"

"The following Saturday, I rode my little bike to my grandpa's, and he had a completely different reaction than my mother. My grandpa told me, 'yes, but it's very good that you can't swallow another bite because it's simply unacceptable that we throw food in the trash here while people are dying a few hours flight away. That's not a coincidence, that's a distribution problem.' And I remember riding back home realising that what my mother said wasn't true. It's not there, it's here. We do things here that cause people there to be hungry there."

## Hope in troubled times

Kees also talks about the birth of his youngest son, which awakened the climate activist in him: "That was a second defining moment when I told myself: this is my calling. With the time I have left, I'm going to fight 24 hours a day, seven days a week for my son's generation. And for all the children born since then, unable to stand up for their interests yet inevitably bearing the brunt of our destructive actions."

"At the same time, I find it really hard. Like now, with the climate summit in Dubai, and you just see that it's not at all about our children. They don't give a damn, it's all just about money. Then, I find it very difficult to hold onto any hope, to be honest."

*Hope in the Buddhist sense of the word is 'to strive for the good, without certainty that your efforts will be rewarded'. So, hope is only hope when you just do it, without harbouring expectations*

I can imagine that. Where do you then draw hope from? "I draw hope from Buddhism, primarily because it recognizes suffering as an essential part of life, helping me to bear it. And the second thing Buddhism teaches me is to befriend all my emotions. So, sadness and anger, even despair, are just emotions."

And how does such a belief that 'suffering is part of life' relate to your activism, where you actually want to fight against suffering?

"I don't fight against suffering. Look, hope in the Buddhist sense of the word is 'to strive for the good, without certainty that your efforts will be rewarded'. So, hope is only hope when you just do it, without harbouring expectations. Everything I do is aimed at the most mundane lesson I've ever had from my teacher, three words: Do the work."

"I can do nothing but strive for the good, with loving kindness, compassion, and empathy for all living beings. That effort is enough for me, and I don't know if it will yield results. But the fact that I do it is enough for me."

## Art and utopia

As of January 1st, Kees Klomp has started as a program manager at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences to develop a new program focused on agency. "With the agency program, I aim to create a sort of sanctuary for activism within the university," Kees shares enthusiastically. "Initially, I won't be teaching; instead, I'll encourage them to create. Whether it's art, an exhibition, a dialogue evening, or a blog or film they're making doesn't matter. The goal is to engage the students actively."

This touches on the importance of art. Artists have the power to challenge and criticise the norm, using their imagination to depict a utopia. I asked Kees what he takes from art into his teaching: "We need the arts, especially the imagination of artists, but also the ability to put oneself at risk - because that's what artists do by definition."

When I think of agency, as a sociologist, the concept of structure immediately comes to mind. I asked Kees how his narrative on agency relates to structure, to the system? "I tried to summarise that in the booklet you just showed [The

Rainmaker]. There, I tried to tell a very old archetypal story of the little hummingbird. A story as a metaphor for courage, but also for the power and strength you have as an individual. To explain to students that it matters that you do something."

Jan Rotmans talks about the illusion of powerlessness, the idea many people have that activism doesn't pay off. Who am I, after all? "That's actually the greatest strength of current turbo-capitalism and neoliberalism, that it doesn't even need a system to sustain itself. We perpetuate it because we can no longer imagine a world beyond capitalism," says Kees.

It has become a belief, and a belief is not easily questioned. But if we don't question the dominant logic of the current economic system, then we can't change the system. "We are the system", Kees emphasises. "Yet, the system is a story and nothing more. So, we can question and fight it. It just takes effort, like the little bird in the story [The Rainmaker] that flies towards the fire rather than away from it, embodying enormous courage. That is the ultimate characteristic of an activist: to face it."

"We should not seek systemic change but narrative change. Our belief system is being challenged. The ideals we hold sacred—capitalism, consumerism, materialism, individualism—all instilled in us from a young age, are now being questioned. This leads to an existential crisis when we realise the prevailing narrative is flawed. Yet, no alternative narrative exists. Artists then say, 'Let me paint you, let me envision for you, a different world.'"

A beautiful message, but, as I ask Kees, how can we convey it? What is the biggest challenge in communicating this message, and how can art contribute?

"The greatest obstacle is changing your belief system. People don't usually change their belief systems on their own. Hence, I employ the metaphor of the existential crisis. I increasingly feel that we are all collectively experiencing one. We've created a material system that appears to provide the comfort we need. This isn't much different from an alcoholic whose life seems okay as long as they remain drunk. However, eventually, being drunk becomes a problem. It's no longer pleasant; it's just a way to numb the pain. I strongly believe we are in a similar situation now. Collectively, we no longer enjoy capitalism and materialism, but they do offer us a certain level of comfort and painlessness. We need to relinquish that identity to make space



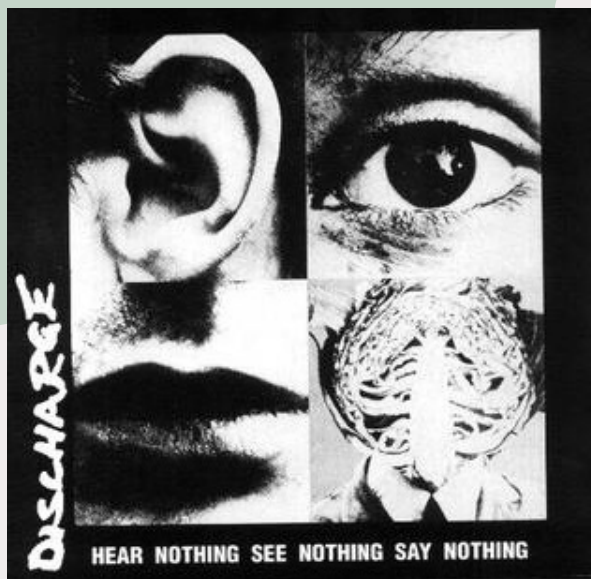


Image 1: "Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing" (1982): One of Discharge's most iconic albums, the cover features a skeleton covering its ears, eyes, and mouth, referring to the expression 'See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' and criticises people's tendency to turn away from injustice and shut themselves off from the problems in the world.

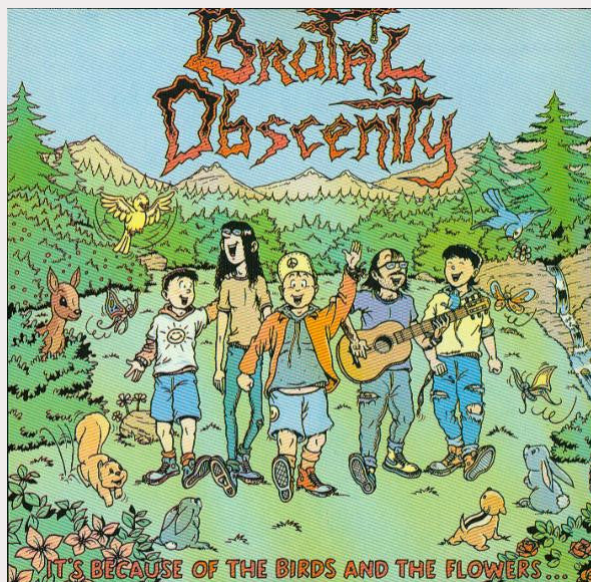


Image 2: Artwork by Kees Klomp's punk band Brutal Obscenity (1987-1994) by Roel Smit

for an immaterial narrative, where we reinvent ourselves. This process is akin to dying. It's about letting your old self die."

Kees has a background in the punk movement. When I inquire about punk's influence on him, he highlights that punk focuses on expressing societal disdain and intentionally shocking those unaffiliated with the movement.

"I've grown quite accustomed to people vocally expressing, screaming, their societal disdain. A significant element of punk is its ability to irritate those who are disconnected from it. This irritation is a deliberate choice by the punk movement, designed to shock and unsettle the uninvolved, which I find beautiful. I believe that's what many artists do, albeit in very different ways."

Punk, as a form of art, isn't solely about the singer's shouting, according to Kees, but more so about the inventive ways lyrics express dissatisfaction and disdain. The artwork associated with punk music is also an art form: "When I look at those old records and the artwork we had then, that was unequivocally art. You can distinctly identify a style, particularly in the scene I was part of. It was remarkably consistent, incorporating a critique that was starkly black-and-white, exemplified by the artwork of the punk band Discharge. This offers a clear insight into the powerful visual language employed"

Artists, in various ways, share a common desire to creatively express dissatisfaction and disdain. The mention of the consistent and starkly black-and-white artwork of Discharge highlights the potency of visual language as a tool for conveying messages. Artists are adept at creating awareness, which is the catalyst for all change. Realising that powerlessness is an illusion, and acknowledging that we can change things, opens the door to making those changes a reality.

This also involves being touched, experiencing a kind of awareness through being affected, which opens you up to a calling. "Exactly, yes, and when I look at my own Buddhist teachers, they serve as guides on the path to awareness for me. But, without any exaggeration, what they do is fundamentally no different from what artists do. Buddhist teachers tell stories, plain and simple. These stories may hail from ancient times or from just the day before yesterday, but they invariably serve as metaphors from which we can learn. And that, in my view, is a form of expression. That's what art is truly about."

*Kees Klomp is an independent entrepreneur and program manager of AGENCY! at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. He acts from deeply rooted values that stem from his youth and the ethical upbringing by his grandfather, a socially engaged dockworker from IJmuiden. After nearly 15 years of working as a marketing consultant, he resigned from the conventional business world in 2006 and moved to Drenthe, where he currently lives with his wife and three children. Inspired by his Buddhist worldview, he decided to exclusively use his knowledge and skills in the field of business development to improve the world. Since then, Kees has passionately dedicated himself to the Purpose Economy, aiming to create awareness that our actions encompass more than just financial outcomes. It's about what truly matters and our core values. In this cahier about making a difference, about calling, about the role of art, what is valuable, and what is at stake, Kees could not be missing.*



# Call to action

TOM MAASSEN

When I contemplate the concept of a calling, two words quickly come to mind: 'given name' and 'profession'. Those who experience a calling feel personally addressed, called by name. This notion carries a religious connotation. Such a calling can manifest in various forms, including hobbies, artistic expressions, pilgrimages, volunteer work, parenthood, and different professions. Traditionally, caring professions are strongly motivated by a calling. *Caritas*, or charity—childcare being its prime example—is an ancient virtue that emanates directly from the heart.

In the Netherlands, charity—defined as 'acting out of love' and 'even when receiving nothing in return'—is now well-organised within volunteer work. Its presence is evident in caring professions such as nursing and caregiving, for instance, through the common assertion 'it's not about me'.

However, this altruistic attitude renders the individual professional vulnerable within contemporary organisations. Healthcare organisations today are not founded on charity but are driven by efficiency, management, capital, control, and accountability. This has led nurses to increasingly unite and organise over recent decades, pursuing professional development towards Evidence-Based Practice and phenomena like nursing leadership, aiming for improved care and greater influence. Despite these efforts, it remains challenging for many professionals to escape the constraints of existing organisational cultures and their dominant parameters, especially in sectors such as elder care.



Making the significant workload of the coming decades appealing to both future potential employees and current staff necessitates a creative renewal of both the work and its environment. There's a demand for individuals capable of viewing organisations and their prevailing mores through an unconventional lens. Artists can play a crucial role in this—not out of charity, nor for free. Today, the healthcare sector offers numerous subsidies, enabling artists—who feel a calling to contribute to a caring society—to also manage their finances. Looking beyond the Dutch political landscape of the upcoming years, I believe it's possible to cultivate a new language in collaboration with nurses and caregivers in elder care, one that they, too, will embrace. A language rich in possibilities, acknowledging vulnerability and fostering genuine connections, grounded in lived experience and a nuanced understanding of self-interest. This language enables a robust response to the call and encourages open exchange, both among professionals and with the older generation we are all on the path to becoming.

There is still a long way to go to get there (it would be nice if I could experience some of it once I belong to the target group). It's a language that needs space to grow and to be tuned, a development that needs to be protected and, from time to time, guarded and fought for.

*Tom Maassen is a researcher in Care Aesthetics at Leyden Academy on Vitality and Aging. In his 'care aesthetic workshop,' Tom works with artists, elderly people and healthcare professionals to find new ways to talk about caring, in order to contribute to the development of future healthcare professionals.*

Image 1: Jan Van Delen, Caritas (1673-78)



# Searching for space

Interview with  
Marcel Kampman,  
by Kim Caarls

*"Your astronaut if you want some space,"* is how Marcel Kampman's LinkedIn page introduces him. As a researcher into Spacemakers, this phrase immediately caught my attention. I quickly became engrossed in his "Happyplaces" project, a playful research endeavour by Marcel. This project aims to learn from a diverse group of individuals on how they create or facilitate space and then translate these insights into practical tools that can help create better spaces where people can find their "happy places."

Marcel's Happy Places project is centred on the creation of space, both physical and mental. This concept was born out of his work as a creative strategist, where he aided organisations in carving out space for creativity, which Marcel views as essential in an ever-changing world. Surprisingly, he found that such space is often scarce, even among creatives like himself. This was intriguing, as one might expect creative

agencies to foster environments conducive to optimal work. He discovered that constraints were not solely due to budgets and time but also related to factors like salary, recognition, and the work environment.

Marcel is a strong proponent of the importance of space for creativity and strives to create environments where individuals feel comfortable and are free to become inspired and meet new people. Driven by curiosity, he launched a research initiative to uncover the reasons behind the scarcity of creative spaces: the Happyplaces Project. He is exploring ways to establish such "happy places." Having conducted over 1000 interviews, each posing the question, "How do you create space?" he eagerly shares these stories to inspire others. Moreover, he wants to develop tools with which people can create space for themselves, in their environment, and the wider world. To then be able to create new spaces where people find space.



Image 1: A 'Happyplaces Journey' - a walking workshop outside through the streets of Lisbon (November 2019). Photo: Marcel Kampman



## Connection

As a Spacemaker, Marcel himself creates space – space that fosters open and honest dialogue. Despite his background in making and creating, Marcel now places a greater emphasis on facilitating conversations. In these discussions, his goal is to carve out space. Additionally, he organises events to connect people and ideas and is developing a book and an online platform to disseminate his findings on 'Happy Places.' He seeks to meet people, learn from them, satisfy his curiosity, and share his discoveries.

He also established the *causatives*. This initiative began when someone frequently referred to him as a 'causer'. From this, Marcel coined 'causatives,' a term he uses to describe action-oriented individuals. In 2004, he registered the domain name, and since then, causatives has evolved into a growing and diverse group of people dedicated to making a difference. They welcome new ideas and strive for positive change. The aim is not to form a collective but to gather an informal assembly of individuals with varied backgrounds and skills to collaborate on projects aimed at improving the world. The group welcomes anyone who embodies the qualities of a 'causative': proactive, creative, and inspirational.

Marcel champions a transition aimed at enhancing understanding among individuals. "Simply put, if we fail to understand each other, we cannot advance together. Consequently, the ensuing conversation is rendered futile. Therefore, if mutual comprehension is absent, everything else loses its significance." Without mutual understanding, further collaboration and progress become challenging.

Marcel's primary motivation is fostering understanding and connections among people. "As a designer, I'm essentially a connector and translator. I focus on identifying what is necessary to collectively address and solve specific challenges." He deeply values the role of communication and the sharing of diverse viewpoints and ideas. His objective is to demonstrate that various perspectives exist and that there is no

single, absolute truth. He aspires to create a setting where individuals are receptive to each other's thoughts and experiences, working together to find universally acceptable solutions.

Marcel is convinced that every aspect of our lives, including the solutions we propose, arises from continuous dialogue and reassessment. Learning from our environment and incorporating new insights enables us to address broader societal issues. He highlights the significance of ongoing reflection and the quest for better ways to comprehend and support one another. "Overcoming differences is challenging, yet I aim for people to recognize that they, like everyone else, are right. This may seem paradoxical since 'being right' is often perceived as exclusive. But, of course, that's not the case."

## New stories

Marcel is guided in his work by the desire to make complexity understandable. This pertains to language as well—how we use words, their meanings, and how they are perceived. This is relevant to the term 'systemic transition' too. Marcel harbours a certain resistance to the words 'system' and 'transition,' particularly when they are combined. He views the system as merely a human-made construct, characterised by agreements that have led to dependencies. He advocates for a more organic approach, inspired by nature. "When we think of a system, our minds often turn to machines and gears, but it would be far more enlightening to consider organic growth. How does that occur? In a forest, forty percent of it may perish to sustain the whole. Therefore, it's crucial for some processes to halt. Yet, we tend to persist with everything."

And then there's transition. He emphasises that transition, by definition, always exists. Changes are constantly occurring, and human existence is in continual transition, driven by survival instincts. "What I find complicated is, when we talk about systemic transition, does that mean we need to drastically

*Overcoming differences is challenging, yet I aim for people to recognize that they, like everyone else, are right. This may seem paradoxical since 'being right' is often perceived as exclusive. But, of course, that's not the case.*

revise our perspective on how change occurs, or should we simply remain aware of the fact that we're in the midst of it and think about how we deal with it?"

His focus is not so much on initiating new projects but rather on presenting alternative perspectives and facilitating conversations that can yield new insights. "My role isn't necessarily to start a pop-up store with local tea; that idea appeals to me less. I'm more focused on showing alternatives, demonstrating that things can be different, making it imaginable and understandable. People should think: 'Oh, I thought the world was always just A, but apparently, there's also B'. And hopefully, then they think: 'If there's a B, maybe there's also a C'. That would be nice."

Due to the large and abstract nature of many of today's problems, it's difficult to see direct relationships between actions and their consequences. "For example, if we go on holiday by plane and come back to find that a part of our house has been damaged. Then, you don't go on holiday once, and your house doesn't get damaged. You go again, and your house turns out to be damaged again. It would have taken three instances for you to see that there's a direct relationship between your actions and their effects. That would be extremely helpful, but in reality, these are all long-term processes that we don't fully understand together." This can sometimes lead to a lack of understanding among people.

Therefore, he stresses the importance of collective awareness. For this, people need to be able to see and understand alternatives and ask the right questions. To achieve this, Marcel advocates better listening to each other and developing an understanding of each other's worldviews and experiences. In this endeavour, art and imagination are essential, according to Marcel, for presenting alternatives and new stories to address our societal challenges.



Image 2: A visit to Tokyo to share the Happyplaces project at Shibaura House. Photo: Ryuichiro Suzuki



For over 70 years economics has been fixated on GDP, or national output, as its primary measure of progress. That fixation has been used to justify extreme inequalities of income and wealth coupled with unprecedented destruction of the living world. For the twenty-first century a far bigger goal is needed: meeting the human rights of every person within the means of our life-giving planet.

- Kate Raworth

The political realm has long failed to recognize the importance of art, with the actions of Secretary Halbe Zijlstra twelve years ago inflicting wounds that have yet to heal. But from now on, it will become apparent that the very art deemed so non-essential will be the saviour of democracy – and that imagination is precisely what's lacking in political thought. (...) But now, as crises accumulate and chatbots make their entrance, attention seems to be shifting back towards a moral orientation for the future. With elections looming, there's a call for a modestly downscaled version of the grand narrative, a human story centred around human values.

- Maxim Februari

It is generally acknowledged that there is an urgent need to transition to sustainable food systems, taking into account social and environmental food system issues. It is important to have diverse perspectives and reflections on a system that is so connected, complex and depleted. (...) By heavily basing the project on experiments and creating demonstrators, we trigger not only conversations, but also actively work towards testing and validation in the real environment. This affects both food practitioners as the public by guiding questions on the position of food in the world. This is much needed to enable responsible innovation in the food chain.

- Spacemaker

All living organisms grow. But in nature there is a self-limiting logic to growth: organisms grow to a point of maturity, and then maintain a state of healthy equilibrium. When growth fails to stop – when cells keep replicating just for the sake of it – it's because of a coding error, like what happens with cancer. This kind of growth quickly becomes deadly. (...)

It's not growth itself that matters – what matters is how income is distributed, and the extent to which it is invested in public services. And past a certain point, more GDP isn't necessary for improving human welfare at all.

- Jason Hickel

## 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 calling

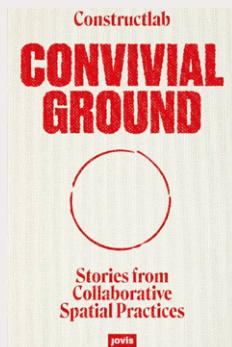
The question is not whether we change  
for we will – always  
Even without you, even without me  
only time

The question is not whether we change  
but in which direction  
Will we grow or perish  
spread, intertwine, connect  
or merely continue to exist

The question is not whether we change  
but with whom  
Who are we, and who are the others?  
With whom will we thrive,  
and whom will we eradicate?

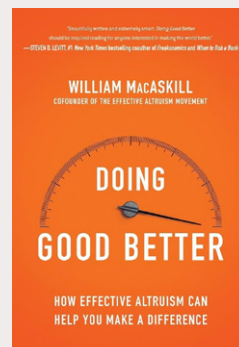
It's time to bring about that change





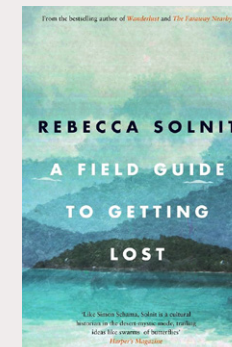
**Constructlab, Pouzenc, J., Römer, A. & Zuiderwijk, P. (eds.) (2023). Convivial Ground. Stories from Collaborative Spatial Practices.** Jovis.

A book about collaborative practices as opportunistic experiments and their potential role in creating convivial societies: societies where people live together harmoniously and support each other in an atmosphere of equality, mutual respect, and cooperation.



**Macaskill, W. (2016). Doing Good Better. Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference.** Guardian Faber Publishing.

Most of us want to make a difference. We donate to charities, buy Fairtrade coffee, or try to reduce our carbon emissions. Rarely, however, do we know if we are truly helping. Macaskill shows how through simple actions you can improve thousands of lives - including your own.



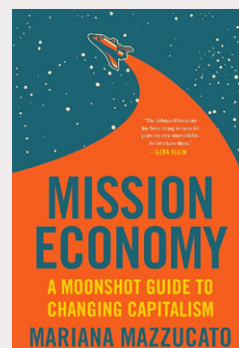
**Solnit, R. (2005). A Field Guide to Getting Lost.** Penguin Books.

In A Field Guide to Getting Lost, Rebecca Solnit draws from her own life to explore issues such as wandering, getting lost, and the value of the unknown. The result is a breathtaking case for uncertainty.



**Kramer, A. (2019). Ben jij al activist? Organisatieverandering in de betekenis-economie.** Business Contact.

"Are You an Activist Yet?" encourages organisations to integrate social issues into their business operations. Kramer highlights the shift towards the purpose economy, where societal impact is central. She provides concrete ways to have a direct impact on your organisation. It is a practical and visionary book for anyone who wants to contribute to a sustainable and social society, regardless of their position or role within the organisation.



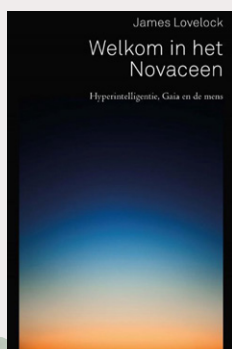
**Mazzucato, M. (2021). Mission Economy. A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism.** HarperCollins.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, capitalism was already at an impasse with no answers to crucial issues such as diseases, inequality, and environmental crisis. Mariana Mazzucato advocates for a new approach, inspired by the 'moonshot' programs, to tackle major challenges. We need to be innovative, engage in public-private partnerships, and restructure capitalism to be inclusive, sustainable, and innovative.



**Twaalfhoven, M. (2020). Het is aan ons. Waarom we de kunstenaar in onszelf nodig hebben om de wereld te redden.** Atlas Contact.

Merlijn Twaalfhoven shows us how art can contribute to changing the world. He shares his experiences as a composer and theatre maker and encourages us to embrace the artist's mindset. By integrating creativity and wonder into our daily lives, we can collectively make a difference for a better world.



**Lovelock, J. (2020). Welkom in het Novaceen. Hyperintelligentie, Gaia en de mens.** Atlas Contact.

James Lovelock presents a new theory about the future of life on earth in "Novacene." He argues that the Anthropocene is over, and we are now entering the Novacene, an era in which artificial intelligence will create new forms of life. These beings will be much more intelligent than humans but will also depend on the health of the planet.



**Simard, S. (2021). Op zoek naar de moederboom. Ontdek de wijsheid van bossen.** Uitgeverij Prometheus.

Suzanne Simard, a professor of forest ecology at the University of British Columbia, writes a reminder to listen to our primitive selves and to remember with humility how little we know about the world.

# The Calling - Bookshelf



# 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](http://www.lectoraatchangemanagement.nl).

# Colophon

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