

# ARTWORKS

## FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

THE HAGUE EDITION



Students researching mosaic benches created by Buurtcanvas Foundation

Painting by Emma Krick @emmaquarel



FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**BUURT CANVAS**

---

**CREATIVE MUSLIM CLUB**

---

**GRANTANGI PLANT MEDECINE**

---

**MURAL OF CHANGE**

---

**MATTIAPAP**

---

**THE FLOATING GARDEN**

---

**JANE GOODALL**

---

**BOB DEMPER**

---

**22FM**

---

**FASHION FOR GOOD**



Mosaic bench created by Buurtcanvas Foundation

Photo by Madeleine Svae

#### STUDENTS

**PRADYUMN ARORA**  
**OLA BIELEN**  
**SOFIA DEBERNARDI**  
**SOFIE DELANSAY**  
**LEO FARRELL**  
**MILA FAZI**  
**CJ FURSATTEL**  
**KATE GARSIDE**  
**AOIBHEANN HAUGH**  
**ELISABETH HIRTZ**  
**EMMA KRICK**  
**BATRICE MATASSINO**  
**AMI MATSUSHIMA**  
**THALIE NGUGEN**  
**FIONA REICH**  
**FERDINAND ROCHER**  
**STERRE SCHIMMEL**  
**EZRA STEMAN**  
**MADELEINE SVAE**  
**EMMA VAN BAKEL**  
**MARENTE VAN DEN HEUVEL**  
**CAMILLA WINTERHAGER**

#### PARTNERS

##### **MANDY KOENRAADS**

Project Manager of the Thesis Hub The Hague SouthWest.

[www.scriptiewerkplaats-dhzw.nl](http://www.scriptiewerkplaats-dhzw.nl)

Thank you for putting us in touch with artists that serve the SouthWest community.

# FROM THE TEACHER

At Leiden University College we prepare our students to become **Global Citizens**; equipped with the knowledge, dispositions, and skills to take responsibility for and engage with the complex global challenges we face. **Searching for Sustainable Livelihoods: A Fieldcourse on Fieldwork** is one of several Global Citizenship courses offered. It is designed and taught by Dr. Caroline Archambault, an anthropologist working in International Development and the Global Citizenship Coordinator of LUC.

This course trains students in the **fundamental fieldwork skills** that lead to learning: observation, connection, participation, reflection, and co-creation. It focuses on centering **fun** in the field learning process by engaging serious topics with playful and creative methods.

The theme of the field course this year is **Art Activism**; exploring how **art works** to build more sustainable livelihoods. In the 7-week preparatory course in The Hague, students are tasked with finding art projects that engage in some way the idea of **sustainable livelihoods**-how do we live the lives we value without compromising others' (including other species) abilities to do so (now and in the future)? They then spend time studying **The Art, The Artists** and **The Audience**.

To do so they incorporate the methods of drawing to better see, gamification to playfully interact, creative data visualizations to connect, and conversational tools to talk. This magazine shows their first efforts.

If you are interested to **learn more** about the course, LUC, and/or my project ArtWorks- using arts to learn about and advocate for sustainable livelihoods, please reach out to me:

c.archambault@luc.leidenuniv.nl  
www.artworks4sustainability.com





**ART &**  
*SUSTAINABLE*  
*LIVELIHOODS*  
**in The Hague**

+ A Sneak Peak into  
Art in Amsterdam

# Buurt Canvas in The Hague: How Art Elevates Community Livelihoods

Art can be a powerful means to improve people's lives over the long term. To examine how art is utilized to enhance livelihoods, this article focuses on the Buurt Canvas foundation in The Hague. We explore how the artists, the art, and the audience relate to two of the foundation's key projects, namely the "community art academy" and the mosaic benches. Our research shows that the foundation's work sustainably improves the lives of many people, whether they actively participate in these projects or simply encounter the final art works in the streets.


## The Artists

We engaged with the two artists Akin Yalcin and Hasan H. Sahin, both volunteers for the The Hague-based foundation Buurt Canvas. The foundation emerged from an initiative for Turkish art and culture that Mr. Sahin started as soon as he arrived in the Netherlands in 1980. Buurt Canvas aims to create a sense of community with art, through many art related projects, such as painting classes, in various neighborhoods across The Hague. These classes, which are the main activities carried out by the foundation, tailored towards children and women, are called the "children's art academy" and the "women's art academy," respectively. We visited the Friday afternoon classes at Centrum Laakhaven. Both Akin and Hasan share their expertise and love for art through these classes, while offering a sense of belonging for the participants.



Indeed, during our interview with Akin, he emphasized the importance of social initiatives to be "sustainable" and that the key to community-building is that initiatives are continued over a long period of time. As such, the painting classes themselves can be understood as the art piece which offers a space for human connections and social interactions. These are essential for "well-being" and for one's capabilities to face "vulnerability" in line with what Scoones (1998) presents as key indicators in building sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, the painting classes offer opportunities for the participants to solidify different types of capital (Scoones, 1998).





Additionally, the painting classes offer opportunities for the participants to solidify different types of capital (Scoones, 1998). Social capital, which includes all social resources one has, seems to be central, while human capital, referring to “the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health and physical capability,” can also be improved by such an initiative. The painting classes help the creation of social networks that can be used to reduce poverty. Indeed, Akin told us about a specific case in which the network established by the foundation enabled some individuals to better reach out for help and receive assistance to find housing. From our interview, we learned that sustainability is key to building a strong and trusting community, while also being essential for Buurt Canvas to pursue its main activity (the painting classes) through strong connections with other social organizations and foundations in the city, thus alluding to the idea of social capital. Moreover, for such an initiative to be carried on, the foundation requires “economic capital” (Scoones, 1998). As an established foundation, Buurt Canvas is funded by the government. Yet, to be able to offer their main activity, the foundation also organizes art events and initiatives to gather additional funding. Such fundraising takes place in the forms of concerts, as well as through paid art projects led by housing corporations. Concretely, a



housing corporation wants to have a mosaic bench in one specific area in the city and opens up the opportunity for someone to transform a bench into an artistic piece with mosaic tiles. Buurt Canvas then accepts such an opportunity and decorates the bench with mosaic, and gets paid for doing so, while also inviting people from the community to partake in this process. Therefore, the income for such jobs are also part of the economic capital needed for a foundation to exist and continue its work sustainably.





# The Art Academy: Children and Women as Artists, Art, and Audience



Author's Work and Reference

For the art academy, it is difficult to disentangle the artist, art, and audience. Taking the classes themselves as the overall piece of art, Hasan and Akin are the artists, and all participants are the audience. However, the participants are also the artists who, every week, create their own art, while the audience is both the other participants and those encountering the pieces at public exhibitions.

During the classes, the children and the women are sitting at large tables on opposite ends of the room. The teachers are walking around and offering guidance to participants.



Author's Impression

Apart from Hasan and Akin, we also met a girl who went to the children's art academy as a participant herself, years ago. Now, she has become a teacher, helping younger children to learn how to draw as she was taught. Rather than strictly enforcing specific drawing exercises, participants are free to draw freestyle or choose one of the many available reference pictures.

The participants are thus free in their art, with as the only rule emphasised being to start painting in the background and then moving on to the objects in the front. This way of teaching art encourages the participants' autonomy while still providing support to develop their skills. For example, if

the children want to draw a specific figure but feel unable to do so themselves, the teachers vaguely outline the object with dashed lines. This guides the children who still have to retrace the dashed lines and paint everything themselves, thus get to feel in charge.



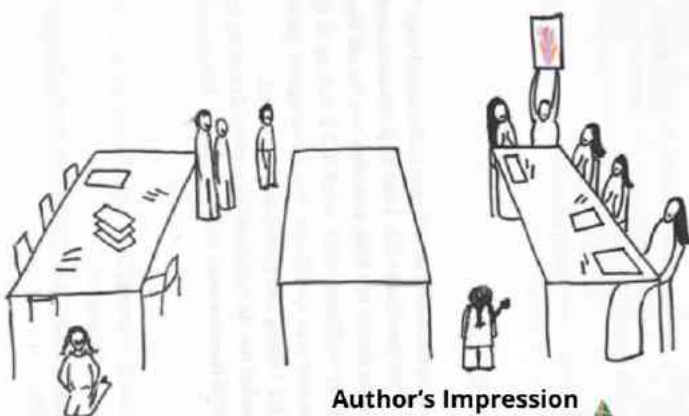
While some participants join every week and others only manage to come every two weeks, the Art Academy always remains a welcoming space. Some women explain how they work on the same painting for months, given that they only work on it during this specific time. The classes enable participants to set aside designated time for creativity and social connections, something otherwise difficult to incorporate in their busy lives. This social aspect is exemplified by the participants complimenting each other's work, making it a very uplifting environment. This mutual empowerment is also integrated in the organisation of the classes: when someone finishes their painting, the teachers ask for a moment of attention while holding up the painting to present it to everyone in the room. The painter then receives applause from everyone, making every participant an audience of their fellow participant's art



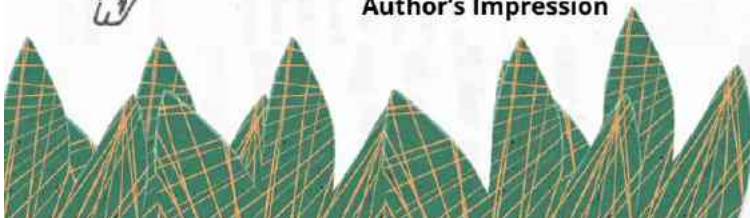
Participant's Art Work

The created artworks are also presented at public exhibitions, such as at primary schools under the viaduct at the Parallelweg and Calandstraat crossing. Especially the latter is an example of a highly accessible exhibition as many people pass this road daily. Rather than limiting access to art to e.g. museums, this type of public art showcases the painters' talent to every member of the community. While empowering the artists, this also makes this dark viaduct a nicer place.

These classes thus provide an avenue for participants to foster or rediscover their talents. Additionally, these classes offer participants the chance to share their artistic journey with their children and socialize in a creative environment. This not only promotes art appreciation among the younger generation but also fosters social cohesion and enhances the overall well-being of all participants.



Author's Impression



## The Mosaic Benches: Art & Audience

Another project of the group is the creation of mosaic benches. Indeed, alongside art classes, Buurt Canvas organizes mosaic classes in community centers, museums, centers for the elderly, theaters, and activity centers. In addition to giving these lessons, Buurt Canvas also develops its own mosaic pieces for indoor and outdoor decoration. Examples of these decorations are the mosaic benches that one can find at different points of the Hague.

The first place where the benches can be found is in Delftselaan, close to Haagse Markt. There, two colorful mosaic benches welcome people walking by on their way to the community center or the market to take a break and enjoy the fresh air of the green boulevard.

One can find three more mosaic benches in Mandelaplein, right in front of another community center, and next to a school. The benches, facing both the square and the street, are a beautiful spot for both elderly and young children to sit and enjoy the stillness of the square.

Additionally, they add color to the square, making it even more inviting.

On the day we visited, a fundraiser was being held in the square and we were happy to see that the mosaic benches turned out to be loved meeting and socialization points. Another mosaic bench can be found in Blaricumseplein's playground.



The mosaic benches had the shared effect of adding color and art to what used to look like common residential areas. The colorful and eye-catching benches invite people to sit down, rest, and socialize on a unique art piece.

Furthermore, the presence of art and artworks across residential areas adds vibrancy and uniqueness to the area and removes monotonousness.

Kumar and colleagues (2023) and Mohammed (2021) explain how the





presence of art in urban spaces can lead to urban revitalization and enhance social cohesion and the general well-being of residents. The experience of the residents shows that the mosaic benches are indeed a successful example of livelihood enhancement!

### The Audience

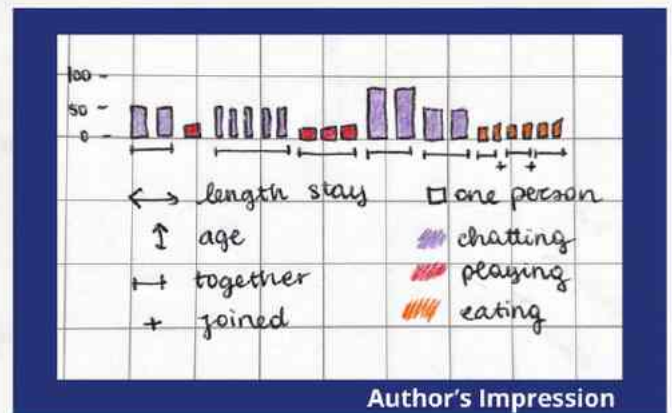
To understand how the community perceives and enjoys the benches, we interviewed the people who were sitting on them or who were from the neighborhood. Two young men, who spent half an hour on the Delftselaan bench during our visit, shared their appreciation for the spot. They find the benches very attractive, and come there about five times a week. They mentioned that they come to relax, enjoy the fresh air and soak in the ambiance of the square.

Because of the fundraiser, Mandelaplein was brimming with people of all ages.

People were selling food, grilling, chatting, and taking a walk around the square. In the forty minutes that we spent there, around twenty people sat on the mosaic benches at the center of the square.



People sat playing cards, drinking slushies, or simply resting. They come to the benches regularly, as they have become a common place of socialization. Overall, the artistically designed benches added vibrant colors and unique flair to the squares, allowing neighborhood residents to interact with art daily. These benches, often set among traditional ones, were consistently favored, demonstrating the community's appreciation.



### References

- Buurt Canvas. (n.d.). Activiteiten. <https://www.buurtcanvas.com/programs>
- Kumar, S., Sengupta, A., & Gogoi, B. (2023). Interventions for sustainable livelihoods: A review of evidence and knowledge gaps. *International Journal of Social Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSE-06-2022-0402>
- Mohammed, Y. K. (2021). Community-Engaged Arts as a Tool For Social Change. A Case Study on the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. *International Design Journal*, 11(4), 359-367.
- Scoones, I. (1998). Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis. <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/3390/Wp72.pdf?sequence=>



# CREATIVE MUSLIM CLUB



SOFIA AND FIONA



1. THE ARTIST
2. THE ART
3. THE AUDIENCE

# THE ARTIST

Next up in this edition of our magazine, we present to you an example of the art created by the Creative Muslim Club (CMC) Den Haag. The CMC is a local initiative in the Vrederust neighbourhood and co-led by entrepreneur Rusen Koc and artist Qasim Arif. On top of working with a variety of local artists and organising a range of events across the city, the CMC also designs its own collection of merchandise. The CMC seeks to empower Muslims in The Hague by organising a collective governance structure for the creative Muslim community and strengthening Muslims according to their identity and values.

Primarily, the art created by the CMC focuses on social sustainability. The Muslim community in The Netherlands, especially the younger generation, finds itself confronted with questions of belonging and suffers from prejudice and racial profiling (1). Structures and institutions, such as the network of Islamic schools across the country, have contributed to a lower quality in education for Muslims and have complicated integration efforts (2). In addition, the political discourse in the Netherlands is increasingly turning towards supporting islamophobic stances (3). Hence, Dutch Muslims are often presented with an ultimatum: "to integrate or to leave" (4). Using the concept of IDS analysis for sustainable livelihoods, the CMC is therefore embedded in a context of an anti-Islam political and social climate (5). It aims to use human capital, such as knowledge and abilities, as well as the social capital created by the close circles of the Muslim community in the Hague to resist these stresses (6). The livelihood portfolio used by the CMC focuses on conversation and **mutual empowerment** (7). It is diverse in its strategies: The CMC works with a variety of partners to organise events that range from conferences to movie screenings. Despite the current lack of social cohesion, research has proven that it is possible to reconcile an Islamic identity with the values in mainstream Dutch society (8). Therefore, the CMC works towards sustainable livelihoods that reshape the dominant negative attitude towards Islam in the Netherlands. Desired economic outcomes are to help local Muslim artists find jobs and generate profit (9). In total the CMC aims at a future in which Muslims don't feel like they must prove their worth within the Dutch society.

As a Kurdish Muslim in the Netherlands, the artist has personally experienced the challenges Muslims face. He has repeatedly stressed the importance of a creative approach since art can serve as a **vehicle for change** or, as other Muslim art activists have put it, "to elevate their voices in the public sphere" (10). The CMC itself, however, is much more than its creative outputs: It is an active meeting spot for people of all ages and nationalities within the local Muslim community. In a few months, the CMC will relocate to a bigger studio, in which not only art will be created, but also regular events will be hosted, children will spend their afternoons studying and older women will help manufacture merchandise. Additionally, the artistic approach increases the accessibility of Islam to those outside of the community, since non-Muslims feel more comfortable connecting through art than for example by going to a Mosque. In total, the CMC uses creative approaches as a means for both self-reflection as well as collective change (11).



# Creative Muslim Club

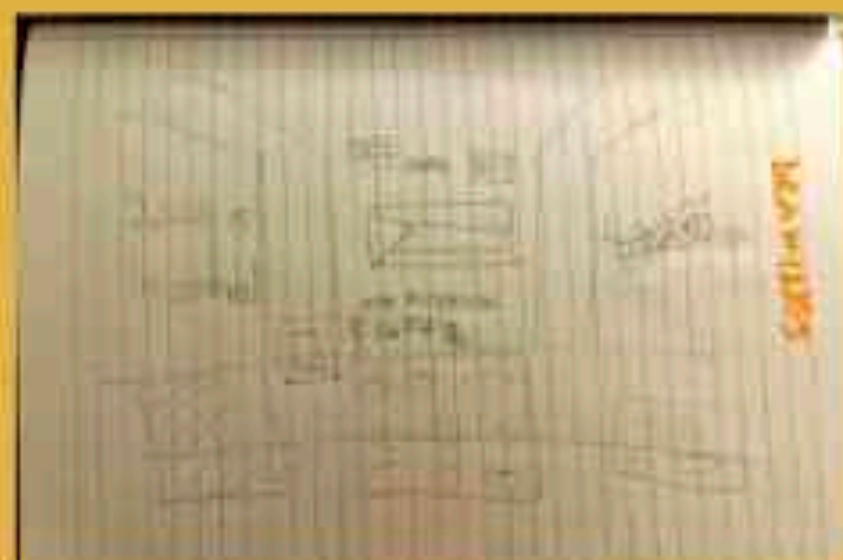


## THE ART

The goal of the Creative Muslim Club is not only to make art, but art is a means to achieve their larger goal: engaging with the community. However, the founders of the Club recognize the importance of being creative to attract more people. This is why their most relevant piece of art is their tote bag, displayed above, which is on sale. It comes in 3 different colors: **red**, **green**, and **white**. The tote bag is an accessory that can be used every day and it is a symbol of younger generations as well. This choice is made also to put an emphasis on Muslima reality in the West and especially in the Netherlands, where tote bags are widely used (12). In fact, the CMC aims to involve young people who are distant from their faith and culture, and in this way they hope to help them reconnect with their roots (13). This is a further step in the adjusting process to the mainstream non-Muslim culture: if in the past, the community mostly wanted to fit in, today many people want to reclaim their culture and identity on their own terms (14).

These tote bags are locally designed and produced and the fabric used reminds the one used for hijabs. They cost 15 euros each and they are so successful that they often sell out quickly. The community is completely self-reliant in the production of this merchandising as one of the core values of the CMC is to never compromise their Muslim beliefs for the sake of integration.

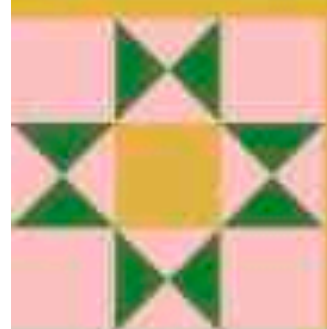
The CMC aims to be socially and environmentally sustainable; for this reason, all materials are locally produced as a "re-creation of the whole community" and the tote bags are prepared only on demand. In this way, the customer might have to wait up for a while, but it ensures a ethical supply chain.



This is a little drawing we made of the main room of the OMC, in an effort to try out **graphic anthropology**, namely seeing the world as an unfolding of cultural and social processes and not just objects (15). It is a wide space with several artworks on the walls about Allah and about Palestine, often made by kids from the neighbourhood. Many machines used to sew and print the tote bags were deployed as well. Drawing allowed us to realize that there is more than what we write or take picture of (16). For instance, we understood the importance of involving all parts of the community in the OMC.



Even if the OMC's goals and act cannot really be expressed through numbers or data, we tried to map it by summarizing needs of the community and the OMC responses. In this way, we realized the data can be extrapolated from every context and all the interactions can be mapped even the ones from the OMC (17). This graph might seem cold and distant, but it is actually a way to engage on a deeper level with this organization and see its people and their needs in a more humane way (18).



# THE AUDIENCE

## Question 1: What do you associate with the local Muslim community?

Both interviewees had little connection to the local Muslim community. One of them mentioned Haagse Markt as a merging point, where traditional Muslim clothing is being sold. The other talked about recognising Muslims due to their clothing in the city as well, but stated that the university bubble allows little contact with Muslims.



**Creative task: Take 20 seconds to memorise the tote bag. First verbally describe it, then draw it from memory.**



### **Question 2: How did your perception of the bag change after drawing?**

Here, both interviewees noticed changes in their perception after thoughtfully engaging with the tote bag. One interviewee said that drawing the totebag made her think about it as less of an abstract concept and more of a tangible object. For her, the totebag represents popular culture for younger generations, regardless of people's backgrounds. Another interviewee argued that the tote bag is not really connected to traditional Muslim values, but she recognized that the fabric was interesting as it is similar to the one used for hijabs. After drawing the bag, she realized that the concept is not really original, but yet inspiring in its own way.



### **Question 3: What do you associate with the local Muslim community now?**

We ended the interviews with the most thought-provoking question. Here, the interviewees agreed that engaging with the totebag changed their perception of the local Muslim community. For them, seeing a tote bag that serves as a representation of religion was new and unexpected. They now have a better grasp about what Muslims in The Hague really are: they can be young, hip and outgoing, while still being religious. One of the interviewees stated that she is glad to have gained a more realistic understanding of this part of society.



# REFERENCES



1. Sadjad, Mahardhika Sjamsoe'oed (2024) "Narratives of being and belonging from the perspectives of young Dutch-Muslims in the Netherlands" In *Gender, Sexuality and Social Justice* (UK: Routledge) 203.
2. Muslih, Muslih. "Islamic Schooling, Migrant Muslims and the Problem of Integration in the Netherlands." *British Journal of Religious Education* 43, no. 2 (2019) 200.
3. Meijer, Bart H. "Muslims in shock over anti-Islam party's Dutch poll win" Reuters (November 23 2023) <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/muslims-shock-over-anti-islam-partys-dutch-poll-win-2023-11-23/>
4. Sadjad, "Narratives of being and belonging," 189.
5. Scoones, Ian. "Livelihoods Perspectives and Rural Development." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36, no. 1 (2009) 3.
6. *ibid.*, 8.
7. *ibid.*, 10.
8. Muslih, "Islamic Schooling," 203.
9. Scoones, "Livelihoods Perspectives and Rural Development," 3.
10. Muftic, Mehak, and René León Rosales. "'We Just Want to Make Art' – Women with Experiences of Racial Othering Reflect on Art, Activism and Representation." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 29, no. 4 (2022) 560.
11. *ibid.*, 573.
12. Merry, Michael S., and Jeffrey A. Milligan. "Complexities of belonging in democratic and democratizing societies: Islamic identity, ethnicity and citizenship in the Netherlands and Aceh." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29 no. 3 (2009): 311-323; 312; 315-316.
13. Veenbaas, Redbad. "Values and Norms of Young Muslim People in the Netherlands." *Reaching for the Sky*. Brill, 2012. 257-267, 266.
14. Merry and Milligan. "Complexities of belonging," 315-316.
15. Causey, A. *Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method*. (2017) University of Toronto Press, 14.
16. *ibid.*, 25.
17. Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. *Dear data: Chronicle books. Introduction*. (2016) Princeton Architectural Press, New York, X.
18. *ibid.*, XI

# GRANTANGI PLANT MEDICINE

**FARAH RAHMAN'S  
'THANK YOU' TO HER  
HERITAGE**

---



# Grantangi Plant Medicine

FARAH RAHMAN'S 'THANK YOU' TO HER HERITAGE

## THE ARTIST



Exploring cultural, political, and spiritual significance of plants, Farah Rahman's work is linked to ethnobotany, providing an alternative to studying them through traditional natural science methods. Closely related to this is ethnoecology, the study of different "ways of looking" at human-nature relationships and how these perspectives shape reality [1]. This perspective highlights the challenges Farah's art poses to the current societal relationship to plants as merely food and decoration, instead prompting us to consider how we can connect to their cultural meanings we inextricably exist within. Repairing this relationship to nature is crucial in creating sustainable livelihoods, sustaining our basic needs over time while also being respectful to the environment [2].

"How can I follow my heart more?" asks the ethnobotanical artist Farah Rahman. Armed with intuition as her central guide, Farah Rahman wants to "challenge society's expectations of what it means to be an artist." Attending plant medicine ceremonies and creating art about plants has evoked "a heightened sense of more-than-human entities" around her and a sense of connectivity to plants. Now, Farah brings her Surinamese heritage, connection to nature, and alternative ways of perceiving into her work and to the wider audience.



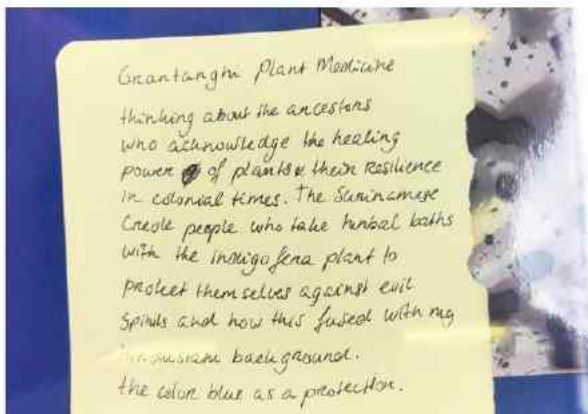
ARTISTS AT *SOFT INTIMACIES* "SHARE INTIMATE STORIES THAT ARE SOMETIMES MORE PROMINENT IN OUR COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS, SOMETIMES AS FLEETING SHADOWS THAT FADE FURTHER, BUT SOMETIMES ARE ALSO CONSCIOUSLY HIDDEN AWAY" [3]

## HERITAGE & STEWARDSHIP

Farah Rahman's work is also very personal and vulnerable – her exhibitions even include letters of appreciation to plants. The story she tells traces back to her great-great-grandfather, Munshi Rahman Khan, whose personal diary depicts indentured servitude in Suriname and the healing power of plants. With this ancestral connection, her own story about “being washed as a baby with blue water,” rooted in the indigofera plant, began. Originally from old Egypt, this color obtained from the indigofera plant was brought to Surinamese plantations by displaced enslaved people from Africa who used this tint on doors as a protective shield. Indigo was later used by the Creole Surinamese people to themselves benefit from its protection by taking herbal baths, as babies, with this plant.



To make this exhibition, Farah went on foraging walks and explored ways to connect with the environment through her senses. “I was perceiving the landscape around me, I stood still, I touched, I smelled, I looked, I listened.” She approached the plants and “let the plants approach” her, observing them without forming any rationalizing judgements, such as “what kind of plant is this?” and instead choosing to get to know the plant. This fostered a profound relationship to her surroundings.



Encouraging others to develop this sense of place by “tuning in” with their environment, she believes that her art can increase environmental stewardship. Her personal desire to engage with the environment in a respectful but tactile way, as well as her background in audiovisual design prompted her to create projections of her prints.

## THE ART

Alongside 4 other artists in Stroom (The Hague) at *Soft Intimacies*, Farah Rahman explores how memories are preserved by reflecting on forms of togetherness, belonging, and identity [3, 4]. She specifically addresses this question through the lens of spirituality, ecology and cultural heritage.

## GRANTANGI PLANT MEDICINE

*Grantangi Plant Medicine* (‘Thank you plant medicine’), includes a display of pressed plant images interlaced with recipes and notes honoring their healing power. A collection of pages contain depictions of medicinal mushrooms that the visitor can observe more closely by placing small films on a slide viewer. Farah’s notes cover a wide array of topics by addressing the plants themselves: they retrace first impressions, highlight senses activated in their presence, seek guidance, or share a more intimate and heavy reflection of their ties to her ancestors and surinamese traditions that were performed with them.

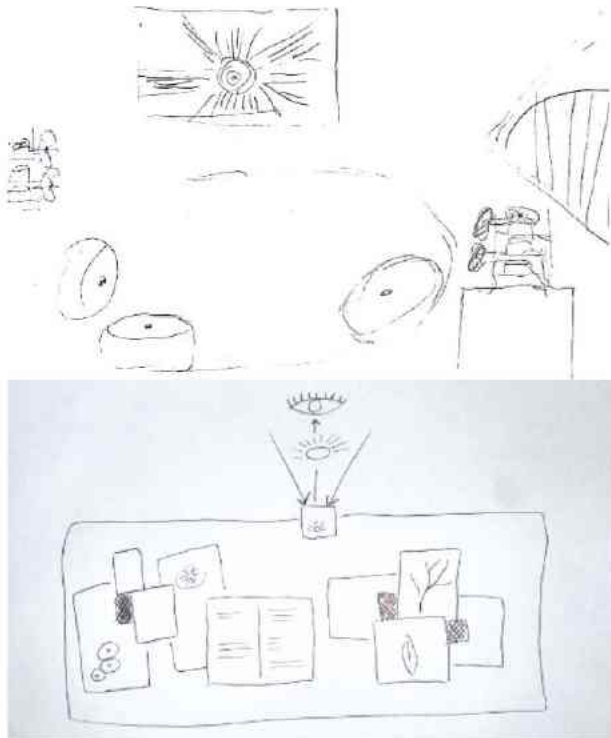


**“Dear amber tree, I discovered your leaves give a sweet lemonish scent [...]. Your resin is known to many indigenous rituals, first spotted during the Aztec period in South America, but somehow you made it here in this botanical park taken away from your origins.”**

Images of plants are also exposed on the wall in a corner of the space, where the visitor is drawn to the rhythmic mechanical sound of a dispositive projector. The space is marked by a large presence of indigo blue found on the display table, the bean bags in the cinematic installation area and the carpet on which they lay. The room's meditative state is enhanced by the burning of self-made incense diffusing scents of blue, rose, resin, sandal and cedar wood. As revealed in one of her notes, Farah made the choice to infuse the room in a dark rich color and in the scent of incense as a protection from the evil eye.

## OBSERVATIONS

Farah created a soft and intimate setting in her exhibition in the hopes to open the visitor's "layer of an inner world" and "connect to the human relationship with nature." Inspired by her use of sensorial walking as a research method, we each took the time to deeply observe one side of the exhibition room. Using Causey's (2017) [5] drawing-to-see method, we mapped our observations to better grasp the space in which the art is presented.



Three-minute sketches helped us capture what features of the art stand out most in its setup and what sensations they may evoke in us, namely the appeal to senses with the dispositive devices on either sides of the room capturing our attention, or the intimacy and comfort created by the space through its openness and the presence of bean bags coated with soft fabrics.









## FINDINGS

The exhibition unfortunately does not have a high affluence, limiting our ability to collect data on the way the audience interacted with the displays through their senses. Instead of observing the attitudes of visitors towards the artwork, we examined their responses to it by analyzing reflections on papers placed in the center of the room. A poem written by Farah, ending with "What do you feel when you think about plants and the relationship with your ancestors?" prompted this. Our findings are presented in an interactive way through a visualisation resembling both a family tree and a leaf, inspired by Lupi and Posavec's (2016) [6] *Dear Data*.

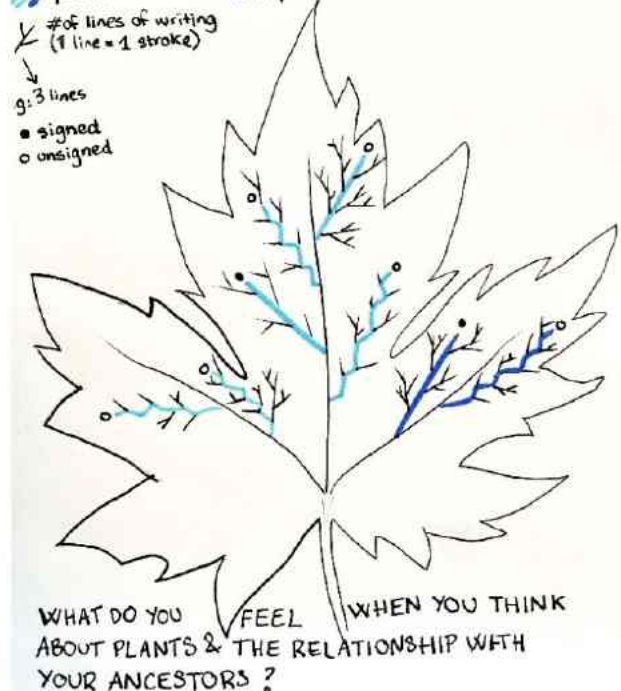
### HOW TO READ IT

#### FORM

-  written-out reflection
-  poem
-  #of lines of writing (1 line = 1 stroke)
-  g: 3 lines
-  signed
-  unsigned

#### TONE

-  hopeful
-  mixed
-  hopeless



## THE AUDIENCE

### APPROACH

Interviews were conducted with visitors and staff at the exhibition in order to explore their subjective understandings of the artwork, personal connections with the exhibit's themes, and the effectiveness of storytelling in engaging with wide audiences. A semi-structured interview structure was favoured for its flexibility and ability to explore individual perspectives and experiences brought up by participants [7]. Participants were first asked, when relevant, introductory questions about the choice of this exhibition, prior experiences of similar artworks and their initial impressions. Following this stage, guiding questions focused on the artists' perceived message, sensory engagement, humanity's relationship to nature and the preservation of memories through storytelling. An additional playful means of engaging with the audience was put in practice by inviting participants to draw a plant they feel a personal connection to, inviting them to engage with the exhibition more deeply and reflect on their own connection to nature, in relation to their unique cultural or personal backgrounds.



### INVISIBLE AUDIENCE

Farah's poem about her relationship to plant medicine invited people to reflect upon how they themselves relate to it. "My rational idea was that people would take the paper and maybe reflect on the question at home," said the artist.

Little did she know that her artwork would have "a life of its own" without her being present. Hence, we saw that through the poetic reflections, a mark was left by an audience we never encountered, changing the exhibition and impacting the experience of future visitors

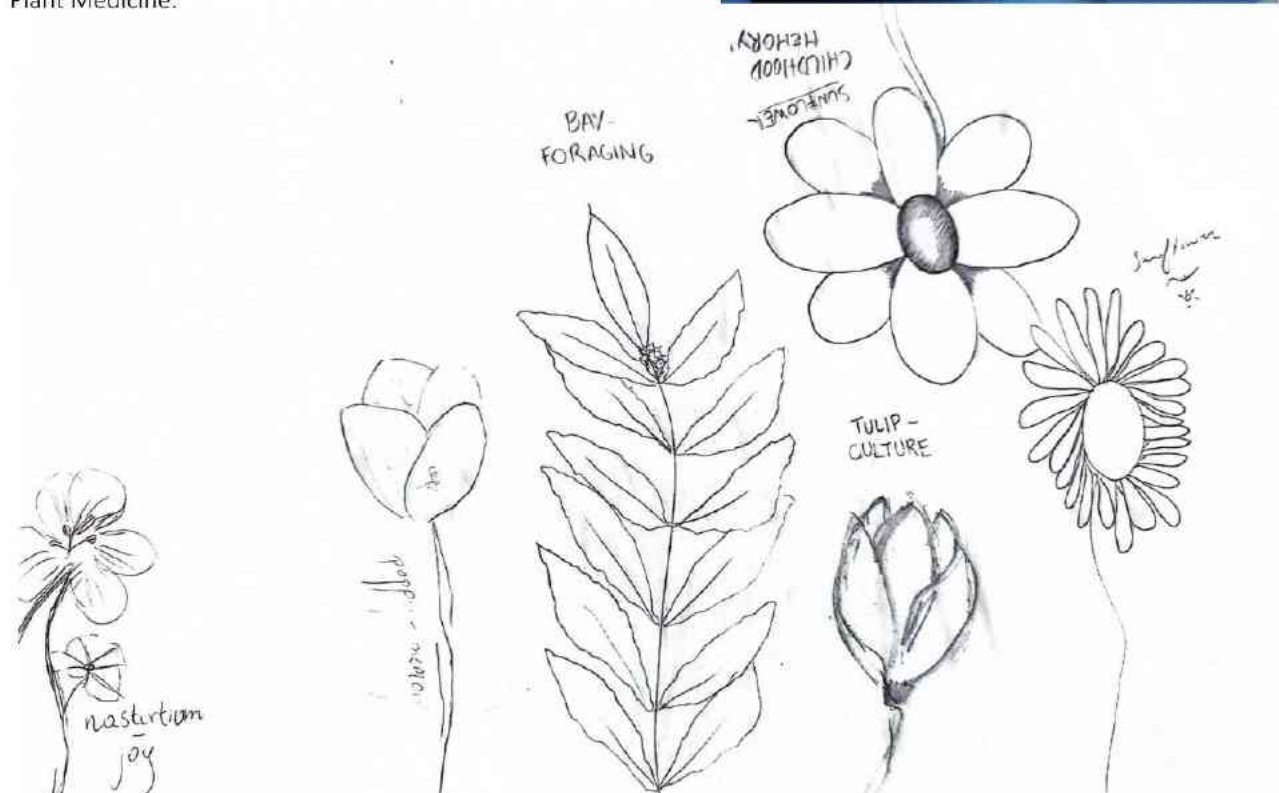
### INSIGHTS

The exhibition's exploration of collective and individual memories was deeply resonant in conversations held with the audience. A visitor reported perceiving Farah's work as a means to bring attention to the hidden beauty of the unseen natural world. For instance, she reported that prints of mushroom gills evoked the iris of a human eye, and appeared like "a hidden place for little people." In parallel, she remarked that medicinal plants, despite their healing power and the fact that "they have been here for years," are often undervalued in western cultures. In her eyes, these plants constitute unseen art that is given visibility and revived through Rahman's botanical research art.



The sensory experience offered by the room's interactive and immersive atmosphere was found to be an effective vector for experiencing, connecting with and therefore better understanding nature. Staff members reported finding Rahman's work as going beyond the visual, into the spiritual sphere that one wants to "dive in" and "see through." Visitors attribute this immersion to the various senses appealed to through tactile elements such as interchangeable slide viewers, scents from the incense, or visualizations projected on the walls. This setup allowed for a "gentle, spiritual and informative" experience of a loaded history that could otherwise be presented "violently."

The exposition's immersive storytelling encourages visitors to introspect, bringing personal stories intersecting with Farah's art to the surface. A visitor was reminded of an exhibition showcasing the power of plants as dye, while another recalled meeting someone passionate about medicinal herbs in Portugal. A staff member described the projector sound as "nostalgic," as she reminisced her father's frequent use of the device for showing photographs. All visitors, by drawing a plant that they feel a special connection to, were implicitly able to draw parallels between an element of nature and parts of themselves, whether through their memories, culture, or other aspects meaningful to them. As such, a staff member described Rahman's ability to make a personal story universal and relatable through Grantangi Plant Medicine.



Plant stories: the visitors' and staff members' drawings of plants.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Nazarea, V. D. (Ed.). (1999). *Ethnoecology: situated knowledge/located lives*. University of Arizona Press.
  - [2] Scoones, I. (1998). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis* (Vol. 72, pp. 1-22). Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
  - [3] Stroom. (2024). *Positions: Soft Intimacies*. Stroom.nl. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from [https://stroom.nl/activiteiten/tentoonstelling.php?t\\_id=4468688](https://stroom.nl/activiteiten/tentoonstelling.php?t_id=4468688)
  - [4] Metropolis m. (2024). The gaps and grasps from Positions: Soft Intimacies at Stroom Den Haag. Metropolis M. <https://metropolism.com/nl/recensie/the-gaps-and-grasps-from-positions-soft-intimacies-at-stroom-den-haag/>
  - [5] Causey, A. (2017). *Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method*. University of Toronto Press.
  - [6] Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). *Dear data*. Chronicle books.
  - [7] Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, 1(4), 492–505. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>
- Cover image: VeronArtLab. (n.d.). Etsy. Retrieved June 3, 2024, from [https://www.etsy.com/shop/VeronArtLab?ref=shop-header-name&listing\\_id=953665893&from\\_page=listing](https://www.etsy.com/shop/VeronArtLab?ref=shop-header-name&listing_id=953665893&from_page=listing)



# The Mural of Change

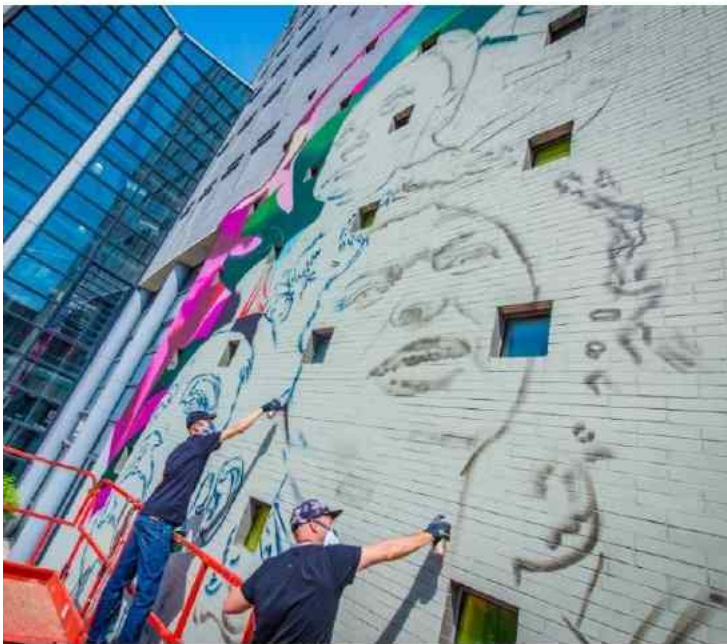
## ARTIST

The Mural of Change, located on the side of The Hague University of Applied Sciences, visualizes three human rights activists, Greta Thunberg, Berta Cáceres and Vitali Safarov ("Mural of Change," n.d.). The mural filled with bold and vibrant colors calls attention to those undertaking action to combat the challenges posed to the world. Each of the human rights defenders in this mural fights for an issue that threatens the sustainability of life on earth. Here Greta Thunberg symbolizes the fight against climate change, Berta Cáceres advocates for indigenous rights and Safarov addresses issues of equality and human rights ("Mural of Change," n.d.) As Scoones defined, the sustainability of a livelihood is reliant on its ability cope and deal with stressors without depleting the base of natural resources present (Scoones, 1998, p.5). This art work therefore symbolizes those who have dedicated their lives to maintaining this sustainability in various ways and simultaneously calls for collective action to fight for a just and sustainable world ("Mural of Change," n.d.).



## Story behind the creation of the Mural of Change

The creation of the Mural of Change in 2020 was a collaborative project between the organization Peace and Justice Netherlands, graffiti artists Karki & Beyond and The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS) ("Mural of Change: The story behind the mural," 2020). In 2017 Peace and Justice Netherlands first came into contact with Karki & Beyond and their style of art activism, which inspired the idea to create a mural together. This led to a brainstorming session in 2019 with the artists, the organization and students of THUAS in which a focus on the defenders of climate action became clear ("Mural of Change: The story behind the mural," 2020). Based on this the artists designed the mural incorporating a variety of activists to illustrate the significance of diversity of voices of hope. Additionally, it demonstrates the importance of the inclusion and respect for different perspectives (Nazarea, 1999).



# The Mural of Change

## Karski & Beyond: Graffiti as Art Activism

Karski & Beyond are a Dutch art activist duo known for their colorful and impressive graffiti murals. For over 20 years they have been creating big art works all over the world (Zwaal, 2020). Art activists like them want to change social conditions through means of art in the real world outside of the art system (Groys, 2014). The Mural of Change is eight by fifteen meters and filled with vibrant colors that immediately catch the eyes of those passing by. This is typical for Karski and Beyond who attach value to the fact it is art that people can hardly go around and is noticeable. On top of this they consider themselves story tellers who hope to communicate a story through their art (Zwaal, 2020).

**“We hope that all people who look up at our painting realise that they too can do something for the world.” (Zwaal, 2020).**

Therefore, the mural and the use of bright eye-catching colors encourages the people passing by to not only see the hope that the human rights defenders symbolize but also inspire people to seek change themselves.

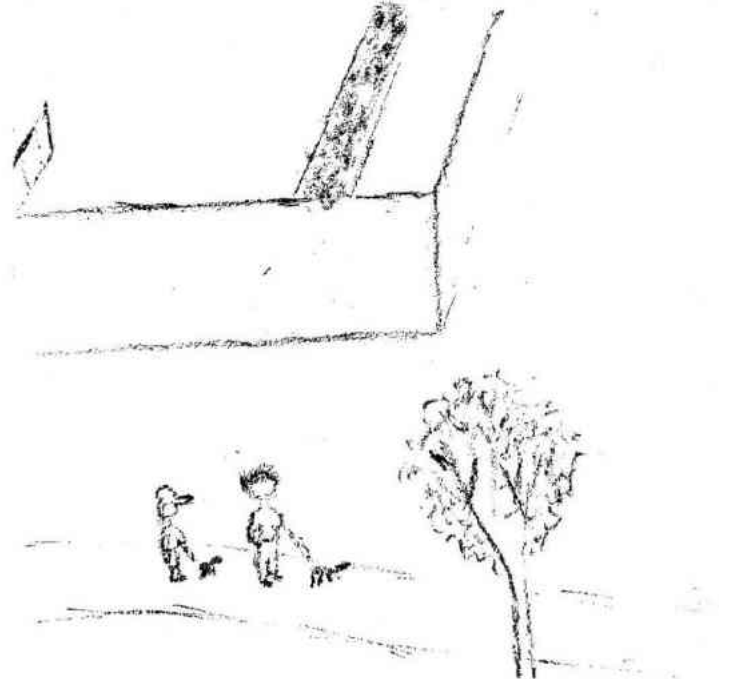
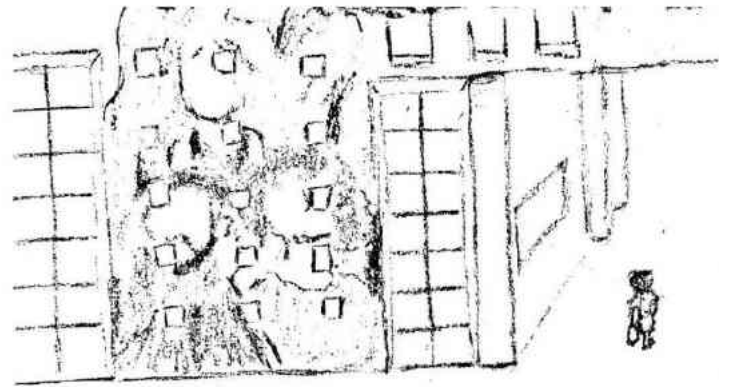


# The Mural of Change

## ART

### Description of the Art

The *Mural of Change* is an inspiring piece of artwork which, through its vibrant colours and detail, transforms the ordinary and rather grey building on which it is painted. As passersby approach, it is impossible not to notice the mural, even on a rainy day like the one we experienced when visiting the artwork. Despite its immense scale, Karski & Beyond have impressively incorporated detailed portraits alongside lush greenery, stretching hues of vibrant pinks, reds, greens and blues. Each of the three portraits wears a distinct, individual expression that draws the audience in, feeling the emotional depth of each image. The mural envelops the entirety of the available wall space, and stretches skyward to a staggering height. Overall, the artwork is a powerful testament to the captivating power of art in urban landscapes.



### How did we conduct observations?

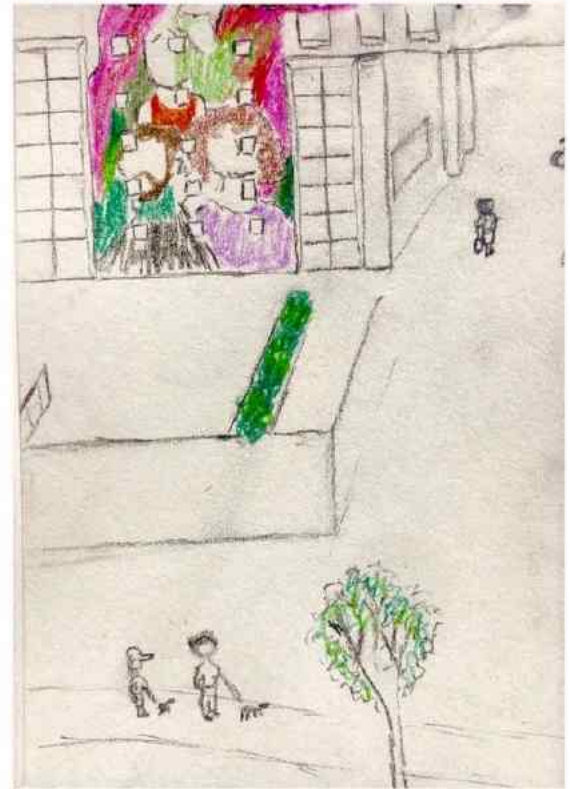
Once we arrived at the mural, we took a few minutes to silently observe and make notes. We then discussed among one another what we noticed. After that, we took some photographs of the mural. We then decided to draw, to help us see the mural more accurately, and to bring to light aspects we missed through note-taking and photographs (Causey, 2017, p.7-8). The ultimate aim was to observe the mural more deeply, and make connections that initially appeared imperceptible (Causey, 2017, 13 and 16).

# The Mural of Change

## ART

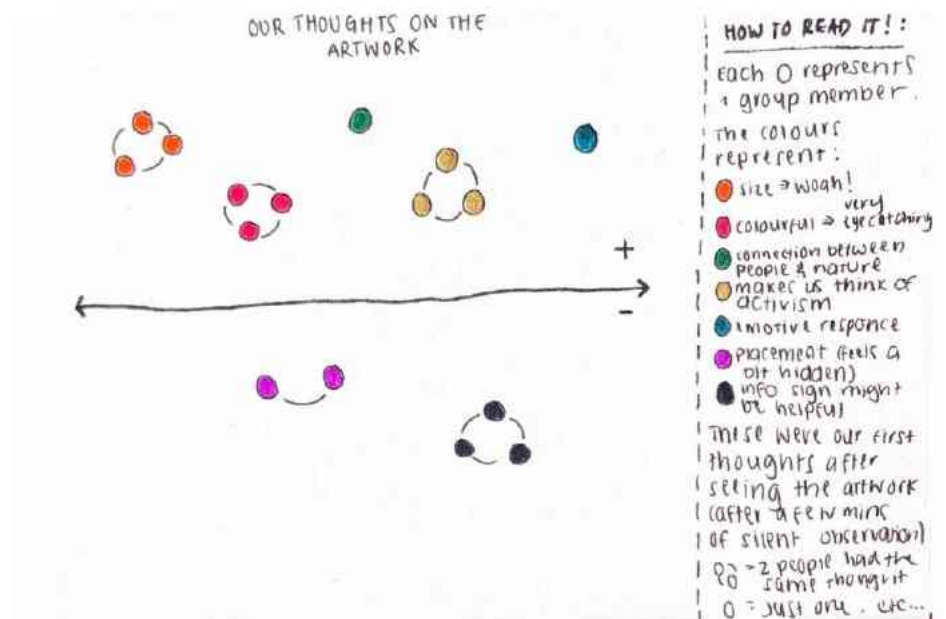
### Our Observations

The longer we observed the mural and drew, the more details we noticed. The overlap between the figures of Greta Thunberg, Berta Cáceres and Vitali Safarov added a narrative element, bridging the human nature dichotomy we often experience in bustling cities. The details in the portraits, particularly their size and the expressions of each individual, provided insight into the character and strength of each individual. This provoked us to think about their work as activists and from this our own experiences of activism. Furthermore, we noticed a visual connection between the vibrant greens in the artwork and the greenery in the surrounding area (some nearby trees and bushes), making the connection to nature ever the more strong. Lastly, the colours were extremely vibrant in contrast to the surroundings, and made us think about how the art might serve as inspiration to the university students.



### Presenting our Findings

To process and present our observations, we drew inspiration from Lupi and Posavec's *Dear data* series (Lupi and Posavec, 2016). We decided to focus on our initial thoughts on the artwork that we collected from the discussion that followed our silent observation. Each circle represents a group member, and each colour represents a different comment on the mural. On the top of the line are positive comments, while on the bottom of the line are negative comments.



Evidently, we mostly shared the same initial comments on the mural. More specifically, on the positive side we shared the feeling that we were impressed with the size of the mural, its vibrancy and that it immediately made us think of activism. On the negative side, we also shared that we felt a small sign or some information regarding the mural might be useful, as we were unaware who one of the figures was. However, there were some initial comments we did not share. For example, only one group member felt the connection between people and nature, and similarly only one felt an immediate emotive response. Lastly, only two group members felt the placement of the mural was slightly hidden, while one disagreed. We were interested to see how these initial reactions might compare to those of the people we were to interview.

# The Mural of Change

## AUDIENCE



## How did we determine audience experience?

To get a sense of the ways in which passersby experience the mural, we undertook a mix of structured and semi-structured interviews, both with people who happened to walk by the mural and with people who passed by the mural on a daily basis. We did this by talking to people we knew and had met previously who studied at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS), where the mural is located, and then also by going to see the mural for ourselves and interviewing people who passed by. We purposefully made this distinction in order to broaden the scope of our observations and see whether the regularity of viewing the artwork would in some way affect their experience.

## How did we undertake the interviews?

Armed with a prepared list of questions, we chose to use a less structured interview style when talking to the people who just happened to walk by the mural. Whereas the people we interviewed who saw the artwork regularly were people we had a closer personal connection to, these were people we had no connection to whatsoever. We wanted to make the interview feel comfortable and natural and be mindful that these people did not have much time or will to engage with us, so we felt a semi-structured interview in which we have a conversation with the interviewees into which we work our questions naturally would work best (Bernard 2017, p. 164-165). This also allowed us to share personal stories with the interviewees and relate to them, making them feel easier expressing vulnerabilities and opening up to them (Roberts 2023, 28:30). In contrast, this was less necessary with the THUAS students we interviewed, for whom we therefore chose to work with a structured interview-style in which they answered our prepared list of questions without much surrounding conversation.

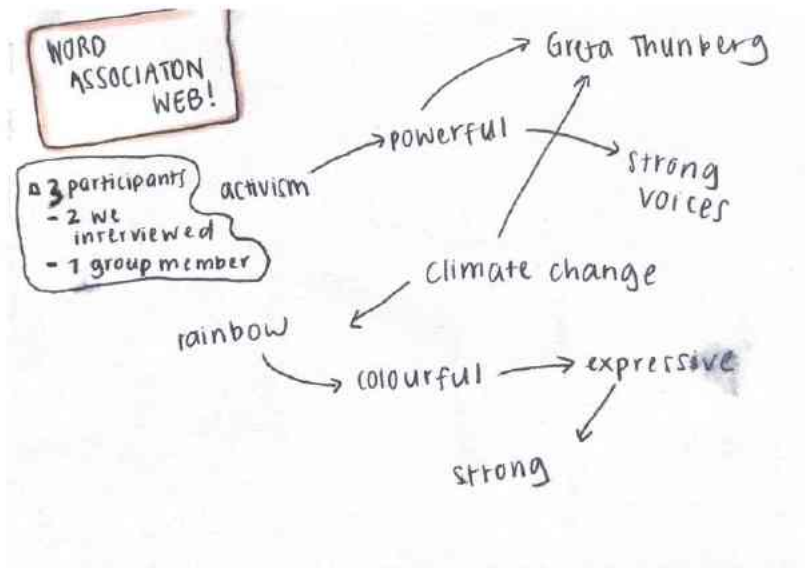


# The Mural of Change

## AUDIENCE

### What was the experience of the audience?

In order to gain a better idea of what aspect of the artwork stood out the most to our interviewees, we decided to undertake all except one interview in a place from which the artwork could not be seen directly, for example under the underpass right next to it. This allowed them to reflect on what they retained from the artwork and had made the biggest impression on them. We captured this impression by doing a game with our interviewees, in which they said the first word that came to mind in a rapid-fire round of word association. For all interviewees, what stood out to them the most was the depiction of Greta Thunberg. None of our interviewees recognized the other two activists in the artwork, which highly shaped the way in which they experienced and interpreted the artwork. One interviewee mentioned, for example, associating the prominent use of greens in the mural to the environmental activism Thunberg is known for.



Her personal experience of viewing Thunberg online also made it so that she was reminded of social media and the ways in which it has influenced climate change discourse, further coloring the way in which she interpreted the art. This influence of personal experience was often noticeable in the interviews, with interviewees recalling attending protests. Interestingly, this ensured that the message that most interviewees felt was conveyed by the artwork was about the importance of small voices in impacting and creating real change.

## References cited:

- Bernard, H. R. (2017). *Field notes: How to take, code, and manage them. Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches, Sixth Edition*, 308-322.
- Causey, A. (2017). Chapter 3. *Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method*. University of Toronto Press.
- Groys, B. (2014). On art activism. e-flux. [http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article\\_8984545.pdf](http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_8984545.pdf).
- Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). *Dear data*. Chronicle books.
- "Mural of Change." (n.d.) Justice and Peace. <https://justiceandpeace.nl/en/mural-of-change/>.
- "Mural of Change: The story behind the Mural." (2020) Justice and Peace. <https://justiceandpeace.nl/en/mural-of-change-en/>.
- Nazarea, V. D. (Ed.). (1999). *Ethnoecology: situated knowledge/located lives*. University of Arizona Press.
- Roberts, R. (Host). (2023, May 22). The secrets of great conversation (with Charles Duhigg) [Audio podcast episode]. In EconTalk. Library of Economics and Liberty. <https://www.econtalk.org/the-secrets-of-great-conversation-with-charles-duhigg>
- Zwaal, Sophie. (2020). "Karski & Beyond, inspiring change through the power of street art." Justice and Peace. <https://justiceandpeace.nl/en/stories/karski-beyond/>.

# MATTIAPAP "IL PAVONE"

Instagram: @mattiapp



Sustainable Livelihoods

Assignment 2

Mila Fazi & Beatrice Matassino





## The Artist

1a. Mattia's artwork emphasises the critical role of **community and conviviality**, values that are diminishing in our increasingly individualistic and self-reliant societies. It underscores the importance of **social capital** and community support as essential elements for sustainable livelihoods (Scoopes, 1998). Mattia's piece encourages us **not to fear exposing our vulnerabilities**, highlighting how **community** support can significantly **bolster resilience and adaptation**.

The work also celebrates the power of **shared experiences** and the human need for **connection**, bridging the gap between **self and Others**. Food, a central theme in this artwork, serves as a potent tool to **unite people** across different backgrounds, genders, social status and age.

By challenging **conventional table manners** and encouraging eating with hands, the piece invites **direct engagement** with the food and, symbolically, with each other.



The intentional absence of plates further critiques the notion of **private property**, suggesting a **communal approach** to resources and experiences.

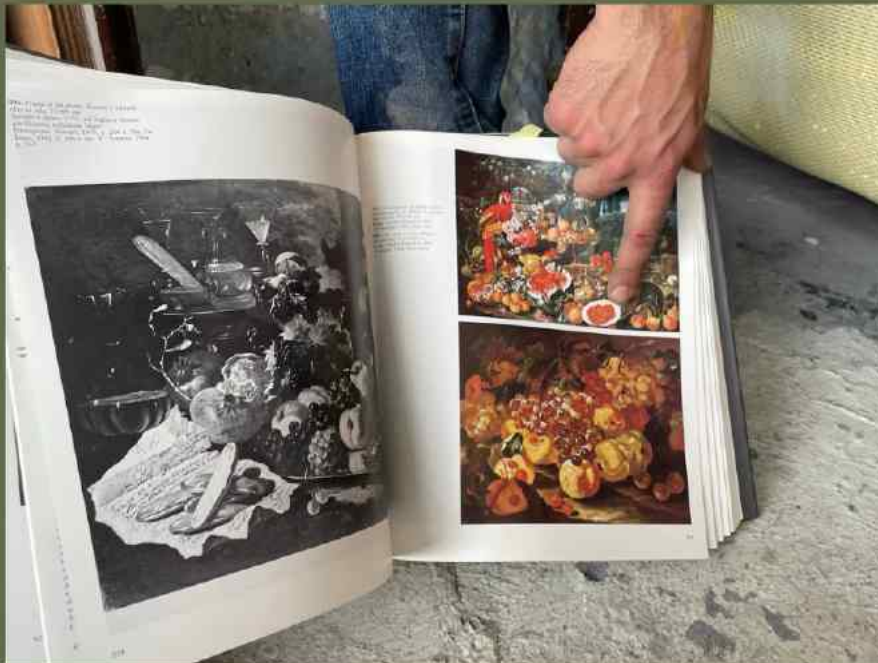
The exhibition was **free**, making it accessible for everyone. All the food came from Haagse Mark, using items that would otherwise have been discarded, considered as old and unusable. This prompts a critical reflection on **what constitutes 'waste'** and challenges the current unsustainable production and consumption systems. By **questioning even food systems** and supply chains, the exhibition supports the ideas of **reducing food waste** and promoting recycling.

Scoopes (1998) talks about how the different **access** different people have to livelihood resources and types of capital—financial, social, human, physical, and natural—affects their success in achieving sustainable livelihood strategies. These disparities, enhanced by factors like gender, ethnicity and social class, **shape immediate opportunities** and **long-term economic sustainability**. Through his work, Mattia talked about the "**democratization**" process, emphasising the concepts of **equality** and **shared identity**, illustrating how individuals are not merely victims of this system but can also be agents of change.



1b. Mattia wanted to **celebrate beauty**. The celebration of beauty simply for the sake of it is widely common in Italian culture but differs around the world. With this piece, the artist wanted to **honour beauty**, while also **challenging societal expectations** and common Western practices. Eating without cutlery, **using our hands**, all together at the same table without following any real form of unwritten mannerism we are usually accustomed with.

Mattia mentioned: *"I wanted to use this piece to appreciate different cultures, while decolonising table manners and moving away from eurocentric norms."*



By bringing together different cooking styles and traditions, absorbed during the years through friends, lovers and more, Mattia reinforces this idea of **shared culture and community thinking**.



He highlighted the concept of **moving away from our own self** to become part of a community, of a group: *"It [the piece] has nothing with the type of person you are."* Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to be part of the experience. The ethical dilemma of the **individual versus community** has been highlighted by many scholars, especially in terms of whose rights are being observed - the communities or the individual (McNeil, 1998)?

Mattia's piece wants to bring us back to this idea of **community, shared values, experiences, rights and needs**. Dealing with such ethical questions can be challenging (McNeil, 1998). Experience-based art such as this piece are humbling means to communicate such messages.



In a society which expects us to always be perfect and follow its rules, the piece wanted to **inspire people to let go**, to celebrate the available abundance and the spectacularity of food. *“Food as an orgy, as abundance. I wanted people to be able to appreciate and prioritise pleasure and joy.”* The concept of “Sustainable Hedonism”, the realisation of joy and happiness without the damage of others nor future generations, was introduced by Lelkes (2021) and it is exactly what the piece is trying to convey. By indulging in the copious amount of food, which would have otherwise been thrown out, the audience is asked to break out of their schemes and fully satisfy their wants and needs, highlighting the notion that sustainability and hedonism are not mutually exclusive and together can actually lead to more sustainable practices and lifestyles (Lelkes, 2021). Mattia mentioned: *“We are all born hedonists, but at least we can enjoy it while doing something good.”*

Common narratives surrounding sustainability often involve this aspect of having to give up, renounce and abdicate joyful abundance. Through this piece, the artist aims to underline the idea that to be sustainable one **does not need to give up** her desires and pleasures but can **satisfy them** while also **positively contributing** to her community. Ultimately, this was particularly important for Mattia as he was able to further express his personality, *“I often identify with Dionysian behaviours, feeding the irrational part of my psyche”*, and his passions for still life and through it, the anthropologically-induced evolution of food. Indeed, in other projects, the artist has focused on raising awareness on extinct food species, such as different apple varieties.

1c. Mattia integrates his two passions, highlighting the **intrinsic connection** between **art** and **food**. The exhibition delivered more than just the art itself; the **entire process**, from the selection of ingredients to their sourcing, to the creation and consumption, **became an integral part of the artwork**. By assembling the piece in front of the audience, a group, a **community was created around the piece**. The notion of eating all together, without any set of formal rules, highlighted the aspect of the **democratisation**, equality in the access to it, of food and sharing between different people and cultures.

Food lays the foundation for shared experiences and connections among people (Moreno & Criado, 2018). By obtaining resources for free and offering free entry, the exhibition facilitated greater participation, making it **accessible to people from all economic backgrounds**. *“Food can become a symbol of what separates the powerful from the powerless, or certain groups from the rest of society”* and vice versa (Gladkova, 2023).

Arjun Appadurai highlights the role of **gastro-politics**, arguing how *“food can either serve the symbolic function of indicating equality, intimacy or solidarity or serve to sustain relations characterised by hierarchy, distance or segmentation”* (Gladkova, 2023). With this piece, Mattia used this food performance as an **act of political activism**.



## The Art

2a. During the performance, music played as the artist artfully arranged the food on a white napkin in a dynamic and performative manner. He said he felt like an *“orchestra director,”* a conductor who creates **synergies between the food and the music**. The display included ingredients such as fruits, grapes, dragon fruit among others, and salad, burrata, peppers and more, creating a visually and sensorially engaging experience for the audience. Mattia deliberately chose to combine foods that do not necessarily fit together, aiming to make people experience the contrast in tastes and explore how these combinations affect their feelings, encouraging them to **try new things** and **challenge their ability** to pair flavours.

Inspired by Francois Vatel's banquets during the 1600s



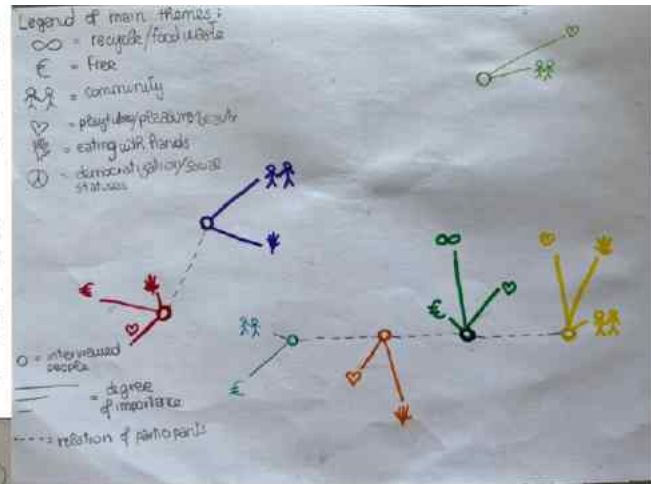
At the end of the performance, we, the audience, were invited to **eat the food directly from the table**, with our hands, sharing this experience side by side with neighbours who were complete strangers to us.



Mattia said *“the audience eagerly dove in, swept up in a whirlwind of derision, doubt, amazement, and euphoria. Like a pack of jackals, they pounced—all hands, no rules. Without any layers, it was pure, more authentic and genuine.”*

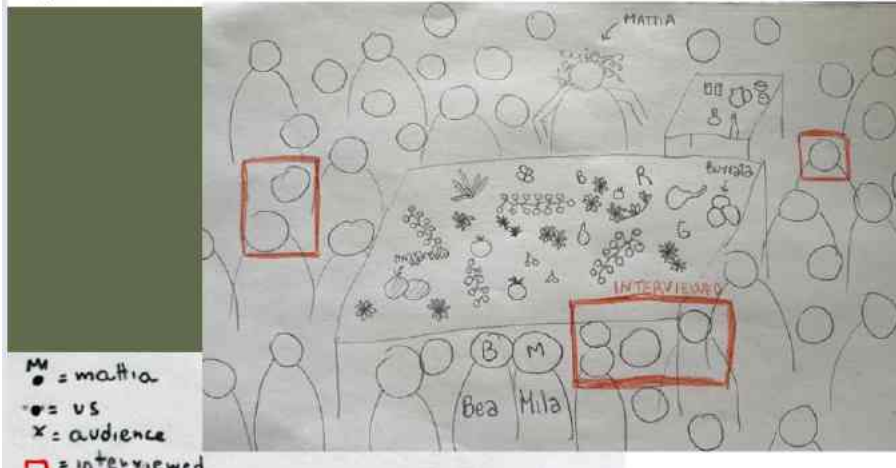
2b. We realised the **difficulty in gathering data** while watching an art performance. Mapping helped **visualise the disposition** of the performance by **"reducing complexity in order to see"** (Causey, 2017). Mattia was at the centre of the art while also being part of the crowd around him. We were looking at him perform and create art while also **being part of the creation**. Furthermore, we noticed the **presence of more ingredients** than we did before, namely flowers, asparagus and cape gooseberries.

Additionally, after the performance, we did a game, inspired by etude 5 (Blind Ostrich). We closed our eyes and drew what we could remember on the table. After comparing our drawings with pictures taken during the performance, we **realised how much we had missed**. With this game, we indeed **practised and experienced the notion of "drawing to see"** rather than seeing and drawing (Causey, 2017). It was interesting to notice how we identified and drew different ingredients. For instance, while Bea identified the different types of cheese, Mila focused on the different vegetables and salads.



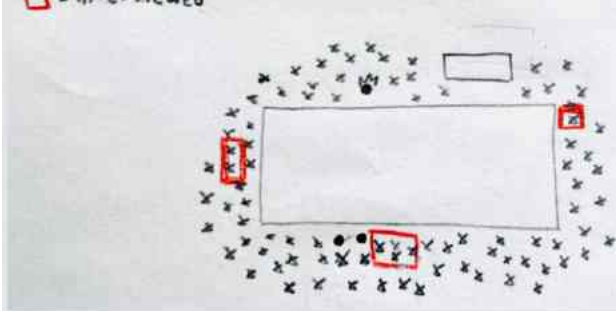
When having to map it down, we also realised the **importance of the audience and the spatial relationships within the piece** (Causey, 2017). Not only during the composition of the table, where the audience was moving and leaving space for Mattia according to his movements, but especially afterwards, when the food was consumed.

2c. With **degree of importance** we referred to **how many times the interviewee mentioned** that aspect of the performance. We realise that the amount of mentions might not actually translate to how much they value the theme they have mentioned. We did however decide to report it to see how the recurrent themes varied between participants and to what extent they value them.



Furthermore, we acknowledge our **positionality** during the interviews and the data collection, being **ourselves part of the crowd and experiencing the art**. For example, Bea's veganism, being Italian and a former cheese lover, led her to notice more the quantity and variety of cheeses on the table.

For our visualisation, we got inspiration from [Dear Data, Week 13: A week of desires](#), as it fit with both the main themes of the exhibition and the way we wanted to visualise the degree of importance for each participant.





## The Audience

The game-based learning of etudes 6 was intended for the interviewee, however, none of the audience wanted to participate in these games. Nevertheless, we were able to informally interview seven people.

We adapted the **looping technique** from the podcast to ensuring a continuous build up in the conversation and more in-depth answers from the participants.

We approached a group of friends nearby, who, like us, were also eating from the table. One of them specifically appreciated the fact that the **meal was free** and how it **brought people together**, highlighting the communal aspect and beauty of the piece. However, they also expressed **uncertainty** about the **intended message** of the exhibition, noting a lack of clear explanation which however left everything open to personal interpretation. She felt that the piece lacked clarity about its purpose and final message. Conversely, another participant **valued this ambiguity**, appreciating the freedom it provided for individuals to freely interpret the art. Nevertheless, they felt that the **artist was very approachable** and non-intimidating, which made it easier for them to engage in conversation with him and ask him about the piece.



One participant told us how she connected the piece to her eating disorder, explaining how the **communal presentation of food alleviated the stress and anxiety** associated with food consumption. She noted that food served on individual plates often sets expectations to fully consume it, marking it as "her" food. In contrast, the shared arrangement on the table allowed her to eat as much or as little as she wanted without feeling observed or judged by others, and removing all assumed habits we have around eating.

None of the interviewed participants mentioned one of the central messages of the performance according to Mattia, the "democratisation process," the aspect of equality and abandonment of social statuses and barriers.

Another participant particularly **enjoyed the playful nature** of the artwork, especially the absence of cutlery. This initially caused some confusion, but after observing others enthusiastically "*jumping in the food*," he felt inspired and somewhat relieved to be able to **participate without judgement**. The **feeling of belonging**, of being part of a group, was also mentioned. It was a first-time experience for him.

### Bibliography

- Cauley, A. (2017). Chapter 3. Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method. *University of Toronto Press*, 43-72. (22 pgs). This includes doing etudes 5-13.
- Fairhead, J., & Leach, M. (1996). *Misreading the landscape: how the commons were lost in Africa and elsewhere*. (pp. 102-103)
- Gladwin, E. (2023). Why food is such a powerful symbol in political protest. *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/why-food-is-such-a-powerful-symbol-in-political-protest>. 197/03.
- Lu, G., & Posavac, S. (2026). *Data data: Chronicle books introduction, a week of books, a week of public transport, and a week of funny you*. (19 pgs).
- McNeil, R. J. (1998). An ethics primer for university students intending to become natural resource managers and administrators. In *Inter: J. G. (comp.) Proc. Second Int. Conf. Univ. Educ. Nat. Res.* (7 pgs).
- Morero, J. L., & Crado, E. A. (2019). From the landscape to the table. *Anthropology of food*, 13. Article 13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/af.1665>
- Nozawa, V. D. (Ed.). (1999). *Environmental knowledge: localized lives*. University of Arizona Press. (9 pgs)
- Soanes, J. (1996). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis*. <https://oendocib.ac.uk/pendocib/pendocib/pendocib/20100126/3333/Wo/2.pdf>. (9 pgs)

# The Floating Garden – The Hague

Made By: Ezra Steman & Sterre Schimmel

In the heart of a politically busy city, right on top of the Hofvijver, lies an innovative artwork consisting of large colourful blow-up artworks, described as a lush garden on a pontoon. For the third year in a row, BlowUp Art The Hague has funded a project throughout the city of The Hague, all made in the same blow-up style. Previous editions of the festival featured site-specific inflatable artworks spread through the centre of The Hague. This year, it is the Hofvijver's turn to be transformed into a blow-up paradise. This project is meant to incentivise people to still visit the Binnenhof, a tourism hotspot and home to the Dutch Houses of Parliament, which has been in reparation for the same amount of time (BlowUp Art Den Haag, 2024).

The three-week temporary festival of inflatable artworks grabs the attention of locals and tourists all the same through its central position in The Hague and its likening to a playground. Four different components compose the floating garden: Airboretum, Gazebo, Eggs, and Like a Pan in Water. Each artwork has its own story and meaning, but the overall interpretation eludes to a demand for more sustainable and nature-inclusive areas within a city. Each component of the floating garden is crafted with attention to both aesthetic appeal and ecological message. The real trees and flowers, planted in pots next to the blow-up art sculptures, mimic the real-life gardens that could be incorporated more into the Dutch landscapes.

The project has been made possible by several artists and designers. To get a the best sense of the artwork, we will briefly introduce the three people that are connected to The Floating Garden.

**Mary Hessing** has been a designer and consultant for years and is the curator of the BlowUpArt The Hague event this year.

**A** **Debora Treep** is an ecological landscape architect and a teacher at Yuverta. She teaches about urban livelihoods and climate and guided the four students that made the Garden.

**Frank Bruggeman** helped design the Garden and is an independent artist who focuses on the thin line between nature and culture. He often uses natural objects to create his art.

**R** **Sustainable Livelihood Issue**

Lately, the effects of climate change have been increasing and affecting cities all over the world (IPCC, 2019). The more the global temperature increases, the more we get acquainted with its effects on our livelihoods.

**T** One of the biggest problems is related to the increase in temperature and air pollution in urban areas (Lopes & Camanho, 2013). According to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) the mortality rates, especially among the elderly, have been significantly increasing over the years and have had an all-time high in the summer of 2023 (CBS, 2023). The CBS has connected this increase in mortality to the rise in temperature in the summer months. An often-overlooked but promising solution to rising urban temperatures and polluted air is the development of Urban Green Spaces (UGS) (Li et al., 2020). Green spaces offer numerous benefits, such as improving air quality by filtering fine dust, facilitating water storage, mitigating the effect of the Urban Heat Islands, and enhancing citizens' health and emotional welfare (Sanders, 2019). Moreover, transforming just 10% of a city's hardened surfaces into green areas can positively affect health and promote social inclusion and community cohesion (Sanders, 2019; De Haas, 2021). Ensuring the availability of green spaces, especially in city centres, remains challenging due to the competing need for new housing as urban populations grow globally.

**S** That is why The Floating Garden of BlowUpArt The Hague hopes to inspire people to think about nature-inclusive gardens that could improve their urban livelihoods. The artwork uses all sorts of materials to highlight this, such as grass, willow branches, various plants, and the important aspect of water itself. The designers and landscape architects have attempted to get the visitors to think about their own garden at home, what they can do to make the garden more inclusive, and what the importance is of greenery and water to increase liveability in a city. The way the Garden tries to inspire ties in with the different strategies that can be used to make livelihoods more sustainable by making them stress, shock, and risk-resistant (Scoones, 1998). The strategies, for instance, are to create reserves and buffers for times of stress and shocks. By making a garden or public space more green and diverse, it can function as a water buffer storage for when temperatures are increasing (Scoones, 1998; Li et al., 2020).

Further, systems within the livelihood are made more reliant “such that the impacts of stresses and shocks are less dramatically felt,” (Scoones, 1998, p. 10). Here, the focus therefore lies on increasing the well-being and capabilities within a livelihood and livelihoods are adapted to be made more resilient and less vulnerable.

#### **Why this issue?**

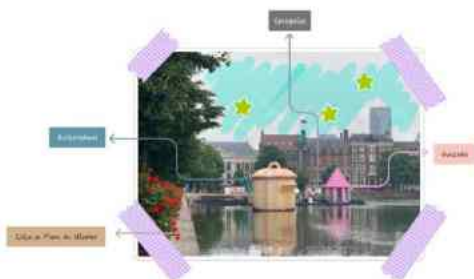
The issue of climate change is one of the most pressing and critical problems of our time and will shape the future development of cities as well. As mentioned, cities will get warmer and the air will be more polluted. Droughts will occur more often, even in the Netherlands. Simultaneously, the Netherlands and the Hague will also have increasing problems with water management and even possible flooding when sea levels keep rising and rainstorms will increase. The Hague, in fact, is one of the cities that is worse off when it comes to increased rainfall (Krijger, 2018). These problems make it necessary to develop new ways of shaping public spaces and private gardens. Debora Treep is actively engaging with this material by teaching students in vocal education how cities can be made more climate resilient and how people can live together with nature in heavily urbanized spaces. The same goes for Frank Bruggeman, he attempts to bring nature and culture closer together to eventually make it easier to integrate them together and finding a balance between the two.

#### **Why communicate it this way?**

Environmental art can be a great communicator to bring awareness to environmental problems and can promote sustainable living through its psychological influence (Davidson, 2015). Thus, choosing blow-up art to communicate the effect of nature on urban landscapes, can be incredibly effective. By working together with an established festival such as BlowUp Art The Hague, the art can reach a great number of visitors, and thus have the greatest amount of influence. All artists stayed close to their own practice with symbolism, exploration of identity, mathematical design process, and a call for inclusivity, the aggregation of the different styles produces a systematic call for action necessary for change.

## The Art

The 4 elements of the floating garden complete with water features and clusters of willows have been specifically selected for the Hofvijver. Studio Mieke Meijer designed the Arboretum to push the boundaries of sustainable design solutions and the combination of architecture and design. Sigrid Calon was involved in the design of the Gazebo in an effort to combine graphic and highly colourful patterns with a critique of the politics of The Hague. Marcel Wanders designed the Eggs with a background in innovative furniture to resemble portraits of people in the heart of democracy. Lastly, Like a Pan was created by Studio Job on the premise of everyday objects (BlowUp Art the Hague, 2024). The collective garden is likened to a fifth element of the artwork. When arriving from the mainland, one has to travel over a set of pontoons loose on the water, creating a wobbling experience that signifies the transition from a stable city to a dynamic nature. This is the first interaction with nature that visitors will endure. Though all artworks have an accompanied description, and the overall theme is sustainability in the urban landscape, some leave more questions than answers. Furthermore, it should be noted that the works are inflated plastic, a material that's anything but sustainable, contradicting its very message.

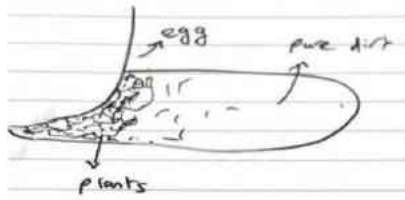


#### **Airboretum - Studio Mieke Meijer**

The Airboretum was designed on the notion of “What is a public garden without trees?” (Adonais, 2024). It is a collection of three air-inflated trees in a minty colour, going from a dark upright tree to a lighter-coloured fallen-down tree, to the smallest and lightest again upright tree. The real-life trees are represented in a geometric formation, transitioning seamlessly from trunk to branches and twigs, reflecting the inherent logic found in nature, from plant life to galaxies. The trees are a distilled image of their real-life companions, using math and geometry to fully capture the complexities of nature.

#### **Studio Job - Like a Pan**

Like a Pan is a large, looming yellow everyday pan, stationed in the middle of the Hofvijver. The idea is that it adds a sense of mystery and enigma to the garden, though even after reading the accompanied description, the real meaning remains quite vague.

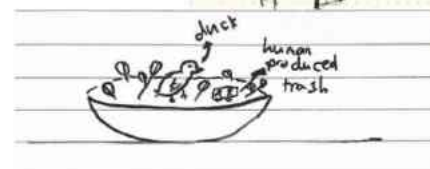


### Eggs - Marcel Wanders

The eggs are the first component where the people are directly reflected in their choices surrounding the climate. Visitors can give them a gentle push, directly interacting with the works. The eggs are surrounded by a green mat of plants, which are eroded over time with the increase of interactions between the people and the eggs. This also seems to counteract the point, as because of the interaction, nature is further destroyed instead of protected.

### Gazebo - Sigrid Calon

The Gazebo, a representation of the Dutch Prime Minister's Tower, stands conveniently right in front of its real-life inspiration. Its striking pink colour gives it a playful, almost child-like appearance, yet it has a significant message: the desire for a female Prime Minister, which is conveyed through its interaction with the surrounding environment. Interestingly the loud the electrical inflation pump accompanying this artwork seems to counteract the nature-inclusivity aspect of the garden. The plants surrounding the gazebo do seem to do their jobs, as bumblebees and ducks were found in the plants.



### Deep observation

Often, in today's fast-paced world, where we are overstimulated, overbooked, and overworked, we may think a quick glance is enough to appreciate a piece of art. Enter Draw to See, a method created by Andrew Causey (2017), designed to help us engage with art on a deeper level. To put this method to the test, the authors embarked on an exercise focusing on a floating garden artwork. They carved out three times to draw the floating garden from the same spot but with different time limits. This exercise will help with not just "looking" at the artworks, but "seeing" the works. First, they spent three minutes drawing, allowing them to note all the intricate details and components of the artwork. Next, they had only one minute to draw, which forced them to eliminate unnecessary details and focus on the most important information. Lastly, they had just 30 seconds to create a drawing that captured the most striking aspects of the garden. This is a practice to relax, slow down, and truly engage with what you are seeing, to understand its meaning better. The three drawings of Ezra and Sterre are shown above and described below.



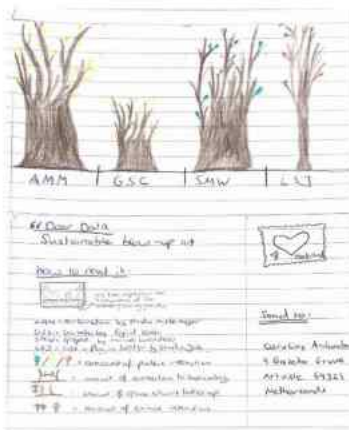
As the drawing time decreases, so do the details captured in the artwork. Ezra's first drawing (above), taking three minutes, includes the full background of the Binnenhof. He notes the stark contrast between the organic, colourful, and less detailed shapes of the garden and the sharp, intricate details of the buildings behind it. All different components were clearly and separately drawn to fully encapture a comprehensive of the garden. The background is drawn thicker than the foreground,



further highlighting the distinct difference between them. Ezra also includes the pontoons connecting the garden to the mainland, showcasing the blend of art and practicality. Interestingly, in the second drawing, with only one minute to spare, he omits this background, seemingly deeming it as less important than the trees and the gazebo, the only artworks still distinctly drawn. Finally, in the rapid 30-second drawing, the sharp lines of the background reappear, along with the trees and the gazebo. This exercise clearly showed what Ezra deemed important about the artwork, and what he saw as less significant. In all three drawings, the pontoons, Gazebo, Arboretum, the entrance, and the trees are illustrated. The Like a Pan in Water artwork gets omitted from the drawings, probably due to it being out of view from this spot. The background appears in two of the three drawings, indicating its importance but also its potential to be overlooked.



Sterre's drawings (above) are simpler in nature. She, just like Ezra, found the trees and the gazebo the most important objects of the art works. In contrast to his drawings, however, Sterre also noted the eggs from the spot they were sitting. The drawings are messier, as she focused on the understanding of the artwork more than the creation of an accurate representation of them. An interesting thing to note is that in the last drawing, with only 30 seconds, she took the time to draw people on the island. This represents the importance of the interaction between the people and the artwork and its importance in spreading the message. People are a central component of the artwork.



### Dear Data

In the figure to the left, we have attempted to create our own version of a *Dear Data* (2016) data collection. Per artwork, we have analysed the interaction it had with the public and with animals. Additionally, we have also analysed the spatial dimension of the artwork (the amount of space it takes up) and how much the artwork relates to sustainability. All this data has then been turned into a tree with the spatial dimensions and the leaves having certain meanings. By communicating the data this way, the reader has a more playful relationship with the data.

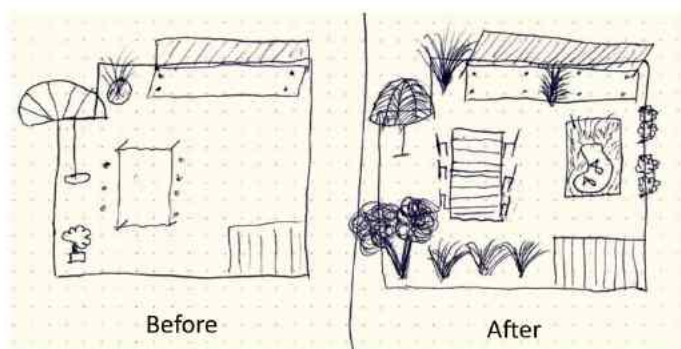
## The Audience

BlowUpArt the Hague is a well-visited art exhibition, particularly this year due to the unusual location (Jongbloed, 2024). On the first day only, there was a crowd of three thousand people who wanted to experience the Floating Ponton Garden and the several art pieces there. According to multiple audience members, it is mainly the exceptionally close location to the now-being-renovated Binnenhof that makes this edition of BlowUpArt extra famous. The Dutch Parliamentary building has been closed for almost three years now, and many more years to come due to complications in the renovation process (Tweede Kamer, 2023). Usually, the Binnenhof is the sightseeing location of the Hague, but with the renovation the city lost its biggest tourist attractions, thus making it necessary to create a new one. That's why the municipality initiated the creation of this location.

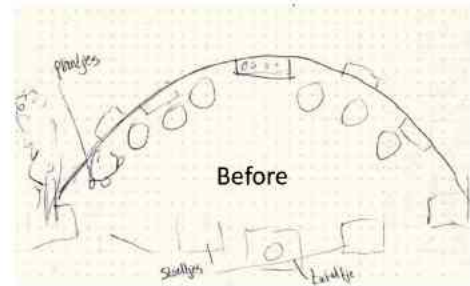
### Audience Experience – Drawing

To fully comprehend the experience of the audience, we asked several people if they were willing to participate in a small playful interaction to see what effect the Floating Garden has had on them. Our playful method was based on Causey's (2017) *Drawn to See*, where he highlights "how our senses of sight may be failing us, but [...] we can learn and practice to see more deeply, to not only enrich our ethnographic work but to enrich our everyday lives," (p. 2). We asked some of the crowd if they were willing, before entering the Floating Garden, to draw their own backyards, balconies, or rooftop terraces. We emphasised that it can be very abstract and does not have to be a complete picture. Since the goal of the Garden is to inspire people about how they can make their own garden more nature-inclusive and climate resilient, we asked the audience members after walking around on the pontoons if they would change anything in their garden. By asking the people to draw, we made them engage differently with the things they had just seen, heard or felt when they were on the Hofvijver. This has given us several drawings of people's outside spaces before and after they had the possibility of getting inspired by the Floating Garden.

The first couple of people we spoke to were a mother and daughter who were on an excursion through the Hague. Unfortunately, when we were talking to them, it started to rain and we quickly had to find shelter in the *Gazebo* on the Garden. We asked them to both draw their balconies which both already somewhat resembled the garden. The daughter emphasised that she was already very much working on making her garden a friendly home for multiple species. Everything she bought was biologically made and carefully selected to attract bees and other pollinators. Her balcony was also filled with a variety of plants. The mother also had a balcony filled with plants and very much resembled the Garden in its proximity to water, since the balcony was right above a big pond. The mother drew the two figures above. As can be seen, the Garden inspired her to be even more nature-inclusive by adding multiple aspects to her garden that bees and birds can use.



the left She emphasised that, although she would love to incorporate everything from her drawing, it is often hard to do so financially. For instance, she would like to use organic materials for her furniture, however, these materials do come at a high cost. Further, the vast amount of water surrounding the Floating Garden made her see that water is an important aspect of a nature-inclusive



We also asked someone else to do the same two drawings. This time we asked somebody who worked at the Garden. She had just graduated from her Bachelor-studies in Economics. Since she worked at the Garden, she has experienced it multiple times in different conditions, making her experience different from one-time visitors. The Student's before and after drawing can be seen in the figure to

garden. The same goes for flowering plants to attract pollinators, such as the Mullein Foxglove and the Wallflower on the Garden.

### **Audience Experience – Interviews**

Afterwards, we have also interviewed people concerning their experiences with the Floating Garden. For this, we used semi-structured interviewing to get a better understanding of human lived experiences and so we can anticipate their reaction (Bernard, 1995). This was also used because of the time constraints people faced and to allow the audience to express themselves in their own words and thoughts. We ended up interviewing three different audience members to ask what they thought of the artwork, if they were feeling inspired after walking through, and if they thought it was expressed well enough. Throughout the interview we had decided to affirmative probing as to get as much information as possible. Interviewee A mentioned how this artwork made her think about her neighbourhood which is slowly made into stone ('verstenen'). Patches of green are removed and trees are taken away. Close to her garden there used to be big chestnut trees, which have recently been removed. Since then, there has been a strong decrease in birds in her garden. On the other hand, she also says that she's having a hard time getting inspired by the garden. Talking about the garden makes her more inspired than actually just observing it. Interviewee B had trouble perceiving the Garden itself as an artwork as well. He reflected on the Garden more as a resource to attract people and as a financial decision. Making a garden that floats right in front of the Binnenhof is just made to be a tourist attraction, which also resembles the municipality's goals. However, the developers of the Garden itself really did mean it to be an art project itself as well. This ties in with Interviewee C who also perceived the Garden not necessarily as garden-inspiration. If it was to reflect a nature-inclusive garden, it should have incorporated more greenery and explanations for why these plants were chosen to make the inspiration more substantial.

All in all, people had mixed feelings when it comes to the Garden as an art project, but also as a nature-inclusive inspiration. Though, everyone we spoke to enjoyed walking around on the Garden and was very enthusiastic about the originality of it, we mainly wanted to reflect on the critical aspects here. Most people were taking pictures of themselves close to the border of the Garden with the Binnenhof in the background, without paying much attention to the plants, bees, and nesting birds.

### **References Cited**

- Adonais, A. (2024, May 22). *BlowUp Art The Hague 2024: Inflatable perspectives through public art*. Stirworld.com; STIRworld.com. <https://www.stirworld.com/see-features-blowup-art-the-hague-2024-inflatable-perspectives-through-public-art>
- Bernard, H.R. (1995). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Altamira Press.
- BlowUp Art The Hague | DenHaag.com*. (2024). Denhaag.com. <https://denhaag.com/en/calendar/blowup-art-the-hague>
- Causey, A. (2017). *Drawn to see: Drawing as an Ethnographic Method*. University of Toronto Press.
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2023). Oversterfte in juni. *Centraal Bureau Voor De Statistiek*. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2023/28/oversterfte-in-juni>
- Davidson, L. (2015). Environmental art: A study of psychology and activism. In *Penn Humanities Forum*.
- De Haas, W., Hassink, J., & Stuijver, M. (2021). The role of urban green space in promoting inclusion: Experiences from the Netherlands. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 9, 618198.
- Krijger, T. (2018). *City index; Ranking van hoofdsteden in Nederland op basis van risico's ten opzichte van extreme neerslag* [Bachelor's Thesis, TU Delft]. [https://filelist.tudelft.nl/News/2019/01\\_Januari/TUDeft/Bachelor%20Eindproject%20Tjerk%20Krijger%204481909.pdf](https://filelist.tudelft.nl/News/2019/01_Januari/TUDeft/Bachelor%20Eindproject%20Tjerk%20Krijger%204481909.pdf)
- Li, D., Wu, S., Liang, Z., & Li, S. (2020). The impacts of urbanization and climate change on urban vegetation dynamics in China. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 54, 126764.
- Lopes, M. N., & Camanho, A. S. (2013). Public Green Space Use and Consequences on Urban Vitality: An Assessment of European Cities. *Social Indicators Research*, 113(3), 751–767. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-012-0106-9>
- Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). *Dear data*. Princeton Architectural Press.
- Jongbloed, L. (2024, May 15). Opblaaskunst Publiekstrekker [Blow-up art Crowd Pleaser]. *De Telegraaf*.
- Sanders, F. C. (2019). Dutch Healthy Green Cities, By Citizen Group Contribution. In *SBE 2019 Sustainable Built Environment Conference: Built Environment in an Era of Climate Change* (pp. 1-11).
- Scoones, I. (1998). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis*. (IDS Working Paper). <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/3390/Wp72.pdf?sequence=1>
- Tweede Kamer. (2023, September 7). *Renovatie van het Binnenhof en de tijdelijke verhuizing van de Tweede Kamer*. Tweede Kamer Der Staten-Generaal. <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/contact-en-bezoek/renovatie-van-het-binnenhof-en-de-tijdelijke-verhuizing-van-de-tweede-kamer>

# ART FOR TOMORROW

A Review of Creative Interpretations of  
Sustainable Livelihood Issues in The Hague

---



(Groeneweg, 2011)

A magazine by students of Leiden University College The Hague

# Jane Goodall: Reasons for Hope

Our research is focused on the “Jane Goodall: Reasons for Hope” exhibition at the Museon Omnispectrum. This exhibition provides an interactive multimedia exploration of the lifework of world-renowned ethologist Jane Goodall who worked to study and conserve chimpanzee populations. The audiovisual presentation of Goodall’s life also provides an opportunity to explore key sustainability issues in today’s world. It is thanks to the collaboration between the ‘Jane Goodall Instituut Nederland’ and the ‘Museon Omnispectrum’ that this exhibition came to be, with the Jane Goodall Instituut providing materials and the museum curating the pieces.



Jane Goodall (GCIC, 2023)

## The Future of Human-Nature Relations

A central theme of the exhibition is the interdependence of humans and their natural environment, including animals. Humans depend on nature in many ways, such as the provision of water and clean air (PBL, 2016). However, ecosystems are vulnerable, and practices like deforestation hamper the well-being of humans and animals alike. The exhibition draws attention to the need to find new ways to achieve “natural resource-based sustainability” (Scoones, 1998, p.6). While it is focused on Jane Goodall’s work in Tanzania, the future of human-nature relations is also highly relevant in the Dutch context. The Wadden Sea as a UN world heritage, for example, fulfils multiple essential functions: Apart from its role in maintaining biodiversity and regulating climatic conditions, it also has an important cultural dimension (Renes, 2018).

**“When nature suffers, we suffer. And when nature flourishes, we all flourish” - Jane Goodall**



(Paul, 2019)

## Why this Issue?

Both the Museon Omniversum and the Jane Goodall Instituut Nederland aim to stir reflection among the public about what a sustainable future might mean. The artists (the museum and the institute) pursued the sustainable livelihoods issue of nature exploitation as it plays a role in diminishing the natural resource base, reducing the capacity of nature and man alike to cope with stresses and shocks (Scoones, 1998).

In the case of the Museon Omniversum, our interviews with the employees revealed a desire to think about sustainability in the context of larger interconnecting systems (Museon Omniversum Employee, personal communication, May 16, 2024). The museum strives to select exhibits that highlight the multitude of components that contribute to 'sustainability'. The Jane Goodall Instituut, and Jane Goodall herself, are similarly dedicated to nature conservation and express interest in reformulating the normative relationship between man and nature (Jane Goodall Instituut, n.d.).

Both the museum and institute used the issue of nature exploitation to spark introspection regarding human-nature relations and emphasise the interconnectedness of the two. For example, the exhibition asks us to reconsider who we include in our moral community (McNeil, 1998). To what extent do we consider animals moral subjects? What about plants? Or even future life...do we have a moral responsibility towards future generations? In addition, Goodall's work on nature conservation, or more specifically her ethologist work, invites us to critically reflect on the dominant narratives relating to the divide between man and nature. Goodall's work disputed the dominant orthodoxy of her time about what distinguishes humans from the rest of the animal world, finding more similarities than previously thought possible (e.g., the use of tools among chimps) (Jane Goodall Instituut, n.d.). Exploring this issue thus provides an opportunity to rethink current narratives around human-nature relations in a way that might facilitate more sustainable future interactions (Fairhead & Leach, 1995).



(AO, 2024)



(Aljazeera, 2023)



(pn.health, 2020)

## Why Present It This Way?

The exhibition aims at inspiring people of all age groups to become an active participant in nature conservation. Its interactive elements are supposed to involve the audience, creating a sense of empowerment (YADEN, n.d.). For example, visitors have the opportunity to send a postcard with their own ideas for environmental protection to Jane Goodall. Additionally, the use of multimedia facilitates engagement on multiple levels for different target audiences. Photographs, short movies, audios, and text elements allow both children and adults to learn about the life and work of Jane Goodall.



Postcard that can be sent to Jane Goodall

## The Exhibition

At the heart of the exhibition are 44 photographs displayed on screens that backlight the photos. The photos are also placed in a room where both the floor and walls are black, further drawing attention to the softly lit photos. Each screen shows one photograph and a short information text supplementing the picture. At the center bottom, there is one keyword related to both, such as "similar," "playing," and "language." Each screen provides a different piece of information about chimpanzees, their way of life, social relations, and their relationship with humans.



Example of a photo Screen



Visitors at the exhibition

In addition to the photographs, a short movie about Jane Goodall's philosophy around nature conservation is projected on a wall. Similarly, several quotes about hope for a sustainable future can be read on walls. Moreover, there are presentation cabinets displaying different artefacts and a timeline of Goodall's life. The exhibition is bilingual, making it accessible to both Dutch and English speakers.

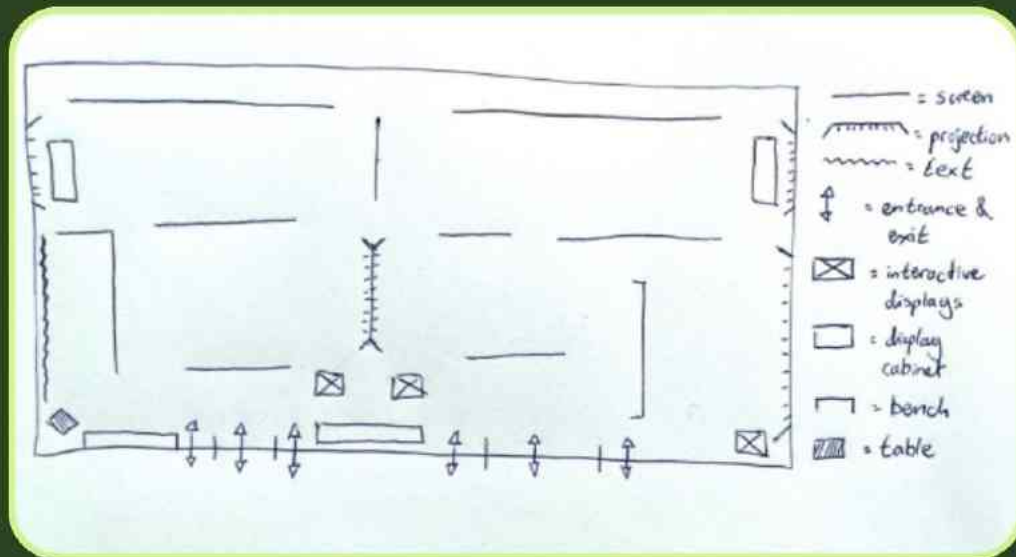
## Drawing to See

This drawing of one of the photographs shows Jane Goodall and a Chimpanzee sitting on the ground, facing each other. The similar outlines of their bodies show clearly how much the two species, humans and chimpanzees, have in common. Their almost mirrored position creates a symmetry in the picture that becomes particularly visible when other elements in the background and details are consciously left out. The strong similarity between the two species is a central insight from the exhibition, not only in terms of physique but also regarding social and family ties or the use of tools.



Sketch of a photograph, showing Goodall and a chimpanzee

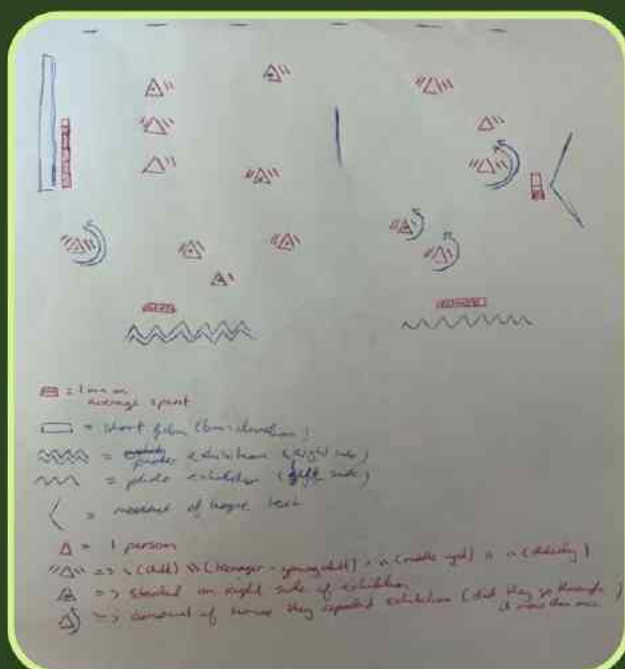
The sketch below shows the layout of the exhibition. Creating it led to several new insights compared to the first walk through the room. This process is described as “drawing-enhanced seeing” by Andrew Causey (2017, p.13). At first glance, it can be noticed that there are many symmetrical elements, such as the display cabinets at both short walls or the long screens near the back wall. Moreover, there are six possible entrances and exits to the exhibition room, depicted by the two-sided arrows. Similarly, the layout does not suggest a specific order in which the photographs and other elements should be looked at. Therefore, visitors are very free in choosing their own route through the exhibition.



Layout of the Exhibition

### Data Mapping

Drawing from the data mapping techniques described by Giorgia Lupi and Stefanie Posavec (2016), we tried to capture the subjective experience of going through the Jane Goodall Instituut. We wanted to both give a sense of what it was like to actually be in the exhibition as well as draw attention to the patterns which emerged in how people engaged with its different elements. The drawing we generated attempts to capture a range of dimensions (e.g., spatial, temporal, behavioural, etc.) as we tried to communicate the qualitative experience of being there.



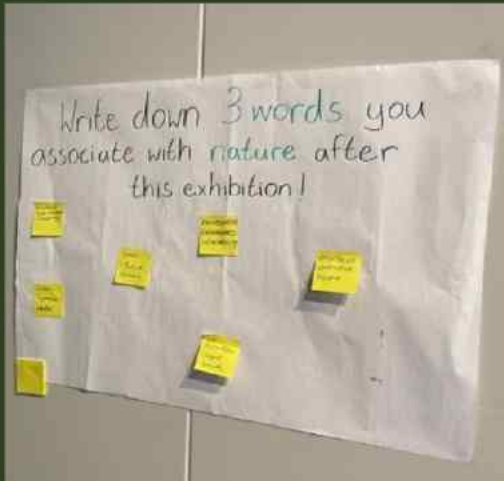
Data mapping image

We can interpret from our drawing that visitors spent an average of 4.5 minutes at the short film (6 min duration) section of the exhibit, meaning they spent longer at the audiovisual component of the exhibition than any other part. Additionally, in line with the museum's aims, people from all age demographics were represented among the audience. However, there was a skew towards older individuals (middle-aged to elderly) when we were collecting our data. This skew may be related to the time we conducted our analysis, 14:00-17:00 on Thursday, which overlaps with the school/work day and we were informed by the staff is not a popular time for school trips. Another interesting insight was that it appears older visitors (middle-aged to elderly) were more likely to go around the exhibition multiple times, indicating a different way of engaging with the exhibition.



## The Audience

The exhibition is intended to inspire its audience to participate in nature conservation and create awareness for the close relationship between humans and their natural environment (G. van Rijn, personal communication, May 17, 2024). We were interested in exploring to what extent these stated goals are achieved. How does the exhibition reframe its visitors' relation to nature? And do they perceive any practical implications of this new understanding? To answer these questions, we engaged with the audience in different ways. As our observation shows (see above), the exhibition's target demographics are very diverse, especially in terms of age. Therefore, we tried to use creative research methods that are accessible to both younger and older audiences.



The Association Wall

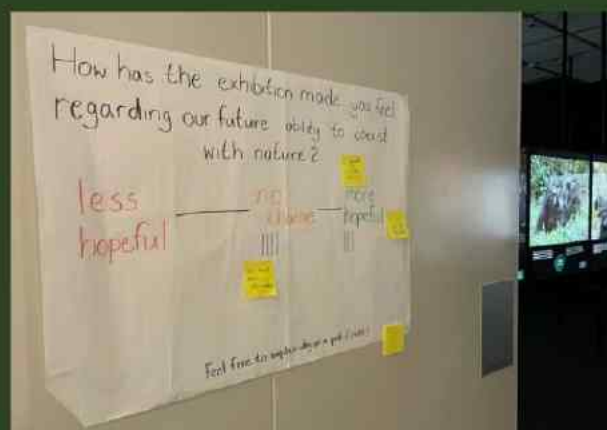
We set up our research station at the most frequently used entrance and exit of the exhibition room. The picture below shows our association wall. To assess the visitors' perception of nature, we asked them to write down three associations with the word "nature" on a post-it and to stick it on our poster.

As six visitors participated in this activity, we acquired a total of 18 words associated with nature. Using inductive coding (Bernard, 1995), four dominant themes emerged. The table below shows all associations organized according to these themes. Due to the very small sample size, all conclusions must be drawn with care. However, it is evident that most of the words have a positive connotation, such as "inspiring" and "resilient." Only two words express concern, namely "urgent" and "endangered." Additionally, the idea of a close connection between humans and nature was expressed by multiple respondents. Other visitors focused on surface-level descriptions of nature, using words like "green" and "monkeys." These results suggest that visitors generally leave the exhibition with a positive outlook on the future of nature conservation. However, they do not permit any comparisons of their ideas prior to and after their visit.

To assess if the visiting the exhibition changed the audiences' confidence in the potential for a sustainable future, we created a tally poster. The museum visit made four of the seven participants feel more hopeful regarding humans' future ability to co-exist with nature. Of these, two people provided a short explanation, expressing trust in future generations and a feeling of inspiration by the work of others. Three respondents did not experience a change in confidence, and no one felt less hopeful. Of the former, one person explained that they did not learn any new facts from the exhibition. Overall, these results may serve as a first indication that the exhibition successfully sparks hope in its audience.

Positive/hopeful	Concerned	Human-nature relations	Neutral/descriptive
Resilient	Urgent	Interdependence	Monkeys
Future	Endangered	Interconnectedness	Environment
Possibility		Home	Safari
Sustainability		Oneness	Green
Inspiring			Animals
Impressive			
Wonder			

Thematically coded associations



Tally poster

## One-On-One Interviews

For our interviews, we used semi-structured interviewing style as described by Bernard (1995). We thus designed an interview guide with a list of questions and topics that we wanted to cover to help focus the interview while allowing for adaptations during the interview. For example, in estimating the timing of the interviews, we included space for additional follow-up questions and for making slight modifications to certain questions in real time. This flexibility facilitated further exploration of topics that our interviewees were particularly keen on or on new topics that emerged. Another important component for us to consider was the slight language barrier we had with our interviewees. We found that the “looping” mechanism was particularly effective at addressing this issue and ensuring clear communication (Roberts, 2024). This created a space where interviewees could feel comfortable correcting us or rephrasing what they meant so that we could better understand each other.

One interesting theme which emerged from our study was the potential of art, and photography, in this case, to reframe prior knowledge. One respondent (A) reported how they already knew a lot of the information presented in the text but seeing the intimate photos paired with the text created a new emotional relation to that information. For example, respondent A highlighted a photo of a chimp communicating with a person through facial expressions as a stand out in the exhibition. Although they already knew chimps used different facial expressions to communicate, they were inspired by the photo which captured how chimps and humans could transcend the species' divide and move beyond these surface-level differences.

Having said this, another respondent (B) highlighted how they were still unsure about how their experience in the exhibition would translate concretely into their everyday life. Although they enjoyed the various pieces in the exhibition, particularly the message of hope highlighting the potential for change, they had a sense that they may still easily slip into habitual comforts rather than fully respond to the call to action. The sense that there are many intersecting issues (e.g., how locals may hunt endangered species out of material necessity) further exacerbated these feelings of uncertainty regarding how to address these issues in the future. It may be that highlighting what people are doing or can do in contexts similar to where the primary audience resides could provide more concrete examples that can help the visitors envision their role in the move towards sustainability going forward.



Camilla working on the association wall in the exhibit



Interactive Section near 'Message of Hope' -> includes storybooks and a postcard you can send to Jane Goodall

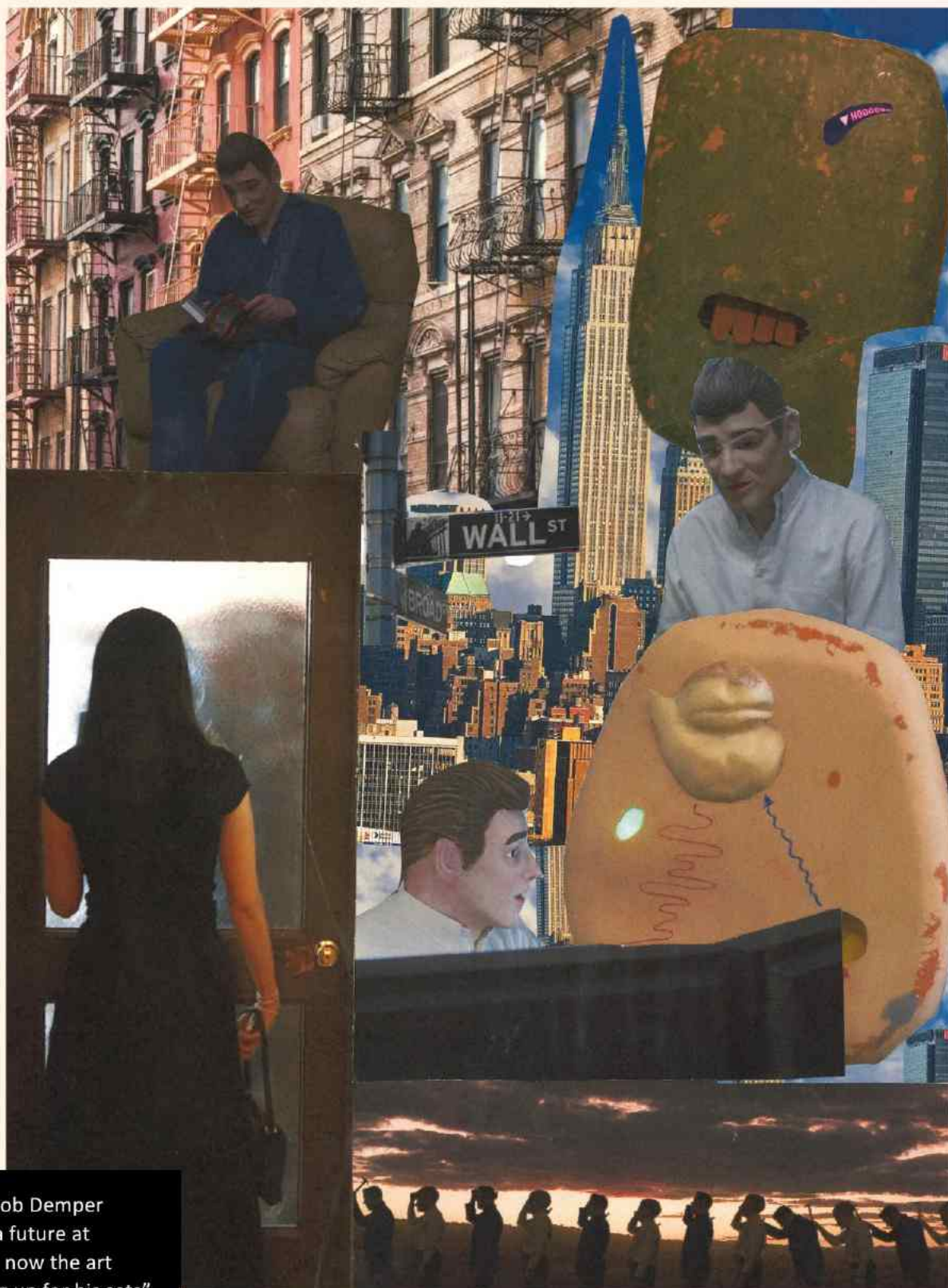
## References

- Aljazeera. (2023, Aug 9). What did Amazon nations agree upon at the summit in Brazil? Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/9/what-did-amazon-nations-agree-upon-at-the-summit-in-brazil>
- Algemeen Dagblad. (2024, Jan 8). Film about famous British biologist Jane Goodall can be seen in Museon-Omniversum. Algemeen Dagblad. <https://www.ad.nl/den-haag/film-over-bekende-britse-biologe-jane-goodall-te-zien-in-museon-omniversum~a2103850/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>
- Bernard, H. R. (1995). Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (4. ed). AltaMira Press.
- Casey, A. (2017). Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method. University of Toronto Press.
- Fairhead, J., & Leach, M. (1995). False forest history, complicit social analysis: rethinking some West African environmental narratives. World development, 23(6).
- GCIC. (2023) [Untitled image of Jane Goodall]. GCIC. <https://www.gcic.go.ug/dr-jane-goodall-to-grace-ngamba-island-chimpanzee-sanctuary-silver-jubilee/>
- Groeneweg, R. (2011). Den Haag Mooie Stad Achter de Duinen. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/remcogroeneweg/5798937871>
- Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). Dear data. Chronicle books.
- McNeil, R. J. (1998, March). An ethics primer for university students intending to become natural resource managers and administrators. In Heister, CG (comp.), Proc. Second Bien. Conf. Univ. Educ. Nat. Res.
- Paul, M. Deforestation in Tanzania [Online Image]. Down To Earth. (2019). <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/forests/weak-governance-escalating-deforestation-in-tanzania-fao-report-66036>.
- Renes, H. (2018). 3 The Wadden Sea region as a cultural landscape: History, heritage, management. In L. Egberts & M. Schroor (Eds.), Waddenland Outstanding (pp. 45–64). Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048537884-004>
- PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. (2016). Natural Capital in The Netherlands: Recognising its True Value. PBL Publishers.
- Roberts, R. (Host). (2024, Feb 26). The Secrets of Great Conversation (with Charles Duhigg) [Audio Podcast Episode]. In EconTalk. Library of Economics and Liberty. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR51Zou2GKA>
- Scoones, I. (1998). Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis. IDS Working Papers.
- tpn.health. (2020, April 21). Green Matters: A Look at Nature's Role in Mental Health. tpn.health. <https://tpn.health/green-matters-a-look-at-natures-role-in-mental-health/>

# A DIVE INTO BOB DEMPER'S EXPOSITION : "IN TALL BUILDINGS"

MAY 2024 | ISSUE 1

FRFL MAGAZINE



"As a child, Bob Demper dreamed of a future at Domino Day, now the art world is lining up for his sets"

- de Volkskrant

FERDINAND ROCHER &  
LEO FARRELL



## THE ARTIST

### ADDRESSING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The exposition “In tall buildings” revolves around the artist’s (Bob Demper) feature film; 5000 miles. The audience are invited to explore the exposition made up of film sets used for his feature film and related art pieces, immersing them in the 5000 miles universe and help them understand better the world of financial power through the artist’s perspective. “In tall buildings” first of all focuses on the formal institutions that dominate our global financial system, creating and enforcing the rules that govern economic activities (Scoones, 1998). Mr Demper talks about those hidden behind “facades of glass and concrete” talking a “language no one understands and making decisions completely detached from the real world” bearing no repercussions to the risks they take (Phone call with Mr.Demper). These dominant institutions directly impact who gets access to resources and opportunities (Scoones, 1998). He talks about how “People at the top of large companies manipulate financial markets, lying and saying that they have it all under control, an illusion because if things do go wrong none of them have to actually face the consequences” (Phone call with Mr.Demper). This parallels the idea that institutions can constrain sustainable livelihoods, corporate decisions transforming private risk into public risk, mediating access to capital and influencing livelihood outcomes leading to economic vulnerabilities for the public (Scoones, 1998). Bob Demper defines his exhibition experience as one that lives the oppression he feels researching and living within these “large companies” ; “The more I find out about this system, the more oppressive it feels, and it is this that I want to express” (Interview with Mr.Demper). His feelings reflect the power dynamics embedded within these financial institutions, who’s power dynamics determine whose interests are prioritized and whose are marginalized (Scoones, 1998). Through his work, Mr Demper also dives into how the pursuit of corporate growth by companies can lead to a reduction of wellbeing, tying in to the sustainable livelihood concerns of “well-being and capabilities” (Scoones, 1998). “in the story, Donny works at a large company but experiences a burnout” “He is on work leave, trying relax in his apartment in the middle of the city, it just dosen’t work out well and all that you live through your experience in the exposition and the film.”. (Phone call with Mr.Demper). Mr Demper wants to illustrate how these power relations affect everyday lives, particularly with the use of his films main character : Donny



(van Leeuwen, 2024)

### CHOOSING THIS ISSUE

Bob Demper chose the aspect of “financial power” to express his personal interaction with the system, to advocate for its impact on livelihoods and develop ethical concepts surrounding his topic. He firstly uses the issue to develop his concern on the impact financial power has on the livelihoods of individuals and communities, how corporate decisions affect peoples ability to achieve sustainable livelihoods (McNeil, 1998). Demper also explores financial power to reveal social and economic injustices, focusing on the rights of individuals. By critiquing these financial structures through art he can effectively highlight a violation of these rights. (McNeil, 1998). Further more, Demper uses his issue to prompt his audience to reflect ethically. By examining consequences of financial decisions and highlighting how the pursuit of profit often leads to negative livelihood and social outcomes he presents a “consequentialist approach” for example, to resource based ethics evaluating actions based on their outcomes (McNeil, 1998).

### COMMUNICATING THIS ISSUE

“I think there is something magical about the agreement between the audience and the film. You sit down, the lights go out, and you believe in what is shown in front of you”. Bob Demper here acknowledges how art can help see concepts through differing perspectives, the complexity in understanding art is like the one defined by Meinig for landscapes, they are shaped by the physical elements we see and those who lie in our own mind, influenced by our own culture and persona (Meinig, 1979).

## THE ART

In this section, main artworks from the exposition will be described, these consist of 12 different installations disposed in 3 main rooms representing the film set of Bob Demper's movie "5000 miles". The first room, containing the 6 first art works replicates the lobby of a corporate office. The second room is a corridor in Donny's apartment building in New York, where the following 4 artworks are displayed behind multiple doors. The final room reproduces a meeting room in the building of the asset management corporation in which Donny works. In this last room a fragment of "5000 miles" is shown on repeat on the presentation screen.



"Elevator room"

### ART PIECE 1

Art piece entitled "Elevator room". The first piece of the exposition. Although audience may initially be confused by the presence of a realistic looking "office style" elevator room, it is in actuality a film set piece of Demper's short film ; 5000 miles. It introduces the audience to the space and theme of the exhibition.



"Hard act to follow"

### ART PIECE 3

Art piece 3 is entitled "Hard act to follow", Made up of an abstract rounded shape, it activates periodically to light up and show various symbols on a cycling disk underneath the shape. Symbols including a bed, ladder, bird and arrow. When unactivated, the art piece always displays the bed



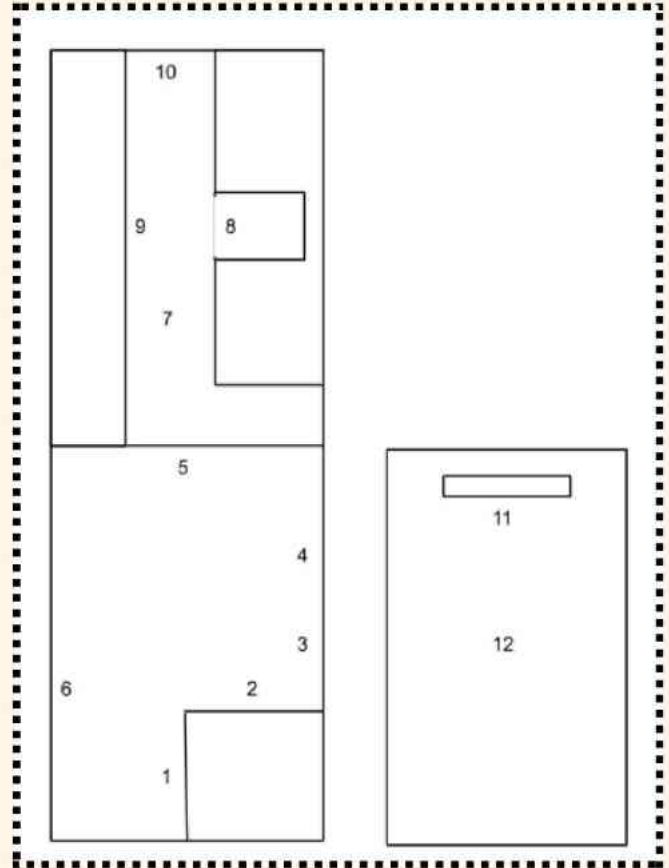
Art piece : 4 "Dojima Rice Exchange"

### ART PIECE 4

Art piece entitled "Dojima Rice Exchange": from afar the piece resembles a worn down electrical box with a ledged lower portion, looking closer one can notice a small screen displaying an agricultural field and farmhouse under stormy skies, with wind at times disturbing the crops. In front of it, mechanically fixed handmade minatures of the crops mimic the the breeze of wind for short periods

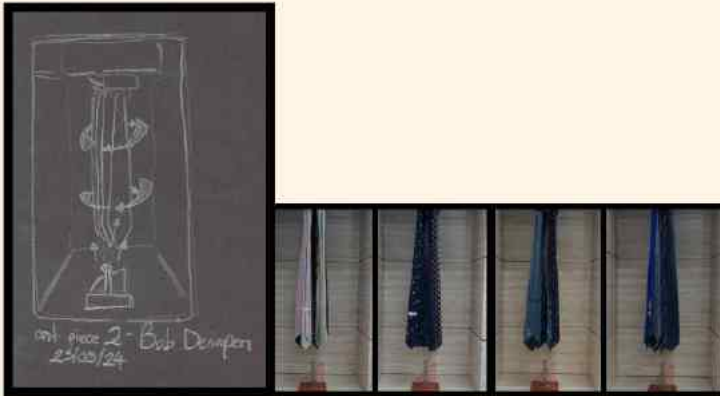
## EXPOSITION REFERENCE

Exposition map designed by the magazine team.



- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. "Elevator room"        | 6. "Roundaboutness"   |
| 2. "Tombstone"            | 7. "239 W 26th St"    |
| 3. "Hard act to follow"   | 8. "Janitors closet"  |
| 4. "Dojima Rice Exchange" | 9. "Peep hole"        |
| 5. "Keystroke"            | 10. "Behind the door" |

## THE ART



Art piece : 2 "Tombstone"

### ART PIECE 2

Art piece entitled "Tombstone". Made up of what Mr Demper calls a "automated tie rack" and smoke machine placed below the rotating mechanism. The pictures taken are arranged to show the rotating ties, varying in colors and patterns. The joined drawing illustrates the movement who is innate in the artwork, the rotating ties and smoke who briefly exits the small chimney below.

### ART PIECE 5

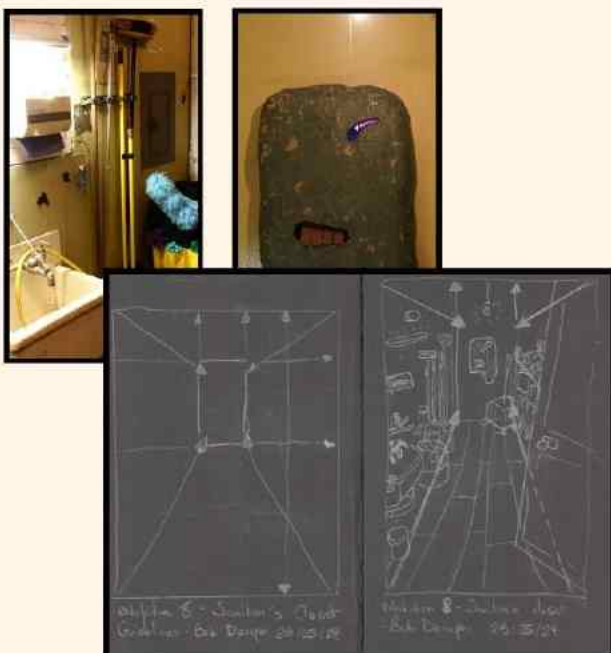
This art piece is entitled Keystroke. It displays on one side a window and green awning on a stone wall. To the right of it a meshed window behind which an arm periodically stretches back and forth towards something hidden from view by a brick wall. An adjoining drawing displays the movement of the art piece. This drawing was originally drawn upside down according to (Causey, 2017), this method firstly incited further our focus on the volatility and desperation in the back and forth movement of the hand. Furthermore, our perception of the artwork changed drastically through drawing it with this method as it now seemed to display the hand clawing upwards, as if it were begging in anger. We noticed how this could be connected with the frustration and entrapment Donny shows in the movie excerpt at his life.



Art piece : 5 "Keystroke"

### ART PIECE 8

Titled "Janitor's Closet", this artwork lies behind a conspicuous door in the second room of Demper's exposition. Behind the door lie an organised but busy closet belonging to the janitor in Donny's building. The closet contains many pipes, brooms, supplies, brushes and is lit up by an eery lightbulb hanging from the ceiling. One's attention is quickly drawn to an abstract shaped similar to art piece 3 at the back of the room. This worn out and pasty green creature is adorned with a set of brown teeth, a small screen upon which text passes periodically and a small piece of silver bobbing up and down. In figure (8), a sketch of the main guidelines and our interpretation of the artwork is included (Causey, 2017). Seeing the artwork through its main axes following etude 8 reflected the deepening effect that one can feel when staring into the room (Causey, 2017). The closet seems deeper and claustrophobic as the seconds pass as one is hypnotised by the ever moving creature on the back wall. The walls seem to further enclose the viewer the longer they are confronted to the artwork. This could connect once again to the oppression felt by Donny in his apartment building in the "5000 miles" extract at the end of the exposition.



Art piece : 8 "Janitor's closet"

## THE ART



Art pieces : 7,9 & 10

### ART PIECE 7,9 & 10

Art pieces 7, 9 and 10 are all part of an apartment hallway decor designed for Bob Dempers short film. Inside the hallway, the audience are immersed in city/building sounds, and live within the environment of the short films protagonist. If they look through one of the hallway's peep holes they may even spot the character vacuuming his own apartment.



### THE SHORT FILM

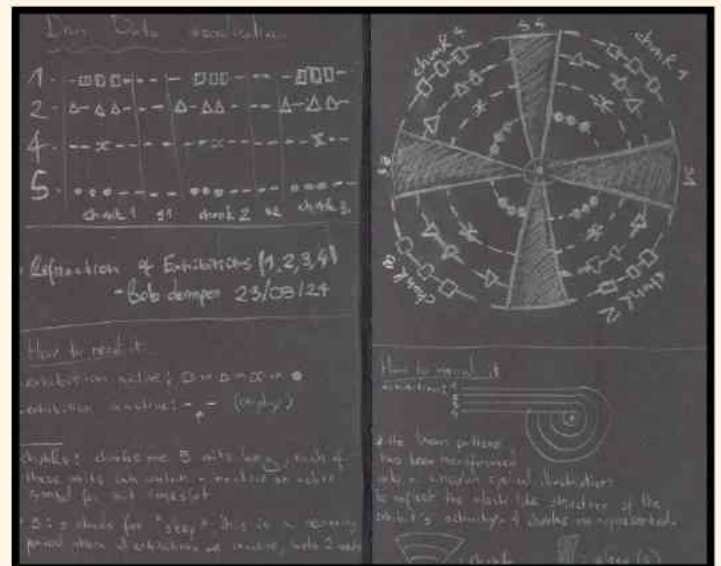
A 15 minute feature film presented in a mock-conference room. It follows the day of a man, Donny, throughout different landscapes such as his apartment, New York city, the desert, and his corporate office. The movie shows how Donny is affected by distractions around him who plague every moment of peace, furthermore the film displays the bleakness of his ever repeating routine to shed light into the artist's perception of the corporate world.



Feature film : presented in a clever setting

### VISUALIZATION OF FINDINGS

The first room of the Tall Buildings exposition contains 4 exhibitions which switch regularly from an active state to an inactive one in a noticeable pattern. As mentioned by the curator, these artworks concern aspects of Demper's personal life and in-the-making movie. As The exposition explores the subject of corporate life and culture, the inclusion of this time dimension was immediately an aspect that evokes intrigue as one spends a few minutes in the first room. The artworks seem to activate and 'go to sleep' constantly through movement, visuals and animation. An interesting pattern soon emerged after deeper observation: the artworks activity mostly start around the same time with a few exceptions, some pause briefly and continue as others only activate for a short time period. In order to visualize this pattern, data was collected through methods inspired by Dear Data (Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. 2016). Activity of the 4 exhibitions was collected every unit/time stamp, each of these lasting approximately 30 seconds. Then data was mapped out through linear and cyclical visualization.



mapping out visual data.

The cyclical nature of the first room through the above displayed pattern connects strongly with the image Demper tries to paint of the financial world and more importantly, the people who are part of it, like Donny. Donny goes back and forth from apartment to work, his life almost entirely dedicated to his career. This quasi-enslavement and oppression Donny feels through the movie is felt by anyone spending a little time in the first room: one cannot relax due to the anticipation of the next sound, movement or distraction who will be emitted by one of the artworks. The pattern of the artworks activating and deactivating begins to govern the mind of the spectator, much as the pattern put in place by his corporation governs Donny's life and mental state.

## THE AUDIENCE

### AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE WITH ART WORK

We interviewed two audience members that viewed the entirety of the exhibition before we spoke to them. Both admitted to having varying levels of knowledge on Bob Dempers exposition prior to viewing "In tall buildings". We attempted to develop a good interaction with the audience member through a range of conversation methods. Methods such as using open-ended questions to develop on more complex topics, planning shorter and concise questions to keep the audience members attention and directing the conversation by interacting with certain points brought up by the audience member. (Bernard, H. R. (1995)). We began by asking the first audience member who we approached after our second viewing of the exhibition, who goes by the name of Eva, her general experience walking through the exposition and interacting with the artwork. Did she find the art captivating ? interesting to her personally or not? Eva, expressed her initial confusion, with the various noises and movements (eg. Vacuum sound effects in the hallway, clanking, art suddenly moving.) making her feel uneasy as she explored the exposition. "At first glance, this is a movie set paired with weird looking objects in the corners and on the walls and sounds coming from around the exposition. At second glance, and after talking with the curator and watching the short film in the other room, the "expo" starts to take shape as a more complex system, all revolving around the movie."



*Audience interacting with "game"*



The second audience member that was interviewed, Anton, confronted with the same questions as Eva, shared her view of miscomprehension of the exposition at the beginning. "I didn't really get the link between the three rooms" - "I did really enjoyed the eerie and creepy feeling of the whole installation though". Anton expressed how art for him can be either an amazing experience or a confusing one, before the movie he shared that this exposition was leaning more towards the latter.

We then asked both audience members to relate their exposition experience to a phrase Bob Demper shared with us during his own interview : "The more I find out about this system, the more oppressive it feels, and it is this that I want to express". Eva expressed how the moving art work and sounds did make the experience more confusing. "the movement made you always a bit alert." she said, "movements can be unexpected, you can't completely focus on something because there is always something else happening." Anton, similarly to eva emphasized on how stressful the environment created by Demper was, particularly in the first two rooms: "Everything here is mechanical, turning on and off, I know everything is just a robot but the whole exposition feels alive in some way, it is creepy , like you always have to look over your shoulder"

Eva continued by saying that although she is not sure her experience directly translates to a feeling of oppression, it does relate accurately to the portrayal of the short film's character. "you're like donny, you cant relax, not being able to focus because of constant little noises, a bustling New York building, you can't have silence and escape.". Coming out of this experience Eva highlighted how the art made more sense after a "conversation just like this one." , after living the art, ideas and theories can be exchanged and linked to various art pieces.

Anton on the other hand, felt like his confusion contributed to the power the art had on him, "after talking about it, it almost put a cap on my imagination, understanding very little at first kind of opened doors up for the interpretation of the pieces."

We then invited Eva and Anton to interact with a "game" we made using pictures and prompts we made after our first exposition visit. The game was made up of a dozen photos depicting the various art pieces that made up the exposition, screenshots of Bob Dempers "5000 miles" feature film and multiple text "prompts", related to the topic of the exposition. The idea was to allow the audience members to group the various images and prompts together to express their understanding and feelings towards the exposition. We both gave them a few minutes to interact with the various elements before asking them about their choices.



## THE AUDIENCE

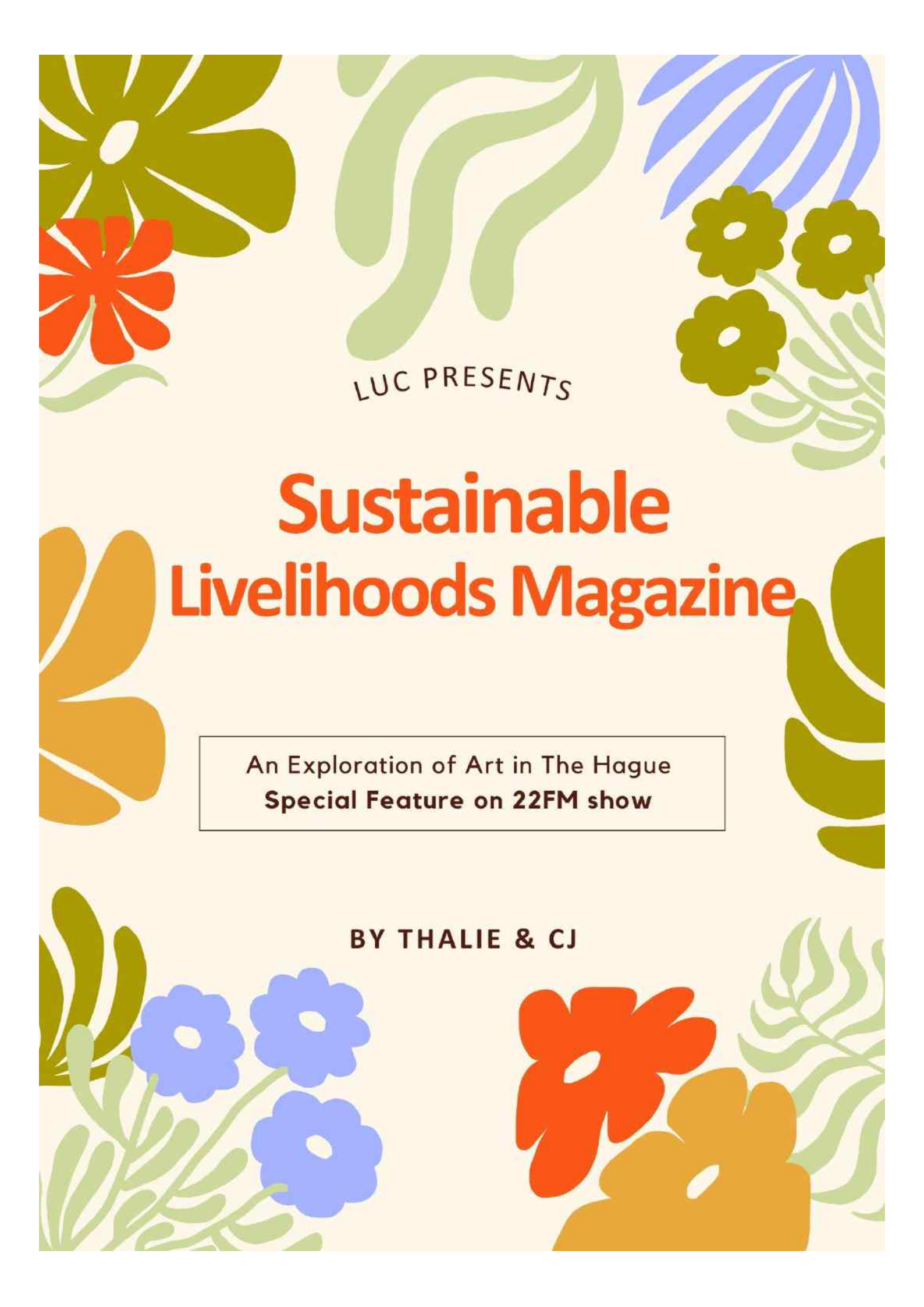
### AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE WITH ART WORK

On one example, Eva chose to group together a scene of the film depicting a metronome moving in rhythm with two other moving art pieces, (piece 5 & 3). She evoked the idea of movement and rhythm as all three of these scenes/art pieces had "regular movement". For Eva it gave the impression that she, as the audience was also forced to follow a rhythm and movement that was set by another person. She tied the three pictures to the text prompt ; "the constant drive for corporate growth" as one she felt connected the most to these pictures.

Anton reacted strongly with the feelings of oppression conveyed by the movie, he related many of the movies scenes and art pieces from the exposition to the phrases "the constant need for corporate growth" and "oppression and burnout", he expressed how "in tall buildings" seems to want to alienate from the corporate world: "I feel like the artist is trying to show us the other side of the coin, try to show us the misery". Anton also mentioned the parallels between Demper's installation and the movie "American Psycho" a movie who according to Anton similarly critiques corporate greed, "the mask he wears dehumanize him, he is just part of a big machine".

### REFERENCES CITED

- Bernard, H. R. (1995). Unstructured and Semi-structured Interviewing. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, 208-237.
- Causey, A. (2017). *Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method*. University of Toronto Press.
- Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). *Dear data*. Chronicle books.
- McNeil, R. J. (1998, March). Ethics primer for university students intending to become natural resources managers and administrators. In Heister, CG (comp.), *Proc. Second Bien. Conf. Univ. Educ. Nat. Res* (pp. 141-146).
- Meinig, D. (1979). *The Beholding Eye Ten Versions of the Same Scene*. [https://eclass.aegean.gr/modules/document/file.php/GEO166/Literature/Meinig\\_1979.pdf](https://eclass.aegean.gr/modules/document/file.php/GEO166/Literature/Meinig_1979.pdf)
- Scoones, I. (1998). *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis*. Institute of Development Studies. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/sustainable-rural-livelihoods-a-framework-for-analysis/>
- Van Leeuwen, A. (2024, May 2). DPG Media Privacy Gate. Myprivacy.dpgmedia.nl. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/tentoonstellingen/als-kind-droomde-bob-demper-van-een-toekomst-bij-domino-day-nu-staat-de-kunstwereld-in-de-rij-voor-zijn-decors~bc80182e/>



LUC PRESENTS

# Sustainable Livelihoods Magazine

An Exploration of Art in The Hague  
Special Feature on 22FM show

BY THALIE & CJ

# ARTISTS: 22FM+ LISTENERS

## What Sustainable Livelihood Issue are we addressing?

We started with the definition of Scoones that we read to our listeners:

"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources), and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base." We wanted to do a radio show about sustainable livelihoods. Our artwork was different as we wanted the art to be based on the participation of our listeners. We thought that by doing a radio show we would reach a larger audience and make it more interactive. We mostly had in mind two capitals when curating the playlist. The human capital – "the skills, knowledge, ability to labor and good health and physical capability important for the successful pursuit of different livelihood strategies." But also the social capital – the social resources (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations) upon which people draw when pursuing different livelihood strategies requiring coordinated actions." (Scoones) We identified these two concepts as potentially the easiest to grasp through music but also included songs for each capital. We explained each capital to our listeners and associated them with the songs. After that, we gave them some time while we played music and they could submit their own song ideas that were connected to the capital. It was mostly the other co-hosts of 22FM that suggested related songs but we also had external help on the playlist. The other two co-hosts of 22fm: Marina and Rosa, never heard of or thought about sustainable livelihoods before the show.



Poster for the show

## Why this Issue?

We chose to have a general introduction to sustainable livelihoods but also have each and everyone's visions of it. Because our art piece was planned a full week before the others we think it was good that people were reminded of what sustainable livelihoods were all about but also maybe voice what they envisioned for their own art work. Our takeaways from the readings on environmental anthropology were that we should develop good field methods. We decided to have an "innovative, participatory, and self-reflective methodological approach and techniques to study human-environment interactions." (Syllabus) It is a technique that we are interacting with a lot especially in LUC as such a multidisciplinary environment.



22FM logo



# ARTISTS: 22FM+ LISTENERS



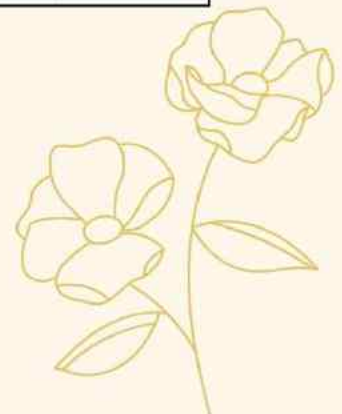
22FM website with the link to the form.

## Why communicate the issue in this way?

It is a rather self-centered reason; we love radio, we love to interact with listeners, and we think associating complex topics to music can be a great form of expression. We not only communicate on the topic of sustainable livelihoods, but also were able to interact with the listeners that participated in the show and the other co-hosts. It is so special to talk about sustainable livelihoods while having the feeling of creating a community. By having a radio show we are also bringing the discussion about sustainable livelihoods outside of the classroom or even the university context as we had listeners from all across the world. We had people listening from many countries that could not have participated in the art otherwise. We also did not want to be at the center of the art, this is not about us, it is about the community around sustainable livelihoods. We just guided the discussion and reminded our listeners of basic concepts, then after we played some songs they knew what to do and could participate while having all the elements of sustainable livelihoods in mind. This allowed us to observe the art in motion despite being the artists ourselves.

04/05/2024 22:51:48	Song rec sustainable livelihoods: The 3 R's - Jack Johnson -> I think to have more people live a sustainable livelihood it's important to teach them about it at a young age. One wa					
07/05/2024 21:41:12	shoutout to thalie					
07/05/2024 21:46:42	shoutout una!					
07/05/2024 22:20:54	hey besties (it's carla) i love this song, currently writing my capstone on the side					
07/05/2024 22:45:09	can't catch me know by zach matari					
07/05/2024 22:54:41	free palestine!!!!!!					

Answers we got on the form on the 22FM website. They were mostly about the artists rather than the art. We also got private messages on Instagram, Teams, and Whatsapp because we promoted the show there beforehand.



# The Art



Spotify QR CODE to access the playlist.

## What is the artwork?

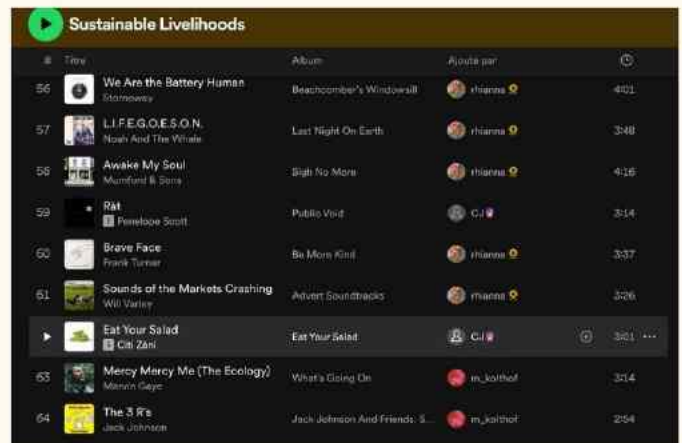
The artwork is a 2-hour radio show, called 22FM, about sustainable livelihoods. 22FM is the radio show of LUC and is a weekly 2 hours show. It introduced basic elements of sustainable livelihoods. After introducing the concepts it asked listeners to send songs either on the playlist or on the Google Form on the website of the show. The usual co-hosts of 22FM also recommended songs that they thought were related to their vision of 22FM. As Artists ourselves CJ and Thalie suggested songs that made them think of the class but also the readings. The artwork is also the final playlist that lasts 4 hours and 30 minutes which is longer than the actual show but is still art because it is all the contributions from the listeners.

## Observation:

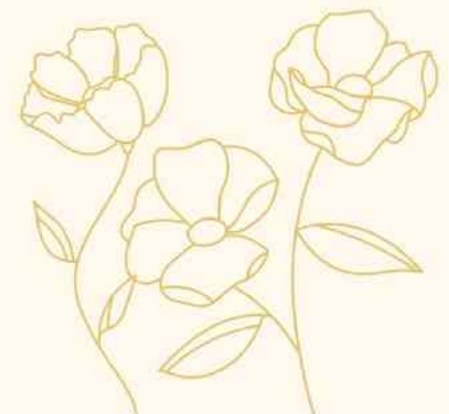
Our art is not visual, like Causey said in his first chapter "you might not be able to see very well." We were however able to observe that people liked to suggest songs in person or listen but more passively than actually come to the room to participate in the art. We mostly played music rather than talk as a way to allow the audience to process the content artistically instead of making it a lecture on sustainable livelihoods. "There is no way to capture entire cultural worlds "in their abundance and in a timely scope" (Causey) but this was an attempt to introduce sustainable livelihoods in two hours.



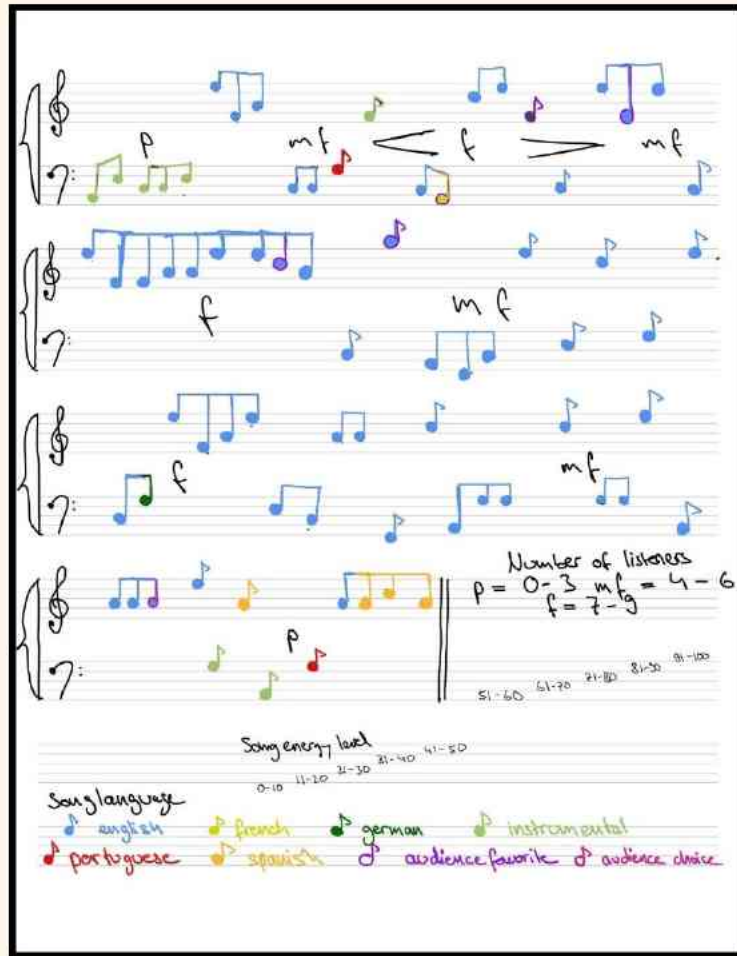
The playlist's cover



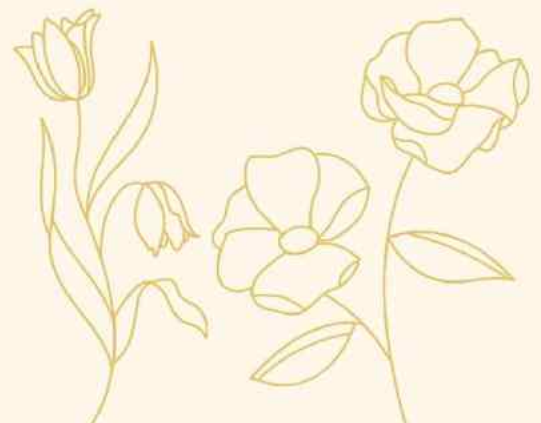
Example of songs on the playlist.



# The Art: Data Visualization



As our project is based in music we decided to use the framework of sheet music to explore the data we collected. This allowed us to see the art work in a new way. In this visualization we explored the songs played in order (with one note per song), their energy level, their language, the number of listeners as well as the audience interaction as this is part of the artwork.





# The Audience

## Who is the audience?

We had listeners from several continents: Europe, North America, South America, and Asia, some mostly people knew us or saw our promotion on Instagram. There were also regular listeners of the show for example Rosa's parents (Rosa is one of the usual co-hosts) who live in New Jersey always listen to the first song to know the theme and keep up with her.

39 people listened to the show through the app but we had people that came over too that were LUC students. It was overall a majority of LUC students but also family members. It really created an entire network of people linked to us all listening and sharing songs about sustainable livelihoods.



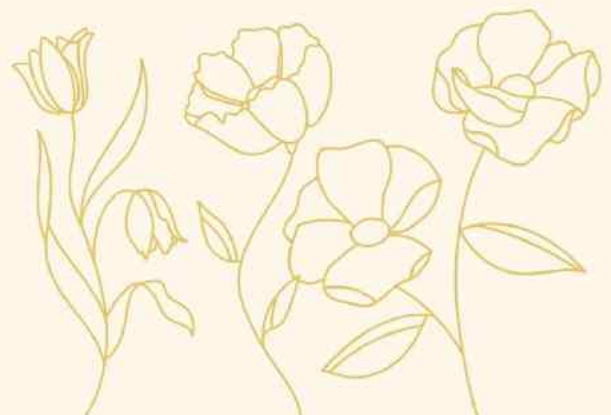
Map that shows our audience at the peak listening time.



Flyer advertising the radio show on the notice board on Floor 2 of Leiden University College The Hague

## How did the audience experience this artwork?

The audience experienced the artwork both as an audience and as a contributor. We mostly got positive feedback on the artwork as the people listening were also contributing. Maybe they were also a bit biased as they knew us or were taking the class so already interested in sustainable livelihoods.



# The Audience



## How did the audience individually experience this artwork?

We set up the interview with the two co-hosts as we felt like they were the most interesting persons to get feedback from.

In Street Epistemology the Basics there was an interesting step to conversation. This was step 7: Post-Conversation Considerations.

This step recommends you to: "personally reflect, learn from, and improve your Street Epistemology talks. After your conversation has ended, consider running the discussion through your head and review any notes, audio, or video." To put that step in place we met up with them the next morning after the show. We first asked them to remember the episode, then we asked them to add the more songs that they could remember from the show to another Spotify playlist. After they were done adding the songs they remembered we shuffled the playlists and we would ask them what they thought about the song and why it made them think of sustainable livelihoods. It was also interesting to see that they mostly remembered songs that they contributed to the show. Shuffling the playlist felt like rolling a dice and just randomly getting a song, associated to a memory.

### What was your fav song and why?

6 Responses

American teenager

Hurra Die Welt get under. It was the first time I heard German rap and it felt fresh to hear.

Weight is gone de Intuition& equilibrium + Brassens 🍷

Georges Brassens's song

Nothing But Flowers, its very funky with an interesting message

Alex on the spot because i liked the movie it comes from

Answers on the form we sent to our listeners.

## References

- Causey, A. (2017). Chapters 1 and 2. Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method. University of Toronto Press. 1-48.
- Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). Dear data. Chronicle books.
- Meinig, D. W. (1979). The beholding eye: Ten versions of the same scene. The interpretation of ordinary landscapes: Geographical essays, 33.
- Scoones, I. (1998). Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis
- Street Epistemology. (2022). Street Epistemology: The Basics. Syllabus Sustainable Livelihoods:

Links:

22FM website: <http://www.22fm.org>

Playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/66WaENtEprxiYguSufW?si=f1d8154de27c4cec>



Overview of the radio show listening data.





MAY / 2024 / ISSUE 1

# Artistic Expressions of Sustainable Livelihoods

The Hague and more

---



## Ready for the experience?

In this magazine you will be able to experience the 3 themes of what makes up art on the theme of 'Sustainable Livelihoods' in The Hague and more. From art pieces in the streets to full museums, in this magazine the aspects of 'The Artist', 'The Art', and 'The Audience' will be explored. Can you not wait to see what we have in store for you? Then flip the page and start the journey for yourself!

### WHAT'S INSIDE

---

#### A SNEAK PEEK

Floating Gardens in The Hague

#### BONUS CITY

Read about what the Fashion for Good Museum in Amsterdam is all about.

# Fashion for Good Museum

## – The Artist –

For a livelihood to be considered sustainable, we focus on the outcomes that a livelihood can have (Scoones, 1998). It not only has to uplift the worker by increasing their livelihood capabilities and reducing poverty, but also contribute to enhancing resiliency in the light of vulnerability and help maintain the stability of the natural resource it is drawing out of for its benefit (Scoones, 1998). The art piece at hand is trying to communicate the issue of the fast fashion industry, which is known to be a huge polluter in the world, contributing to about 8% of all greenhouse gas emissions (Hewamanne & South, 2023). It also amounts to 1/5<sup>th</sup> of all the waste water generated in the world (Hewamanne & South, 2023).

Aside from the environmental aspect of the fast-fashion industry, it also stands as the prime example of globally outsourced industry wherein fashion houses of the Global North have created supply chains with workers from the Global South serving as the backbone of it. These workers are usually positioned in countries where labor laws are either non-existent or lack enforcement, thus creating room of exploitation of thousands of workers (Hewamanne & South, 2023). Conditions for workers have often been described as inhumane in nature. Workers in Sri Lanka, for instance, earn around 900\$ a year while working 12 hours a day and often not having the money to even buy food (Hewamanne & South, 2023).

The fast-fashion industry is quite polluting, but the problem becomes more intense with the amount of waste it generates. Some estimates amount textile waste to be more than 92 million tons per year (Niinimäki et al., 2020). The exhibition, *What Goes Around Comes Around* tries to highlight this problem of textile waste by showcasing how circularity can be used as a way to combat textile waste and make the industry more sustainable in nature. The exhibition displayed at the Fashion for Good Museum shows local artists like the Patchwork family who have tried to upcycle old pieces of clothing and textiles to create new outfits (Fashion for Good, n.d.). The idea behind this was to imagine an industry which reuses all it produces and does not leave any waste behind.

The artists have tried to tackle three spheres of sustainability via this display of upcycled clothing in this exhibition. These are at the individual, community, and industrial level. Inspired by the 'Circles of Influence' model developed by Steven R. Covey, the model tries to show how a person's actions influence at three different levels within the climate movement (Westwood & van Duren, 2024). Similarly, the exhibit depicts a story tackling the issue at different levels via the actions they are doing and hope to invoke a similar line of thought among the visitors to see what they can do within their practices to impact any of the three levels.



Figure 1: Fashion for Good Museum logo (Fashion for Good, n.d.).

## – The Art –



Figure 2: Art installation by The Patchwork Family.

sections, each on another floor in the building. Each of these floors have different sections devoted to the theme that is presented. The 3 themes from lower floor to upper floor seem to be *History*, *Individual Power*, and *Future*, respectively. Additionally, the exhibit that was being showcased, *What Goes Around Comes Around*, took up most of the ground floor and the upper floor. Specifically, the exhibition was also divided into various dimensions, all relating to the 'Circles of Influence' model by Steven R. Covey, which are *Individual* (on the ground floor), *Community*, and *Industry* (both on the upper floor) (Westwood & van Duren, 2024).

The Fashion for Good Museum provides an immersive experience to learn more about the processes behind the fashion industry and how the clothing you wear is made (Westwood & van Duren, 2024). Moreover, the museum takes you on a journey through its various levels to learn how you could have a positive impact on your own fashion consuming habits (Westwood & van Duren, 2024). Now, how does it do this, you might ask. To start, the museum is divided into 3 different



Figure 3: Art pieces by multiple artists.

Each of the floors had a mix of methods that were used to convey the theme at hand, which consisted of information shared through text and video, interactive areas where the audience could actively participate, and real-life examples such as art pieces (see Figure 2 and 3) and textile. Moreover, the interactive areas comprised of a drawing area for kids (see Figure 4), a design studio where you could make your own sustainable T-shirt, and a large pin-up board where you could share your own thoughts. Uniquely, you could even acquire a special bracelet at the start that would help you make your own action plan regarding making a positive impact on the world of fashion.



Figure 4: Drawing area for kids.

## – The Art –

In order to have a better understanding of the most important parts of each floor in the museum, we utilized an adapted version of ‘House Glyphs’ by Andrew Causey (2017). This method is used to create a minimalistic and dynamic image of a single thing in order to capture the essence of it, and make it easier to draw quickly at a later point (Causey, 2017). Our adapted version of this method is used to capture the essence of each of the floors in the museum, when given only 1 minute to draw it. The output of this can be seen in Figure 5, which shows the three different floors from bottom to top, with the parts we found most important in the delimited boxes. The lower floor depicts the 7-step process of how raw cotton becomes the clothing you wear, and the historic timeline of fashion. The ground floor shows the sustainable T-shirts you could create and the clothing you could buy, as well as the large section devoted to the artist The Patchwork Family. Lastly, in the upper floor box you can see the change from individual to industry level solutions.

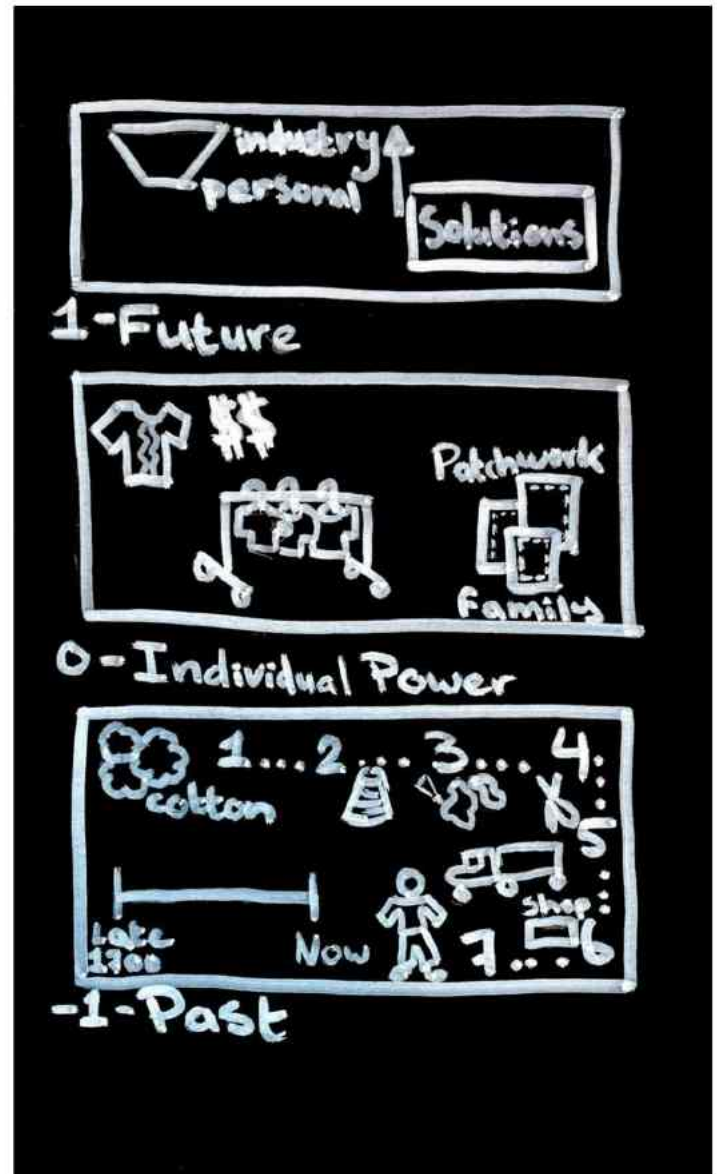
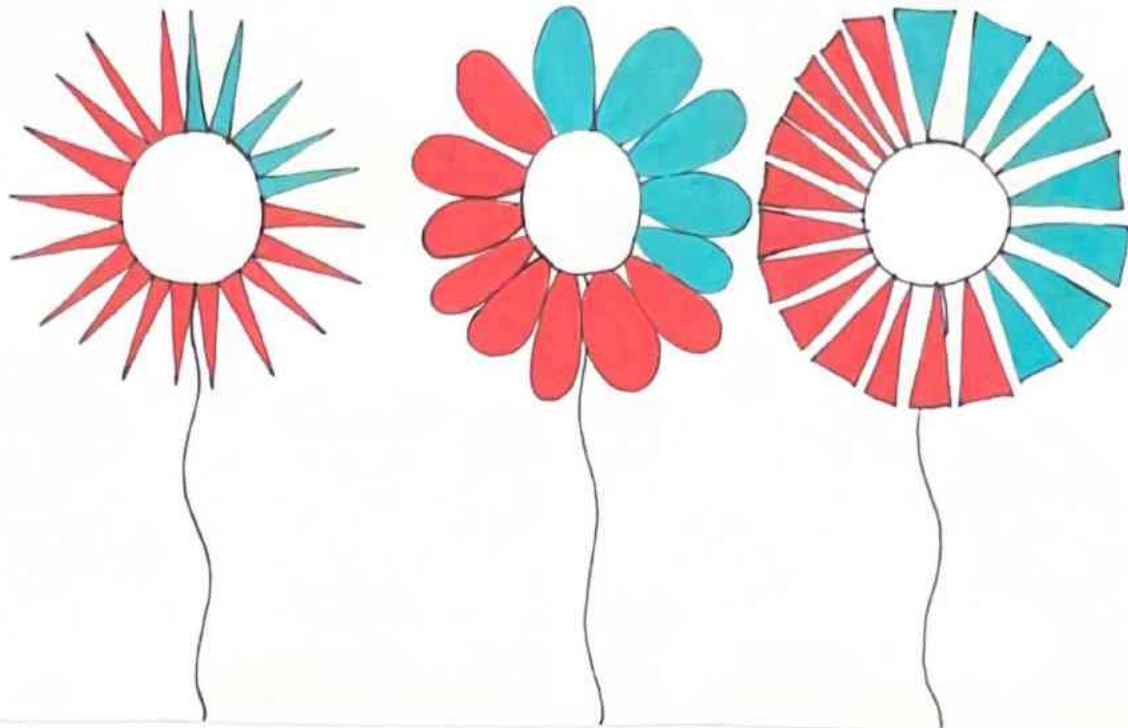


Figure 5: Observational mapping of museum.

As the exhibition of *What Goes Around Comes Around* is focused on the three dimensions of the ‘Circles of Influence’, we wanted to gauge if that importance was mirrored in the interactive parts where visitors could write their thoughts. To do so, we used the *Dear Data* method created by Giorgia Lupi and Stefanie Posavec (2016). To collect the data, we went around the museum and counted how many times each of the dimensions was mentioned, and then did the same with the notes visitors left behind on the pin-up board. The result of this is drawn and described in Figure 6. The shapes of the petals were consciously chosen to signify different ways to take action. Therefore, a triangle was chosen for *Individual* to represent a bottom-up approach, a round shape for *Community* which represents people coming together in a group, and lastly an upside-down pyramid for *Industry* which represents a top-down approach.



## Dear Data:

Exhibition dimensions

### How to read it:

Each of the flowers represents one of the dimensions from the 'Circles of Influence' model by Steven R. Covey, which can be recognized by the shape of the petal. Besides that, the color represents who mentioned it, and the number of petals on each flower show how many times it was mentioned.

### Color of petal:

**W** = museum  
**M** = visitor

### Shape of petal:

△ = Individual  
 ○ = Community  
 ▽ = Industry

Figure 6: Dear Data of exhibition dimensions.

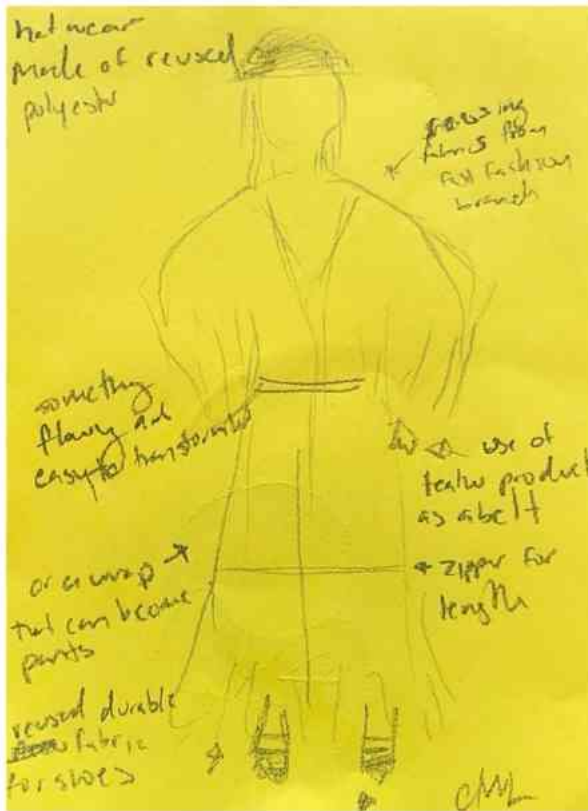


Figure 7: Drawing of 'Outfit of the Future' by first audience member.

The two drawings made by audience members are shown in Figure 7 and 8. In these drawings, there are a few topics that are emphasized most. To start, both audience members seemed to put a large focus on the materials that are used for the clothing. For example, in Figure 7 it is mentioned to reuse fabrics from fast fashion brands, reuse polyester for a hat and reuse durable fabrics for shoes, thus emphasizing the importance of reusing materials. While in Figure 8 we can see a larger focus on the type of material, for example that it is natural, plastic-free, and durable, such as silk, cotton, wool, and canvas. Additionally, the audience member who drew what is seen in Figure 8 said that they found it unimportant what the clothing looked like or what shape it had, noting that "beauty is in simplicity". Conversely, in Figure 7 there is a focus on shape and what it looks like, for example by adding a zipper in the skirt so the length can be adjusted, or making the skirt into a wrap that could be transformed into pants as well.

In order to understand a bit more about the experience of the museum from the side of the audience that attends it, we decided to conduct a small interactive game and a few interviews. For the playful game, two separate audience members were asked at the end of their visit to draw their own 'sustainable outfit of the future' based on what they had learnt or experienced in the museum. Additionally, it was emphasized that the drawing did not have to be pretty, it could be a simple sketch, and they were free to interpret our directions however they pleased. We chose to have them draw something as this gives the participants more agency in what they would like to convey, without being held back by limiting or directed questions (Prosser and Loxley, 2008). Moreover, it gave us the opportunity to engage with audience members even when a language barrier was present (Prosser and Loxley, 2008).

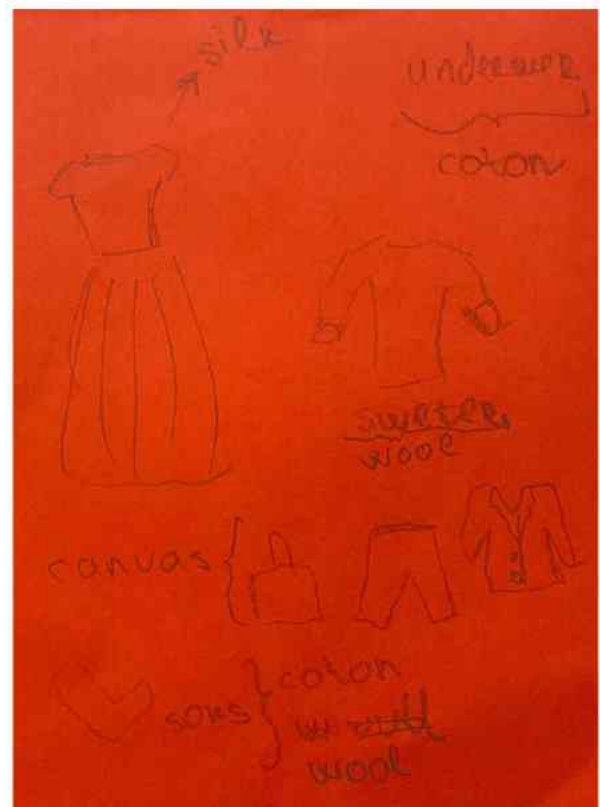


Figure 8: Drawing of 'Outfit of the Future' by second audience member.

## – The Audience –

In terms of the interviews, we decided to keep them semistructured as this allowed for a focus in the questions we asked, while still leaving the space for either us or the participant to follow a different direction if desired, and accounting for possible time constraints (Bernard, 2006). Accordingly, two interviews were conducted with audience members, and one with a staff member of the museum. The audience members were asked about their overall experience of the museum, their key takeaways, and if the museum motivated them to consume fashion/clothing more sustainably in the future. The staff member was asked somewhat different questions that were focused on why they had started working there, how/if the museum has changed their view on sustainable fashion, and what they found most important about the museum. During the interviews, one of us asked the questions, and the other made jottings of the answers to make sure that the interviewer's full attention was on what was being said (Emerson et al., 2011; Roberts, 2024).

The two separate audience members who were interviewed both expressed that they had already made changes in their lives to consume fashion and clothing more sustainably prior to visiting the museum. Therefore, the museum added to the basis of knowledge that both already had. Additionally, one of them noted that it did bring the topic more to the forefront again, which they were grateful for. Then, as was also emphasized in the drawings, one participant noted that their key takeaways would be that many of the materials we use are mainly bad, and that we should not simply follow trends and promote consumerism. In terms of their overall experience and view of the museum, they both mentioned how important they thought it was that such a museum exists and found that the point of the museum was good. However, one did note that they felt the layout of the museum was a bit confusing, referring to the process and the focus each level had. The staff member who was interviewed, similarly to the audience members, noted that they had prior knowledge to the issue addressed in the museum before they started working there. However, the museum had given them the chance to broaden their knowledge on the subject and gave them the opportunity to be more practically involved with it as well. They are of the opinion that educating people on this matter is very important, which the museum does by informing the visitors of the basics of the issue and potential solutions. Lastly, they hope that visitors get to see the problems that come with high consumerism and the importance of circularity in the fashion and clothing industry.

### References Cited

- Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4th ed). AltaMira Press.
- Causey, A. (2017). *Drawn to see: Drawing as an ethnographic method*. University of Toronto press.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). In the field: Participating, observing, and jotting notes. In *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2nd ed). The University of Chicago Press.
- Fashion for Good. (n.d.). *What Comes Around Goes Around*. Fashion for Good. Retrieved May 27, 2024, from <https://fashionforgood.com/museum/what-comes-around-goes-around/>
- Hewamanne, S., & South, N. (2023). Women and the Structural Violence of 'Fast-Fashion' Global Production: Victimization, Poorcide and Environmental Harms. In E. Milne, J. Heydon, K. Pegs', P. Davies, & T. Wyatt (Eds.), *Gendering Green Criminology* (pp. 148–169). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781529229646.009>
- Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). *Dear data*. Princeton Architectural Press.
- Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T., & Gwilt, A. (2020). The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, 1, 189–200. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0039-9>
- Prosser, J., & Loxley, A. (2008). *Introducing Visual Methods* (10; NCRM Review Papers). National Centre for Research Methods.
- Roberts, R. (2024). *The Secrets of Great Conversation (with Charles Duhigg)*. Retrieved May 27, 2024, from <https://www.econtalk.org/the-secrets-of-great-conversation-with-charles-duhigg/>
- Scoones, I. (1998). Sustainable rural livelihoods: A framework for analysis. *IDS*. <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/3390/Wp72.pdf?sequence=1>
- Westwood, A., & van Duren, S. (2024). *What Goes Around Comes Around* [Exhibition]. Fashion for Good, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. <https://fashionforgood.com/museum/what-comes-around-goes-around/>