

The 'Kunsthalle Bern' as an Ecosystem of Encounter

A proposal by 'KeoeB'

The core and foundation of our proposal is to change the 'Kunsthalle Bern' (KB) into an Ecosystem of Encounter. The art, the artists as well as the organisation and the local KB-network are invited to inhabit and embody that ecosystem and to shape, explore, maintain and challenge it.

As stated in our letter of application, our proposal is based on a time frame that consists of a 12 month period, a 4 year period and a 88 year period. Seeing the sustainable nature of the ecosystem, our proposal should first of all be regarded from the long term perspective: the 88 year time frame. This is obviously a symbolic number and, analogue to i.e. trees, it refers to a mode of being (and acting) that fundamentally considers the next generations. There is no set strategy for doing this and it will have to be negotiated for each new context and/or circumstance. We will however invest in creating a strong awareness for this 'working for future generations' and prioritise it in the decision making. One practical consideration for promoting this mind-shift is to prepare the KB-ecosystem for coming challenges in regard to technology, climate change and possibly the extinction of human kind.

A gardener who is planning a new garden first observes the territory for as long as necessary. The objective is to locate the different qualities: sunlight, shadow, temperature, acidity, sheltered, open,... This work is vital as it will determine what to plant where. As we are guests in the long term life cycle of the Kunsthalle we consider it essential to acknowledge what is already there and take that as the foundation for further development. The first of the four 12-month-periods therefor will focus on exploring the existing ecosystem: the current state of the Kunsthalle. How is it organised? Which initiatives in the direction of an Ecosystem of Encounter have already been taken or are being taken? Exhibitions and events that have already been planned will offer wonderful opportunities for this investigation into the fundamental dynamics of the system as we will find it. But this exploration will also look into the bigger system of the Kunsthalle: its relation to i.e. the local community, the local art scene, the art world at large, financial systems, formal and informal networks as well as the local ecosystems.

On day 1 we will start the programming of 'Aicubo' (our AI-Curatorial Bot). On that day 'Ruedig Cheib', the gold nugget, and Douglas fir 'Jolien', not unlike the human entities of KeoeB, will start with finding their role. They may want to try different ways of contributing and as such explore the scale ranging from mere presence to active involvement. 'Aicubo' is programmed according to machine learning. It will generate output that will initially be rather crude and/or borderline useless. These provocations will however soon enough evolve to more sensible and profound impulses to the curatorial process. Ultimately 'Aicubo' will be a leading entity on curatorial ideas and decisions.

The experiences and observations of the first 12 months will define the focus for the next 12-month-periods, obviously also considering the 4 and 88 year time frames. Longer term "streams" will be defined for the remaining three years. The emancipation, the role and recognition, of an increasingly wide variety of species will take center stage in curatorial, organisational and general decision making processes together with a dedication to move away from an exploitative model towards a regenerative model.

There will be a break with the tradition of temporary exhibitions.

With the KB as an Ecosystem of Encounter, and analogue to a garden or forest, we propose a 'liquid' exhibition that will be durational, discursive and constantly changing, sometimes radical, sometimes more subtle, with different tempi, with different intensities and including (and allowing) the different stages of growth (i.e. production).

We will propose a set of 'curatorial values' as guidelines for a discussion on value with and within the KB-ecosystem. These propositions may include:

1. Pluriformity: the KB-ecosystem will represent the widest variety possible, considering i.e. socio-political issues (feminism, post-colonialism,...), media, levels of engagement.

2. Extended space: the KB-ecosystem will expand the physical boundaries of the property, both analogue and virtual.
3. Extended time: we will consider time beyond the immediacy of the here and now human experience.
4. Extended spirituality: we will explicitly and implicitly address spirituality, meaning a communication and awareness on a 'natural' or 'humane' frequency. This includes a special interest in ritual.
5. Fluidity of presentation: constant change will be the fundamental characteristic of the KB-ecosystem
6. Encounter: the encounter will be promoted as the foundation for all communication. We believe that the quality of the individual encounters decide the quality of the ecosystem as a whole.
7. Streams: we will work with "streams" rather than "themes". Where a theme represents a set, conceptual agenda the exploration focusses on the element of time and the possibility for organic development. Like rivers meandering through the landscape, these 'streams' run a-chronologically through the 4 year programm of the 'liquid' exhibition. Our first proposed "streams" are: **Thong** (Thai for 'gold'), **Espíritu** (Spanish for 'spirits'), **N=Rfnfffl** (stylised Douglas Equation), **Wa' poch 'ang** (Klingon for 'One Plant Show')

The second, third and final 12 months will be dedicated to the KB-Ecosystem of Encounter in general and the 'liquid exhibition' in particular. Over the course of the last 12 months we will create a 'living bridge' towards the new directorship

Within the logic of the ecosystem there is hardly a separation between the 'HOW' and the 'WHAT', meaning that the organisation of the system is as relevant as what the system produces. As for the organisation of the KB-employees (in relationship to other included entities) we will develop a 'holistic management'. This 'holistic management' is based on an awareness of interconnectedness and a developed sense of shared and personal responsibility. We will promote and support a horizontal organisation as well as a situational or emergent leadership, based on skill, interest and need.

'Ruedig Cheib', the gold nugget, and Douglas fir 'Jolien' represent our ambition to propose, invite and explore as the basis of our approach. We will never claim authority on i.e. implementing a non-human entity into an organisation. We will however see it as our duty to propose such questions and unknowns to a system that is healthy enough to allow them. This means taking responsibility for both the health of the system, in other words its generative capacity and the sensitivity of the propositions, in other words their impact on the generative capacity of the system.

As a zoöp we represent a wide variety of ideas and perspectives. The contradictory potential of our constellation is our key asset. We are looking forward to working with all entities related to the Kunsthalle. Not as a formal nicety but as our fundamental attitude. We are looking forward to encounters, we are looking forward to discussions and we are looking forward to sharing, cocreating and collaborating as the driving force of our contribution.