Falk Hübner

In Good Company.
Think we must.

Fontys

for my children, who show me every day that this is a world worth fighting for; and that money and the imperative of competition[1] are the last things that will solve its issues.

[1] I use this phrasing by Isabelle Stengers, who writes regarding challenges that are just "too big": "Changing course at a planetary level is in itself a daunting perspective, but it is specifically so today, when what prevails at every level is the imperative of competition, that is, the economic war of one against all." (Stengers 2018, 138)

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The "Big Six"

The work of and with a multiplicity of agents is central for the professorship and for artistic connectivity. I like to take this as an opportunity to mention six voices that have been of extraordinary importance in my professional biography – not for the sake of repeating past achievements, or dropping the names of famous teachers, but to mention the ones who have been more than just important or inspiring, and have rather helped shaping considerable parts of my professional being and doing. Each of them has a place in the journey I made and still make, and how my ideas and work have been shaped throughout the years, up to my most recent work here in Tilburg. They keep being present and mentioned in conversations, professionally and in private, resonating even years after the time in which we worked together. I am all the more grateful that I can still work with some of them. I mention them in biographical order, or, as film credits might say, in order of appearance:

I met **Soheila Najand** as a young, just-beginning student, and she showed me the importance of the responsibility that we as artists have towards the world around us. She also taught me the relevance of critique and how to work with it. One of her most important pieces of advice might have been (while I was in my early twenties): "First you need to take a few years and just make beautiful work." Everything else develops from there; income and paid work will come; but the imagination only develops through hard and continuous work – there are no shortcuts.

I learned incredibly much from **Dolf de Kinkelder** during my composition studies in Arnhem. Dolf taught me about craft and how to think and work as a composer, far beyond music composition. He taught me to be dedicated to one's material, to question it and to make choices – and actually get work done, compositions finished – and performed. He showed by example how important it is to support others. And I am still humbled by the confidence he has in me.

Sometimes we need others to show us our strengths, especially those we didn't know we had, or even existed at all. At times, I am astonished for how long I've actually known **Bart van Rosmalen**, as we met in 2003 at his programme "The Composer 0304", funded by the Gaudeamus foundation. There we improvised together (I still remember Bart playing an ostinato on his cello, and me standing one or two metres away with my double bass and he glanced at me, saying: "It's up to you.", suggesting I need to start playing. I cannot remember though if I was excited or terrified – probably both.), and worked through all kinds of issues around the profession of the composer. Since then our paths keep crossing, up until Bart's time as professor in Utrecht, yet he continued to make me aware of strengths and skills that I have, but wasn't aware of.

It was in the programme "The Composer 0304", that I also met **Marcel Cobussen** for the first time, when he gave a workshop on artistic research, together with Henk Borgdorff. This encounter should not be without consequences: It was Marcel, together with Henk, who introduced me to the phenomenon of artistic research (and to the eye-opening revelation: "Oh, *this* is what I need to do!"), was so kind to guide me in writing the proposal for my doctoral research and supervised me during these six illustrious years that certainly belong to the most intense learning I was ever allowed to experience.

Nirav Christophe is a very special person who I have known for close to 15 years now. While in the second year of my doctoral studies, I called Nirav (on advice from my partner Marieke, who knew that Nirav did "something with theatre processes" in Utrecht) if he would be interested to meet and connect. He immediately said yes, without reservation or typical questions to "send him something to read first"! This was the beginning of several years of substantial support of my research, and also the beginning of my professional home for the years to come, at the University of the Arts Utrecht and Nirav's professorship Performative Processes.

Nirav's attitude of always-being-positive, of support and trust has been striking to me ever since we met and inspired me beyond measure.

John Johnston brought the context of socially-engaged art, artistic activism and the intensive entanglement of being an artist and educator to my attention, and introduced me to the field of art as an approach to conflict transformation. Through our conversations, he helped me to understand the entanglement of the different sides of being an artist, researcher and educator, and how the potential for critical engagement can unite these three parts into a hybrid professional identity. John's example of leading a programme, through providing as much space as possible to a team while being responsible, caring and tying the threads together, has been truly inspiring and insightful.

Soheila, Dolf, Bart, Marcel, Nirav and John: Thank you all for having been, being and staying on this journey.

And finally, I need to mention my family, Marieke and our joyful and chaotic club of children: Yannis, Milo, Levin, Lise and Jara - who always stay with me, even in times of too much work and without the time that I would love to have for and with them. A warm and lovely thanks for staying with me.

PREFACE

Please read this text as what it tries to be: a document to depart from, a spark to think with, to think further, and to experiment with in practice. This text is not the result of the professorship but rather its beginning. Take it as unfinished thinking, as material to work from and to work with. It is an introduction to our work for you as a reader, and an introduction for ourselves to continue with. With this text, I have chosen to offer you a hopefully fascinating space "in-between": on the one hand, the text summarises, contextualises and makes sense of the work that various people in the professorship have done until this moment. On the other hand, it should open ideas, insights and imagination and offer a sense of where the journey is heading. Some of the threads are still open or loose, rather than being tied up or fixed. Take this as an invitation to look through the gaps and discover your own ideas on how these threads might be woven further.

As already suggested in the acknowledgements, I must emphasise the collaborative nature of the work in the professorship, and I hope that all people who have worked with me until now recognise their voice or at least a part of it in what follows. The central approach of the professorship is what I call "collectively thinking together, in circles." The work with these various circles, and the thinking that has happened in the various activities of the first year of the professorship, have flown into what has become this text. I hope that the voices that have been present in the institution, in the work of the professorship, in the city and in the various collaborations recognise themselves in this text, too.

Just as artistic practice is central to artistic research, among a network of other disciplines, contexts and practices, I write this text with artistic practices and an artistic identity as the central point of departure. Many disciplines and discourses touched upon here are situated in areas where I am not necessarily "at home"; I enter them rather as a guest, a visitor, exploring resonances and exchanging with them through the perspective of the arts.

PART ONE
INTRODUCE WE MUST
Regarding The Title

To start this text, an extended version of the inaugural lecture at Fontys University of the Arts Tilburg on November 18th, 2022, let me mention just a few words on the title. In fact, the main title "In good company" and the subtitle "Think we must." are two quotes by two extraordinary thinkers and writers, Ursula Le Guin and Donna Haraway.

Science fiction writer Le Guin, of whom author Sioban Leddy writes that "[h]er novels imagine other worlds, but her theory on fiction can help us better live in this one" (Leddy 2019, n.p.), delivered an impressive acceptance speech at the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters in 2014. Le Guin used this speech to express publishers' escalating tendency to value profits over art. Besides this important point, I was further intrigued by the statement: "I've had a long career, and a good one. In good company."² Although this is only one short sentence, not followed by any more direct comment or elaboration, I consider it spans Le Guin's entire career and resonates with a deeply-felt and crucial point I aim to make. Not only does Le Guin offer a very particular, non-economic and non-competitive understanding of what a "good career" can be; she also marks the importance of professional company and a field that is dear to her, for which she cares, and with which she associates important values. In this sense, being in good company is at the very basis of the work we do, and the very basis of this text, as none of us can do this work alone.

I regard the community in which I work at Fontys, at the University of the Arts and at the Research Centre of Creative Economy as good company. The same goes for the community of artists and artistic researchers at large, as a community of smart, creative, brave human beings, willing to fight for what needs-to-be. Lastly, it reminds me of my own biography, in which I had the unbelievable privilege to work with enormously inspiring mentors, teachers, colleagues and students - I mentioned some of them in the acknowledgements. So much of this experience, and the creative individuals I have worked with, have flourished and sourced my journey of inquiry. Thanks again, for offering and being good company.

The subtitle, "Think we must." is a quote from philosopher and multi-species feminist theorist Donna Haraway, in her *Staying With the Trouble* (2016). Since reading Haraway's book and seeing a few of her lectures, I have been amazed and fascinated by her intellectual virtuosity, paired with artistic imagination, seriousness of activist urgency and yes, great sense of humour (which she shares with Le Guin!). Haraway quoted "Think we must." herself from Stengers and Despret (2014); the quote is so important to her that it comes back a number of times in her book - in fact, ten times! For her, "Think we must." is about cultivating response-ability (Haraway 2016, 34), - the ability to respond. The slogan even appears in good company next to a quote by Ursula Le Guin regarding the urgency of *changing stories*, to tell the "words of the other story, the untold one, the life story" (Le Guin quoted in Haraway 2016, 40).

Being in good company is at the very basis of the work we do, [...], as none of us can do this work alone.

In many ways, "Think we must." and these associations around it reflect what I regard as crucial points in this text: in the research we are doing in the professorship Artistic Connective Practices and the thinking behind it. I understand "thinking" in a broad sense, which includes artistic practice and artistic research as forms of thinking-in-action, and thinking-through-making. With artist and philosopher Erin Manning, the point is one of "resituating research-creation as a practice that thinks" (Manning 2015, 53)[3]. While action researcher Judi Marshall offers a perspective in which ideas, thinking and action are closely entangled, when she reports that: "I feel compelled to imply my thinking in action and to develop my ideas through experimenting" (Marshall 2016, xvii). Ideas, thinking and action are closely interrelated and entangled.

Neither the relation to Le Guin's "company" nor Haraway's "must" are accidental here: As will become clear in the section on the "artistic" (see page 24), the imaginative power of a science fiction writer is one way of understanding what an "imaginative proposal" might be, a speculative reality or speculative alternative. As writer, activist and facilitator Adrienne Maree Brown puts it: "Science fiction is simply a way to *practice the future together*. I suspect that is what many of you are up to, practicing futures together, practicing justice together, living into new stories. It is our right and responsibility to create a new world" (Brown 2017, 19). For myself, this responsibility links immediately to the "must": to the sense of urgency, and the desperate need for different kinds of stories; towards imaginative realities and speculative ways of looking at our world and its economies through art, and artistic research.

In my view, based on the experience of collaborating within the various circles of the professorship this past year, the two elements "In good company" and "Think we must." are not only certainly linked, but critically inseparable. I have experienced a huge value of being in good company, offering good company, not the least in order to "help each other think" (Adams St. Pierre 2019, 1). This includes the company of the artist researchers and practitioners at the Connective Symposium[4], the three-day long thinking-together in which this inaugural lecture takes place.

"Science fiction is simply a way to practice the future together. I suspect that is what many of you are up to, practicing futures together, practicing justice together, living into new stories. It is our right and responsibility to create a new world." –Brown 2017, 19.

[3] Research-creation is a term used in the Canadian context, fairly close to what the Western-European and Nordic context understands as artistic research.

[4] The inaugural lecture on which this text is based took part during the Connective Symposium at Fontys University of the Arts Tilburg on 17-19 November 2022. During the symposium, about 30 participants worked on the understanding and discourse of artistic connectivity through various practices that were presented, shared and explored through practice.

One Year Ago

Visiting the Marietje Kessels monument. Marietje Kessels was raped and killed in 1900, aged 11.
The murder has never been solved, although it is assumed that the local priest committed the crime.

During the process of writing this text, I realised that almost to the day one year before the inaugural speech, on 17th November 2021, I carried out the first practical project of the professorship Artistic Connective Practices: *Running Tilburg*. The idea of the project was to get to know the city to which I am new and to connect to it - through running it. Using my own non-artistic and non-professional practice as a long-distance runner to step into the notion of connectivity[5], as an embodied approach of moving the body through the city, its various areas and environments. Based on the experience of getting to know my home city Rotterdam much more intimately, by literally "spending time on my feet", and through "running it", I was wondering if I could connect to the city of Tilburg - the place where I will work for the next couple of years - through the act of running.[6]

Director of Fontys Master Performing Public Space Heleen de Hoon joined me as dramaturge of the project. We asked a number of colleagues at Fontys University of the Arts[7] who are living in Tilburg, to suggest places accompanied by personal narratives, stories and reasons why they think a newcomer needs to visit or pass through their recommendations. We hosted an informal gathering over coffee and cake, to talk about the city and places that need to be seen or experienced. Gathered around a physical map of the city on the shared table, a lively conversation emerged about the various places and neighbourhoods, their stories and the history of the city.

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[5] It is important to note that both the theme of connectivity and the title of the professorship, Artistic Connective Practices, were already a given when I applied for the position and when I started to work in Tilburg. So it is not a topic which I have been familiar with for a long time, but I needed to explore the topic as such, too.

[6] The project *Running Tilburg* is also subject to a Research Catalogue exposition that includes more in-depth information and reflections.

[7] These have been colleagues from all parts of the organisation: heads of studies, teachers, support staff, researchers; regardless of gender, skin colour, nationality (although naturally most of them were born Dutch) and hierarchical position in the organisation.

We talked about where the various participants currently and previously live, and how they have experienced different areas of the city. What struck me during the exchanges of stories, was how I was already becoming further embodied with Tilburg. As the conversation expanded and the personal and historical locations on the physical map grew, so too did my artistic and geographical interests in trying to build a personal relationship to the city.

With the collection of places and stories I designed a 53 kilometre-long route, which I ran on 17th November 2021.[8] Starting and finishing at the location of the Circus Academy, I passed through market places, small gardens hosted by communities, places reminiscent of Tilburg's history as a city of textile industry *and* a city of refugees: From the cultural meeting spot "De Nachtzuster" (the night's sister), one of the first Dutch VINEX-neighbourhoods[9], the "Reeshof", the impressive "Warande", a park designed and built in the 18th Century, to "Zandpoort", an arts monument on the Northern edge of the city, mirroring the cranes of the harbour industry.

Although this project was largely an individual undertaking, what opened was not only a first encounter with the city, but also with the notion of connectivity, and a first exploration of the concept *through* a specific practice, in this case long-distance running. It became important that this project immediately started in a collaborative fashion, with an inclusive approach to who likes to help, to being and working together. Instead of doing an entire inquiry into the city, its history and places by myself, I chose to see the city through the eyes of others next to mine and therefore under-

stand the city as fluid, heterogeneous and diverse as the stories of its inhabitants. I took personal and individual stories with me, which allowed me to experience the entire undertaking not only as a personal running project, but rather as an experience where the places and their stories have been shared and can be taken "on the track". Although I ran alone, the experience of taking the shared stories and personal narratives with me was very strong. The project enabled me to make a first mapping of the city, as well as an initial exploration of the notion of connectivity through lived experience.

On a more in-depth level, I like to mention two key aspects of this project that are important for the further narrative of this text, and for my exploration of the arts and artistic research in relation to society. First, the project taps into the necessity of "physically being there", to be *present* in the context that is important at a given moment and to take responsibility to actually be there (I definitely felt a responsibility to pass by all places and locations that were suggested to me by my colleagues). This goes for this specific project in particular, which is, and this is the second point, highly concerned with making connections to a *place*, a surrounding, a city or other social context, through physically moving the body in and through it, and literally making connection through one's feet on the ground. Put differently, the aspect of the *local* is crucial in this. In fact, I suggest that it is the *necessity of presence in places* which is performed as such in this project, performed through running the city, passing along places with stories and meaning for people living in the city.

TILBURG

Bakerij Smarius

Waar nu het doorn in het oog van Tilburg staat op de Hasselt rotonde, rook het vroeger hier heerlijk naar koekjes en brood. In 1959 opende zich hier het brood- en koeken fabriek Smarius zich, helaas is deze zoete geur vervangen door het nou bekende draaiend huis van Tilburg.

StadsBos **013**

Stadsbos 013 is een groot natuurgebied wat allemaal uit wat kleinere natuurgebieden bestaan en ook hier vindt je sporen terug dat Tilburg een echte textiel stad is. Zo hebben textielfabrikanten Diepen, Jellinghaus en Comp door lakenvollerij en ververij gebouwd in het gebied wat wij nu kennen als Dongewijk.

Oude Warande

Een sterrenbos gebouwd door een Duitse Prins en hierna gebruikt als ontspannings- plek voor de rijkste textielbaronnen in Tilburg. Ook was hier vroeger de Tilburgse Dierentuin dit kan je nu nog alleen terug vinden door de kleine restanten van de gebouwen en de leuke grondeekhorens die er nog leven.

Tilburg

Theresia
Deze wijk is erg actief en gericht op de gemeenschap. We hebben een buurtbewoner hierover gesproken. Elk jaar in september word er het knoflookfeest georganiseerd en in de winter zetten ze gezamenlijk een kerstboom op.

Markt
De markt is centraal gelegen in Tilburg. Het gevoel dat wij hebben bij de markt, is een beetje bedrukt en ongemakkelijk. Het is erg druk en we werden een beetje raar aangekeken door mensen.

Warandepark & Grotto (stadsbos013)
Tijdens onze zoektocht kwamen we erachter dat de Warande hoort bij het Stadsbos013. Het is een sterrenbos, dit model was erg populair in de 18e eeuw. In de Lustwarande is door het bos een expositie met kunstwerken te zien. Grotto is te vinden in het hart van de oude Warande.

Nachtzuster/carré
Dit is het voormalige Elisabeth ziekenhuis, in- middels is het een culture- le ontmoetingsplek.

Koningsplein
Deze plek is niet alleen een plek voor ijs, maar ook een plek om gezellig samen te komen. Iedereen schuift bij hem aan!

Vittorio Perzisch ijs
Het is ontworpen door Hendik Tulder en op het koningsplein vinden evene- menten en de markt **plaats.**

.KATTERUG:
DOE NAA NIE ZÔO KATTIG

DE STADSWACHTER:
IK HUUJ OVER DE STAD!

WONING HAVENDIJK:
KOM LEKKER BÔOTSKE KÈÈKE!

SACRAMENTKERK (NACHTZUSTER): OUWE KERK IS TEEGESWORREG UN SCHONE KIET!

INTERPOLIS:
HÊELE HÊELE HÔOGE TORE

WILHELMINAPARK:
ECHT EN PARK MEE KÉI- GAAFH FISTE

MARKTGEBOUW:
LEKKER NAAR DUNNE MÈRT KOOME, KEI GEZEL- LIG!

THERESIA :
AWIR UN KERK WAARIN GE KEN WONE

WILHELMINAPARK:
ECHT EN PARK MEE KÉI- GAAFH FISTE!

SPOORPARK :
SCHON UITZICHT HÉ

OEWE NAACHTLIJKE HER- KENINGSPUNT VEN 140 METER HÔOG
9. DE PLOATS

VREDENHOF KERKHOF
KRUSKE SLAAN

KAPEL AAN DE DELMERWEG & JOODSE BEGRAAFPLAATS KRUSKE SLAAN

WARANDEPRAK & GROTTO MÈN STERREKE

STADSBOS 13
DÈ-S UN VAN ALLES WATJE

REESHOF
ABC BUURTKE

ZANDPOORT
GRÔOTE RÔOJE PLÉKTENT AAN'T WATER

DRAAIEND HUIS BEKANTDÔOZELEG, AL DA DRAAJE

TILBURG NOORD BÔOMKESMET DAANSEN- DE KLURKERS

PEERKE DONDERDS HIER DOOPT PEERKE U

MOERENBURG DAS MÔOJ SCHÔON

Zandpoort, artwork by Geert van de Camp, opposite to industrial cranes at the Northern edge of Tilburg.

Shortly after the actual run, students of the ArtCoDe (Art, Communication and Design) programme engaged with the project, too.[10] In various groups they chose specific parts or areas of the route I had taken and delved deeper in the historic contexts and specific attributes or atmosphere of the areas and places. As an outcome, the students created sketches, texts and alternative mappings of the sites (see images). Strikingly, some of the students' key reflections resonated very well with my own reflections and thoughts above: that it matters to be physically and mentally present in a place, and that the relevance of a place and what it has to offer changes significantly as soon as one decides to experience this place as such, explicitly, rather than just passing through.

I suggest that it is the necessity of presence in places which is performed as such in this project, performed through running the city, passing along places with stories and meaning for people living in the city.

[10] I need to thank Mariska van Zutven, a teacher at the programme, that she was so engaged and open to join *Running Tilburg* with her students in the context of their own *Citymapping* project, in December 2021.

On the Arts, Artistic Research and our Institutions in (Relation to) Society

These notions mentioned, - presence and place/locality - among others, are also three elements that I consider as being crucial when we explore what we, as artists and artistic researchers have to offer in relation to society, or to social and societal issues, topics and questions - in a broader sense, the world around us, while being in the midst of it. And there are quite a few urgent societal topics at present, among others, questions of sustainability, social (in-)justice and (in-)equality, diversity, inclusion and resilience - not to mention questions of (post)pandemic life, ongoing wars and climate change. Virtually all of these relate, in one way or another, to issues in our global (and globalised) economy and the understanding of how this economy is working, does not work anymore and eventually *should* work. And these in turn relate to less generic but more concrete issues, such as people in communities who feel left behind or a health care system under enormous pressure.

Obviously, I don't think that the arts or artistic research have the solution to any of these issues – and nor should they! However, I do think that we have and can develop powerful perspectives and approaches towards how we can be together, with our surroundings and with our planet, and thus towards a more resilient and sustainable society; not as instrumentalised "creative problem-solvers" who just approach complex problems with an "artistic mindset", but through concrete artistic practices and the social practices they embody. Art's *potential* is to ask questions *through artistic practice* about what an environment, a situation or context offers to explore. We do so with a commitment that goes beyond our own work or artistic disciplines: towards working with citizens and the various communities, or other domains, such as healthcare or the creative economy. The point of our work is not so much the idea of "solving societal issues", but rather to ask questions and develop imaginative proposals, speculative imaginaries towards an environment, a situation, community or context; imaginaries as ideas, practices, processes and works that bring us to a place we want to be, where we could be, and where we are not yet. In our view, societal issues do not ask for solutions, but rather for *approaches* towards working with them, to create alternatives, with Donna Haraway (2016), to "stay with the trouble." Pianist and researcher Joost Vanmaele (2022) puts this as a rhetorical question: "Do we want to solve problems, or rather create perspectives, create (unfinished) thinking?" Artists *want* to create perspectives, see alternatives, they are also able to create them and are trained to do so - as a kind of *science fiction* if you like (being reminded of Ursula Le Guin once more). With philosopher Isabelle Stengers these thoughts "echo the call that was part of feminism's strength: 'things really *could be different*!'" (Stengers 2018, 134, italics in original).

The notion of "speculative practices" can also be helpful in order to understand artistic approaches, processes and works in general; practices that wonder: "What if?" and create concrete experiences as speculative responses, so to speak. Activist and scholar Stefano Harney emphasises that speculating can manifest itself in different forms of practices, such as while going for a walk, talking, or in study: "People [are] speculating all the time, […] have freed themselves of certain kinds of protocols […]" (Harney 2011a, n.p.). Next to the liberation from protocols, Harney makes the important point that speculative practice does not need to be detached from anything else: "A speculative practice *joins* what's going on already" (Harney 2011, n.p.). Speculative practice "is partly about extending our own lives, extending our own practices, […] in a way that begins developing something else" (Harney 2011a, n.p.).

"Do we want to solve problems, or rather create perspectives, create (unfinished) thinking?" – Joost Vanmaele (2022)

Without going into history too much, it is safe to say that art has always situated itself in a meaningful relation to society and societal questions, in one way or another. A huge variety of artists and artistic disciplines do not see artistic values or qualities as being separated from social or societal ones, but rather start from the very perspective that the artistic and the social are entangled in a meaningful way (see e.g. Gaunt et al. 2021 for a discussion of the "partnering values" artistry and citizenship). Genres and practices of artistic citizenship[11], community art[12], socially-engaged art, artivism and participatory art[13] are all adding up to a globally distributed body of work that should provide us with sufficient trust that art takes and will take its responsibility in the future. However, for our context here it is of crucial importance to consider what our *institutions*, as one kind of place from which artistic research is initiated, can offer towards the wider field of the social and society. I am convinced that artistic research needs to work and develop towards a more prominent and defined place in society; next to, but also as a counterbalance to economic-monetary and political perspectives. What can artistic researchers offer to society and to the urgent questions of our time? I think they have to offer a lot.

It might sound fairly obvious or natural that artistic research and the institutions in which it happens, just as the arts in general, should and automatically do engage in social and societal issues. After all, does not all academic or scholarly research commit itself to some degree to deliver a contribution to society? However, in my experience this is much less the case than it should be. To give a short example, in the recent past when several crises hit our national and international societies, the arts and culture have been sectors in society that have not only been hit the hardest (not surprisingly, as they consist of mostly freelancers with small incomes and often little financial reserves), but were also systematically overlooked when it comes to compensation by governments. The COVID-19 lockdowns are the most recent examples of this: Performances stopped, museums were closed and the compensation from the state mainly affected larger institutions or organised events. Freelance artists, musicians, dancers, and actors were not only literally put out of business, but also out of state support.[14] And this was not the first time in which the arts stood under pressure in the country, after the disastrous budget and funding cuts initiated in 2011 by Secretary of State of Culture Education of Science Halbe Zijlstra.[15]

"We" artist researchers in teaching positions or employed at institutions, were much less affected, just as the institutions of higher arts education in general. However, in some ways we weren't able to find a way in which we could engage with the problems of the arts sector at large, we couldn't support the sector. And we were not able to build a voice sufficiently heard by the state and government. (As a note, I sketch this in a very auto-ethnographic way, almost as a personal field note of my own experience of the time. There might have been small initiatives here and there, but they went past my attention - I was very busy, too, taking care of my students and managing institutional responsibilities, e.g. for teaching online.) And this is where it got frustrating for me. In my experience artistic researchers have a number of skills at their disposal that could have been of enormous help! As artist researchers, it is a daily practice for us to navigate between different artistic and academic contexts, discourses, and languages; not seldomly combined with questions of education, policy, management, strategy and politics.

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[11] See e.g. Elliott et al. 2016.
[12] See e.g. Altena 2016.
[13] See e.g. Bishop 2012.

[14] To be fair, the Dutch government indeed made available an amount of €16,25 million "for makers and cultural professionals." (see https://open. overheid.nl/repository/ronl-e94516b6-6c0a-465d-be3d-cd558a917a80/1/pdf/steun-aan-de-culturele-en-creatieve-sector-en-herstelplan.pdf, retrieved 26 October 2022) However, practice was much more recalcitrant than simply applying for financial support. I know arts professionals who literally had to spend their savings first before being eligible for specific funding programmes.

[15] For a comment (in Dutch) on Zijlstra's "toxic legacy", see https://www.bnnvara.nl/joop/artikelen/de-giftige-erfenis-van-halbe-zijlstra, retrieved on 11 October 2022.

So why couldn't we find a way to help here? Isn't this our obligation to use our abilities, in whatever way, for the common good if necessary? I agree with Lara Staal and her statement that:

> Being an artist in my view means trying to resist to a lot of existing structures and values and protect those that are under pressure. Being an artist is never taking things for granted and claiming space for the vulnerable, the public, the inefficient, the marginalised, the poetry and the painful. (Staal 2019, n.p.)

Certainly this is the case, I only argue that this should go for institutions of the arts and artistic research, too. In this sense, the objective of the professorship is to produce "'stuff to think with' that will nourish interesting debates" (Stengers 2018, 16) to reconsider the function of artistic research in relation to society and urgent societal questions. From this point of departure, the professorship Artistic Connective Practices aims to provide nourishing for:

- practices that ambition positive social change, through artistic (research) practices;
- interactive and/or participatory approaches;
- individual experiences and practices that want to connect and engage with questions of society and communities;
- practices that enable and facilitate or develop connections/connectivity between a range of human and non-human entities.

But how to do this? How to relate to current and urgent questions in society through artistic research, through the lens of artistic connectivity?

Within the professorship, we work from several core principles that translate to basic approaches to work with, to ethical principles and a few elements of methodology. The most important of these principles are collectivity, collaboration, trust, co-creation and emergence.[16] In order to explore and develop the notion of Artistic Connective Practices, one central methodological approach is *collectively thinking together*. This happens

in different "circles", teams or groups that also contribute to the growing network of the research community at our institution, typically through conversations, writing, reading and discussing resonances with artistic works and practitioners. A central circle is the Connective Intra-Activiteam (which's name is inspired by Karen Barad's notion of intra-action, see next section "A Closer Look"); this circle will be mentioned in the second part as well, as one of the most important "breeding grounds" for the ideas on Artistic Connective Practices.

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[16] Emergence is important as a principle for how things come to be, come up. It is a concept coming from complexity theory, which essentially refers to higher level forms of logic, knowledge and behaviour that emerge from low or local level interaction (Johnson 2001). In my view, the understanding of emergence plays a critical role in balancing thoughtful design and planning on the one hand, and openness towards the unexpected and unknown on the other (Hübner 2022, 328-329). With management theorist Esko Kilpi, emergence is not "understood as things which just happen and there is nothing we can do about it. But emergence means the exact opposite. The patterns that emerge do so precisely because of what everybody is doing, and not doing. It is what many, many local interactions produce." (Kilpi 2015, n.p.). With this perspective in mind, the professorship aims to develop an environment that facilitates emergence and "higher-level intelligence, rather than suppress it" (Johnson 2001, 116-117).
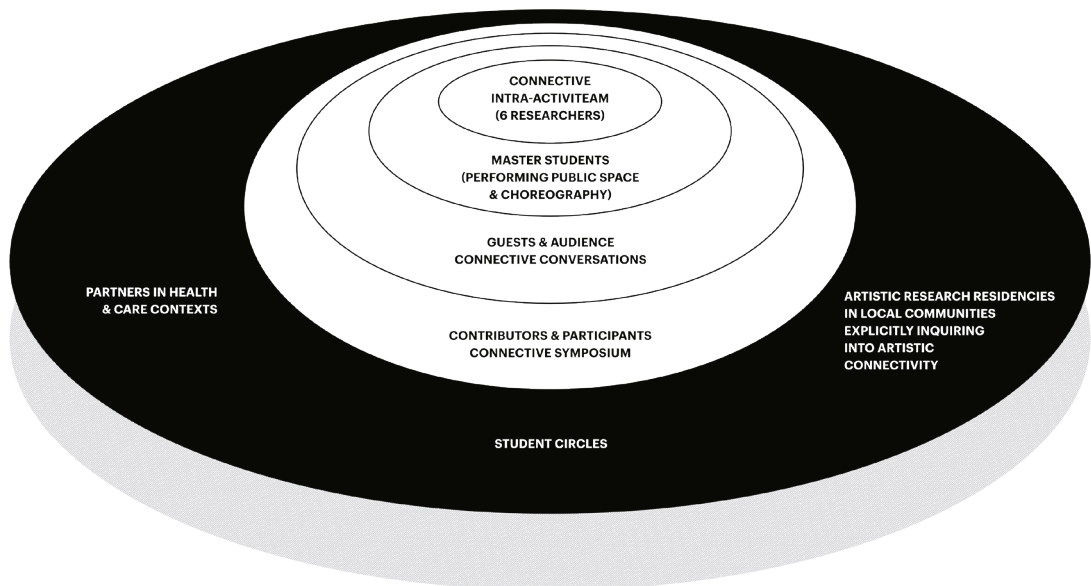
By extending these circles, with care and attention one step at a time, the overall research network grows continuously (as does the collective that is part of the conversation on artistic connectivity): from the Intra-Activiteam to student groups especially within the master programmes of Performing Public Space and Choreography, to the guests and audiences in the Connective Conversations (which present an important interface between the "outside" of the institution, in the form of guest artists and researchers on the one hand, and the internal research environment and students on the other), and the contributors and participants of the Connective Symposium – or, as artist Farid Rakun puts it with the notion of friendship: "new friends, old friends – possible friends as well" (Farid Rakun, member of artist collective ruangrupa, in Hervieu 2022, 07:25). The projects we participate in, the various circles, collaborators, researchers or contexts all function as nodes in a growing network of emerging associations, processes and works. From these associations and this process of collective thinking, we "get down and get dirty" (Hathaway 2020, 30)[17] and design ways in order to do practical work, research and projects (see Part Three).

A concept that resonates very well with the professorship's core values and the notion of artistic connectivity, while it also adds important nuances and values, is the Indonesian concept of *Lumbung*. It is a term for a rice barn located in villages, to which farmers bring the surplus of their harvest. Whoever in the community is in need can use rice from the barn for what is needed. Sharing what you have and using just what you need is a central thought here, next to the core values of trust, collectivity, sharing and responsibility.

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[17] Cynthia Hathaway prepared the professorship during her work as "research explorer" at the University of the Arts in Tilburg (2018-2020). The magazine *Disco* (Hathaway 2020) traces the work carried out in these two years.
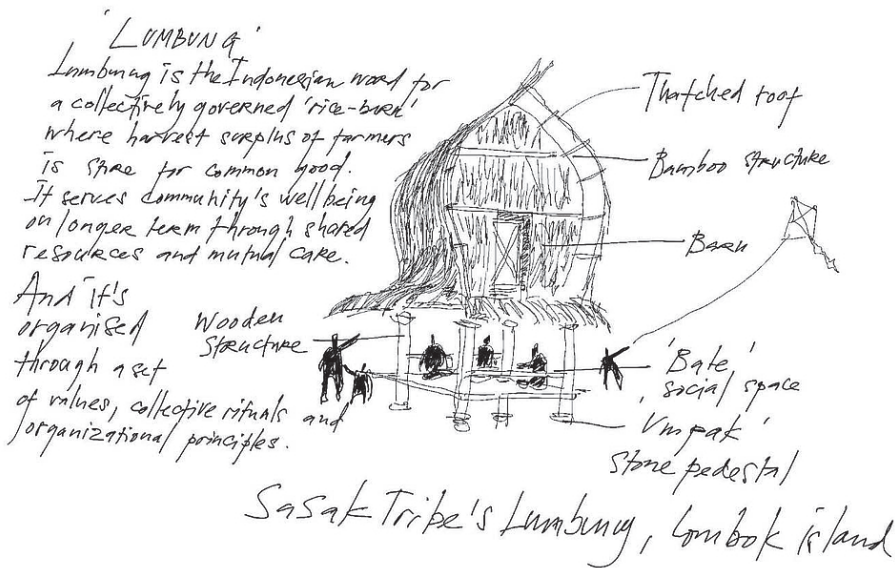
lumbung drawing by Iswanto Hartono, 2020. Retrieved from https://universes.art/en/documenta/2022/lumbung, 3 September 2022. Notice the "social space" below the barn: a communal space and a shelter, a shared and communal space for social exchange and spending time together.

In 2022, Lumbung suddenly started to play an important part in the international art world, as Dokumenta 15 in Kassel invited the Indonesian arts collective ruangrupa to be the curators of the art event.[18] Ruangrupa and other art collectives of the global South are intimately familiar with Lumbung as concept and practice, and have used it in their own practice extensively: both in ways of working and being together, as well as building their collective work and career through Lumbung's (and other Indigenous) principles and philosophy, which "include generosity, humour, local anchoring, independence, regeneration, transparency and frugality."[19]

In ruangrupa's words, "Lumbung is a collective pot or accumulation system, where crops produced by a community is [sic] stored as a future shared common resource" (ruangrupa 2019, 3). In Lumbung, a surplus of production becomes common: The rice or crops that are put into the barn are not lost; they become collective goods. Lumbung "equals things out", which does not only go for rice or money: What else do we have that we can "put in a pot"? Machines, resources, materials, studio space, a kitchen, funding, … and it does

not stop on the material side, but can extend to the relational side of living, in the sense of sharing network, knowledge, skills or time. It is this form of exchange that inspires the work of the professorship and how the concept of Artistic Connective Practices is given shape in theory and practice. In the next sections I will take a closer look at this concept as we think it in the professorship.

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[18] I have to thank Godelieve Spaas, professor of new economy at Avans University of Applied Sciences, for bringing the concept of Lumbung and its meaning to my attention.

[19] Retrieved from http://documenta-fifteen.de/en/glossary/?entry=majelis, 9 October 2022.

PART TWO
CONCEPTUALISE WE MUST
A Closer Look: The Conceptual Clouds

A core element of this text is the framing of Artistic Connective Practices and how we think of these in the work of the professorship. In our thinking, Artistic Connective Practices are:

> *A set of interconnected ideas, a concept to think and work with, rather than a thing, genre or field in itself; in order to enable and support artist-researcher-educators[20] to being engaged and ethical in their work and the world.*

We engage with societal questions and issues, what we see around us in our society and in the world, rooted in emerging realities and social practices. We do so through the perspective of artistic connectivity and through several practices, such as discussing, writing, thinking and carrying out artistic research residencies. The main idea is to co-creatively and collaboratively explore the notion of Artistic Connective Practices as a *theory-practice*. It is not my intention to arrive at a strict definition of Artistic Connective Practices; the notion of a theory-practice or practice-theory is related to Robin Nelson's idea of "theory imbricated within practice" (2013, 37). Artistic Connective Practices are not only framed by words but just as well by people, concrete individual and personal practices and by practical examples. Both conceptual thinking and hands-on examples are what shape the concept, in continuous iteration, with the aim to achieve a clear framing of the concept, as well as a certain potentiality, in order to make things possible that are not yet there.

The central "mechanic" or understanding of the idea of theory-practice stems from physicist and philosopher Karen Barad's concept of intra-action, which she describes as "the mutual constitution of entangled agencies" (Barad 2007, 33). In short, this means that practice (or projects) and theory don't exist (or rather pre-exist) as more or less fixed entities *before* their relationship, but both emerge *from*

within their relationship. Practically this means that we can think about a given project through the notion of artistic connectivity: We can explore in which way a particular practice can be an example of artistic connectivity, and reflect on what this means for our conceptual framing; in which way our framing might be extended, changed, more delineated, and so on. This can also work the other way round, by working with theory and thinking practice through this theory[21] - theory and practice both emerge and develop from this process of asking questions and relating them to each other. And not only can this way of relating practice and theory be inspiring and insightful in itself[22], it also makes possible that projects can already function without a pre-defined definition of artistic connective practices (or, in other words, the question if a given project actually is an artistic connective practice and therefore part of the professorship).

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[20] I am using this hybrid term to include a number of professional identities, which often revolve around the triangle of working as artists, researchers and educators (or variations of this). I am following Robin Nelson's (2013) approach to signify such hybrid professional identities by a hyphen in between the different professional "profiles", similar to hybrids such as practitioner-researcher or artist-scholar. Often the different professional identities are entangled and "challenge some of the preconceptions of specialisation and professional identity, which for many individuals do not reflect their complex, varied and evolving relationship with visual art." (Thornton 2013, 3).

[21] The idea of reading sources through each other is yet another reference to Barad's and Donna Haraway's work, an approach they call *diffraction*. To be explored later.

[22] The idea of reading sources through each other is yet another reference to Barad's and Donna Haraway's work, an approach they call diffraction. To be explored later.

Just as the development of the research theme of Artistic Connective Practices was community-driven and -developed (Hathaway 2020, 3), the conceptual core should share this collective and collaborative spirit. Naturally so, the notion of "doing it together" is crucial and central to the work of this group, the *Connective Intra-Activiteam*; a collective and collaborative work & research process.

Geographer and educator Martin John Haigh discusses connective practices as "affective educational strategies that invite learners to build an emotional and conative connection beyond their individual selves and their immediate social circle. They aim to build participatory consciousness rather than on-looker consciousness […]" (Haigh 2017, 6). Haigh closely links the concept of connective practices to education, environmental change and sustainability, and furthermore aims to connect the learner to be aware and be ready to engage with the aforementioned subjects. Haigh pleads for more individual commitment and a better "concerted will to do what is necessary to change human social behaviour and so change the situation" (Haigh 2017, 7). He argues for a notion of selflessness and acting for the welfare for all as a central component of connective practices.

Haigh mentions three sources for the concept of connective practices in relation to sustainability education: deep ecology pedagogy, social sculpture and invitational education. While I cannot go into further detail here with all three, the origin of Joseph Beuys' social sculpture is essential and immediately close to our context of the arts: Social sculpture "reflects [Beuys'] belief that art has the power to transform society. This would be achieved by engaging society through participation, so transforming society by releasing the creativity of the people" (Haigh 2017, 11). Nowadays, Shelley Sax, a former student of Beuys, continues to use and develop Beuys' ideas on connective practice.[23]

But what makes connective practices artistic?

This was one of the basic questions we asked ourselves when we started discussing and exploring the idea of Artistic Connective Practices. The "we" is chosen very consciously here, as I could not and have not done this work alone, on the contrary. Building on the principles of Lumbung, the notion of collectivity, logic of emergence and the methodological approach of thinking together, the circle of the Connective Intra-Activiteam works on a conceptual framing of Artistic Connective Practices, as flexible as such a framing might be, or as unfinished, as work-in-progress as necessary in order to actually make meaningful work – and meaningful connections. We give shape to this conceptualisation in the form of three "conceptual clouds": the *artistic, connectivity* and *practices.* These clouds consist of a network of interrelated elements that, as a collective, network or panorama, offer a way of framing, understanding and imagining the term in question – without *defining* it in clear-cut terms. Essentially, what we are aiming to do with the conceptual clouds is to keep the concept of Artistic Connective Practices open, fluid and flexible, while at the same time being precise enough to actually work with it.

Our work includes the idea of the conceptual clouds in and of itself, which emerged during the first weeks of our conversations and discussions. In this respect, the team, consisting of Danae Theodoridou, Juriaan Achthoven, Aart Strootman, Heleen de Hoon and Jan Staes need to be credited as important co-thinkers, in particular in this second part on the core concepts and ideas of Artistic Connective Practices. In some cases when I have (almost) literally used their words in the text, I have marked these as quotes with the corresponding abbreviations of the authors in brackets (DT, JA, AS, HdH, JS). So if you as a reader experience these sections as a dialogue rather than a text from a single author, this is exactly the intention. Although I am writing this text, I try to offer some sense of how our collective conversations have taken place.

[23] See https://socialsculpturelab.com/, and more specifically https://socialsculpturelab.com/the-enquiry-labs/connective-practices/, retrieved on 13 October 2022.

Methodologically speaking, we have chosen a two-fold approach: In the first phase of our thinking-together we have discussed the terminology of the three "clouds", as well as started to talk about practices and works from the perspective of Artistic Connective Practices.[24] In the second phase, we continue these discussions and framings-in-progress through "Connective Conversations": We invite guest artists and discuss their work through the notion of artistic connectivity.[25] A similar approach guides the Connective Symposium, where practitioners and researchers from the international field share their work and exchange through the common thread of artistic connectivity.

Before I go on with the analysis of each of the three clouds, just to repeat for the sake of clarity: Please take the next sections and the framing of the conceptual clouds as a starting point to think and work with. The different elements of the three clouds can be understood as nodes in a network, points on a map, or ephemeral spaces. Take them as points of departure, as metaphorical starting points for thinking through art and artistic research. Following this discussion, I will continue to move towards three directions in which the professorships shall be developed in the coming years, as well as a few thoughts regarding our own institution - all potential directions that emerge through thinking about Artistic Connective Practices and artistic connectivity. But first things first: Arguably the most generic of the three conceptual clouds are "practices", which is the first to be discussed.

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[24] Examples of these practices are choreographer Katja Heitmann's performative installation *Motus Mori* (2019-2022), composer Georg Friedrich Haas' composition Solstices (2018), or painter Franky Sticks' community-based wall painting *Maybe Tomorrow* (2021) at Boijmans Zuid, Rotterdam.

[25] For the various guests of the Connective Conversations, see the timeline of the professorship on page 44.
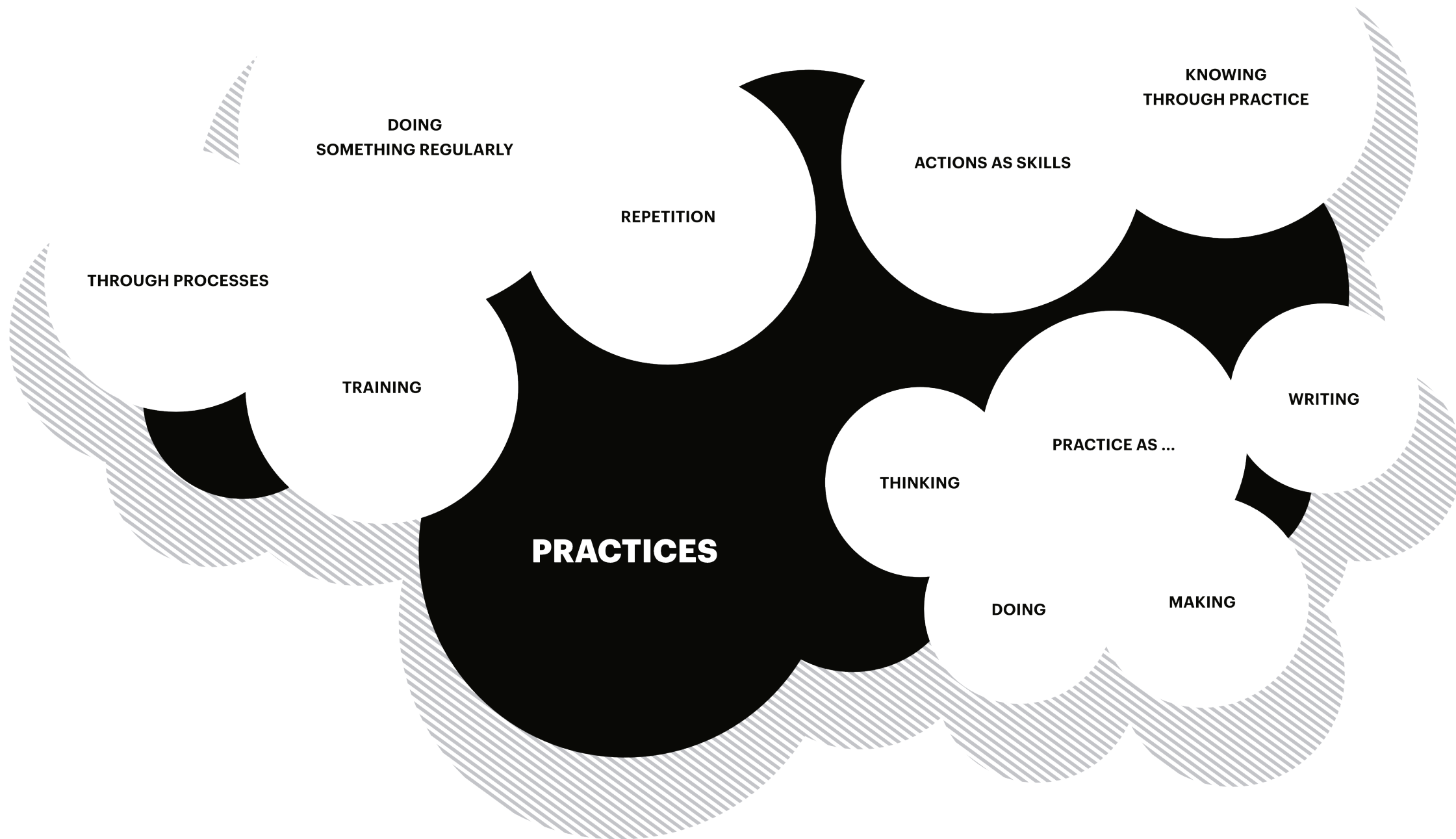
PRACTICES

On a very general level of understanding, practice can be understood simply as "what you do." Situating it in the artistic realm, we contextualise practices in the discourse of performativity: As constituting reality, anchored in the here and now and through a feedback-loop between all present human and other-than-human entities (Fischer-Lichte 2004)[26]. However, practice goes beyond just random actions or activities; our understanding of practices excludes its use as a "flattening term" (DT) that fits everywhere and concerns every mode of human action. In order for an activity or habit to become a practice, it requires doing something regularly, through processes, repetition and training; it might include developing specific actions as skills (understanding skills as being practical knowledge). According to Judith Butler, practice strongly relates to identity, developed and performed through a "stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 1988). From the outside, practices can look easy and very natural - which is due to being "activities carried out by individuals whose competence is high enough that the activities are taken for granted - essentially, activities that are familiar and practiced, even those with significant cognitive loads […]" (Skains 2018, 87).

It should be clear by now that we are not interested in the traditional and old-fashioned theory-practice divide, "as the notion of 'practice' encompasses many potential activities from artistic to analytical" (Skains 2018, 85). Practice happens as thinking, doing, making, and writing, in a way that does not privilege either theoretical thinking or performative making but rather exceeds and makes such distinctions irrelevant. Needless to say it includes creation, or creating: Making something definitely belongs in "practices", which shows potential (and potentially necessary) overlap with the artistic. In many kinds of art practices, the artistic has to do with making something of some sort.

It is important to be aware of the political nuances of the term. While "practice" in artistic contexts is often understood as indeed highly individual, we strive for an understanding "in contrast to the way that 'practice' may be understood today as one's individual work – 'my practice' – that is meant to, for example, demonstrate specific features, carry an individual (artistic) signature, follow a particular methodology, and take place in specific settings and certain kinds of conditions" (Georgelou et al. 2017, 20). Instead we see it as a more generic and performative term that goes beyond branding very particular practices (which in itself carries the risk of a neoliberal and somewhat economic understanding of practice). (DT)

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[26] Fischer-Lichte describes the feedback-loop as being one between performers and audience, she does not include the other-than-human. However, almost twenty years after her work on performativity, a more holistic understanding of performativity that includes other entities than humans, seems natural to embrace.

PRACTICES

DOING
SOMETHING REGULARLY

THROUGH PROCESSES

TRAINING

REPETITION

ACTIONS AS SKILLS

KNOWING
THROUGH PRACTICE

PRACTICE AS ...

THINKING

WRITING

DOING

MAKING

ARTISTIC

Another conceptual cloud that might seem more or less self-explanatory is the one of the "artistic." Obviously, it is not and cannot be our intention to *define* the artistic. Our intention in the conceptual cloud of the artistic is rather to frame a panorama of elements we find compelling and necessary to think with, in order to think the artistic together with the connective. Because, even if it is not definitive and defining, it is necessary to be specific about what artistic practices - and artistic *research* practices - have to offer with respect to connectivity, and to the contexts in which our work takes place. In this sense, the idea as I see it is far more humble and relates to framing the area in which we work, to understand what our work and research is about - in short, about what "artistic" means in the context of work we are pursuing. The conceptual cloud is not about a fixed and solid idea of what the artistic is, but of what we regard as important elements when we talk about and think through it.

As a point of departure, we regard the arts and the artistic as works and processes characterised "by the use of imagination suggesting a certain type of aesthetics: work that relates to the creation of *visual, embodied, sensorial, imaginative forms* of approaching the world and each other" (DT). Artists are trained in the creation of such forms and in shaping, organising or facilitating the processes that lead to artistic work, be it individual or collective processes. This particularly concerns the creation of *alternatives*, rather than confirming what is already there: Within daily life, one primarily acts, thinks and feels according to a more rational and logocentric manner. In an artistic context or situation one can experience "something else"[27] , that is not reasonable, moral or logical. Other things may *appear,* may become *present*, may become *possible*, in the indeterminable space of aesthetic experience. (JA)

These aspects of the imaginative, the speculative and open alternatives play an important role for us. Within the realm that these terms open, performance curator Lara Staal's notion of "making propositions" or "making proposals" is essential: The arts and artistic practices are not only able to "ask questions about" or to "expose" what concerns us. The arts can also make proposals, create alternatives, opportunities, and worlds that are "not-yet but should-be" (Haraway 2018, n.p.). Again, art is not there to solve problems, but to suggest alternatives, to construct speculative alternatives. As philosopher Isabelle Stengers puts it from the perspective of philosophy: "we who are selected, trained and paid to think, imagine, envisage and propose" (Stengers 2018, 106), which brings us back to the idea of art making and artistic (research) practice as a form of thinking - and *think we must.*
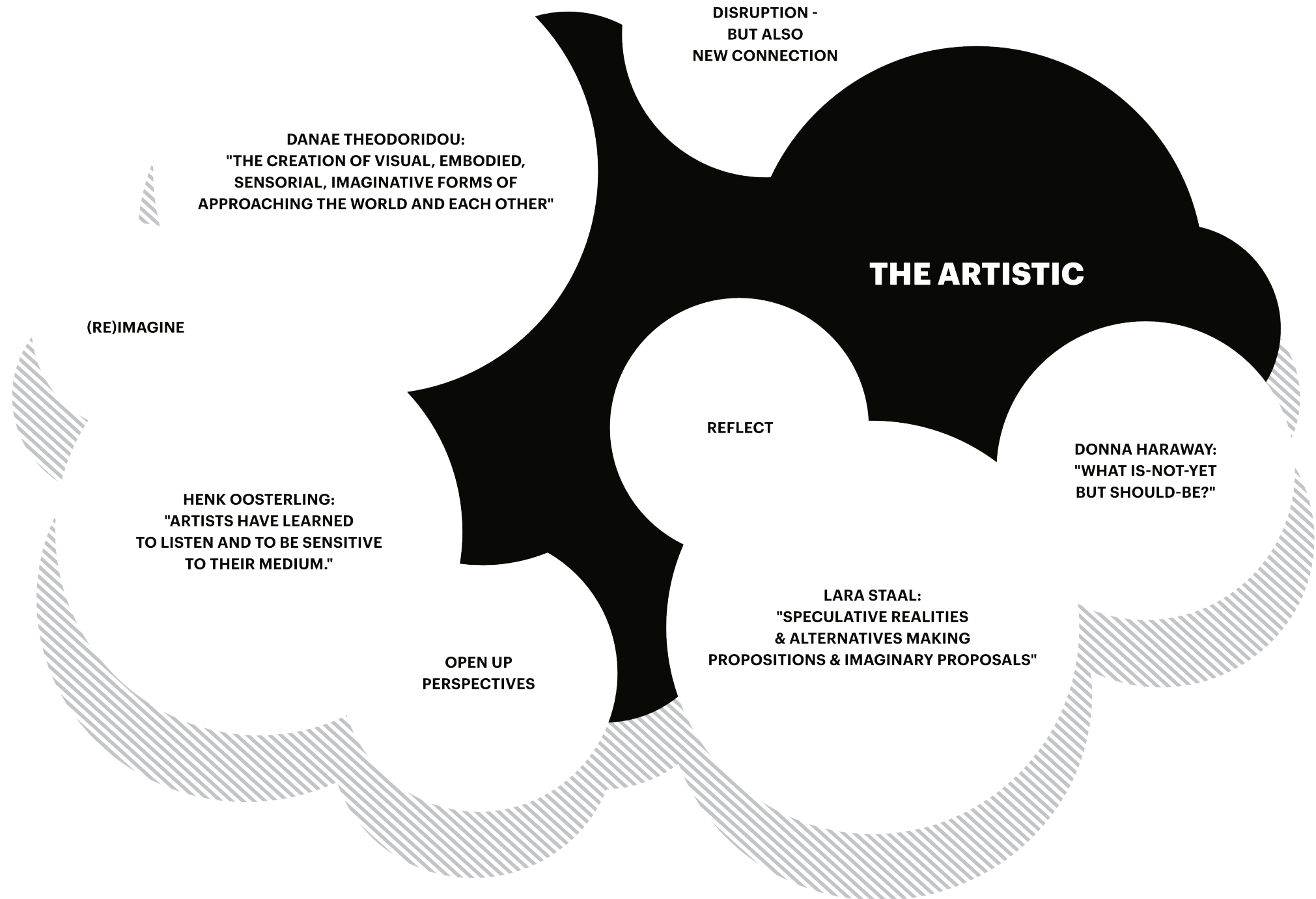
Evidently, we understand the artistic as an open concept, which can involve education as being artistic as well. The creation of imaginaries and alternatives as being part of artistic practice can be crucial to practices of arts education as well, just as the habit of looking critically at the world and taking a position by an artistic utterance or experience. Educational theorist and philosopher Gert Biesta mentions art as "this ongoing, literally never-ending exploration of the encounter with what and who is other, the ongoing and never-ending exploration of what it might mean to exist in and with the world" (Biesta 2020, 66). This is an interesting point where the educational and the artistic meet and go together. Another idea of Biesta is similar, in relation to the capacity of the arts to "pause" and to the "educational gesture" as one that "interrupts": "It interrupts where the child is, it interrupts what the child is doing, it interrupts what the child is (identity), it interrupts what the child wants (desires), and it does all this through the enactment of this simple phrase: 'Look, there!'" (Biesta 2020, 86). And this points at a compelling tension that emerges when we think of the artistic realm as something that intervenes, disturbs, de-familiarises and indeed disrupts in relation to the connective. As Biesta notes, not only the educational gesture, but particularly:

> art can interrupt - and there are some who would argue that good art should always interrupt - art can offer resistance, art can slow down, art can make people stop in their tracks, art can make us think, art can make our heads turn, art can make our hearts skip a beat, art can offer us something to get our hands on. (Biesta 2020, 88-89)

Contrary to the possible negative associations that might come with the mentioned terms of interruption or disruptions, both the connective and Biesta's ideas of "making us think" or "getting our hands on" offer a somewhat positive turn, just as Haraway's "Think we must." We think of this not so much as a tension of opposites, but rather as being relational: as art producing disruption, disturbance, de-familiarisation, which breaks open, which makes other views, thoughts and experiences possible, and then leads to new and potentially unexpected connections: "a materialised form of re-assessing whatever is there to be re-assessed" (AS). In this sense, disruption can also relate to the speculative and is not necessarily negative, but can rather mean redirection, connection to alternatives and re-imagination.

Finally, our understanding of the artistic includes a close relation to technical knowledge and craft/craftmanship, and therefore also to the Greek "techne." Techne connects art directly to crafts and the detailed artistry needed for the creation of forms. (DT) We are reluctant to see the artistic as a quality that can be present in any type of activity, where anything can be seen as artistic and therefore art would lose its particular characteristics, the complexity of its processes or the specific skills that artists are trained in. Lara Staal's comment that we as artists "are trained in the imaginary" (Staal 2021 during Connective Conversation) is telling here, as it concerns the training Philosopher Henk Oosterling relates to when he describes artists as professionals who "have learned to listen to their medium [such as sound, paint, images, data, light, bodies or language]; they are sensitive to what their medium asks of them. They relate critically and sensible [or sense-able] to their medium" (Oosterling 2013, n.p., my translation).[28] And through this specific sensitivity, artists are able to work and create with their media, rooted - again and in the obvious overlap to our notion of practices - in training, repetition and practice.

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[27] And indeed, one might remember a classic free jazz record, saxophonist's Ornette Coleman's 1958 debut album: *Something Else!!!!*

[28] Implicitly Oosterling even relates to the idea of facilitating connectivity through art: "In the arts something between different cultures emerges. Something new emerges through the intervention of artists, so that people can think differently about the relations they have with each other" (Oosterling 2013, n.p., my translation).

DISRUPTION -
BUT ALSO
NEW CONNECTION

DANAE THEODORIDOU:
"THE CREATION OF VISUAL, EMBODIED,
SENSORIAL, IMAGINATIVE FORMS OF
APPROACHING THE WORLD AND EACH OTHER"

THE ARTISTIC

(RE)IMAGINE

REFLECT

DONNA HARAWAY:
"WHAT IS-NOT-YET
BUT SHOULD-BE?"

HENK OOSTERLING:
"ARTISTS HAVE LEARNED
TO LISTEN AND TO BE SENSITIVE
TO THEIR MEDIUM."

LARA STAAL:
"SPECULATIVE REALITIES
& ALTERNATIVES MAKING
PROPOSITIONS & IMAGINARY PROPOSALS"

OPEN UP
PERSPECTIVES

CONNECTIVITY

The last conceptual cloud to be discussed is the one that gives the professorship the most distinct part of its name: "Connectivity" (see previous page). It would be too easy to think of connectivity as simply being about connecting or making links. It is more complex, first of all, but it is also very much about what such connections actually entail, what it means to connect, and what kinds of qualities, complexities or urgencies this might create - why it matters. It is therefore important to resist the temptation to work with a too general or generic notion of connecting such as "we connect" - as if everyone knows what this means. As Haigh already made clear, connective practices are not just meant as "practices to/that connect", but rather seen as practices with clear values, and an agenda of learning, positive change and sustainability.

⊙

I like to invite you to read and think through the map of elements first, to get an initial feel of the conceptual space that this opens and your own associations of this space, and to take the terms and your associations with you through the coming sections. See what emerges from the encounter with my text and what it might mean in your own practice, whether artistic or not.

Connective practices are not just meant as "practices to/that connect", but rather seen as practices with clear values, and an agenda of learning, positive change and sustainability.
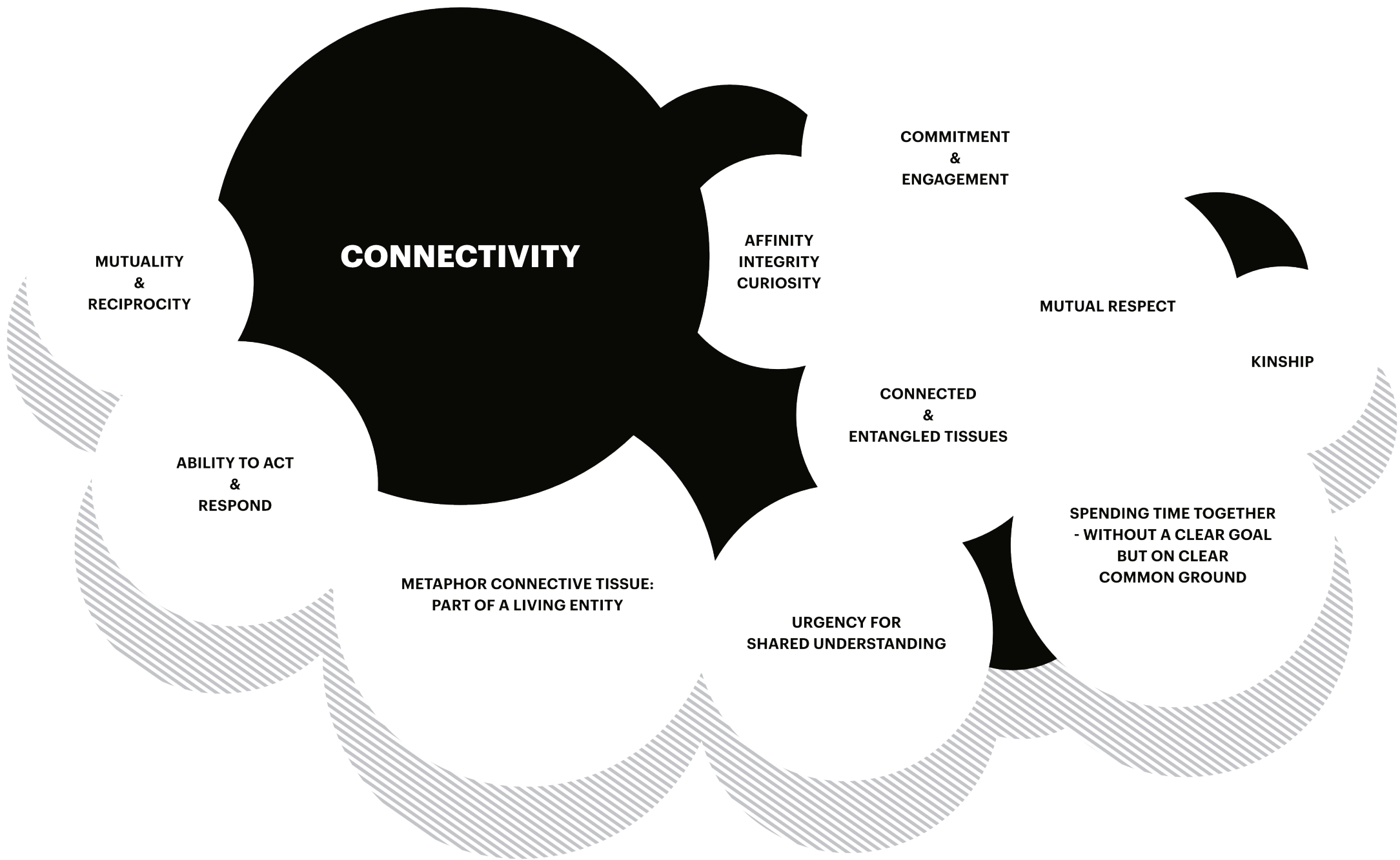
In the following sections, I first sketch a few general observations, notions, remarks and considerations regarding connectivity, before I elaborate on some of its elements more in-depth. A first look at the term "connective" reveals its origin in linguistics, as a logical term that connects different grammatical instances or linguistic units (or, if-then, and, not). The connective thus implies two agents that come together - they connect. The focus in this understanding is on individuality, on two distinct entities and their interaction - it's me, it's you, and we connect. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines connectivity as "the quality, state, or capability of being connective or connected."[29] Regardless of the obvious question of what being connective or connected could mean, and what therefore the quality or kind of (the) connection actually is or can be, it is notable that the connective refers back to itself, and shifts the attention from the agents or units that are connected to the "third term/entity" that connects these agents: "as a *third term*, as in-between, as a space that belongs to none of the agents involved, and which can not be summed up if we sum up the skills of each one of us here" (DT). The relation and connection emerges *from within*, intra-actively. For Danae Theodoridou, this signals an important shift from the notion of "collaboration" to "commoning"[30]:

> I see 'collaboration' as a term that implies different agents putting together their distinct skills in order to create something. 'Commoning' (in close relation to 'commons') means more to intervene, question, interfere, and engage with others, mobilising a way of working *between many*. 'Commoning' in this sense puts the idea of plurality at work for the creation of a third space of unbelonging and disowning that does not belong to anyone and goes way beyond the summation of individual skills, striving for pluralised and differential processes of communicating, working, imagining, and experimenting that makes the production of common practices, imaginings, and actions possible. (DT)

[29] Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/connectivity, 15 October 2022.

[30] As mentioned in *The Practice of Dramaturgy* (Georgelou et al. 2017).

CONNECTIVITY

COMMITMENT
&
ENGAGEMENT

MUTUALITY
&
RECIPROCITY

AFFINITY
INTEGRITY
CURIOSITY

MUTUAL RESPECT

KINSHIP

CONNECTED
&
ENTANGLED TISSUES

ABILITY TO ACT
&
RESPOND

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER
- WITHOUT A CLEAR GOAL
BUT ON CLEAR
COMMON GROUND

METAPHOR CONNECTIVE TISSUE:
PART OF A LIVING ENTITY

URGENCY FOR
SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Juriaan Achthoven sees the concept of connectivity in strong relation to social norms and as a fundamentally un-capitalistic notion:

> Connectivity pertains to issues, concerns and questions with regards to social norms. In other words: Connectivity focuses on the way we interact and exchange among each other from an ethical perspective. What kind of structures are traceable in day-to-day encounters? What kinds of values are dominant in our way of being together? Hans Achterhuis points to a degradation of human relations because of neoliberal policy: 'human relations have degraded because the entire world is being reduced to a market … [there is an] increase of social inequality, exclusion of citizens who cannot keep up with the market's competition, a decrease of political power of communities and paradoxically an increase of surveillance and control.' (Achterhuis 2010, 296, translation JA)[31]

Aart Strootman's thoughts were instead directed at what is necessary as potential prerequisites for connectivity:

> The shared desire for connectivity, born out of necessity and/or curiosity, must be in the DNA of those involved - regardless of what the context is. It can be enthused, but it can't be solely rooted in an art school, nor can it be classified in ECTS. Mutual respect, unrestrained browsing, willingness and above all curiosity without boundaries are, in my opinion, indispensable. (AS)

The notion of connectivity also can be read through the perspective of arts education and ideas on collective learning: "Learning can be understood as an exchange between the individual and the environment, as a shared activity in which learners develop their thinking together, in a community - and society" (JS). This thought by Jan Staes resonates with Stefano Harney's notion of "study", as a practice of "getting together with others and determining what needs to be learned together, and spending time with that material, spending time with each other, without any objective, without any end-point, without any sense that we will never escape a feeling that we are permanently immature, premature, without credit […]" (Harney 2011b, n.p.).

To summarise this tapestry of thoughts, connectivity in our understanding is a concept that embraces ethical values, approaches of sharing, shared experiences and commoning/commonness - all notions with obvious resonance with the concept of Lumbung mentioned earlier. Connectivity can therefore challenge dominant and rather "neoliberal" ways of being together, such as exchange (of whatever kind) for economic reasons rather than driven by interest and curiosity, or much simpler: oppose the understanding of connectivity as "networking." In that respect, when we take the artistic into account as well, artistic connectivity can offer an approach by the arts to question, bend, provoke and open up such dominant modes, and offer an alternative value system - and an alternative practice of/with such values. After this more general sketch of the "cloud" of connectivity, I will elaborate on two of its elements further in the coming sections, in particular: the notion of mutuality/reciprocity and the element of spending time together.

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[31] "De dystopische trekken van de neoliberale utopie tekenden zich in de loop van mijn onderzoek wel steeds duidelijker af: verschraling van menselijke relaties omdat de hele wereld tot een markt wordt gereduceerd, gewelddadige onteigening en ontworteling van grote groepen mensen, toenemende sociale ongelijkheid, uitsluiting van burgers die de concurrentiestrijd op de markt niet aankunnen, afbraak van de politieke macht van gemeenschappen, een paradoxale toename van toezicht en controle."

On mutuality/reciprocity

The notion of mutuality/reciprocity is an example of this challenging dominant neoliberal ways of thinking and doing: We understand connection and mutual exchange in the sense of being in a socially engaged relation with someone or something, rather than according to the logic of commercial transaction (selling/offering goods or services for money, or more general, something is delivered/offered for something else in return). The straightforward image I see coming up here regards having a conversation, and finding the balance between speaking and listening, taking and providing space in a conversation, between acting and responding. This does not necessarily imply an *equal* relationship,[32] however (HdH), but rather one of "resonance", which sociologist and philosopher Hartmut Rosa frames as "a form of world-relation, in which subject and world meet and transform each other" (Rosa 2016, 298, translation by Susen 2020).[33]

Both the question of equality and the idea of transforming each other echo the notion of *interdependence* - opposed to the ubiquitous Western ideal of independence - sheds an interesting light on mutuality/reciprocity. Writer, activitst and facilitator Adrienne Maree Brown notes "that interdependence is not about the equality of offers in real time" (Brown 2017, 95) and rather expresses a "desire for a society where there is more interdependence - mutual reliance and shared leadership, vision" (Brown 2017, 87). Brown mentions the "inter-" as a space of being in-between entities, but also reframes "reliance", as an aspect of reciprocity, in a more positive light than one might initially expect.

The idea of a mutual exchange as a process in which all participating entities can "give and take" in some way also taps into aspects of both socially engaged art practices, as well as forms of participation, collaboration and co-creation. In this sense, I see connectivity as part of an ethical (artistic) (research) practice within communities or within society, "by developing respectful and productive relationships […] without being extractive or abusive or self-serving" (Kara 2018, 11).

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[32] Social scientist Helen Kara also notes the potential problematic and complicated notions of equality, in relation to ethics of care:
"Another theoretical categorisation from the Euro-Western literature divides ethics into ethics of justice and ethics of care. Ethics of justice refers to treating everyone equally, as the law aspires to do. Ethics of care refers to making sure everyone is looked after and, as far as possible, their needs are met - which clearly can't be done by treating everyone equally. However, these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive" (Kara 2018, 35).

[33] A more elaborate phrasing, also by Rosa, is this: "The core idea here is that the two entities in relation, in a vibratory medium (or resonant space), mutually affect each other in such a way that they can be understood as responding to each other, at the same time each speaking with its own voice" (Rosa 2019, 167). I need to thank Juriaan Achthoven for the literature research on Hartmut Rosa.

On spending time together

Although the idea of "spending time together" sounds quite self-evident at first sight, it is quite crucial to our understanding of connectivity: The point of this is that we spend time together because of mutual interest, affinity, a thorough curiosity in each other; *not* because we need to arrive at a certain tangible product or end point, via an efficient process or plan, in a precisely defined time span. The point here is to spend time with each other *without* a precise plan, spending time that is not framed, but spent on a clear (common) ground, such as a context, a frame as the basis for a common understanding (such as the interest in each other's discipline or profession); in order to avoid the risk of simply fetishising social exchange. In short: spending time with each other *simply because of the urgency to spend time together,* based on interest and curiosity, and rooted in clear ground. Theories on efficiency and productivity would probably call this "time spent wasted."

In fact, connectivity and the notion of time in this has nothing to do with efficiency, one economic principle in the time of neoliberalism. In relation to the concept of slowness, Isabelle Stengers notes: "Slow, today, designates all those social movements that endeavour to escape what has been put forward in the name of efficiency, and discover that in this name many relations have been cut or destroyed, to be replaced by divisions and oppositions between contradictory interests"(Stengers 2018, 104). Stengers refers to movements such as slow food, slow fashion, and so on; all movements that favour a "more varied, richer, deeper, and better-integrated memory [that] will open up more sophisticated anticipatory capabilities" (Cilliers 2006, 3). However, slowness in itself is not the point, but rather what slowness makes possible: Stengers continues to argue that "[t]hinking together and negotiating can not only open up new, mutually agreeable transactions, but might also become important and rewarding in themselves" (Stengers 2018, 104). The point of being "rewarding in itself" directly relates to the urgency of spending time together that folds back onto itself: spending time together for its own sake, which produces a different kind of value and work.

Before closing this section on connectivity and on the conceptual clouds, I draw my attention to the methodological approach of *thinking through metaphors*, and a metaphor I am fascinated by: the one of *connective tissue*.
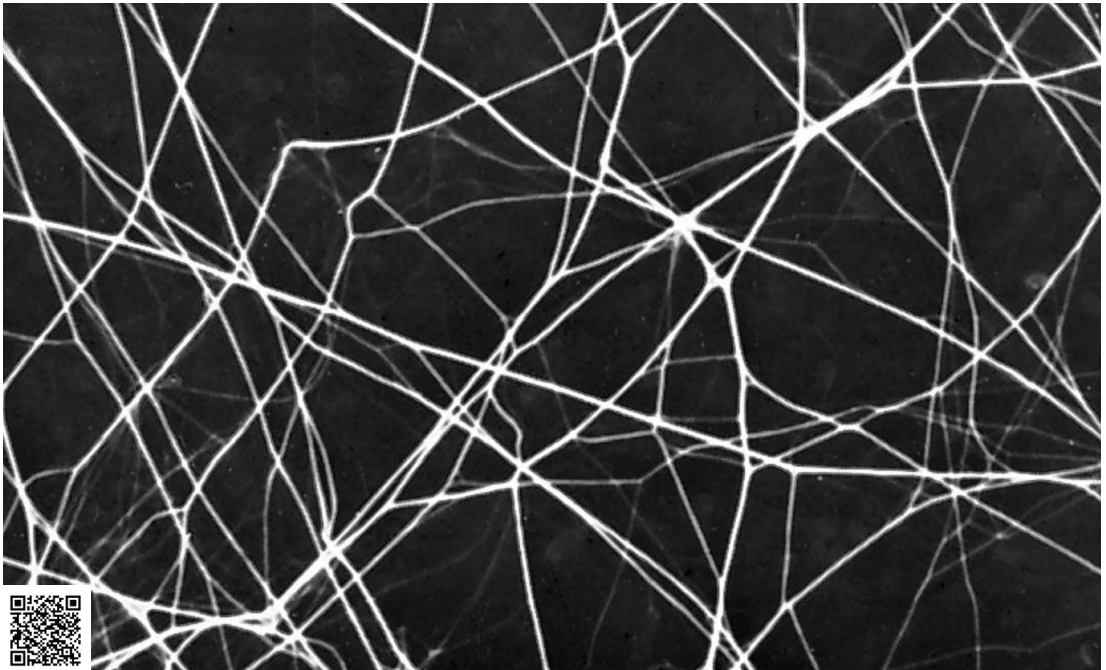
Areolar connective tissue. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/summary/connective-tissue#/media/1/132995/39840, 16 October 2022.

The Metaphor of Connective Tissue
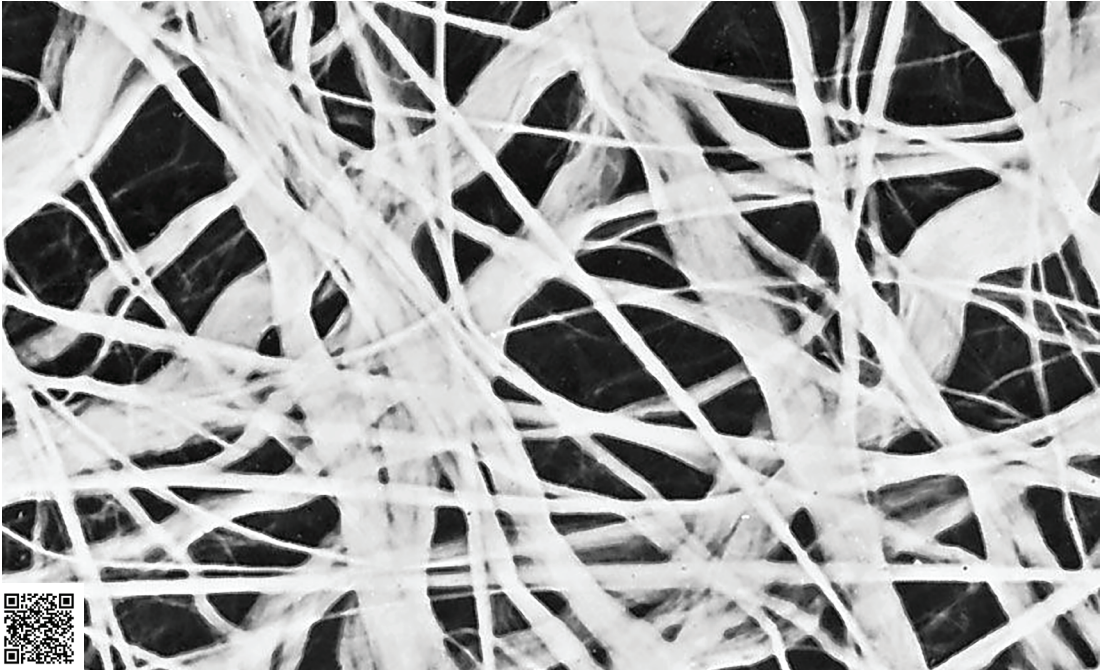
Collagenous fibres. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/summary/connective-tissue#/media/1/132995/39842, 16 October 2022

Working with metaphors is an important methodological element in our process of thinking together and creating imaginative proposals. It is an approach inspired by Donna Haraway, who argues that "it matters what ideas we use to think other ideas (with). […] [I]t matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; […] what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions […]. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories" (Haraway 2016, 12). One example is Haraway's work with string figures and its abbreviation SF: Haraway uses this abbreviation for a variety of ideas, such as *speculative fabulation, science fact* or *speculative feminism*; all terms that are created through association and open new associations.

The basic methodological idea is to "take" a metaphor, spend time with it and try to understand it as fully as possible on its own ground, within its own realm or discipline. The second step is to take it seriously to the fullest extent while transposing it to the context in which one wants to work with it (regarding the notion of transposition, see Schwaab 2018). What can the metaphor offer to the context into which it is transposed? The aim is to "unpack" a metaphor, as Bart van Rosmalen calls it in his (Dutch-spoken) podcast "Unpack a Metaphor" (Rosmalen 2016, n.p.): Try to get everything out of it, including its different forms, shapes and qualities, and use one's imagination to make it meaningful in its new context. Next to e.g. Lumbung, connective tissue is an important metaphor to explore more aspects of connectivity.

Connective tissue is one type of human or animal tissue, for example next to muscle or nerve tissue. It connects other tissues, but is at the same time entangled with them. It is the most abundant and widely distributed tissue in the body and consists of three main components: fibres (elastic and collagen), ground substance and cells. One kind of categorisation (among others) relies on three types of connective tissue: loose, dense and specialised connective tissue. Concerning the function of connective tissue, the website of the NIC (National Cancer Institute) states: "Connective tissues bind structures together, form a framework and support for organs and the body as a whole, store fat, transport substances, protect against disease, and help repair tissue damage."[34] The entry on connective tissue in Britannica defines it as "[t]issue in the body that maintains the form of the body and its organs and provides cohesion and internal support [...]."[35] The different types of connective tissue have a variety of functions, of which the most interesting for our context of connectivity are:

- protection (e.g. the skull protecting the brain)
- structural support (skeleton)
- connection and binding (e.g. organs; ligament binds bone to bone, tendon connects muscle to bone)

Thinking these through the perspective of our work and our understanding of connectivity opens a few more associations that have not yet been mentioned or discussed: Both **protection** and **support** offer associations of being safe, shielding, to stand in for one another or being there for the other – concepts that bring our understanding of connectivity into a closer relation with the notion of care. The functions of **connection** and **binding** go more into the direction of bringing together, and seeing the potential for relations and connections. These are long-term and sustainable, yet flexible connections. But beware: in the case of harm, the types of connective tissue that fulfil this function might not heal easily – which alerts us regarding aspects of vulnerability, and the necessity of being taken care of.

"Connective tissues bind structures together, form a framework and support for organs and the body as a whole, store fat, transport substances, protect against disease, and help repair tissue damage." – NIC (National Cancer Institute)

[34] Retrieved from https://training.seer.cancer.gov/anatomy/cells_tissues_membranes/tissues/connective.html, 16 October 2022.

[35] Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/summary/connective-tissue, 16 October 2022.

PART THREE
INTO PRACTICE WE MUST
Three Lines of Thinking

In the preceding sections I have elaborated on the three terms of the "artistic", the "connective" and "practices" in the form of three conceptual clouds, in order to create a thinking space that is framed up to a certain degree, but still open enough to offer inspiring starting points for further thinking and especially the kind of that we are interesting in here: thinking through art and artistic research. The concept of artistic connectivity offers inspiration and invites artists and artistic researchers to use its elements and embedded values (or fragments of them) by thinking through them, while *taking them seriously* (which sounds more self-evident than it is, and which might be much harder than it seems at first sight), and experiment with them by making them stronger in a given project, relationship, practice or context.

So at this point, the question is: What can we do with these thoughts and concepts and how can we work with them? How can the conceptual clouds and the concept of Artistic Connective Practices actually be implemented within and brought into practice, in order to actively engage with and work towards the necessary changes in the contexts we work with? To give you an idea how I envision this to happen, I will briefly elaborate on three lines of research that the professorship is already engaged in: artistic connectivity and community, artistic connectivity and health, and artistic connectivity and youth.[36] All three suggest ways to think and work with the notion of Artistic Connective Practices in different contexts and to elaborate on what it might offer to the field.[37] Their common general research objective is to work through the perspective of artistic connectivity, in order to explore what this perspective can offer to a given context.

The common approach to all of these lines is the form of *artistic research residencies*. But rather than providing artists "time and space […] to develop work and creatively explore ideas" (artsACT 2014, 1), relatively independent and autonomous, the core idea of the residencies as laid out here is that artists and artist researchers engage in the context at hand, from a socially engaged perspective and through the perspective of artistic connectivity. The research-aspect and the exploration of artistic connectivity are crucial - which in all cases works through the close relationship with and supervision by the professorship. The form of residency we envision merges the concept of artist residencies with an ethnographic research approach (not uncommon for the arts and artistic research), in which the researcher is present in specific contexts for a more or less extended amount of time, by inhabiting the same social space as participants of a study (Madden 2017, 16). The two ideas of the beginning come back here: presence and place/locality.

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[36] Interestingly, these three lines coincide with the topics of a social impact study of the ArtsFund, an organisation in Washington, US. The study works with "primary focus on youth development & education, health & wellness, and neighbourhood vitality" (Retrieved from https://www.artsfund.org/social-impact-study-2018/, 24 October 2022).

[37] These three lines are in no way meant as exclusive research lines, or meant as a way to focus the work of the professorship. Such kind of exclusive focus would be much to early for the young professorship and for the early stage of our work and research. The three lines emerged from the concrete projects that we are already doing, and will likely be extended or more precisely delineated in the future.

The three lines have in common that the arts enter a societal context. In all three it is essential to be(come) "capable of hearing and taking seriously" (Stengers 2018, 10) what people and contexts we work with have to offer. Next to the exploration of artistic connectivity, the central research question to all three lines is what artistic *research*, rather than the arts exclusively, can offer to specific communal or societal contexts. Furthermore we choose a methodological approach that leaves space for the residencies, so that their forms and purposes can emerge from the ground up, from scratch and through already doing them. We start from smaller residency periods of three days up to a week in the respective context, in which the artist researcher can experience the context and develop ideas based on lived experience. On the basis of this week of experience in context, the artist researcher takes time for reflection and to produce a proposal for a potential project - an imaginative proposal of what she "sees" or thinks would be a necessary or meaningful contribution to the context at hand.

Within completion each residency has two outcomes, both of which can be utilised for further work, research and future (eventually more extensive) projects: First, the reflection and documented experience will become input for artist researchers who enter the respective context at a later moment and who are already informed from the outset of their residency/project. With Isabelle Stengers this kind of outcome will have the more open nature of "a lesson, rather than a recipe" (Stengers 2018, 78). Second, the imaginative proposal can be the start of a future, more extensive project carried out by the same artist researcher, which is then already embedded in and connected to the context or community and as such can directly build on these connections and experiences.
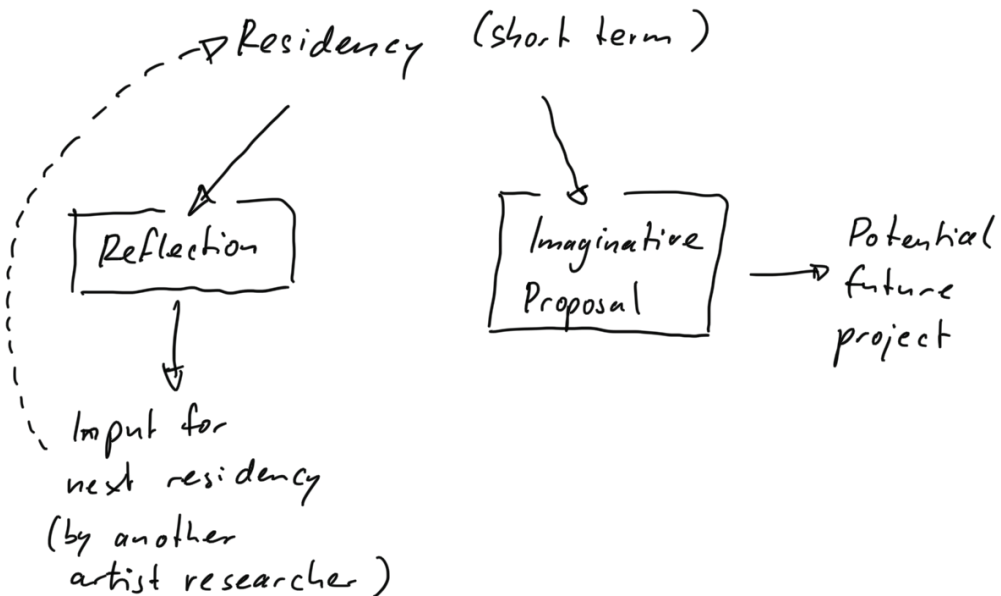
Towards Artistic Connectivity
in Community Work

In which ways can the perspective of artistic connectivity offer something useful for artists and artistic researchers who work and engage in/with/ for communities?

Regarding the work in communities, what matters is not "matters of fact," but rather what Bruno Latour (2004) calls "matters of concern" - the concerns of citizens and communities that are "highly complex, historically situated [and] richly diverse" (Latour 2004, 237). This is where it needs to begin. According to Isabelle Stengers, Latour "insists that we think, hesitate, imagine and take sides" (Stengers 2018, 3). I argue that artist researchers need to do all four necessary actions. I also agree with Stengers on the point that these situations "require the power to make people think about what concerns them, and to refuse any appeal to '*matters of fact*' that would bring about a consensus" (Stengers 2018, 3). Of course, there is no single correct answer to whatever issues come forth while working in and with communities. Stengers, again, asks for putting all possible choices on the table and facilitate a "process of hesitation, concentration and attentive scrutiny" (Stengers 2018, 4).

The principle design or starting point for an artistic research residency in the community is straightforward: We invite an artist researcher to work in a co-creative fashion with community members or with parts of the community and generate ideas about what to create, make, develop or achieve with the community in this context. One key question to depart from is: "What do you see/envision here, in this context, and with these people?" The central lens with which this work happens is the one of artistic connectivity; the topics or themes with which the artist works are principally free, but naturally need to be negotiated between the artist researcher, the community members and the community organisation - or emerge through their interaction and co-creative process.

There is a close collaboration at all times regarding which topics/themes to choose, which part of the community to work with and when to do this - in order to connect to the current issues, questions or developments that are at play within the community. The essential aim is that the people with whom we work need to be part of the process and outcome of the artistic research journey.

In the first series of residencies, the professorship collaborates with the community organisation WijWest[38] and with Arthur Kok from the Fontys Academy for the Creative Economy. WijWest is an active community centre in the West of Tilburg and works in various strands (offering legal advice for foreign inhabitants, community cooking for the people and close-by school, community services such as bike repair services, common gardening, computer repair services and exchange of goods), as a means to help people in their basic needs, but also in developing strength in order to live independently – with the greater goal of increasing social capital, and heightening a sense of "public familiarity": from the idea of creating bonds, the notion of "being a family / being familiar to each other", to create shared memories and shared experiences.

[38] https://wijwest.nl

A central problem to be addressed in our research is the question of sustainability or durability – of a durable resonance in a community. A crucial issue in community arts work (usually) is that artists come and go. The challenge is how artistic work can become a truly integrated approach - being, working, thinking, doing - within communities or within a variety of contexts. And this undoubtedly has to do with spending time, and preservation. This could imply the maintenance of individuals, persons, groups, ensembles, or just a continuation in the form of different people present in a common kind of engagement that connects them. So in that sense, the aspect of spending time is not only important in our concept of Artistic Connective Practices, but also has an essential resonance with the approach of artistic ethnography, as ethnography is an approach that traditionally works with extended amounts of time.

One of the questions we are concerned with is:

How can the people, the community, arts and research be brought together in a meaningful, and optimally sustainable way?

CleanUp West Team (https://wijwest.nl/cleanup/)
Artistic research residency in WijWest by Danae Theodoridou, November 2022. Photo by Lois de Jong.

WijWest Garden (Wijktuin West, https://wijwest.nl/wijktuin-west/)
Artistic research residency in WijWest by Danae Theodoridou, November 2022. Photo by Danae Theodoridou.

Towards Artistic Connectivity in Healthcare

The research line of artistic connectivity in healthcare resonates with a larger current tendency of the arts domain working with healthcare. This wider "trend" concerns questions not only from the domains of healthcare and art, but also from society as a whole, and the principle question of how we actually care for each other? Next to the work of the arts in hospitals, healthcare institutions or elderly homes, for example, the notion of a "caring society" is an important one, which social impact researcher Paul Flatau describes as follows:

> A caring society is one that treats all people with equal dignity and respect, looks after its people so that no one is left behind, ensures they can access basic goods and services to place them on an equal footing with others, rights the wrongs of the past and looks forward to the future to ensure that our kids have the same or better opportunities than we have. A caring society is also one that values, respects and looks after its workers and volunteers who care and support others. (Flatau 2020, n.p.)

Within The Netherlands, a number of initiatives by artists and artistic researchers are already active in the field of health and healthcare. The professorship Image in Context in Groningen at Hanze University of Applied Sciences, led by Anke Coumans, conducts several research projects in the field of arts and dementia (see e.g. Coumans 2021). Coumans' professorship works both with individuals with dementia and their caregivers in several modes, including relational (in co-creation), collectively (with larger groups) and on a systemic level (with small interventions). Tilburg has a vibrant *Arts & Health* network as well, and to mention two initiatives: *Sounding Bodies*[39] is an organisation led by cellist Jacqueline Hamelink and philosopher and advisor Arthur Kok, with the aim to use music to let people (re-)connect with themselves and with others. Dancer Andrew Greenwood and his organisation *Switch2move*[40] focuses on dance and music in the work with the elderly and people with dementia or Parkinson's - literally by letting people move.

This work between artistic practice, research and healthcare also has a specific place in my own biography: In the project *IYANTWAY (If you are not there, where are you?)*, as one of nine artists from different artistic disciplines, we worked in collaboration with a group of eight young people between eight and 28 years old, to find a language for the often fearful and misunderstood experiences children have during absence seizures, a light form of epilepsy. Alone or in duos, we worked with the youngsters on artistic works that match with the experience before, during or after a seizure, in order to make the invisible experience visible, audible, experienceable. The outcomes provided the young people of the project with alternative ways to communicate with the world about their disease, through image, sound and experience rather than by language alone (see Dörr and Hübner 2017). The ongoing project *In Search of Stories*, initiated by the Department of Medical Oncology at the University of Amsterdam, the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religion Sciences at Radboud University Amsterdam and the University of the Arts Utrecht, follows a related approach.

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[39] https://soundingbodies.com

[40] https://switch2move.com

Artists are working on co-creations with terminal cancer patients, for the purpose of developing alternative views on "contingent experiences"[41] , on drastic and radical life events, such as a cancer diagnosis, and overall how a person's life story can be seen or re-interpreted through creating artworks.

My own fascination with these projects come from the experience of co-creation in relation to pedagogy, as an approach that works extremely empowering for the other person, and is no less "artistic" at the same time. In these particular projects that I have been part of, patients and participants clearly felt acknowledged and empowered. Moreover what was most striking and transformative for myself was the imaginative and creative space that emerged because we as artists don't necessarily need to "do" anything: We are not there to heal or to make patients "better", the only agreement is to work together towards an artistic work. This "simple" agreement, almost "without obligation", creates an enormous space that is virtually impossible in any other kind of relationship between doctor/therapist and patient.

Starting from the same form of smaller residencies in an institution such as Vitalis in Tilburg[42] , the overall idea is to bring together artists, artist researchers, health and healthcare professionals, patients and residents to explore potential transitions in institutions and in the approach to working with patients and residents. While the necessary shift is arguably one from efficiency to experience and well-being, the professorship's particular approach is - again - the exploration of what the lens of artistic connectivity can contribute to this discourse and current and future practices. This is what makes its contribution specific; the notion of connectivity can be translated to forms of agency, for example, the agency of participants, of healthcare professionals, and so on. As is the case with projects such as *IYANTWAY* or *In Search of Stories*, co-creation is a crucial part in this; not making work for patients or healthcare professionals, but making work *with* them.

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[41] One speaks of a contingent experience when a patient is diagnosed with a life-threatening disease, and this diagnosis puts enormous pressure on the patient's life expectations. "Contingency refers to the idea that everything could have been different, and compared to one's plans and expectations could develop otherwise. […] This experience of contingency can be described as a crisis of meaning and interpretation, something that complicates the progress of the patient's meaningful life story." (Kamp et al. 2021, 2)

[42] Vitalis is an elderly home institution: https://www.vitalisgroep.nl/vitalis-woon zorg-groep/vitalis/over-ons.

Towards Artistic Connectivity
in Youth Work and Young People

The notion of working-with also comes back in the third line, artistic connectivity and youth. Young people and what they do is where urgency for change can sometimes be sensed most deliberately, as social theorist Willem Schinkel sketches from his bike rides through the tunnels of Rotterdam:

> I often cycle through the tunnel. It suddenly struck me that this was not there 10 years ago. There's something about climate rebellion, there's a sticker against fascists. There's something about housing protests, there's graffiti. Well, there's graffiti, but it's kind of spoken word actually, but on the wall. Actually in that tunnel, so under ground, literally, you see everything happening, you see the connections. All the themes are now suddenly on that wall. And who is doing that? It's young people. (Schinkel in Klomp 2021, n.p.)

Although such kinds of utterances by young people are anything but new (I can remember seeing them as an adult ten or fifteen years ago, and have created them myself as a 15-17-year old), yet the idea of "reading" these kinds of visual utterances and taking them seriously is a point worth mentioning; at least to some degree, as Schinkel does not articulate much further than the sheer fascination or surprise about them.

When we work with youngsters, the idea of "*incorporating the lived experience of children, youth, and their families*" (Fox et al. 2022, n.p., italics in original) is essential; the research by Fox et al. argues that this perspective "offer[s] a reality check on the academic perspective, which may contain assumptions that don't match the real experiences of children, youth, and families. Listening and learning from youth and their families […] will ultimately increase and expand the impact of the work" (Fox et al. 2022, n.p.).[43] And this concerns especially our "grown-up perspective" rather than just the academic one; we need to understand that without the perspective of the youngsters, our grown-up perspective is simply too limited.

The work with young people also has a place in my own biography, back in 2010, when I worked with the Arnhem-based organisation Interart, led by Iranian visual artist and activist Soheila Najand (one of the "big six" in the acknowledgements). Interart facilitated the creation of original interdisciplinary performance productions, in which a choreographer, theatre director and composer collaborated and co-created with an ensemble of youngsters. The material we created with the young people typically departed from relatively common "things youngsters do" such as rapping, hip hop moves or other choreographies from popular music videos. And through a process of several weeks or months we typically arrived at intriguing work in which the youngsters not only developed a distinct artistic language, but also developed a thoroughly critical attitude to the material they create and to the relation this material has to the world. The seemingly simple but crucial point here, which also resonates with the work Lara Staal did with youngsters in *Dissident* (2021), is not to work *for* or *about* young people, but indeed *with* them.

Link to Trailer *Dissident*:
https://vimeo.com/650864029

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[43] This article on youth as experts in the field also includes a "Researcher's Brief Guide to Including Lived Experience Perspectives", which is especially helpful when planning artistic research activities with youngsters.

Such an approach of taking youngsters seriously as co-creators of artistic work is similar to the one described in the previous section on artistic connectivity and healthcare, and is also the starting point for the approach to the artistic research residencies we conduct with youth - again, through the perspective of artistic connectivity. The professorship Artistic Connective Practices collaborates with Maike Kooijmans and her professorship *Opvoeden voor de toekomst* (Raising for the Future), and the Fontys Research Centre[44] *Youth Education for Society (YES)* in the research project "Empty Farm to Fill", a project in which we work very explicitly with youth, in a former monastery farm in Tilburg. The main objective of the project is to work on the creation of a "pedagogical open space": a space in which the focus of raising and education shifts from *what* youngsters (need to) learn and towards who they actually are. Practice-based research on this shift contributes to questions of resilient identity-forming, based on a holistic view on youngsters that aims to embrace all kinds of talents and thus breaks with the dominant focus on *cognitive* talent. Moreover, "talent" in this context is not understood as a form of excellence, but rather as human and social capital and as ability to grow (Kooijmans 2018).

Our work with young people naturally includes the aim to enable and empower them through the process of becoming co-creators. As elementary as this sounds, this gets to the core of the complexity of artistic practice and to the process of making artistic choices - to the actual and difficult practice of making art. This does not simply mean facilitating the expression of youngsters and enabling them to bring these into an artistic work. With educational theorist and philosopher Gert Biesta the question is much more what it actually is that wants to be expressed and what the quality is of that which is emerging. (Biesta 2020, 88) According to Biesta, the difficult and risky work of the arts and education is to explore "what it might mean to exist in the world in a grown-up way, that is, 'in the world without occupying the centre of the world'", and "about bringing children and young people *into dialogue* with the world" (Biesta 2020, 37).

"The educational moment appears inside the artistic endeavour" (Biesta 2020, 38).

As already mentioned, this work can never be done for, but only *with* the youngsters, in intense exchange and co-creation; in order to not only bring them into dialogue with the world, but actually enable them to make imaginary proposals. The in-depth conversation with youngsters is a crucial part of this: What values do they expect that art can actually give them? What would they wish for? And going further, even more important: what kinds of images do *they* see (rather than adults or experienced artists), what are *their* speculative imaginaries, their futures to create through artistic work?

Artist-researcher Juriaan Achthoven at the first residency with a group of youngsters at Landgoed Sparrenhof, November 2022. Photos by Thuur Kurvers.

[44] At Fontys, Research Centres (Dutch: "Kenniscentra") operate as larger research units that contain several professorships under one research topic and agenda. Both the professorship Raising for the Future and Artistic Connective Practices are taking part in the Research Centre YES.

EPILOGUE
Towards Artistic Connectivity
in the Institution

To close this text, I want to offer a fourth line of thinking on top of the three lines explored in the previous sections – communities, healthcare and youth. This fourth one however, is somewhat speculative in nature. All three previous contexts are situated outside of the institution and therefore attempt to develop important and meaningful links between an arts institution, arts education, artistic practice and research on the one hand, and a societal context on the other. All three contexts link to the question regarding the institution and the relations with its surroundings - the direct local surroundings, the city and the region in which it is situated. For myself, this makes it only natural to think about artistic connectivity *within* the institution, too: I cannot resist wondering what the professorship and its theme can offer the institution *itself.* Not how the research of the professorship can be embedded in or brought into meaningful relationships with the educational programs in some way, or how the professorship can work on the support and development of the overall research environment (although we are working on that, too.). I am more interested in exploring what artistic connectivity and a few of the core concepts of the professorship can offer the institution as a whole and its systemic inner workings. So, as a last context interesting for the notion of Artistic Connective Practices, I will discuss the University of the Arts itself. This is also about offering the challenge to actually take the ideas seriously, think through them and work with them in the institution.

Often the arts, generally speaking, are subject to the cliché of being at the "frontline" of developments and innovation, being "avant-garde", or "thinking different", etc.… Le Guin notes that "resistance and change often begin in art" (Le Guin 2014, n.p.). As does imagination. Yet while all this is arguably true, we must remind ourselves that the way in which we run our organisations is remarkably traditional and hierarchical. I cannot help but keep wondering why our institutions, universities of the arts, seem to defy their identity as artistic places on an organisational level. Of course we educate young artists, so undoubtedly we are involved in training young people in all of the mentioned aspects concerning the arts and artistic practice. But our institutions, the contexts in which these young people (and we, too!) learn and in which we carry out research, have the tendency to work in fairly traditional and hierarchical structures; the logics how our institutions are run are generally not logics of the artistic, or of artistic companies (or even collectives), but rather logics of capitalism, neoliberalism, or organisational theories. I wonder where the artistic logic or principles are in the organisation of arts institutions.

Once more, to be sure, as an unnecessary reminder: We are an arts institution. And too often, our arts institutions, both nationally and internationally, work in a fashion that seems to facilitate a "market" of sorts. And this is where Ursula Le Guin reminds us, again: "We need writers who know the difference between production of a market commodity, and the practice of an art" (Le Guin 2014, n.p.). You get the point: This doesn't just go for writers, but for artists, too - and in the case of our small fabulation exercise here, for arts institutions. We must not turn into commodities in between all kinds of other commodities in a spectrum of/for the "market."

Yet I believe that the principles and values of artistic connectivity, such as trust, reciprocity, spending time together or endless curiosity, have something to offer here. Of course, several of these principles and values are hard to work with if taken seriously, and they might require much bravery - particularly on an organisational level. But they can also have an enormous power if truly worked with, and might be able to work as inspiration for how our institutions might operate differently; to fuel institutional change we don't dare to dream of at this moment.

One of my favourite qualities of the unfinished thinking and speculative proposals that both the arts and artistic research can make is the simultaneous balance between taking such proposals and the thinking behind them utterly seriously on the one hand, and lightly and playful on the other. In combination both are complementary in a powerful way. I use these final sections of this text to invite you to a thought experiment (what physicists Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr called "Gedankenexperiment"), a speculative fabulation, to use the power of the imaginary, and take the questions and suggestions seriously: What if we use e.g. the concept of Lumbung, principles of emergence and the notion of connectivity to think about a different way of running the institution – in ruangrupa's words, work together "to achieve […] a new institutional practice" (ruangrupa 2019, 3)? What if we replaced the existing forms of organisation with speculative forms based on the concepts, principles and values of artistic connectivity?

What if…?…

What kinds of conversations would we be having if they were truly based on the idea of reciprocity? This includes not just conversations between colleagues, but especially conversations between different "hierarchies", such as teacher and student, researcher and community member, management team member and head of study and so on. Note that such an idea starts with *intention*: no matter which side is ours, we need to have, embody and enact the intention to have a mutual exchange -

which goes much further than expecting such an intention from the other person.[45]

What if one truly dismantles the level of hierarchy? If there is not one team, however organised that determines who receives which kinds of roles and responsibilities, but if a leading team (e.g. heads of study, management team) truly act as facilitators of a collective, where questions about roles and responsibilities are discussed and negotiated collectively, and *emerge* from that collective conversation? When everyone, from the perspective of one's work and abilities, is both valued and trusted in this? The notion of trust is very crucial here, and goes much further than simply acknowledging that "because you have this or that role and responsibility means that you are trusted with this." Trust in this case is not unquestioning someone's role as it has been assigned to this person. It means to trust someone in what they or one regards as important and in what they or one takes as responsibility. And obviously this is not about "taking" from an individual(istic) perspective, but from an inherently collective perspective.

And we should not forget that one of the important consequences of working with the principles of emergence *is* trust. When one facilitates emergence, one also needs to trust it, especially because in most cases what emerges is unexpected, not really controlled and likely difficult (or impossible) to understand. And trust in itself, as Brown mentions, "is a seed that grows with attention and space." (Brown 2017, 214) The metaphor of a seed that grows is crucial here, as it turns our attention back on taking time and "[m]ove at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass - build the resilience by building the relationships" (Brown 2017, 42).

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[45] Obviously I know and understand that not each and every conversation can be held in such a fashion or with such an intention - some conversation simply have the reason that questions need to be settled, arrangements need to be made, synchronised, organised, etc.

Moreover, how can we give shape to the spaces in which we work, in ways that we want to work and want to spend time in and with them? What if we think of the variety of spaces, especially the larger spaces in the building, not as "our spaces" in a possessional sense (*my* teaching space, the space of *my* programme, *my* office, *I* need this or that kind of space), but as communal spaces, including the potential to become a surplus? By this, I don't mean the neoliberal open plan offices or co-working spaces where flexible workplaces are the default approach, and where no space is permanent (including absence of memory and traces), because it is made as being flexible to the requirement of the situation. What I mean is that we can think about what our needs for spaces are, in all its variations, whether these are spaces for performance work, for sculpting, textile work, sound recording, practising, printing, talking, reading, reflecting or sharing. And from there, how much do we need them and for what; what is (the surplus) that we can share with others, or what would we might need additionally? And how can we make such surplus available, "put in a pot", in situations or moments when we don't need them, when they are a surplus? As mentioned earlier in the words of Godelieve Spaas, what is put in the pot is not lost; it becomes common.[46]

Obviously the above are all open questions; I do not, and cannot offer any solutions at this point (and even more evident, I cannot develop or offer them alone!). But I encourage you to think along these lines, to pick up this unfinished thinking on conversations, hierarchy, the habit of trust and the use of spaces: to see where we all can get, potentially together.

In the same way as I opened the idea and the intention of this text in the Preface, with the question to you as a reader to take it as a starting point, as a document to depart from rather than to arrive at, I use this series of open and unanswered *What if...?*-questions as an invitation to think and potentially rethink how our institution could (or should?) work from the perspective of Artistic Connective Practices. Regardless if you are an interested reader, a participant of the Connective Symposium, one of my team members, a colleague-teacher, -researcher or student:

Thank you for being on this shared journey with me; thank you for being good company.

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[46] The list of resources that can be shared and "put in a pot" can be much longer, concerning materials, network, knowledge, budget, time, …

August 2021 | September | October | November | December / January | February | March | April | May | June | October | November | December

August 2021

30 August 2021
Inspirational lecture by Falk Hübner at the opening of the academic year of Fontys University Fine & Performing Arts.

September

September 2021
Start professorship.

September 2022
Falk has first meetings with the committee of other arts professors in The Netherlands on the Professional Doctorate Pilot.

September 2021
First sessions with the Fontys team on participation in Society of Artistic Research and the Research Catalogue.

14 September 2021
First conversation with Maike Kooijmans on the research project "Empty Farm to Fill".

16 September 2021
First explorative meetings with national network on collaboration arts & health.

Late September 2021
First conversations on Research project "Child of Our Time" in collaboration with Academy for Music Education.

October

September - October 2021
Collaboration with Hanze University Groningen and Anke Coumans in their PrePhD trajectory.

First conversations for Exchange project.

Early October 2021
First conversations and meetings with core team of Fontys Kenniscentrum Creative Economy.

16 October 2021
Falk delivers a keynote speech at the Fontys Artistic Research Day: "Artistic Research: On Matters that Matter."

19-20 October 2021
A team of Fontys researchers and staff participates in ELIA conference in Vienna.

November

4 November 2021
First work session Connective Intra-Activiteam, continuing through November and December.

17 November 2021
Supported by Heleen de Hoon & Ingrid Westendorp, Falk carries out the "Running Tilburg" project, running 53K through Tilburg.

December / January

22 December 2021
The members of the Blueprint Group (research group on artistic research in the bachelors) discuss their first outcomes with Falk.

12 January 2022
Falk works with students MA Performing Public Space, thinking together about Artistic Connective Practices.

20 January 2022
Kick-off event Research project "Empty Farm to Fill".

February

1 February 2022
Falk works with students MA Choreography, thinking together on artistic connectivity and the notion of metaphors.

March

9 March 2022
First brainstorm session regarding research space & Reflective House.

11 March 2022
Performance of the theatre project Academy of Music Education, part of "Child of Our Time".

22 March 2022
First conversation with WijWest for Artistic Research & Communities research residencies.

30 March 2022
Inspirational lecture Maite van der Marel in the context of the "Child of Our Time" project (with Academy for Music Education).

April

April 2022
First conversations with Vitalis for Artistic Research & health research residencies.

7 April 2022
First Connective Conversation with Bart Lodewijks.

19 April 2022
Connective Conversation with Lara Staal.

22 April 2022
Final Concert Reflections: "Child of Our Time", with Koor Brabant & Kamerata Zuid.

25-29 April 2022
Arts Meets Arts week Project week of the bachelor programmes lead and designed by the Exchange research team: Jasper Dzuki Jelen, Godelieve Spaas & Falk Hübner.

May

18 May 2022
Connective Conversation with Myrjam van Imschoot and Andreas Bergner.

20 May 2022
Exposition of the project In Search of Stories, Co-creations of artists and terminal-stage cancer patients.

21 May 2022
Artistic Research Festival at Fontys, Falk and other researchers from the professorship present a variety of projects.

June

1 June 2022
Connective Conversation with Katja Heitmann.

15 June 2022
Connective Conversation with Lisa Heinis & Seecum Cheung (Boijmans ZUID).

30 June - 2 July 2022
Fontys team visits the annual conference of the Society for Artistic Research in Weimar, Germany.

October

7 October 2022
Kick-off Reflective House with guest speaker Caecilia van Pisken.

19 October 2022
Connective Conversation & Book Launch with Danae Theodoridou.

20 October 2022
First explorative performance and presentation Exchange with Godelieve Spaas and The100Hands.

November

1-3 November 2022
Danae Theodoridou carries out first short community residency at WijWest Tilburg.

11 November 2022
New Music Conference in s'Hertogenbosch, part of November Music, festival for contemporary music; Falk Hübner co-chairs two panels on socially-engages music (with Veerle Spronck) and on music in relation to health care (with Janine Stubbe and Karolien Dons).

17-19 November 2022
Connective Symposium

18 November 2022
Inaugural Lecture by Falk Hübner.

23-26 November 2022
Fontys team visits the ELIA Biennal Conference in Helsinki.

25-27 November 2022
Juriaan Achthoven carries out first short youth residency at Sparrenhof Tilburg.

December

January 2023
Start of the Professional Doctorate pilot of the "Arts & Creative" network.

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"this headland route going nowhere useful"
(Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust*)

Albert Einstein & Kurt Gödel on one of their daily walks in Princeton in the 1940s - in a time when many brilliant European thinkers found refuge in Princeton, fleeing from Nazi Germany. The themes of their conversations went from physics and mathematics to philosophy and politics.

Falk Hübner is a composer, theatre maker, researcher and educator. Since his composition and double bass studies at the ArtEZ Conservatoire he has been active in contemporary Jazz, experimental music theatre and a huge diversity of interdisciplinary collaborations within and outside of the arts. Falk is professor of Artistic Connective Practices at Fontys University of the Arts in Tilburg, The Netherlands. His research focuses on the social-societal potential of artistic research, research methodologies, and the relation of the arts and art education in relation to society. In 2019-2021 Falk has conducted a post doctoral research at HKU University of the Arts on artistic research methodology and ethics. As a teacher and research supervisor, he has worked at the ArtEZ Conservatoire, at HKU University of the Arts, the Master NAIP (New Audiences and Innovative Practices) at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, the ArtEZ Master in Music Theatre, and as director for research and writing at the ArtEZ International Master Artist Educator. Falk is member of the board of *Forum+*, journal for research and arts, based in Antwerp. Next to his professional life Falk is a marathon runner. He lives in Rotterdam with his partner and their 5 children.

Fine and Performing Arts