

# TEN SION

**SUSTAIN**

making space  
for art in  
transitions  
that matter

# Table of contents

**Introduction** **3**

**Editorial** **6**

**Spacemakers Stories** **7**

**Navigating tensions in Spacemaking** · Waag **10**

**Spacemakers: gold diggers or gold delvers?** · Sandra Boer & Jetske Freeve **17**

**Balancing Spacemaking and artistic practices: Circus Andersom** · Marga Rotteveel **19**

**Reed as Spacemaker / Spacemaker as reed** · Marga Rotteveel **23**

**Art doesn't make our work easier, but it does make it more valuable** · Verily Klaassen **30**

**Analogy between Spacemakers and the Reed Plant: an alternative perspective** · Marga Rotteveel & Ine Mols **35**

**Sustain: impressies uit het maakproces** **37**

**Bookshelf** **45**

**Research team** **47**



# 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.

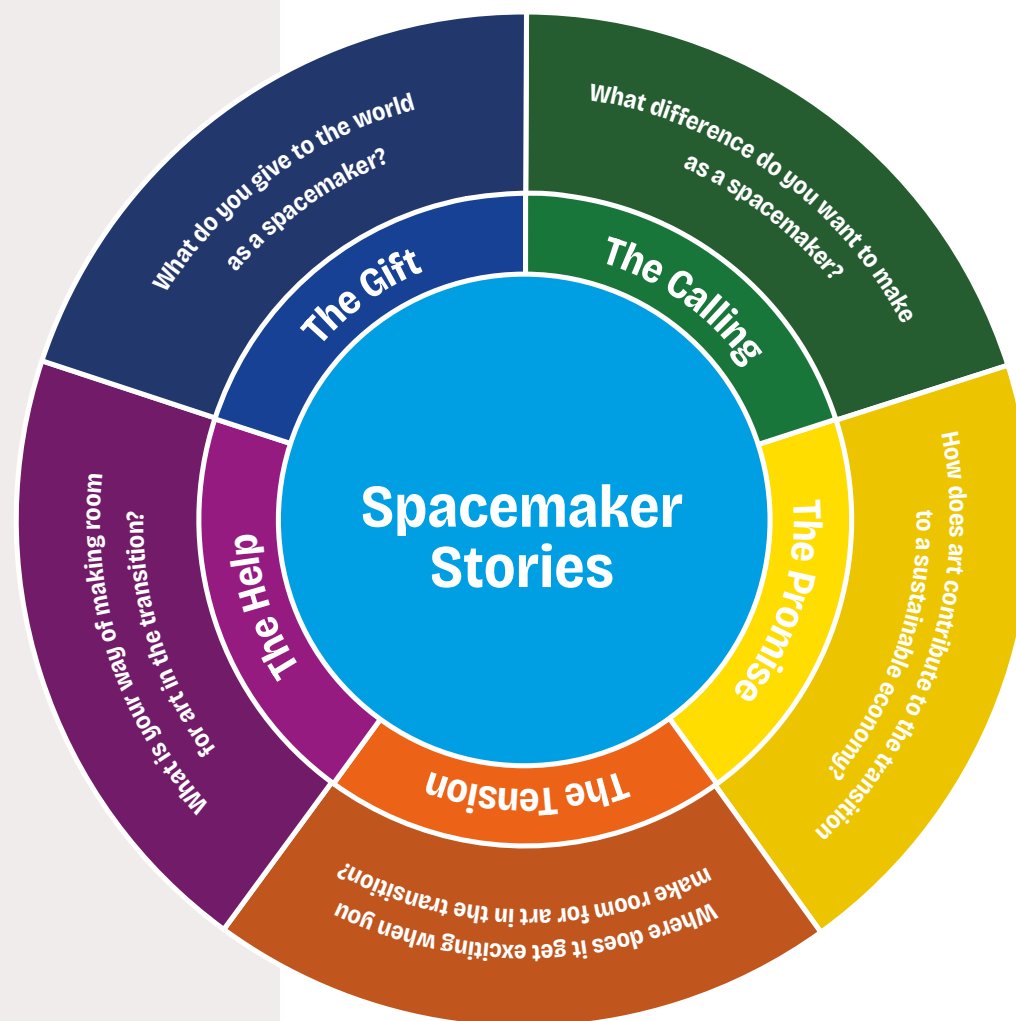
- 4. The Help:** How do Spacemakers create space for art in the transition? What kind of spaces are created? And where does the Spacemaker position themselves within this space?

- 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

*Spacemakers face unpredictability in carving out spaces for art across various domains*

In my youth, my twin brother and I invented a game that completely absorbed us. We placed two partially filled bottles of water on the table, with their caps removed. On the neck of each bottle, we placed an empty plastic cup. We each had a thick rubber band, and the trick was to place the rubber band around the thumb of our left hand and then pull on the other end of the rubber band with our other hand to put it under tension. Then, the challenge was to aim the rubber band and release it in such a way that the cup flew off the neck of the bottle. The reward for the most accurate shooter was a chocolate bar - a sweet prize the other had to purchase with funds from his own piggy bank after 50 successful shots.

The fact that I can still recall this game is for its thrilling elements. There was the tension of potentially missing the shot, causing the elastic to snap back and hit your thumb first, which was quite painful. Moreover, there was the risk of hitting the bottle itself, causing it to topple over and spill water on the floor, something our parents especially weren't pleased with. But above all, I remember the act of placing that thick elastic around my left thumb and using my right hand to stretch it. The trick was to find the right balance—not pulling too hard, risking that speed would overpower precision, but also not too softly, causing it to land in a shallow arc in front of the bottle on the ground.

This childhood game has frequently come to mind in recent weeks as I worked on this cahier, 'The Tension'. For me, the similarity between the properties of elastic and the practice of Spacemakers is striking. In the introduction of this cahier, the elastic now plays a symbolic role, where I draw personal connections and identify three key aspects.

First is anticipation and predictability: similar to how a stretched elastic stores potential energy,

Spacemakers face unpredictability in carving out spaces for art across various domains. Second, physical tension: the tight tension of the elastic reflects the resistance Spacemakers sometimes encounter in their efforts to integrate art outside the traditional art domain. And third, elasticity and return to the original form: similar to the law of elasticity, where a stretched elastic returns to its original form when the tension is released. This symbolises the resilience of Spacemakers when they encounter challenges in their practice.

All three of the aspects, among many others, can be recognized in the reports, stories, and images in this cahier. Zeynep Birsal and Margherita Soldati from Waag approach tensions like elastic, navigating between healthy and unhealthy tensions. During our conversation, an artwork by Margherita Soldati, both a Spacemaker and an artist, sat on the table. The artwork, embodying intrinsic tensions, was used as a metaphorical tool to explore and discuss the various tensions in Waag's practice.

Verily Klaassen, Head of Art Affairs at Rabobank, shows how art works often spark conflicts and tensions, yet also facilitate dialogues for mutual understanding. The column by Art Partner discusses the often unhealthy tension surrounding financing and asking uncomfortable questions about it. There is no straightforward answer, but the first steps towards opening this dialogue have been taken.

In the cahier, the use of visual metaphors is a common thread. Images and analogies mainly guide my thought process and research, with the metaphor being an essential tool in my role as a researcher. This approach originates from my education at the art academy and my years of experience in the visual arts. For me, the strength of this approach lies in its ability to visually depict abstract and

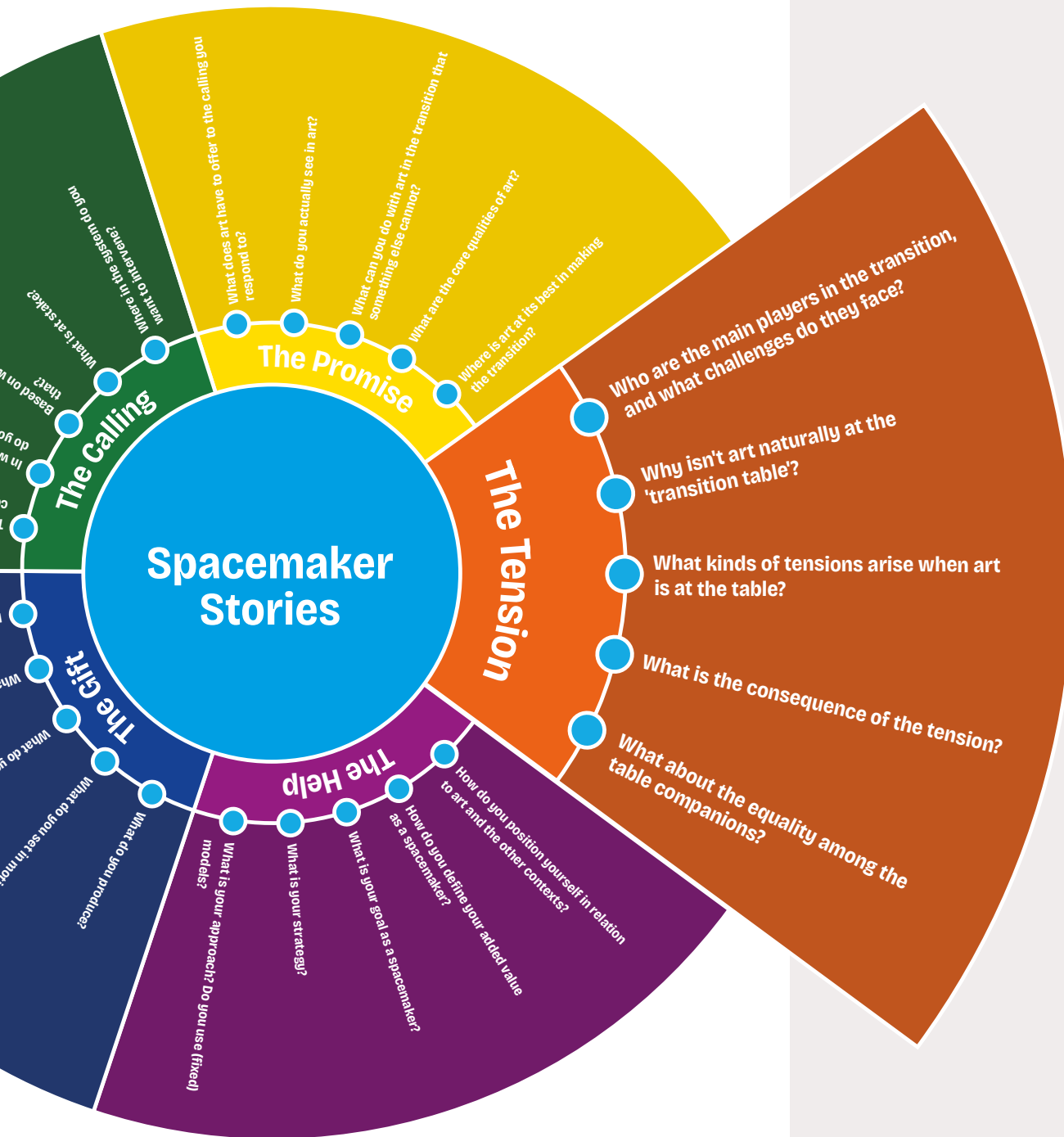
complex concepts, often imbued with tensions. The metaphor serves as an illuminating instrument that not only leads to a deeper understanding but also makes information more accessible and stimulates creative thinking.

For a deeper understanding of the characteristics of a Spacemaker, I have chosen to find this metaphor in the reed plant. This plant exhibits qualities that, in my opinion, closely align with a Spacemaker. Inspired by the photos and characteristics of the reed, spoken word artist Ine Mols has written beautiful texts intended to stimulate thinking about the Spacemakers' practice. A contribution from her is included in all cahier in response to each cahier's theme.

In each interview I conducted over the past two years, whether with different Spacemakers, artists, or clients, I always carried a roll of paper under my arm. This roll served as a tablecloth. During the conversations, the interviewee described the cloth with thoughts, small drawings, words, and ideas, surrounded by coffee stains and cookie crumbs. This melding of thought and action stimulated creative thinking. This resulted in a collection of these metres-long rolls of paper, and some elements from these rolls are included in this cahier.

This research culminates in a visual overview that integrates interview data, characteristics of the reed plant, quotes, and visual contributions from myself, fellow researchers, and consortium partners, representing a personal visual interpretation.

*Marga Rotteveel*



# Spacemaker Stories

Every Spacemaker has a unique story. These stories explore a variety of themes. They delve into the changes Spacemakers envision and the meaning of art. They examine how the tension between art and other domains can be harnessed. Additionally, they consider ways to create space for art and contemplate the potential outcomes of these endeavours.

We posed six questions to six Spacemakers about their stories. In the cahier on **The Tension**, we delve into the relatively unknown territory of art in other contexts, where Spacemakers experience tension in balancing between different worlds. This tension can be both helpful and hindering. Where does this tension reside? What causes it, and how does it manifest?

We asked the Spacemakers to articulate the tension.



*If you already have the solution, then you don't need us*

- ART PARTNER

Tension often arises because organisations are accustomed to thinking in terms of outcomes and results. Art Partner tackles issues where this approach does not or insufficiently work. This requires a completely different mentality. The courage to collectively venture into unknown territory and explore it step by step together, without knowing the outcome in advance. This lack of certainty is essential in Art Partner's approach and can be daunting for many organisations. However, experience shows that many organisations struggle with this only the first time.

Additionally, Art Partner often works on sensitive issues, those that are avoided. When Art Partner names the elephant in the room, it can lead to discomfort and thus tension. But it is necessary to address delicate issues. This is the first step in achieving a change that can lead to a solution. Artists are accustomed to observing tension and seeking discomfort. By approaching the issue from the perspective and expertise of artists, a space is created in which something new can emerge. The elephant in the room disappears...

*Polarities expand the space in between*

- CIRCUS ANDERSON

Art thrives on tension, and Circus Andersom consciously embraces the inherent tensions present in the world. They do not seek to resolve these tensions but rather to explore and experience them. Many tensions arise from misconceptions about control and fear of the unknown, especially in the relationship between humans and the Earth. Circus Andersom advocates embracing these tensions as essential steps in breaking through boundaries. They consider art and creativity as guiding principles at the transition table, where 'non-making', along with 'not-knowing' and 'not-doing', will become increasingly important. Room for nothing, so that the layers of accumulated tensions have the opportunity to unfold.

*It's not about finding solutions, but about asking better questions*

- FUTURE OF WORK

Future of Work emphasises the crucial role of art in uncovering tensions and contradictions in society and the economy. They view art as a powerful tool to explore the complexity of economic, technological, and social issues. Art excels at revealing and harnessing the inherent tensions and conflicts within these issues.

By using art as a tool for reflection and provocation, Future of Work seeks to challenge the status quo and create space for alternative perspectives and solutions. They emphasise that embracing tension and converting it into creative energy is essential for generating innovative insights and promoting positive change in society.

## *With artists, no one knows what to expect*

- IN4ART

In creating space for art, In4Art recognizes that various tensions can arise in the multidisciplinary, multicultural, and multidimensional teams in which they work. These tensions, which can be both productive and inhibiting, stem from differences in work ethos, values, and interests, particularly due to the diverse backgrounds of team members and their varying perspectives.

The main cause of these tensions is the uncertainty of experimental projects and the different interests at play. This can manifest through confrontations or reduced participation. There is a thin line between professional and personal emotions, especially among artists, and when these two are not separated, it can be inhibiting.

The Spacemaker serves as a crucial translator between different worlds and disciplines and selects artists. Depending on the development phase, the Spacemaker fulfils various roles: from co-producer to coach, to reviewer, and reflector. Typically, artists are not automatically seen as knowledge partners in transition issues, which emphasises the role of the Spacemaker in integrating art into the transition discourse.

## *The economy benefits from a purely positivist approach to technology*

- V2\_

To make space for art within various domains, V2\_ experiences significant tensions, particularly in recognizing technology as a potential problem alongside a purely positive view of it as a solution. This tension arises from the economic interest served by a purely positive view of technology, where economic benefits and marketability take precedence.

This tension is evident in the way the work of Spacemakers is often perceived as senseless or undesirable. As a cultural institution, V2\_ faces the challenge of balancing an artistic mission with business reality, where dependency on subsidies and partnerships sometimes conflicts with artistic integrity.

Art is not automatically present at the 'transition table' because its value is not primarily measured in financial returns or direct solutions, but rather in challenging and enriching perspectives. Nevertheless, V2\_ regards high-quality art as the key to a breakthrough, with artistic quality being decisive in transcending these tensions and gaining recognition from both funders and partners.

## *Serendipity plays a role in transforming tensions into breakthroughs*

- WAAG

At Waag, the tension mainly lies between 'institution' and 'autonomy', where protocols sometimes hinder the freedom of research, exploration, imagination, and experimentation. The focus is not so much on solving tensions, but rather on understanding what constitutes healthy versus undesirable tension and how to deal with it.

The pressure to 'create innovative solutions/generate impact' within strict frameworks and timelines creates tension. Tension is present in all aspects of the work. A lack of open dialogue and the ability to adjust plans can lead to obstacles. Breakthroughs can occur when tension is explored, or when unexpected solutions are discovered. Art is a natural part of the transition, but there is a lack of formal systems to fully recognize and appreciate it.

# Navigating tensions in Spacemaking

Spacemakers Zeynep Birsal and Margherita Soldati from Waag, in conversation with researcher Marga Rotteveel

In this interview, we explore the tensions inherent in the role of a Spacemaker by delving deeper into the practice of Spacemaker Waag.

Waag Futurelab plays a crucial role in promoting research, design, and development for a sustainable and just society. Within an interdisciplinary team consisting of designers, artists, and scientists, Waag applies public research methods at the intersection of technology and society. Its mission is to empower as many people as possible to co-design an open, fair, and inclusive future.

At the time of the interview, Zeynep had been working at Waag for just over a year as a concept and project developer. In this role, she develops project concepts, forges creative collaborations, and secures funding. Her projects often involve setting up artist residencies in domains outside of art itself. In this process, artists and artistic research are more actively involved in technology, design, production, and policymaking. Zeynep not only takes responsibility

for designing these programs but also mentors the participants. She regularly acts as a bridge between all parties, bridging the gap between art and industry, technology, engineering, and science.

Margherita has been working at Waag as a concept developer and designer since January 2020. Although she is involved in various projects, she mainly serves as a mentor for artists in European projects. She closely collaborates with artists who work with other partners, including technology providers and various small and medium-sized enterprises. Margherita mentors artists and provides support on the artistic side of their projects. She also sees herself as a translator between the various stakeholders in the project, navigating the terminology and jargon used by different parties. In addition to her work at Waag, she is an artist herself.

Margherita had a dual role in the conversation, both as a Spacemaker and the artist behind 'Evolving Sensitivities,' an artwork that played a central role in this interview.





Image 1, 2 and 3: Photos of the interview with Zeynep Birsal and Margherita Soldati, November 27, 2023. The artwork 'Evolving Sensitivities' is displayed on the table. Photos: Marga Rotteveel.

## Evolving Sensitivities: tensions and transformations

**Marga:** "I look forward to hearing your perspectives, insights, and experiences regarding the tensions that arise in your Spacemakers practice. This conversation will be guided by an artwork created by you, Margherita, which is placed on the table in front of us. We have collectively decided to incorporate this work into our discussion because the artwork itself explores the theme of tensions and actively contributes to the discussion, potentially offering new perspectives by stimulating the power of imagination. We hope this will lead to a deeper understanding of our topic. Margherita, could you start by discussing the theme of your artwork and the connections it has

with the tensions you encounter in your Spacemakers practice?"

**Margherita:** "When I was 14, I was diagnosed with allergies to all vegetables and fruits, both raw and cooked. Standard tests covered only raw and cooked variants, and blood tests also only addressed a few. Interestingly, the results presented during my diagnosis in Italy were identical to those ten years ago when I was tested in the Netherlands. Allergy research, especially in unique cases like mine, is scarce and leaves many questions unanswered. This led me to two core questions: what causes these allergies and why do we have allergies at all? These questions formed the basis of my artistic research, where I conducted biotechnological experiments on myself. I exposed my skin to a variety of processed foods, not

just raw or cooked items, but also various fermentation and pickling methods that allow chemical transformations in the food. After repeated experiments, I discovered that fermented food yielded the most positive results and did not cause allergic reactions in me. This discovery led to the creation of 'Digestors,' two glass stomach vessels specifically designed to accommodate fermented food. My research has led me to rely on cooking methods that pre-digest and break down the food, placing the digestion process literally outside my body.

The essence of this work revolves around questioning the nature of diagnoses and using artistic practice to critique the way diagnoses are determined. It challenges a system connected to insurance policies and specific protocols, which often

overlook individual needs. Here, the freedom of artistry comes into play, allowing me to flexibly navigate rigid work protocols. I have brought together elements from various fields where professionals are highly specialised. But it is noticeable that accessibility or integration with other specialised knowledge often falls short. This creates inherent tension for me. The way forward is to connect these domains and share their respective knowledge."

**Marga:** "Your artwork 'Evolving Sensitivities' serves as a metaphor for the tensions you experience as Spacemakers. Can you provide specific examples from your Spacemaker practice that illustrate this metaphor?"

**Margherita:** "In the context of my artwork, I experience a healthy tension

in my role as a Spacemaker at Waag. We strive to create a safe environment where diverse professionals come together, fostering trust and collaboration without existing rigid protocols. Waag acts as a constructive tension, a laboratory where interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial. Visionary biologists and chemists share the same space, pursue similar goals, but have different backgrounds. In my role as a Spacemaker, there is tension in our collaboration, but it is constructive. It's about facilitating encounters for diverse individuals, whether they are artists or doctoral students, who use the lab and have access to knowledge that may not be readily available elsewhere due to specialised protocols. Here, we have the opportunity to question and break these protocols."







**Zeynep:** “Nurturing healthy tension involves not only creating physical but also intellectual space by inviting highly specialised experts to address issues. Margherita, who exposes her own body to understand it, challenges the scientific approach to allergies and gastric research. The creative collaborations between artists, engineers, and sometimes scientists bring a tension that teeters on the edge of being unhealthy. When facts and concerns collide negatively, it can become problematic. However, when they collide positively with the intention to improve diagnostics and decision-making in the diagnostic process, it becomes constructive. In such situations, we lean more towards the artists, focusing on caring for artistic creation over technology.

And speaking of discussing tensions in our Spacemakers practice using Margherita’s artwork as a metaphor, I have another example. In a conversation with a physician about rare diseases and the unresolved nature of some threatening health issues, I found it challenging to grasp the complexity that complicates solutions to problems like cancer. While indeed solutions exist, they often come hand in hand with the issues they seek to resolve. Our tendency to think systematically hinders our ability to trace the problems back to their deeper causes. It is crucial to recognize the profound significance of understanding that the ‘cause is the cure.’ An example from William MacAskill’s book, ‘Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and How You Can Make a Difference,’ illustrates the need to explore blind spots. An educational program aimed at increasing children’s school attendance and

combating illiteracy encountered issues in student turnout until a local insight emphasised the importance of deworming. Deworming turned out to be a crucial factor in improving the health and well-being of the children, positively contributing to their attendance. This discovery proved to be the key solution, highlighting the importance of exploring blind spots.”

**Marga:** “From the examples you’ve provided, it seems like we’re talking about our inability to think and act holistically. How do you, as Spacemakers, actively contribute to that different way of thinking, and what do you do to break that system of linear thinking and acting?”

**Zeynep:** “We cause disruptions, positive disruptions, and often draw attention to the fact that something isn’t working as intended. Diagnostics, for example, don’t function as they should. If they did, Margherita wouldn’t be dealing with this issue today, and neither would many others. This approach disrupts the way standard protocols are executed. It takes just a few people, maybe even one immunologist, to say, ‘Let’s look at your case from a different perspective.’ Who did you live with? Where did you live, and who were your friends? Such questions might go beyond the scope of contemporary diagnostics and indicate a much more holistic approach.”

**Marga:** “What happens in a healthy tension, as well as in an unhealthy tension, when you introduce artworks into a completely different atmosphere outside the art world?”

**Zeynep:** “The most unhealthy tension arises when external parties, not

involved in the artistic or collaborative process, question whether this qualifies as art. It’s fine to pose this question, of course, but it becomes problematic when the inquiry remains superficial and anchored in a limited understanding of aesthetics, artistic intent, and research. In my opinion, it’s also counterproductive to steer the conversation towards an extremely instrumentalized view of art and examine it based on whether it reflects a scientific perception. For Margherita’s work, questions like ‘Is this anatomically correct? Is it factual?’ are very limiting.”

**Marga:** “What does a Spacemaker do exactly to find a balance between healthy and unhealthy tension when working with artists?”

**Zeynep:** “As Spacemakers, we adopt a critical attitude. We ensure that the initial question has depth and encourage artists to dig deeper, to move them beyond their initial thoughts. Sometimes their answers may falter when we ask additional questions. In such cases, we focus on critical and creative thinking to ensure that the depth of the question is maintained. It’s all about ensuring a thorough exploration of the underlying themes and concepts.

Our goal is to support the creation of high-quality, intriguing artworks that have the potential to disrupt science, technology, and public perception. We continuously challenge artists and collaboration partners to stay ahead in this regard. To achieve this, we spend time exploring the artist’s work, delve into scientific articles, and gather knowledge about various processes. This way, we become effective conversationalists for

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Afbeelding 5 en 6: 'Evolving Sensitivities', foto Anne Lakeman



our artists in collaborative projects. Some artists may come in with a strong artistic background and the intention to create a fantastic exhibition piece as the end result. We find this acceptable as long as it sparks in-depth discussions and reaches other domains. Our role involves extensive preparation so that we can facilitate these processes for our artists."

**Margherita:** "Working at Waag feels like earning two or three master's degrees per year to me. It involves constant reading and studying."

**Marga:** "But I can also imagine that when I try to step into the shoes of the artist, I can bring tension into the conversation by asserting: 'Regardless of what you say or think about it, this is my autonomous artwork.'"

**Zeynep:** "That certainly happens, and it's especially delicate when working with established artists because they've been doing what they do for years. Resistance does occur, but if I feel they are intrigued at the same time, I pose the question differently and try to approach them differently. But only if I feel like I'm making a positive contribution; otherwise, I withdraw. The goal isn't to interfere with what the artist is doing; it's simply to ensure that, especially in the kind of projects we work on, they aren't blindsided by unexpected reactions like very harsh criticism. So, it's actually a form of protection."

**Margherita:** "The way we work with artists requires a lot of care and empathy."

**Marga:** "How does this unhealthy tension manifest itself? In an earlier

interview with me for this SUSTAIN project on November 8, 2023, you said: 'It manifests itself in relationships and impedes dialogue. And that's where it causes problems and activates power imbalances.'"

**Zeynep:** "I don't want to generalise, but most artists are very accustomed to working alone. And I don't mean they don't collaborate, but collaboration is a different concept in their world. Collaboration is often very temporary and fleeting. Continuous collaboration, designed to go from ideation to problematization to production, is very rare. We try to create it, but it's sometimes very difficult. Also, because some projects are very delineated; they're designed to do something very specific, so collaboration for an artist is usually not a linear, seamless process from start to finish."

Sometimes, asymmetries arise when the artist introduces a speculative idea that isn't fully understood. It becomes evident that there's a gap between the artist's vision and the understanding of partners. Then, artists must clarify their ideas without losing their passion and energy, and that's where we, as Spacemakers, help them. We also advise: divide the process so that you work on this specific part while we support other aspects of the process and work. It might feel a bit like being a school-teacher, but it's necessary in our role to keep things on track."

**Marga:** "In this SUSTAIN project, another Spacemaker indicates that the work they do is quite invisible. Due to the unseen nature of their contribution, there's a

*Our goal is to support the creation of high-quality, intriguing artworks that have the potential to disrupt science, technology, and public perception*

lack of recognition, and that creates tension. Do you recognize that?"

**Margherita:** "I think it really depends on who you ask. Occasionally, I hear people in Amsterdam wonder what's happening within the Waag building. It really depends on who your audience is. Our organisation has so many projects running, and each of them has a different audience."

**Zeynep:** "What we do here is sometimes called Spacemaking by us, while others might call it research or laboratories. This doesn't bother me, and I don't perceive it as tension either. Because Spacemaking creates value for those navigating through the collaboration. And often, we hear things like 'I couldn't have done this without your intervention.' Or they come back to us with new projects. Those are the value indicators that personally matter to me. I think communicating the research findings of this SUSTAIN project is essential to showcase what Spacemaking is, what it can facilitate, and how it can create value."

**Margherita:** "It also depends on who your audience is and what language you use when communicating with them because we naturally have our own jargon. Some say, 'Margherita, stop speaking Waag language.' That's like a sentence such as 'citizen concern-driven project.' But every environment has its own language. I remember curating an exhibition, and in the main text, it said 'the art practice of Anna...'. Then a friend asked, 'What does art practise mean, actually?' It's obvious to us, but if you're not in the art world and read 'art practice,' you might think of a dental or law practice, right?"

As an art mentor here at Waag, I have to learn a new language every time I work with a new partner because they bring new language and terminologies."

## Redefining value and ownership in collaborative projects between art and other domains

**Marga:** "In our previous conversation, you also mentioned that claiming ownership inhibits open dialogue. Where is the tension here?"

**Margherita:** "The way we work within Waag is open, transparent, and inclusive, which means that everything we produce or make is always open source. We often focus on projects that are geared towards a joint effort. The moment you often start to encounter problems is when the concept of ownership comes into play. Collaborative partners then seek intellectual property rights, want to own the solution, commercialise it, and be the exclusive owners of the art project. Often, we have to deal with this established business model that has been used in our current economy for a long time; we can't just set it aside. We try to propose new systems that break with the concept of ownership and the standard way of doing business. The whole idea of ownership certainly poses a challenge and a source of tension in our work."

**Zeynep:** "It's a serious tension because our entire economic value system is ultimately based on who owns what. Often, artists have to make their own tools, and they don't protect those tools because

they have no interest in doing so. But if a collaborative partner comes across that tool and discovers that it has value, they want to protect it. While artists say, 'No, you can't protect that. Firstly, I made it, it's part of my artwork, and secondly, I need to work with it, develop it, and be able to share it with others.' These are serious tensions and not always equally productive. Once you leave the art domain and move to something more functional, or even if part of your art is embedded in it, that tension is strongly present."

**Margherita:** "It's a different concept of value, and in such collaborations, this always comes up. That's why it's interesting for us to explore different value models."

**Zeynep:** "Because those don't exist right now. What's the stumbling block here are the existing legal frameworks behind those values to truly explore radical models. You would have to abolish intellectual property rights and completely remove the concept of patents. We bring artists and their collaborators into unusual conversations because most are not well acquainted with intellectual property law, patents, and copyright, and they often mix these aspects up. Often, people are not familiar with the specific rights and responsibilities of copyright compared to a patent. So, what does it mean to have a patent? People often don't realise the costs associated with having a patent. If you can't enforce the patent, it becomes a hindrance. This is not only detrimental to you but also to others. That's why sometimes it takes a lot of energy and time to argue about ownership for something it doesn't even make sense to fight for."





*Tensions are transformed  
into catalysts for creative and  
inclusive interdisciplinary  
collaborations*

**Margherita:** “Often we encounter situations where companies and artists work with organic materials. This highlights the absurdity of a system that emphasises extensive patents, contracts, and discussions about intellectual property for something inherently provided by nature.”

**Marga:** “Now that we’ve extensively discussed healthy and unhealthy tensions in your Spacemakers practice, and you look again at the artwork on the table, is there anything you would like to add in conclusion?”

**Margherita:** “Our conversation has shed light on the subtle balance needed to make space for art in domains outside of art, transforming tensions into catalysts for creative and inclusive interdisciplinary collaborations. I’m glad to see that my artwork has played a role in igniting and strengthening the dialogue. That’s a beautiful realisation: my artwork, both literally and figuratively, creates space for these discussions.”

**Zeynep:** “I see Margherita’s artwork as a valuable, metaphorical exploration of tensions in our practice, addressing both personal and systemic dimensions. It reflects the inherent challenges in our role as Spacemakers but also emphasises the power of art to facilitate such dialogues.”



# Spacemakers: gold diggers or gold miners?

SANDRA BOER AND JETSKIE FREEVE,  
ART PARTNER

The relationship between money and art remains a fascinating and often uncomfortable terrain, riddled with persistent stereotypes. Since the days of Vincent van Gogh, the image of the artist has been that of a brilliant yet impoverished soul following their passion. Artists are thought to make choices based on inspiration, not financial considerations. However, satisfaction alone doesn't pay the bills, and inspiration doesn't secure a mortgage. The debate between meaningful work and financial reward continues to evoke tension. As one artist once remarked, 'Bankers talk about art at dinner parties; artists talk about money.'

As Spacemakers, we serve as a bridge between artists/creativity and the outside world, organisations, and societal challenges. Payment for labour is standard in all sectors except the arts,

it seems. We advocate for and represent the value of artists and believe that fair compensation should be the norm.

But what about us? What is the value of Spacemakers? How much should we earn from it? Recognizing that the relationship between art and money is historically uneasy, this column is an exercise in confronting the discomfort within ourselves.

What tensions regarding money do we encounter? In our relationship with clients, artists, the field we help develop, and ourselves?

Working with clients, we often tackle themes and issues that are inherently tense. Issues that revolve around inclusion, equal opportunities, discrimination, racism, (sexual) misconduct,



making organisations more humane, and listening to unheard voices. Engaging in these kinds of themes with artists is often particularly new and exciting for clients. And money needs to be allocated for it, which adds even more tension. Because in an organisation, it's customary to know in advance how you'll earn back the investment. For that, you already need to know what the outcome will be.

As Spacemakers, we help clients endure the discomfort of not knowing and provide support in parking these investment considerations. We make them aware of the control mechanisms they're accustomed to and offer a safe space for creativity. Often, the comparison with Research & Development is helpful. It's entirely normal for companies to invest in innovation in products or services. Yet, even there, you don't know what the returns will be. It's widely accepted that this risk is a valuable risk because innovation means progress. We argue that the same applies to engaging in an issue with artists.

A greater sense of discomfort strangely lies in our relationship with the artists. Are we gold diggers if we earn from artists? We'd rather see ourselves as gold miners, jointly seeking the immense value that many artists can add. To mine that gold, a lot of work 'behind the scenes' is needed. This involves not only the work we do with organisations but also the work we do to make the gold visible. As Spacemakers, we strive to expand our field. We participate in research, engage in open conversations within organisations, are active in various networks, give lectures, act as guest lecturers, write columns, and contribute to publications. Our dedication to the profession contributes to a broader recognition of the value of artists and the role of Spacemakers. It makes the gold mine accessible to everyone.

We are aware of the value we add, but we hardly discuss it with artists. Writing this column and participating in the SUSTAIN research makes us realise that as Spacemakers, we need to provide more insight into the work we do behind the scenes. It is time to acknowledge the tension between art and money and fully illuminate our role as Spacemakers. As Andy Warhol aptly said: "Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art."

*Sandra Boer (1972) and Jetske Freeve (1978), both partners of Art Partner, are Spacemakers. They create space for both the clients and the artists so that both can excel at what they do to initiate change.*

Image 1: Gold Miners - Anook Cléonnoe for Art Partner

# Balancing Spacemaking and artistic practices: Circus Andersom

MARGA ROTTEVEEL



Circus Andersom, a collective of unconventional and innovative thinkers, is known for its ability to bring fresh insights into societal issues that are often overlooked or taken for granted. Comprising four core artists, the collective contributes alternative perspectives for people, places, and organisations through its projects. The creators of Circus Andersom aim to create spaces for dialogue with their projects, unafraid to provoke and confront, ultimately striving for sustainable change. They do this in a 'disruptive connecting manner,' deliberately seeking out diverse dynamics in the daily challenges of society."

The projects tackled by Circus Andersom inherently contain tension, ranging from exploring feelings of fear to encouraging in-depth conversations about sexuality among men. Regarding the latter, our society often lacks the space for open discussions about intimacy, especially among men. To address this, they launched the art project 'Sexpack - Pecker beer' in collaboration with Oersoep Brewery in Nijmegen. This project brought together various stakeholders, including Rutgers, Emancipator, external artists like Nikki Loef and Linda Huijbers, and the Public Prosecution Service. One notable outcome of the project is 'Penis Dialogues,' featuring six specially brewed blonde beers designed to spark conversations, alongside a 'Pecker Game' developed to encourage frank discussions about sexuality. Through this project, they aim to contribute to a world that is sexually safer and healthier.

Research into Circus Andersom's Spacemaking practice, particularly focusing on this art project, provided insights into their unique approach. They often embody the dual roles of artist and Spacemaker simultaneously, a balancing act that presents its challenges. Navigating between these identities involves managing the pressures of fulfilling both roles effectively. It demands a delicate balance between artistic freedom and practical responsibilities, creative expression and strategic planning, and the pursuit of desired artistic and societal outcomes while managing costs. 'Sexpack - Pecker beer' is not merely an intriguing product; as a project, it embodies the tension between these roles. It is in this alternating of roles that Circus Andersom has developed a keen understanding of what it means and what is required to create space for art.

For more information about this project, visit <http://penisdialogen.nl>









Image: Pecker Game, part of Penis Dialogues; photo Circus Andersom





AN ASSOCIATIVE COMPARISON

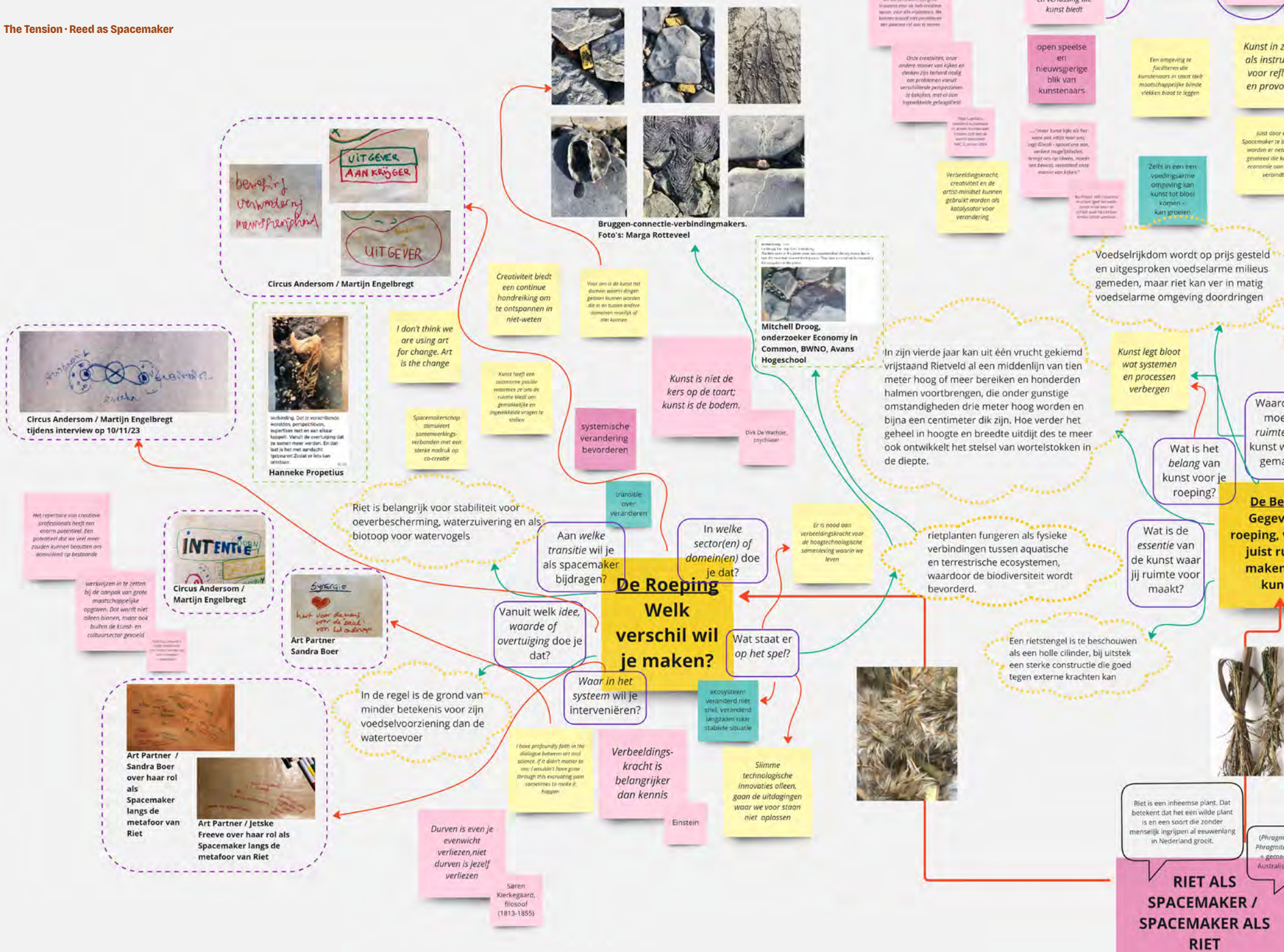
# Reed as Spacemaker / Spacemaker as reed

Researcher Marga Rotteveel has compiled a visual overview incorporating data from interviews, characteristics of the reed plant, quotes, and visual contributions from herself, fellow researchers, and consortium partners. She creatively connects all these elements in her unique visual style. [Click here](#) to see the full visual overview.





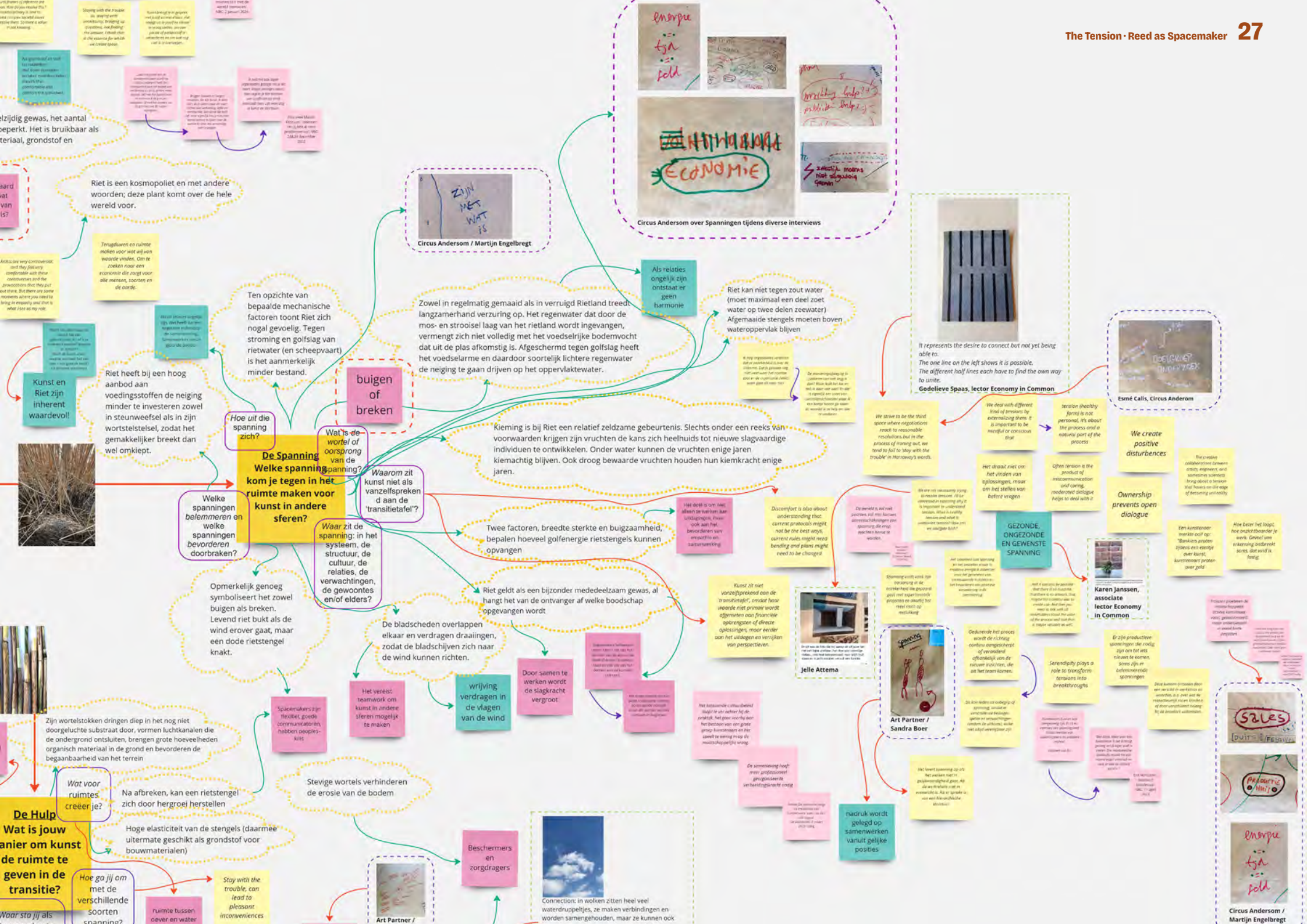


















"....in deze stressvolle  
samenleving moeten  
we ruimte creëren  
voor spel en voor het  
denken als  
kunstenaar of  
ontwerper.

Want kunstenaars beschikken over 'onzekerheidsvaardigheid' en verbeeldingskracht

Robbert Dijkgraaf, minister van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap in kabinetsam-  
lezing, 2022.

Door een Spacemaker te betrekken wordt vruchtbare bodem gecreëert voor hergroei en ruimte maken voor kunst.

Structuurvorming is relationeel en belangrijk in spacemaking praktijk

Riet verdampt veel water en begunstigt dus de ontwatering van pas  
drooggevalen grond en draagt ook  
sterk bij aan structuurvorming, kortom  
het versnelt de bodemrijping

'Building common ground is what soil does'

Riet is stevig  
geworteld in de  
bodem (grond)

een gebruiksplant

Wat lever je op?

Wat laat  
je  
achter?

**De Gift**

Wat geef je aan  
de wereld dat  
bijdraagt aan  
je roeping?

Hoe weet of  
meet je de  
waarde  
van je gift?

wederkerigheid;  
ik heb je nodig,  
zoals je mij  
nodig hebt.

Riet is een inheemse plant en werkt samen met dieren (onderdeel ecosysteem)

Ik kan wel tegen  
een stootje, ik heb  
je aan alle kanten  
te kunnen  
verduren

Riet is de overland e

How  
ste  
me  
on

Golfwer  
positiev  
belangr  
instand  
rietkrag

Hé Marga, dit is mijn beeld. Het is het beeld dat me enorm indruisende en bleef hangen dus veranderde deze ook gekkezi. Omdat ik het niet echt begrip denk ik. En dat laatste met dan. Het heeft te maken met de verandering die geen echte verandering is. Het toont die daar zo streng liggen/zijn en dat andere... wat is het toch? ... dat zo zijn weg daardoorheen vindt. Die weer die dat over zich heen laten komen, maar toch ook voor niet lidzaam. En dan eroms die persoonlijkheid van het gerimpelde patroon. Het heeft iets zachts en krachtigs.

**Sandra Boer / Art Partner**

Antwoord: 2. 10000, 10000  
vrijheid

Circus Andersom / Martijn Engelbregt

De Spacemaker  
praktijk vormt het  
fundament om  
kunst en economie  
samen te brengen.

door goed  
te wortelen  
sta ik stevig

Riet is bij uitstek  
een  
gebruiksplant

Voor veel overblijvende planten vormen de ondergrondse delen het fundament voor hun voortbestaan, maar voor weinig planten geldt dat in zo sterke mate als voor riet. Het gewicht van de gezamenlijke wortelstokken bedraagt minstens tweemaal, soms wel tienmaal het gewicht van halmen.

De wortelstok wordt rizoom genoemd. Het is een organisme dat niet verticaal maar horizontaal en ondergronds groeit, voortwoekend langs ongebaande paden en waaruit een nieuwe plant groeit

*Wij willen zichtbaar  
maken wat  
onzichtbaar is en  
ongehoorde  
stemmen laten  
horen*

Zie je m'n stelen  
of m'n pluimen:  
een enkele spriet  
of de hele bos  
en wie ziet m'n  
wortelstok?

Riet breidt zich op drie manieren uit: door zaad, door wortelstokken en door uitlopers, dat wil zeggen bovengrondse, horizontale stengels waarbij op de kroppen een nieuwe plant ontstaat.

Insecten die riet tot voedsel hebben (voedsel relatie):

- Uiltje: 'Mythimna Impura' (vlinder en in de nacht actief)
- Grasmieermot: 'Elachista Cerusella'
- Halmwesp: 'Calameuta Filiformis'
- Gewoon Spitskopje: vroeger Rietsprinkhaan genoemd ('Conocetus Dorsalis')

Care takers  
Daisies are everywhere  
They are generous  
Beautiful  
Represent attention  
Happy with a little sun  
When they are cut with the grass  
they regrow within days, not ever  
giving up  
Coming out early spring and  
staying there whole summer until  
early winter.  
Accompanying us when walking,  
having a picnic and are the  
flowers everyone has given to the  
ones they love.

**Godelieve Spaas, lector  
Economy in Common**



At Aranya, 300 Miles, 1700 AD. (1700 AD)

Just naming the coffee, food, and the way to the city. The way to the city.

1700 AD

Connection to me is when two parts comes together and understand their differences, accept them and works with these differences rather than trying to create hybridity - hybridity cannot reproduce.

**Rosa, catering assistance at V2.**

But, I think the research results of this project sustain these platforms are quite crucial in communicating what it is and what it can possibly enable and do, where it can create value

ruimte voor  
alternatieve  
perspectieven  
en  
oplossingen

Mijn droom dat organisaties kunstenaars beschouwen als normaal en noodzakelijk voor het aanpakken van belangrijke en actuele vraagstukken.

en waarbij kunstenaars die buiten de kunstwereld een rol willen spelen, voelen dat ze van waarde zijn

*Spacemaking  
creates values for  
those who have to  
navigate through  
the collaboration*

Measuring is not relevant, not realistic. How do I determine the value? When I see that, I create more demand for spacemaking

*Hopelijk maken we  
ruimte waarin  
mensen zich  
primair gaan  
bekommeren om  
elkaar en de wereld*



*Ik ben in het bomen-thema  
gebleven... mooi hoe in  
jouw foto een totaal  
andere structuur groeit  
aan een boom. In mijn foto  
intieme verstrelling...*

**Verly Klaassen, Hoofd  
Kunstzaken Rabobank**

Ik heb deze gekozen omdat hier veel verschillende vormen en maten van stenen te zien zijn- gezamenlijk vormen ze een structuur, maken ze een verbinding, waarbij elk onderdeel een goede fit/ verbinding heeft in het grotere geheel. Daarnaast is het ook een stukje van een weg- een pad om samen te bouwen- en weg als verbinding tussen A en B.

**Lija Groenewoud van Vliet / In4Art**

# Art doesn't make our work easier, but it does make it more valuable

VERILY KLAASSEN

"You don't know it either; you might just do a little more than others, as if you do know, but you don't know it either." When the artist Lucas de Man said this to Wiebe Draijer, the chairman of the Group Management Board of Rabobank, during the art commission meeting, I had to take a moment. This rather direct address could go well, but it could also completely backfire. Inviting an artist to participate in a meeting - what a strange idea that was, anyway?

It was the summer of 2016, and after the closure of our own exhibition space, the Rabo Kunstzone, I was exploring how that beautiful art collection could also be of value in our rapidly changing organisation.

Without knowing it then, that particular meeting of the art commission was the birth of what we now call the Rabo Art Lab: a free space in the bank where we see art as knowledge, invite Artists in Residence, and explore societal transitions together. The Art Lab is an active space for imagination, where new questions are asked, where we embrace failure and doubt, and where, for a change, it's okay to be uncomfortable.

And it's a beautiful process all revolving around 'not knowing', which Lucas de Man set the tone for in that meeting. Because the appeal De Man made to the CEO fell on very fertile ground. Wiebe Draijer also understood that starting with 'not knowing' is essential for fruitful research. And not much later, we had our first Artist in Residence: Lucas de Man was given space and freedom to work in the bank for a year. And he didn't come alone; in his wake came musicians, theatre makers, podcasters, dancers, and designers into the bank. And were they immediately making art? No, as their very first action, they wrote very large on the wall: 'IT ALWAYS BECOMES DIFFERENT'. The tone was set.





Image 1: Het wordt altijd anders, Lucas de Man. Photo: Pascal Leboucq - Stichting Nieuwe Helden

The decision to ask Lucas de Man to become our very first Artist in Residence turned out to be a stroke of genius, but it didn't come out of nowhere. Together with Godelieve Spaas, I had been exploring ways not only to unlock the stories from our collection but especially to demonstrate that the art collection could also be valuable to the bank in a different way. How could we not only share that treasure trove of images, stories, ideas, and sharp questions with all employees, but also with the bank's members and customers and the general public? Seeing the art collection as a source of knowledge and working with it as a workshop within the bank.

And that starts with sensing what is happening in society and bringing it into the bank. Using art and artists as a way to invite that sometimes confusing external world into the bank. I invite artists who work on or research certain themes that are playing out in society. Artists who articulate what may not (yet) be said but is needed. Institutions tend to not immediately welcome complex issues, but they are often system partners in much-needed transitions.

In those collaborations, I build a relationship with an artist, and together we enter the bank. I then let myself be guided by what the artist brings to the table and try to make that tangible. The themes within the artists' work manifest the spirit of the times, perhaps not on the surface but in the undercurrent. The art and these collaborations can be a lever or a crowbar for creating a free space where we can discuss and work on these issues. Without knowing exactly where it will take us. Because we only know that we don't know yet, and that it will always turn out differently.

Don't get me wrong, I don't approach artists with the question: "Come and make things difficult for us." I invite them to explore what is happening in society within the context of the bank. Tension is not the starting point, but if it arises, it is important to embrace it and make it part of the process.

At that moment, my role within the Art Lab becomes important. I then see a constellation of events where I make connections. Between inside and outside the bank, between artist and research, between treasure trove and workshop. Then I try to broaden the agenda of those themes from the residency: what is happening here, who can I involve, how can we make that happen and unfold, and how can we best facilitate it?

The result could be a theatre performance about how safe colleagues actually feel in the automation process the bank is undergoing. About concerns whether their job will remain relevant, or even exist. Or a podcast about our deep-rooted desire for growth and whether we could also desire less. And if so, how? Or conversations with diversity agents and the Ethics Committee about how art can contribute to the diversity issue within a rather white bank.

Looking back at the artists we have invited as Artists in Residence, the most successful collaborations have been with artists who have chosen to really 'dive into the issue or the pain'. They are able to make that tension tangible with their work. And when that tension is there, I think: 'great, now we can have the conversation, now I'll step into it.'

Of course, that's exciting and complicated, but it becomes interesting and beautiful when I can start thinking and puzzling with a team of sparring partners. Sometimes it's difficult and uncomfortable when I receive an email from a manager advising to put a disclaimer on an artwork saying, 'This is not the opinion of Rabobank.' We don't do that, but we do try to understand the information contained in such advice, which often relates to a larger issue.

And how beautiful and special is it that the art collection and the Rabo Art Lab regularly spark complex conversations about what we as a society are dealing with. Perhaps everything revolves around those words Wiebe spoke in his farewell interview: "Art doesn't make our work easier, but it does make it more valuable."

*Verily Klaassen (1971), is Head of Art Affairs at Rabobank Netherlands.*





Image 2: Het wordt altijd anders, Lucas de Man. Photo: Pascal Leboucq - Stichting Nieuwe Helden





Image 3: Het wordt altijd anders, Lucas de Man. Photo: Pascal Leboucq - Stichting Nieuwe Helden



## 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 tension

I can bend, if you push  
I can lean, support, stand  
I can  
withstand friction in waves of wind  
from anyone who must, who knows  
from anyone who minds

Questions can bend  
And today  
I am the question  
Will I stretch, push, pull  
to disrupt any conviction

Because standing still is stopping  
is hiding from what is  
Thus moving is bending,  
and being moved by it  
If it touches you, then it matters  
A caress, a punch, or a  
hand turned too early again

If we open up and question  
we will endure friction





# SUSTAIN: Impressions from the making process

## **Workshop on Exploring Tensions in Spacemakers Practices**

During the SUSTAIN meetings with Spacemakers and researchers, workshops were organised focusing on tensions present in Spacemakers' practices. Various tensions were explored, including advocating for different interests, juggling different roles, maintaining equality and plurality, and navigating the tension between art and economy.



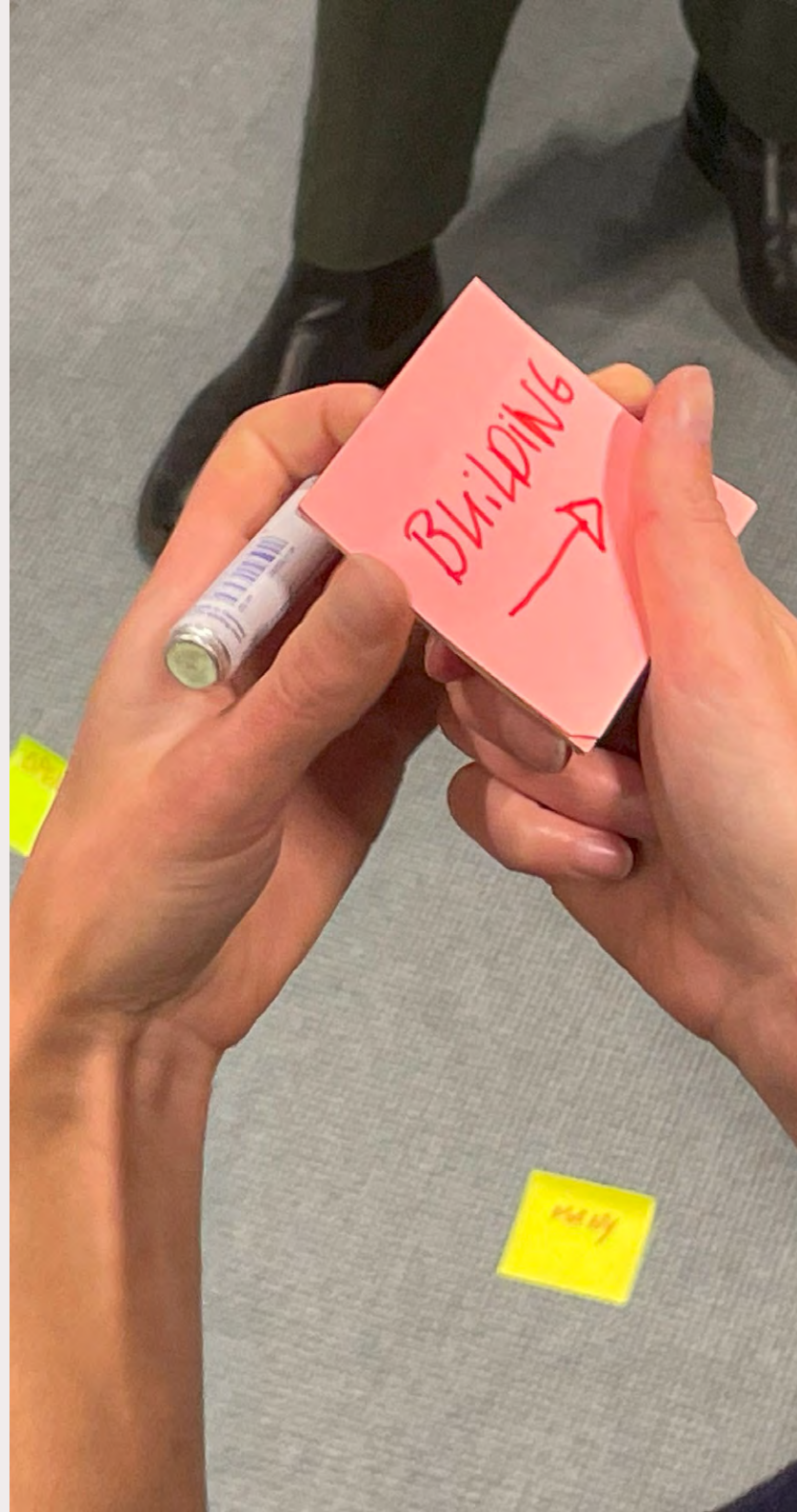


Image 13, 14 and 15: Work Package 2, Working Session at Willem II, photos: Loes ten Den



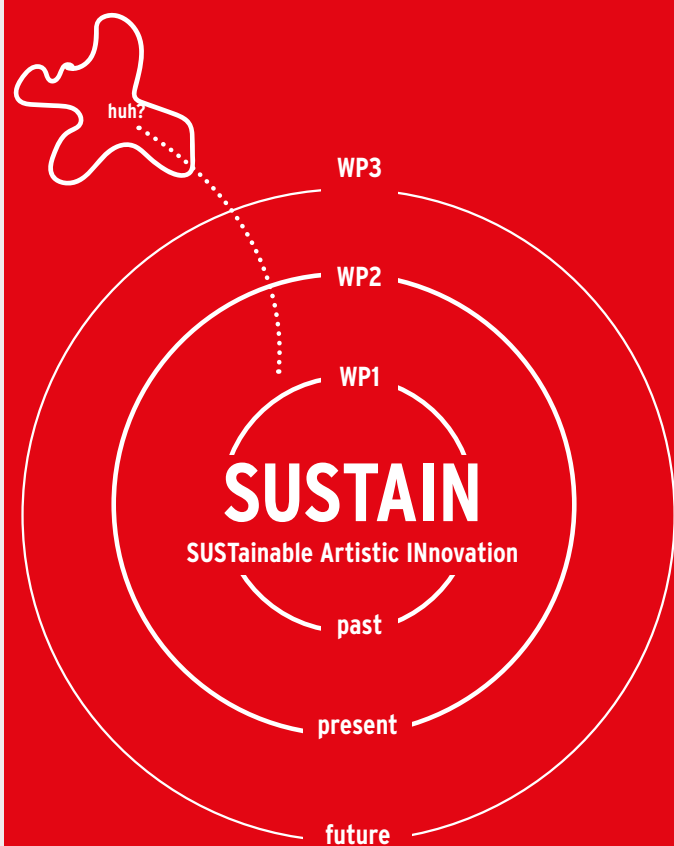


Image 4: Result of the exercise during the kick-off meeting, by Esmé Calis, Circus Andersom

We are talking about  
everything here.

playing  
~~battlefield~~

don't / always  
trust the broker

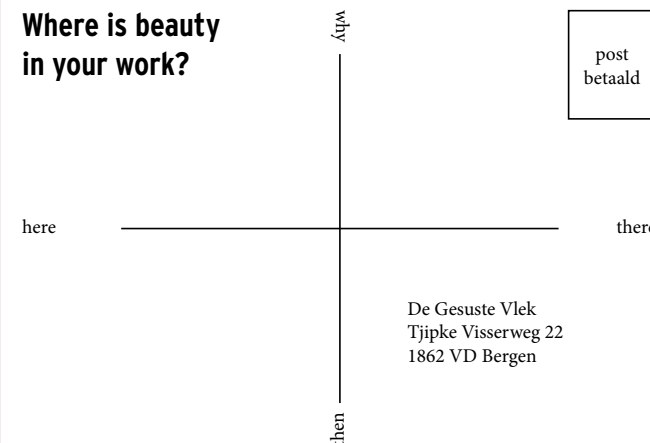


SAFETY

MEANING      BALANCE      CREATIVITY

PASSION

Where is beauty  
in your work?



CAREFUL  
MESSINESS

to put on      MANY HATS      to take off











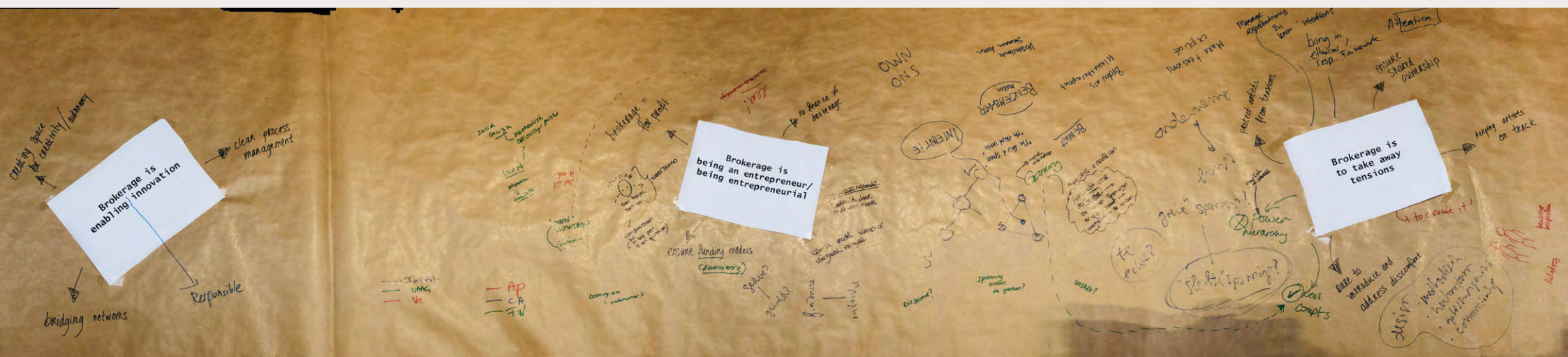


Image 13, 14 and 15: Work Package 2, Working Session at Willem II, photos: Loes ten Den,









**ARTICLE: "I asked patients: where would you rather be right now?" ("Ik vroeg patiënten: waar zou u nu het liefst willen zijn?")**

Gijsbert van Es, editor in conversation with Erik Mattijssen, NRC, April 11, 2023.



**BOOK: Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds**

María Puig de la Bellacasa



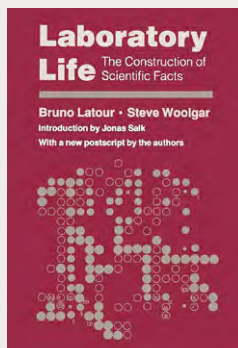
**BOOK: Unavailability (Onbeschikbaarheid)**

Sociologist Hartmut Rosa writes a highly readable quest for humanity. Vitality, touch, and real experiences arise precisely in encounters with the unavailable, the unknowable, and the uncontrollable. November 2022.



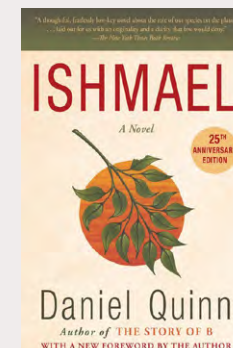
**ARTICLE: "The future demands the creativity of artists: support them generously" ("De toekomst vergt de creativiteit van kunstenaars: steun ze dan ook royaal")**

Joost Heinsius and Henk Krijnen. De Volkskrant, 2 maart 2023.



**BOOK: Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts**

Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar



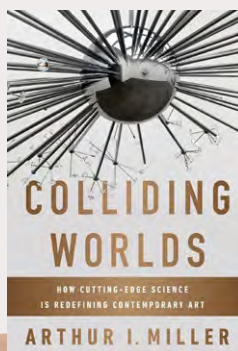
**BOOK: Ismaël**

Daniel Quinn redefines what it means to be human through a gorilla's perspective.



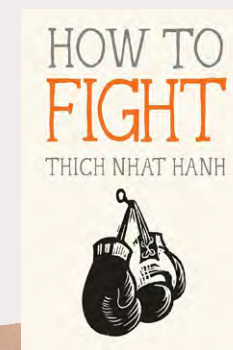
**ARTICLE: "Artists should involve themselves with the world" ("Kunstenaars moeten zich met de wereld bemoeien")**

Gijsbert van Es, editor in conversation with artist Fides Lapidaire



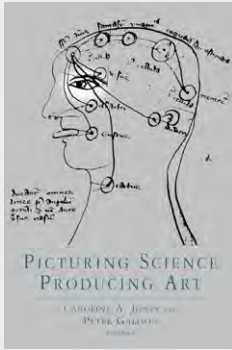
**BOOK: COLLIDING WORLDS: How Cutting-Edge Science Is Redefining Contemporary Art**

Arthur Miller



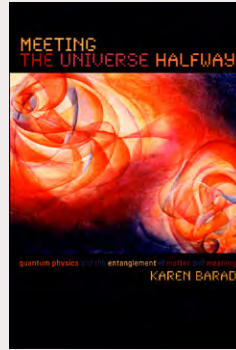
**BOOK: How to fight.**

Thich Nhat Hanh helps to look with clarity at the origin of anger. Tao Te Ching. The non-existent innocent sage, Lao Tzu, makes lyrically clear how dark and light bring forth each other. An ode to emptiness.



**BOOK: Creating ArtScience Collaboration: Bringing Value to Organizations**

Claudia Schnugg



**BOOK: Meeting the Universe Halfway**

Karen Barad



**PODCAST: Agendapunt**

An audio archive about art, culture, and policy from the Boekman Foundation.



**BOOK: Picturing Science, Producing Art**

Edited By Peter Galison, Caroline A. Jones



**PODCAST: Slagkracht**

A podcast by Cultuur + Ondernemen: personal stories about important moments in the careers of business leaders, marketers, or other creative professionals in the cultural or creative sector.



**BOOK: Synthetic Aesthetics: Investigating Synthetic Biology's Designs on Nature**

By Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, Jane Calvert, Pablo Schyfter, Alistair Elfick and Drew Endy



**PODCAST: Kunst & Bondcast**

Podcast channel for and by the creative sector.



# 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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