

LEARN TO ACT

Introducing
The Eco Nomadic School

- Trans-Local
- Informal
- Self-Organised
- De-Centralised
- Practice-Led
- Multi-Lingual

LEARN TO ACT

Introducing The Eco Nomadic School

Edited by
Kathrin Böhm, Tom James and Doina Petrescu

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Introduction

For the last ten years, a network of locally-based projects from across Europe have been visiting each other to learn, teach, share and discover the knowledge held in their communities. This network has involved projects, practices, participants and ordinary people from six countries, nine regions, four cities, two towns and six villages. This is the Eco Nomadic School.

The Eco Nomadic School grew out of two pan-European collaborative research projects: PEPRAV (European Platform for Alternative Practice and Research in the City) in 2006/2007, and Rhyzom, from 2008-2010. The experience of taking field trips to study and meet other local projects across Europe led to a bigger idea: to use the budding network as a place for mutual learning – a school – where the curriculum is organised around the topics, needs and ambitions of local projects.

Many groups have been involved in running the school, including atelier d'architecture autogérée in Paris; Myvillages, based in Rotterdam; FCDL and APTNV in Romania; Brave New Alps in Northern Italy; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Leipzig; the Peasant Museum in Bamberg; and the University of Sheffield's School of Architecture, in the UK.

The school reflects the projects that comprise it. It's informal, self-organised, de-centralised and geographically dispersed; non-hierarchical, peer-led and multi-lingual. Crucially, the roles of learner and teacher are interchangeable. The same applies to the roles of specialists and amateurs, locals and incomers, doers and speakers, researchers and makers.

One of the strongest aspects of the school is its trans-local focus: the fact that people involved in locally specific projects travel to see, learn from, and inform other local projects, in far away places. Thus rural activists from Brezoi meet students from Sheffield and architects from Paris; residents of suburban Colombes meet community artists from Northern Ireland or women entrepreneurs from Holland; rural women from Höfen meet clay specialists from nearby and academics from Sweden. The school acts as a means of travel for people beyond the usual academic/artist network, who might never have travelled before, or only done so as tourists.

The Eco Nomadic School has been financed through a series of EU-funded Strategic Learning Partnerships, with the administration and coordination of the whole school being organised in turns by the different partners involved.

The terminology required to administer EU applications can be terrifying, but in times when ideas like internationalism, trans-national collaboration and diverse identities are increasingly associated with being un-patriotic, elitist and cosmopolitan, it's of utmost urgency to amplify values that the EU supports: civic engagement and society, shared trans-cultural identities, mutual exchange and non-profit focused economies, across both rural and urban communities.

The book is titled Learn to Act, because that's what we set out to do. The title is a clear proclamation towards a form of learning which is both an act of commoning and a moment in which knowledge becomes relative, collective and applied. Learn to Act is about the near future, how to act, and how to support each other.

But now to what we learn.

Kathrin Böhm, Tom James and Doina Petrescu
London and Sheffield 2017





















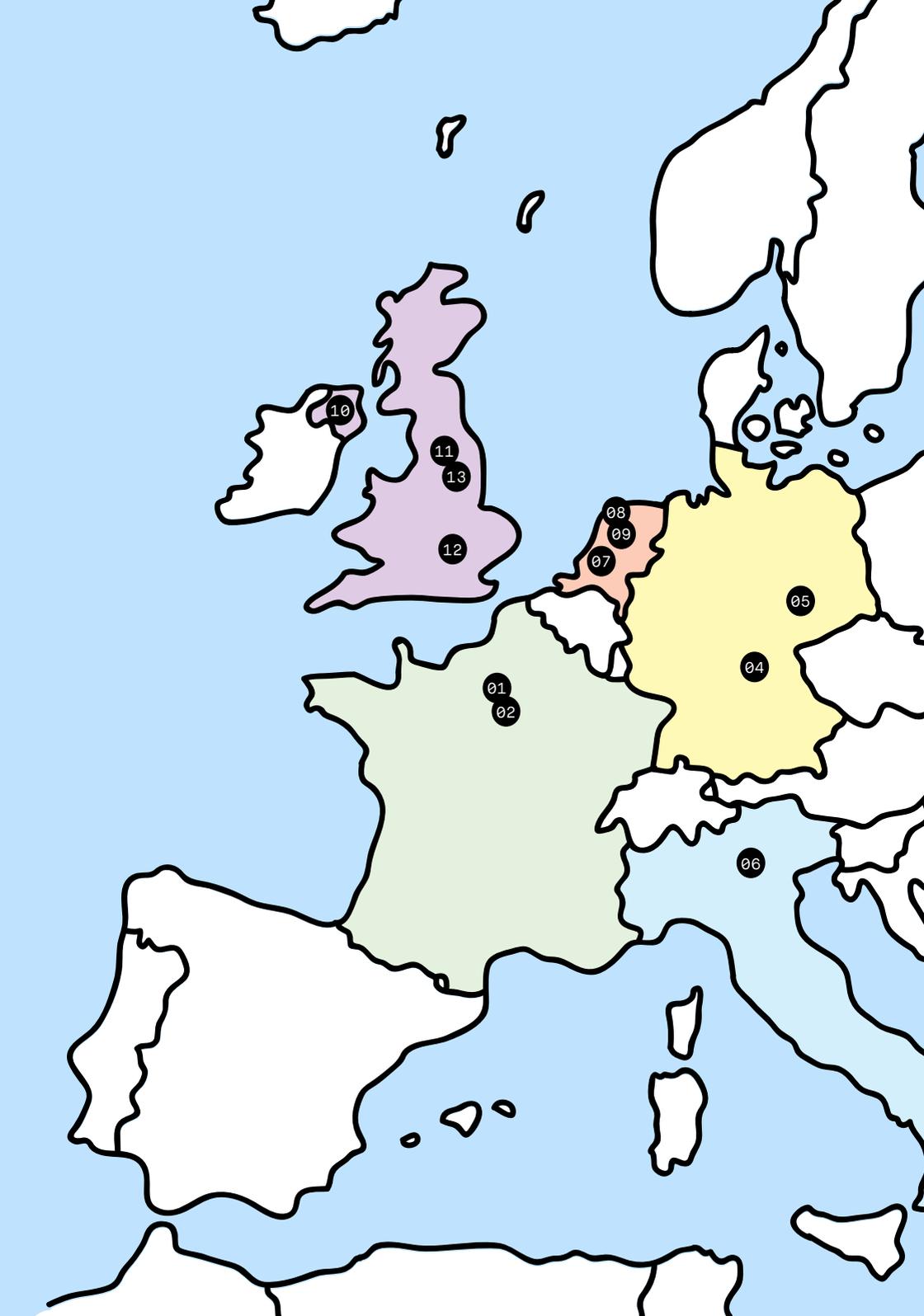












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PLACES

- 01 Colombes
- 02 Bagneux
- 03 Brezoi
- 04 Höfen
- 05 Leipzig
- 06 Vallagarina Valley
- 07 Rotterdam
- 08 Friesland
- 09 Beetsterzwaag
- 10 Ballykinlar
- 11 Todmorden
- 12 London
- 13 Sheffield

MODES OF TRANSPORT

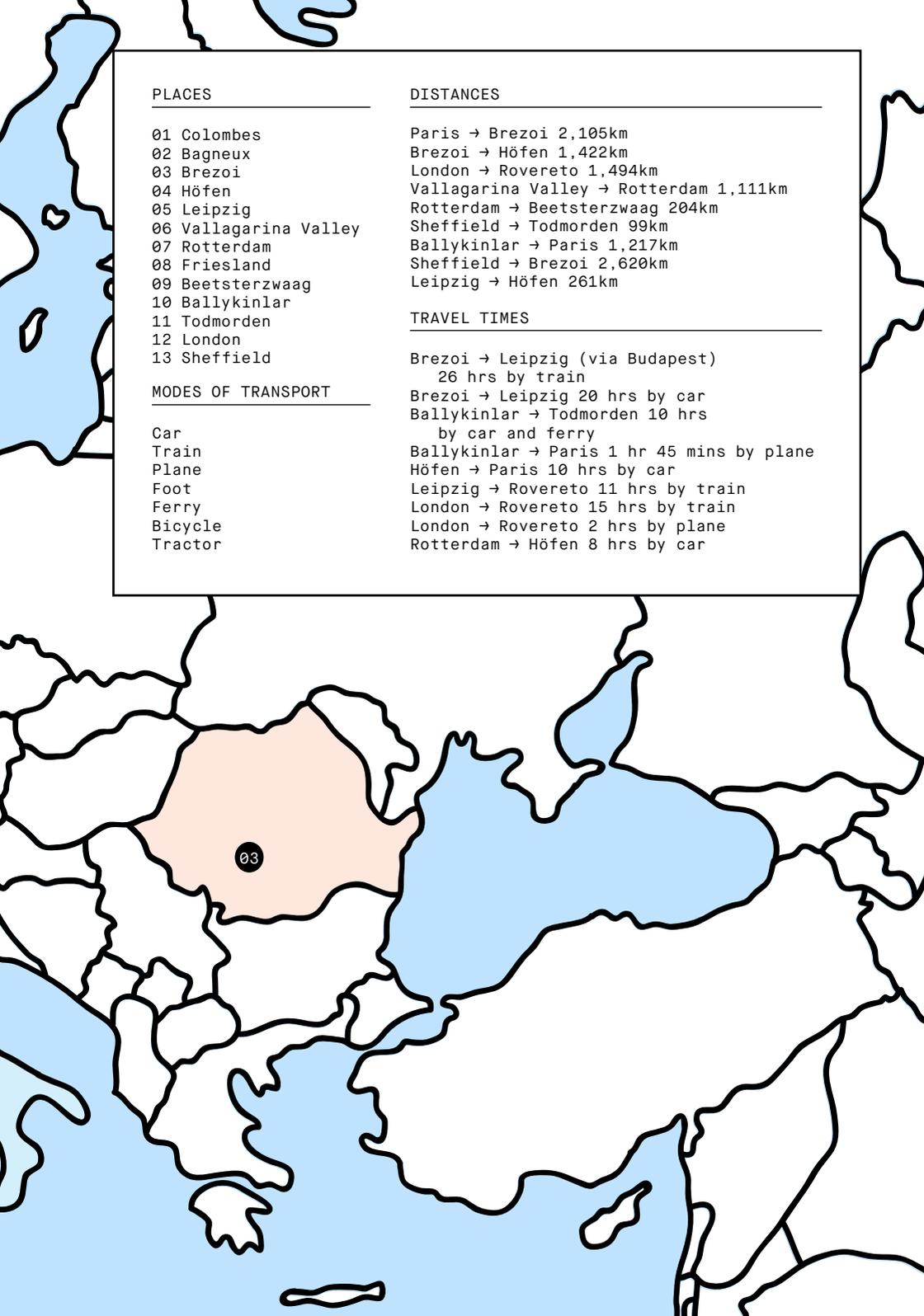
- Car
- Train
- Plane
- Foot
- Ferry
- Bicycle
- Tractor

DISTANCES

- Paris → Brezoi 2,105km
- Brezoi → Höfen 1,422km
- London → Rovereto 1,494km
- Vallagarina Valley → Rotterdam 1,111km
- Rotterdam → Beetsterzwaag 204km
- Sheffield → Todmorden 99km
- Ballykinlar → Paris 1,217km
- Sheffield → Brezoi 2,620km
- Leipzig → Höfen 261km

TRAVEL TIMES

- Brezoi → Leipzig (via Budapest)
26 hrs by train
- Brezoi → Leipzig 20 hrs by car
- Ballykinlar → Todmorden 10 hrs
by car and ferry
- Ballykinlar → Paris 1 hr 45 mins by plane
- Höfen → Paris 10 hrs by car
- Leipzig → Rovereto 11 hrs by train
- London → Rovereto 15 hrs by train
- London → Rovereto 2 hrs by plane
- Rotterdam → Höfen 8 hrs by car



FRANCE

Locations

- Colombes, Paris
- Bagneux, Paris

Subjects

- R-Urban Practices
- Local Produce and Market
- Community Economies
- COP21 and Manifesto Launch
- Co-Produced Resilience

COLOMBES

Colombes is a suburban town with 84,000 residents in the Ile de France region, west of Paris. With a mixture of private and council housing, it has a variety of social issues such as the youth crime typical of large-scale dormitory suburbs, combined with a consumerist, car-dependent lifestyle typical of more affluent suburbs. Despite a high unemployment rate (17% of the working-age population) Colombes has a high number of local organisations (around 450) and a very active civic life.



R-URBAN



R-Urban is a bottom-up resilience strategy, conceived by atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa), to enable residents to play an active part in changing the city while changing their ways of living in it. This framework aims to create a network of citizen projects and grassroots organisations, based around a series of self-managed collective hubs, which can host economic and cultural activities that contribute to boosting resilience. The project starts at a neighbourhood level, by setting up a local network, and can progressively grow to the city and regional level.

In 2011, aaa started the implementation of R-Urban in Colombes. The result was the construction of three civic hubs to bring together different resilient practices in the neighbourhood of Stade – Fossé Jean. These hubs were Agrocité, Recyclab and Ecohab. Collectively, we refer to them as R-Urban.

The R-Urban hubs provide space, resources and training, allowing social and ecological stakeholders of resilient practices to emerge. R-Urban practices include: farming and gardening, wormery, beekeeping, poultry farming, compost making, recycling, water and energy management, cooking, local product selling, recycling, reusing, eco-design and eco-construction.

CURRICULUM – COLOMBES

To overcome the current crises (climate, resources, economic, demographic), we must, as philosopher André Gorz says, 'produce what we consume and consume what we produce.' This balance between production and consumption through sourcing goods locally and sustainably cannot occur without changes in the living and working lifestyles of citizens. How can we create collaborative practices and local networks to support citizens to make this change? How can we re-design flows, networks and circuits of production-consumption to achieve sustainability?

During the Eco Nomadic School, R-Urban became a place to experience your own knowledge and consider it to be useful to a larger collective and political idea. Both rural and urban practices frequently met at the civic hubs. Hay was made, discussions on alternative economies were held. Older residents and participants with upbringings in more rural settings could use, show and share skills that otherwise seem of little use in a suburban context.

The Eco Nomadic School visited R-Urban as a regular guest and contributed to discussions taking place on site at the time. In return, the participants could learn how to balance R-Urban's principles and ambitions against the day-to-day reality of running a non-hierarchically organised community project.

R-Urban regularly fed the Eco Nomadic School, not only with organic urban vegetables, but with inspiration and optimism.

NOTE:

After the Parisian municipal elections in March 2015, the newly elected local government declared their intention to build a temporary car park on the site of Agrocité. After a long struggle and a lost court case, Agrocité was dismantled in February 2017. At the same time, however, another Agrocité was being built in Bagneux, in the south of Paris. The R-Urban network continues to grow and new hubs are planned for the future. *La lutte continue!*



FRANCE

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Recycling and Reuse Workshop

Agrocité has its own building unit, with disused material neatly organized for the work to come. Mircea and Adi are shifting concrete casting panels to make a central garden path; Kim is sorting planks for a sunroof above the dining area; Anne Marie is looking for wood for the toilet door.





Building a Compost Toilet

One group spends one week constructing a compost toilet, which is integrated in a larger worm-based composting scheme.

Compost toilets on public land are a contested topic: what if they smell, come across as unhygienic, what to do with the compost? Well-built and well-managed dry toilets won't cause any problems, and are instead probably one of the best communicators to explain the ethos of a site: yes, we want everyone to come and make this their place; yes, we apply ecological principles; yes, existing popular conveniences like the water closet are unnecessarily wasteful.





Seminar: Introduction to R-Urban and Urban Resilience

R-Urban consists of different circles of provision for housing, making and farming, which are interconnected through direct exchanges and which are complimentary to each other.

R-Urban takes place within an existing urban pattern and practices alternative models of living, economy and production.

Each aspect of R-Urban holds enormous potential, and numerous prototypes are being developed as the project develops.

R-Urban holds firm principles, but decisions are pragmatic: the value of making things real and implementing them is higher than remaining principled.

The project quality is optimistic. *



*Notes made during the seminar



Interview with Constantin Petcou (aaa)

Learn to Act Who participates in R-Urban?

Constantin Petcou Anyone is welcome to participate in our projects. Our work is made to address everyone as inhabitants (since we are all residents of somewhere) and ecological citizens. We call on ourselves to change how we live. We seek to improve our public politics.

LTA What do you hope to achieve?

CP What we want is for more people to become aware, critical and active. We, as humans, tend to act in ways that are quite complicated and easily obstructed. We end up feeling like we cannot act, or that the only action possible is to call upon authorities. We want to encourage others to propose actions in their own space. We develop projects in order to create and hold space for this change to occur.

LTA What works? What doesn't?

CP There are certain things that work better than others. We would argue that people have become increasingly sensitive to ecological issues, yet we are now faced with the heightened challenges of accommodation and integration of immigrants in Europe. We don't necessarily have the channels to tackle every problem directly, but we work to produce public and civic spaces apart from those that no longer function, that are no longer public. We think about how we can make space work better—in ecological, social, and civic ways. We're particularly interested in 'autogestión', or the democratic organizing, of a project. This eventually creates inclusive, ecological and functional space. But it takes time.

LTA Why did you want to get involved in the Eco Nomadic School? What do you gain from it?

CP We wanted to work on different levels, with issues that we're not accustomed to. While working on the local level helps to develop deep relations, you also remain rather limited – there are also wider spheres to be concerned about.

LTA What did you learn and what did you teach during the network?

CP We often discovered that collectives have specific strengths. For example, urban agriculture in Rotterdam is more vital and diverse than elsewhere. We learned, too, that the questions being asked vary. The Romanian activists, for instance, confront the existential question: how do we live? These are important differences in our mentalities and our

ways of life. That's why it's important to come together and share our knowledge.

We contributed in the areas of ecology, resilience, and how to bring together complex groups of actors. We also brought an architectural knowledge. We were able to demonstrate ways to organize space—to propose and organize new spatial plans—that allow for autogestión.

LTA What was the most surprising thing you discovered through the network?

CP We were impressed by the sincerity of the activists from Romania. They often lived in the countryside and close to nature. They carried with them a sort of harmony that comes from living alongside nature and aligned with their communities. They displayed a rural humanity that was very friendly and fraternal.

LTA What has changed in your practice as a result of being involved in the Eco Nomadic School?

CP This network has allowed us to meet project leaders who discuss their interests, values, struggles, successes and limits. That is incredibly enriching. Some of those involved in our projects don't have the chance to travel often, or to come together with these kinds of people. The network reminds them that the project is theirs as well. It has therefore been an occasion to give meaning to our work, through meeting others who have done this work for many years, and who remind us that what we do is meaningful.

LTA Finally, we see the process of informal knowledge exchange as quite a radical act. Do you agree? Is there a political dimension to your work?

CP In order to be really innovative and experimental, our projects are carried out on the level of the everyday: there's nothing more radical than to want to change everyday life. Today's problem is that our societies are increasingly depoliticised. The tendency is to think everything is taken care of by public policies; all we can do is vote. We seek to disrupt this notion by giving local democracy space to develop in the city. For us, local democracy comes along with horizontal systems of power. It's a way to reintroduce and redevelop politics for everyday life.

Gardening and Cooking

Agrocité has two different growing areas; one collective farming area which is looked after by a trained grower and is based on organic and restorative agriculture; and a second area which is divided into individual plots, looked after by residents from the area. The farm area is also used to test and experiment with different agricultural ideas such as permaculture, resourceful irrigation and soil restoration.

The Eco Nomadic School was partly fed from what grew in the garden during our stay. Gigi identified a weed she knew from Brezoi as an edible plant and made a pot of soup for everyone.





Urban Haystacks

The front meadow needs cutting. Mircea brought his scythe. Anne Marie from Ballykinlar, Gigi from Brezoi, and Kathrin from Höfen pile up the hay.





School of Compost

Yvon Pradier and Benoît Wulveryck run workshops and training sessions on how to set up a wormery for any size of land, from balcony to urban farm. To produce enough compost for Agrocité, one tonne of food waste per year must be collected.

Whole school classes come to visit the Agrocité School of Compost and admire the thousands of superworms which relentlessly digest layers of cardboard and food, leaving fine brown compost behind.







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Manifesto Launch
(December 2015)

Bagneux,
Paris

Term 05 071
Co-Produced
Resilience
(June 2017)

Product Packaging Workshop

The group from Rotterdam, Höfen, Brezoi and Colombes spends a morning in one of the larger training-rooms at Recyclab, developing different packaging ideas for goods and knowledge that come out of R-Urban. How to label the conserve, how to make manuals for knitting, how to write a recipe?





Local Market (Turkish Food Stall by Rotterdam Guests)

The Agrocité garden and building are open for trade. Neighbours set up stall to sell clothes. Local traders turn up with goods. R-Urban has a stall with the freshly labelled and packed goods. Theo and Alexandra bring local products from Brezoi, Romania.

The women's group Stadslandbouw Schiebroek-Zuid from Rotterdam set up a stall to make and sell Turkish flatbread. They've brought everything in two suitcases, including the flour. Within an hour the first flatbreads are sold and, for the afternoon, Turkish becomes the main language around their stall.







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Community Economies Seminar

Economic geographer and co-author of the book *Take Back the Economy*, Katherine Gibson introduces the concept and principles of Community Economies during an informal seminar and discussion.

Community Economy is that part of the economy connected to the practices taking place in households, in communities, on farms and in nature. As Katherine noted, 'if we look at all the people living in the world, the greater proportion are producing their livelihoods through means of subsistence, self-provisioning and self-employment. That is to say, they are producing outside of those relationships that we associate with the normal economy; the so-called real economy.'

The central idea is that economies are always diverse, and always in the process of becoming. *Take Back the Economy* presents a feminist critique of orthodox political economy, by focusing on the limiting effects of representing economies as solely capitalist.

Together we look at R-Urban's different economies and try to understand their social and monetary complexities. How do volunteer contributions sit next to EU funding? Can R-Urban host individual enterprises? How does informal knowledge exchange raise cultural capital? How much monetary surplus does the compost produced in the last 12 months make?

For most of us in the room, who are on modest and low incomes, our time invested into R-Urban and the Eco Nomadic School is also an actual investment into the future.

The Economy as an Iceberg was redesigned by James Langdon for *Trade Show* at Eastside Projects, December 2013, and translated into French by Anne Querrien for *Trade Show* at R-Urban.



Trade Show and Prod-actions

Trade Show presents art which has trade, value production and the making of economies at its core. *Trade Show* was curated by Kathrin Böhm and Gavin Wade and was first shown at Eastside Projects in Birmingham, UK in December 2012.

Trade Show at R-Urban was a demonstration of possibilities and different forms of trading. The show included Kate Rich and Feral Trade, Myvillages and the International Village Shop, and Anna Best's Spare Time Job Centre.

Daniela Dossi's 'Prod-actions' were presented in parallel, to demonstrate how a less product-focused approach to goods could be organized at R-Urban.



Launch of the Non-Consumerist Shop

'This is the shop and the shop can be many things' defines the many possible offerings in the new R-Urban Shop, from R-Urban publications to preserves and local handicrafts, from freshly cooked lunch to locally made honey. One thing the shop doesn't want is fixed roles. Consumers should be able to become producers and vice versa. The focus of the shop is a more collective production of goods and values, a fair distribution of opportunities and local redistribution of gains.

The tradeables for R-Urban result from local activities in each of the three sites and in-between. Ideally they feed into a circle of exchange, where the producers are directly linked to the trade of their goods, and where the consumption and income from the trade supports and strengthens other local activities.

Some of the goods and services are obvious, others aren't at all.

I think it's therefore useful to start an inventory of existing and imaginary goods. A list of what is and could be traded. This list will also help to understand what kind of trading counters exist and are required, and how much space, including processing facilities and storage, will be taken up by the goods. *



*Notes from Kathrin Böhm's report





Oil
Salt
Pepper
Vinegar

Water

White cutting board

Black coffee maker

White electric kettle

White bowl
Green bowl
Blue basket
Stack of white plates
Foil tray with fried items
Salad in clear bowl
Salad in green bowl





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Civic Resilience Micro-Conference

A micro conference organized by aaa for the COP21 Climate Summit in Paris in December 2015, in conjunction with the Eco Nomadic School.

The conference addresses the role of bottom-up and grassroots urban resilience initiatives in allowing neighbourhoods to adapt to the complex crises we face. In order to become more effective, these initiatives need to work with and join forces with others, at different scales. Proposals, projects and calls to action are presented by representatives from the wider aaa network.



R-Urban Manifesto Launch

R-Urban's Charter for Local Action against Climate Change begins thusly:

We, citizens of this planet, do not have time to wait anymore for concrete solutions from governments and international institutions to the global crises (Climate Change, ecosystems pollution, economic crisis, social segregation, etc.). These crises are due in fact to our lifestyles, which produce too much waste and CO₂, which consume too much energy and are based on individualistic behaviours that do not carry any hope for a better future.

To achieve long-term sustainability for our planet, we need to reduce our ecological footprint by changing our lifestyles, by reducing and managing our waste and by reducing the CO₂ emission, etc. We need to act quickly and coordinate our efforts, knowing that Climate Change will have immediate effects on all of us and not only on the 'future generations'.

The rest of the charter can be found on the R-Urban website www.r-urban.net





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Re-producing Agrocité

This workshop took place on the site of the emerging Agrocité hub in Bagneux, this time in the south of Paris. On the agenda were planting, soil preparation, diverse ecological devices and eco construction: all similar classes and topics we addressed a few years ago at the beginning of Agrocité in Colombes.

The outputs from the Eco Nomadic School workshop included: vertical garden boxes, a rain water collector, a compost trail, and a few soil beddings ready to become permaculture plots.

On one evening, architect Markus Bader from Raumlabor Berlin introduced a discussion on how to learn 'participation'. On another, the artist Grace Ndiritu introduced her latest project *The Ark : Center for Interdisciplinary Experimentation*.



Tour of the Fête de la Récup – Repair Fair

Fête de la Recup is organised by the Paris based REFER group (Le réseau des acteurs du Réemploi en Île-de-France). The Eco Nomadic School spent one day at this citizen-run exhibition, which showcases a broad spectrum of practices to creatively reuse and transform urban waste: objects, clothes, computers and books.









ROMANIA

Locations

- Brezoi

Subjects

- Studying the Odaja and Obste System
- Building a New Odaja
- Odai Produce
- Wool Processing





BREZOI

Brezoi sits within the Southern Carpathian mountains, between the regions of Transylvania and Northern Oltenia. The mountains around the village are steep and forested, and managed as common land. Under communism, the existing timber industry was massively extended, with a large factory built in the village, along with residential blocks for the newly arrived workers. These blocks stood in sharp contrast to the older and much smaller family homes around them, with their compact gardens, sheds and vines supplying plenty of food. Meadows and fields extend into the village. Today, a few cows still stroll down the lane for the evening milking. In the past, it was whole herds.

The second part of the 1990s was defined by a wave of hope and enthusiasm for development in Romania. During this wave, quite a few people from Brezoi began to believe in the possibility of local, ecological and durable development, and set up organisations that could carry out economic, educational and social initiatives and ideas. Yet the transition from communism also brought the closure of the lumber mill, and a dramatic rise in unemployment, whilst the unchecked power of local officials led to much illegal deforestation of the surrounding forests.

Today, the area struggles with issues familiar across many European rural areas: low economic prospects and few opportunities for locals; young people leaving for the cities or abroad; a diminishment of traditional manual and agricultural skills; and a stark disconnection between the rich natural resources and local opportunities to profit from them.

FCDL AND APTNV



Two local NGOs are involved with the Eco Nomadic School in Romania.

The Community Foundation for Local Development (Fundatia Comunitara de Dezvoltare Local or FCDL) was instigated by Brezoi head teacher Mihaela Efrim and set up in 1996 as a consortium of local organisations and groups. In its 20 year history, the foundation has created numerous initiatives to combat local unemployment, create training opportunities and nurture local and regional crafts and skills. Their work has included setting up a 'Park of Traditions', creating an ecologically-aware, small-scale timber plant, and creating the first School of Arts and Crafts in the area.

APTNV (Asociatia Pro-Turism Nedeea Valceana) was founded in 2001 by local farmer, entrepreneur and pedagogue Mircea Onica, together with a group of family and colleagues. The association aims to rediscover shared traditional cultures, and save local knowledge about manufacturing and farming, whilst also investing time and skills into finding new, sustainable economic models for the community.

CURRICULUM – BREZOI

The topic of this Eco Nomadic School session in Brezoi is the Odai (singular, Odaja): small hill farms in the nearby mountains, often only reachable by foot, which, in the past, were part of the subsistence farming of individual families. Odai were usually farmed in the summer, but now mostly lie fallow throughout the year, and are falling into ruin.

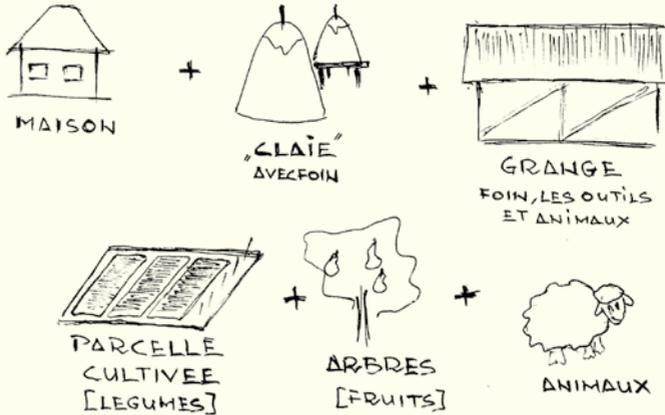
Each Odaja is a private property, located within woodlands organised as a commons, called the Obste. Literally translated as 'assembly', the Obste refers to both the common land around the village (traditionally the mountains, waters, forests and common grazing land) and the association of commoners living in the village, who possess the collective right to use this land. Today, this commons is reduced to the forests and grazing areas. Profits from forestry feed back into communal infrastructures, often accompanied by conflicts over where the investment should go.

An Odaja would consist of a simple house with one or two bedrooms, sleeping up to 10 people, with cooking and washing facilities; an outdoor cooking area; and various barns and small animal shelters. Each Odaja has a meadow orchard (mostly plums), grassy slopes, a barn, a fenced-in vegetable garden and high-tapering haystacks for the animals. Odai are completely off-grid, and are built from whatever material is available and workable by hand in the nearby hills.

The Odai used to provide supplementary food for families living in the villages. This economic chain is now completely broken, whilst the hundreds of Odaja structures are now often neglected and disappearing quickly. New communities in Brezoi, such as working class communities that were relocated to the village during communist times, have no access to such traditional structures.

The curriculum in Brezoi thus revolves around how to reuse and reconnect the Odai system to the local and regional economy and society. Can traditional Odaja farming continue without seeming like a museum piece? What economic strategies make sense for the next generation? Could additional income for local families be generated through rental or touristic use, without this straining the relationship to the village? Can we rebuild a community based on Obste principles, whilst also opening up this system to those people who don't currently have access to these traditional rights?

ODAJE



Our Odaja project here is also a personal story, one which spans three generations: my grandfather, my father (Mircea), my sister and me. The land and the building inherited from my grandfather has become a key project of APTNV, who are trying to preserve this type of hill farm. Mircea's Odaja is situated in a beautiful place, on a hill where people used to go by foot or with carriages pulled by horses. After reinforcing 3km of the access path to the plot, Mircea started to build a new Odaja, a bigger one, using the same traditional methods as his father: stone, wood and clay. The idea was to give an example of good practice and to create a place that allows for a new type of tourism, agro-tourism.

Our aim for the future is to rebuild a community in the nearby mountains for preserving the Romanian traditions, which can encourage the young ones to invest in their own family properties, so they can live decent lives, and earn some money building on what their elders have already done.

Mariuca Onică, co-founder of APTNV and
co-organiser of the Eco Nomadic School.





CLASSROOMS

- The dining hall of a local guest house
- The local hillsides (on foot and on horseback)
- The pilot Odaja and neighbouring Odai
- Gigi and Mircea's house in the valley
- Mihaela's veranda and garden

LANGUAGES

The main language used was French, followed by Romanian and English.



Study Walk Brezoi

A walk around Brezoi guided by Theo, to understand its mountainous geography, and old (rural) and new (urban working class) communities. We reflect on political changes – the Ceaușescu regime, post-Communism, and new globalism – and how they shaped the village and its economy over the years.

The importance and potential of the local wood industry was made tangible, not only in the size of the vast timber processing plant in the valley, but in realizing that its closure also meant the end of the local profit chain.

It is January, the whole area smells of woodsmoke.





Lesson in Effortless Group Catering in Difficult Circumstances

A small metal ring with legs hangs on the side of a tree, next to the Odaja. It has started to snow. There are 20 of us, and we're hungry from the hike.

Whilst Mariuca makes fire with no fuss, the others produce sausages, onions, bread and salt from their small rucksacks. Enough polenta is cooked on the open fire to feed 40, and within 20 minutes we all eat and drink mulled wine. The group catering deserves 10 out of 10 for elegance and efficiency.









Strategic Seminar: Reconstructing Traditions

FCDL requested that the Eco Nomadic School discuss and create a strategy for alternative development of the common land economy – one that could help members of the Obste maximise their current resources, and involve them in searching for solutions for the future.

However self-contained the Odai are, with their particular ecology and economy, it was soon clear that the traditions of using and re-using them can't be split from practices in the village. They are inseparably linked. Their development has to be an extension of everyday life and economy in the village.

Mircea's wish was that the group develops a 'best practice' Odaja for the empty plot that is right next to the Odaja we had visited the day before, with the idea that a new and working Odaja would encourage others to redevelop their own.

To us – the visitors from outside – the desire to build a new dwelling seemed less obvious and necessary. This stemmed from the group's general suspicion that buildings can solve problems, but also the idea that a new building could block other possibilities.

In the end it was decided that one Odaja should be used as an open field, to experiment with different groups and their needs. A series of summer camps, workshops and seminars could take place there to test ideas, interest and practicalities for future collective and communal endeavours in the mountains.





Meeting the Politicians

In some places, the EU-funded Eco Nomadic School would temporarily enter the systems of official welcomes and political representation. The mayor of Brezoi and a small group of local politicians welcomed our group into the impressive looking Town Hall.



Savoir-faire

Mihaela Efrim

Each and every aspect of the Eco Nomadic School was primarily a 'transaction of savoir-faire'. I learned from architects, artists, sociologists and public servants, the importance of acting, being involved and involving others, and activism in various forms and contexts. What did I give back? I contributed knowledge both very particular and very broad. From how to cook specific recipes using local ingredients, to the impossibility of teaching someone who is illiterate 'by the book' following an inflexible curriculum.

The visits and joint working sessions during the Eco Nomadic School are very important. For people from here, from the so called 'East', and therefore from a former communist country, the impact of being able to take trips to Western Europe was quite large. They didn't travel as Eastern European tourists, but as participants in an international project, and it impressed me how some returned with a very different idea of 'the West'. We sent young people who we thought could disseminate their experiences on their return. This direct confrontation with other cultures also allowed for a direct reflection on 'what is local', and I understood more about the advantages of certain traditions here, and the benefits they can create.

Each group has their own way of dealing with European social issues. Interacting with them within the network made me understand how important it is to bring local projects together on an international scale, to become more aware of different perspectives, and an 'outside' view which allows us to think up and test different approaches in our practice.

When the school came to Brezoi, the knowledge exchange worked in terms of helping to inspire local people with the potential of development; finding technical solutions to integrate local traditions in our current work; and using communication tools to advertise our products and services.

Being a teacher and slowly approaching retirement, I'm occupied with finding ways to relate more with young people – with children – both at school and in extracurricular activities. The Eco Nomadic School gives me practical ideas and methodologies to do this. The social dimension of the whole project gives me the opportunity of lifelong learning, experimenting with interesting people, and discovering a more comprehensive world.

The school, as a formal act/activity, has an end. But we constantly continue to learn. We each have a lifetime of learning experiences. I do not think sharing knowledge is a radical act, but rather a necessary one.

I write this in March 2017, in the context of mass street protests in Bucharest and in dozens of other cities across Romania, protests against the government's intention to mitigate the criminal law relating to corruption. These protests will go down in history for the enthusiasm, determination and persistence of the demonstrators, their peaceful and contemporary method of protest, and the humour and truth of the slogans they use.

And I am happy that there, in Victory Square in Bucharest, four hours drive from Brezoi, are some former students of mine! I feel a little reconciliation with myself that maybe I influenced them a bit, that perhaps this rational and conscious 'citizenship', that makes them stand there every night facing the cold and the government, might owe a little to me, and to what I tried doing in the school and in the community.

I tried to match words with deeds.

ROMANIA

Brezoi

Term 01 089
Studying the Odaja
and Obste System
(January 2012)

Term 02 101
Building a New Odaja
(October 2012)

Term 03 111
Odai Produce
(July 2014)

Term 04 123
Wool Processing
(May 2016)

Summer Camp: Building a New Odaja

This Eco Nomadic School summer camp puts into practice some of the outcomes of the first discussions in January, and helps with the construction of a more communal Odaja.

The new structure is initiated by Mircea but built collectively, within the tradition of communal self-management and informal economies. All building material is sourced on location and handled manually. The new Odaja is called 'Starry Sky'. The common house snake lives in its foundations.









During construction work on the main building, the craft knowledge of our Romanian hosts came to the fore, and we all observed and tested methods of cutting and joining timber using hand-tools and chainsaws, including low-tech methods to achieve precision of workmanship, such as using a plank nailed to a log to serve as a guide for cuts made using the chainsaw.

The culture of the Odai as a social network engendered a keen attitude towards self-management amongst participants. In our sub-teams, we were free to self-manage, and also to dip in and out of other sub-teams; the tasks themselves existed independently of who was doing them. They were there to be done, and collectively we knew that we must do them all; yet people had the freedom to change their work. There was a willing urgency to 'find a job', which itself enhanced the range of learning participants were able to engage with.

Sitting by the fireside was also an opportunity to share knowledge of language and other things, and often provided the content around which language learning revolved. Participants exchanged folk stories from home, swapping them for those of the surrounding mountains; Vlad the Impaler, Count Dracula, the evasive Lynx population, and the Romanian folklorish Slendermen.

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Low-Tech Eco Infrastructures

A temporary outdoor shower was the first thing to be built, and perhaps the most urgent piece of infrastructure – there were many labourers who had been working in the sun all day! Two teams were established: one to construct a toilet and shower 'area' and one to lay the reservoirs and water-runs to feed it.







ROMANIA

Brezoi

Term 01 089
Studying the Odaja
and Obste System
(January 2012)

Term 02 101
Building a New Odaja
(October 2012)

Term 03 111
Odai Produce
(July 2014)

Term 04 123
Wool Processing
(May 2016)

Mushroom Picking

These sessions on produce and goods aimed to explore and document practices and products which are 'tradeable' and which could help create an alternative economic circuit in the region, with the Oдай at its centre.

We walked up into the mountains behind the Oдай to collect mushrooms and herbs, with Gigi as our guide and specialist who knows all the plants. We ate what we picked for dinner. After dinner, the guests from elsewhere showed and talked about their projects at home.



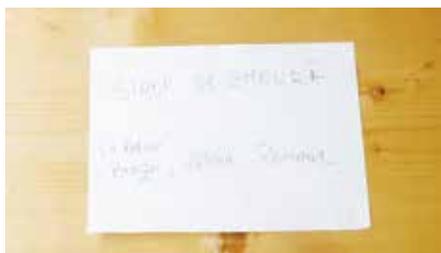


O dai Preserves

Preserves are made here in the same way as everything else – that is, simply and directly.

Zacuscă is boiled down in a copper pot over the open fire. Syrup is made with fresh raspberries and sugar dissolved in cold water. There is no sterilizing of jars, no rubber rings and clamps, no hours of hygiene anxiety which seem to be part of preserve making in many other parts of Europe.





Tzuika Making

1. Collect surplus fruit (mainly plums)
2. Ferment it in large barrels
3. Make a still
4. Distill
5. Bottle it in disused plastic bottles
(this is the international standard for homemade spirits).

The production of Tzuika – a traditional alcoholic drink distilled from boiling fermenting plums, grown on the Odaja – was a central task to the Odaja project. We drank this clean spirit in the evenings around the fire. One neighbour's job was solely to manage its production: from collecting wood to stoking the fire that drove the still, to laying down full bottles to accompany the next plum harvest the following summer. He would taste the product, caulk gaps in the still with mud as they appeared, ensure a precise and constant temperature was kept and that the fire was adequately fuelled. The bottle of Scottish whisky from the airport remained undrunk.

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Ad Hoc Chainsaw Products

Mircea and Nelu cut a birch tree which was in the way and turn it into:

- Six coat hangers
- Five children's chairs
- One small table
- A few stools
- Firewood for the outdoor kitchen





An Exercise in Making a Promotional Video

As part of the Eco Nomadic School, a small film crew from Bucharest had arrived to film the Odaja in context and in action. The plan was to make a short video that would both represent the outstanding beauty of the Odai area but also explain its potential beyond romantic notions of 'a retreat in the mountains for busy people'.

The footage was 'brutally beautiful'. Young women on horses crossing a meadow, haystacks testifying manual labour, wide blue skies telling of a southern summer.

The editing and finalizing of the film revealed the dilemma that occurs when you seek external interest for a very local project, and the signing-off of the video became an exercise in circumnavigating kitsch whilst attracting attention.





Seminar on the Promotion of Tourism and the Need to Preserve

We had left the Odaja. Torrential rain made our extended stay in the mountains unsafe and we had relocated to a guesthouse in the valley.

The afternoon was spent discussing what kind of tourism would suit the ambition of the new Odai set up. Who is wanted as a guest and what are the attractions and conditions? At no point must the practice of traditions become an entertainment and service for visitors only.

It was suggested to produce an architectural survey of the existing Odai network, their spaces and formats, to also help preserve their architectural heritage.



ROMANIA

Brezoi	Term 01	089
	Studying the Odaja and Obste System (January 2012)	
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	Term 02	101
	Building a New Odaja (October 2012)	
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	Term 03	111
	Odai Produce (July 2014)	
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	Term 04	123
	Wool Processing (May 2016)	
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Odai Tour by Horse





Shearing Sheep and Wool Tile Making

Mircea showed us how to shear sheep by hand. The work is done with large scissors, which are able to cut the wool very precisely, without hurting the sheep. It's hard and delicate work. The stronger sheep attempt to get away, and it took many of us to hold them down – hence the number of people in the photos. One participant likened it to 'peeling the animal out of their second skin, like potatoes.'

We create small shearing teams and, with the help of Mircea, Theo and Mariuca, we slowly and patiently shear ten sheep. The wool is then stored and will be used as locally sourced building insulation.

The shearing lets us all enter the 'Odaia spirit' – a mindset that is partly about processing natural resources in the simplest way possible, but also about creating a good energy within the group. This is one way to see the culture of the Odaia as a living thing, as something to do, rather than see in a museum. At the end of the day, we eat together, and dance to both Romanian and Peruvian music around the fire.*



* Excerpts from reports by aaa and Giovanna Zanghellini (Brave New Alps)



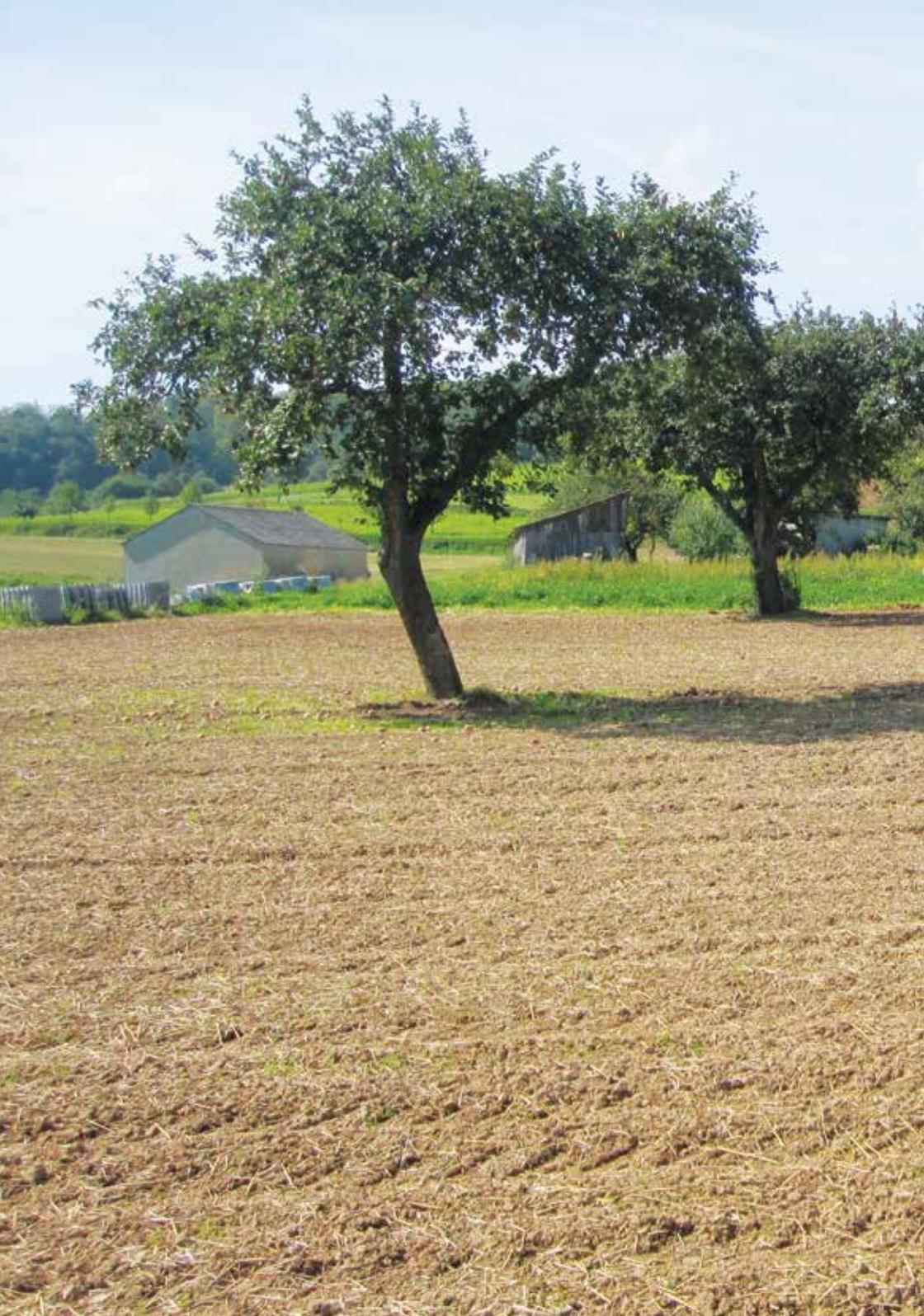
GERMANY

Locations

- Höfen
- Leipzig

Subjects

- Local Clay
- Rural Women's Economies
- Preserving and Manufacturing
- Clashing Agricultures
- Lessons From Northern Ireland
- Where Does Art Go?





HÖFEN

Höfen, which translates as 'hamlets', is a small single-road village in Upper Franconia in southern Germany, with roughly 300 residents. There is one brewery-pub, a large community house, a letterbox and a chapel. You can buy eggs, pork and milk, but only if you know the families and farms who produce them. A new residential area was built a few years ago, and therefore a second road, which has not yet been given a name.

The farms themselves have always been relatively small in size (around 20 hectares) and tenant-owned. The soil is clay-rich and fertile, and the landscape between the village and the nearby forest was characterized by fruit fields, primarily cherries and apples, as well as potatoes or grain. Today only one part-time farmer remains, and many work in nearby manufacturing and technology companies such as Bosch and Siemens.

The village isn't pretty as such, even though a rural regeneration scheme in 2016 produced a fake cobbled stone road and generic shrubbery to make it look greener. Visitors from outside come for the good beer and cheap food in the pub. Most families have been here for generations, with the young building their own homes on the edge of the village. A small group of houses is called the 'International Quarter' with local residents coming from Vietnam, Russia, Ukraine and Romania.



HÖFER FRAUEN

The Eco Nomadic School in Höfen is organised by artist and Myvillages member Kathrin Böhm (who is from Höfen) and the Höfer Frauen (Women of Höfen). Together they have hosted four Eco Nomadic School terms, and special cakes were made on each occasion.

The Höfer Frauen normally meet for coffee and cake in the community house every last Friday of the month. The group is roughly between 20 and 30 women, mainly the middle aged and older generation. In 2005, Kathrin suggested to the group a project to make new collective local goods: tradeable women-designed objects that would tell a story about local particularities, knowledge and skills. These Höfer Goods are launched annually during the village fair in October¹ and range from Frogbutter Spoons to Jar Lamps.²

In 2010, this local product development was for the first time linked to the international network of the Eco Nomadic School, with guests coming in with new topics, questions and ideas. Why anyone from anywhere else would want to come to Höfen for more than a few hours was unclear to many of the locals. What could possibly be of interest? And in which language would we talk to each other? Where will everybody sleep?

Once the guests from elsewhere had arrived, stayed, appreciated and contributed, the international get-togethers quickly became something familiar. Locals from the International Quarter also felt like they took part in public village events for the first time. Groups of people walking around the village taking photos didn't seem strange anymore, and the local men would join the women's events in the evening.

However the horror – or let's say extreme surprise – at realizing that the most local of local things, such as pickling cabbage or killing a pig, are done differently elsewhere, still leaves a hint of disbelief.

1 The annual stall at the village fair is a fixed component of our International Village Shop, see also www.internationalvillageshop.net

2 The Frogbutter Spoon was created for the village fair in 2006, together with a frog wine cork and a frog skeleton cape for Halloween. We have also made Surplus Doily Bags, Jar Lamps, Village Produce Films, Tinned Clay, and in 2015 the new Höfer Lace.

CURRICULUM – HÖFEN

Local traditions and everyday knowledge are generally valued very highly amongst the women, but decades of post-agricultural living, a general depreciation of traditional and female knowledge, and the increased dominance of a monetary economy have resulted in uncertainty about what remains 'local', and how it can be valued.

To invite guests to contribute to the thinking and making of the Höfer Goods helps locally to build a collective sense of identity, in relation to various things: to other professions, to similar knowledge and traditions from elsewhere, and to what others would find of interest.

The topics for the four terms of the Eco Nomadic School in Höfen were selected because of both their local and universal qualities: clay, rural women's economies, food preservation and small-scale family manufacturing. Each time, the aim was to investigate certain knowledge and techniques for what makes them locally specific, whilst being critical and creative about what they represent and reproduce.

CLASSROOMS

- The Community House in the centre of the village with its function room, kitchen, hall and outdoor yard.
- The nearby Peasant Museum in Frensdorf with its community kitchen, garden and exhibition spaces.
- The regional Adult Education Centre in Sulzbürg with seminar rooms and accommodation.

LANGUAGES

German followed by English, Dutch, and French.



GERMANY

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Show and Tell: Local Clay Stories

Clay is one of the most universal of local materials. It's used to make bricks, pots and buildings all over the world. It's both very direct – it can be dug and used with almost any tool – and, at the same time, refined and specialised in each local context, resulting in locally specific manufacturing methods.

The Women of Höfen remember the village clay pit and two clay factories close to the village. Does this make clay a specific local material? Local ceramicist Michael Back, who ran the clay workshop, helps us to unravel the localness of 'our' clay.

We hear the following stories:

- Resi Derra brings a brick made in the local brick factory. She remembers local production up to the nineteen-forties.
- Hildegard Lysek remembers climbing through the brick factory ruins as children in the mid-forties.
- Walter Böhm gives tours around his two-storey home, whose outer walls are made of sandstone, and whose inner walls are a mix of wood and clay.
- Rosa Leimbach describes how clay is used to treat cows with 'gas', via application to their tummies.
- And the folk story is repeated of the man who built his house from broken bricks he took home from the factory where he worked. Céline Condorelli refers to the famous Situationist's 'Postman's House' as the only possible architecture, a house made by a postman out of the scraps of material he collected over a period of 30 years.





Making Clay Tiles (with noses)

We first walk up the hill to dig some fresh clay from the former clay pit.

"This is good clay" Michael Back explains. He smells it, kneads it. It hardly needs any extra sand to be structural. We can use it straight away. Michael demonstrates a low-key method of making 'swept tiles' using a simple jig and wire tool. The rest of the afternoon is spent making tiles.

Houses in the region were thatched until the late middle ages. Following an attempt to control and manage house fires, the clay roof brick was introduced in the 1600s. A pagan tradition to paint symbols and patterns on the straw roof – to protect the building from demons and other spirits – was continued with the clay tiles and the same patterns were drawn into the soft clay during production. This started to change with the increased conversion of rural areas to Christianity.

Tiles at the time were handmade, and so-called noses were attached on the back as a hook to fix the individual tile. The maker of the tiles could be identified by their nose.



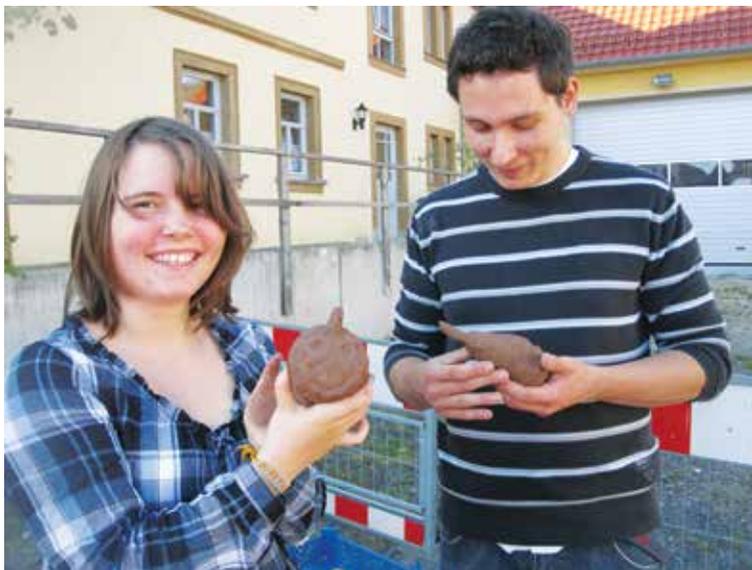


Public Workshop: Fruit in Clay

A combination of freshly dug local clay, apples from the remaining traditional orchards, Hausfrauentechnik, noses and the task to develop a new product are being tested in this workshop.

The fruit is baked in a thin layer of clay, with a nose attached to release steam. The result is a ready-to-eat snack, with all the leftover rubbish to be absorbed by the ground.





Kneading Whilst Listening to a History Talk

The evening class is announced as a talk on village history, with historian Dr. Thomas Gunzelmann who works for the regional Conservation Board, and archaeologist Dr. Andrea Bischof from the nearby university in Bamberg. The community hall is packed and the mix of participants is commented on. For some, it's the first public event they have attended in the village – local history sells.

To start with, Dr. Gunzelmann deflates the high expectations by stating that there are 35 other small settlements across Bavaria which hold the name Höfen, and it is therefore historically difficult to distinguish which Höfen is addressed in old documents. His presentation begins much further back in the past than the history that's usually discussed in the village. It also puts the village in clear relation to former feudal power systems that shaped the village to suit commercial interests.

Andrea Bischof talks us through a regional history of ceramics. Around 9,000 BC the first pots were produced in the region, whilst the introduction of the turning wheel (from the Romans with whom the Germanics would have had contact) was a significant turning point. This tool was lost for many centuries, being reintroduced around 1300, which led to a first wave of mass production in ceramics from about 1400.

She points out that historic manufacturing processes for ceramics and porcelain survive into a time when they could easily be replaced by plastic and synthetic materials – yet we still choose to produce them.

We put chunks of clay on the tables and invite everyone to shape it during the evening.





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International Kraut Workshop

Kraut is a bit like clay – regarded as a completely local tradition and foodstuff by communities across the world.

We are starting the second session of the Eco Nomadic School at the Peasant Museum in Frensdorf. The Romanian group has just arrived after a 24-hour drive from Brezoi.

The Höfer Women have prepared everything for demonstrating how to make Sauerkraut, and we are using Heidi Böhm's recipe, which has never failed. The ingredients for 50kg of cabbage are 500g table salt, one handful of sugar, cumin, Wacholder (dried juniper berries), dill seeds and a litre of Franconian dry white wine.

The kraut is put in layers into a large barrel, then sprinkled with the various herbs and salt, then compressed and another layer gets added. The compacting produces a juice which will cover the kraut and allow its fermentation. Once all the kraut is compacted into the container, a wooden lid and heavy weight are placed on top. The only disagreement is whether a cotton cloth or cabbage leaves should cover the kraut.

In the meantime Gigi and Mihaela quickly slice the cabbage they brought from Brezoi with a small but very sharp knife, demonstrating that there's more than one way to shred a cabbage.



Coffee and Cake Seminar: Landfrauenwirtschaft (Rural Women's Economies)

The Coffee and Cake Lecture format allows show-off baking to meet feminist critique, calories to meet theory and chit chat to merge into discussion. Women from across the rural and farming world meet in the village hall: from academics to self-identified village women; from construction-biologists to urban food growers. The aim was to study and emphasise the economic role of women in the rural environment, and to look at and value the specific knowledge that women hold in this world.

I was impressed that so many trusted the invitation and arrived from all directions. For Ingrid, attending the whole programme meant leaving her farm for a night for the first time ever.

I was impressed by Caroline's very pragmatic approach toward resolving conflict in the community garden she is running in Rotterdam: "Some things are not on, and then you just have to talk." And by Gabriele Götz, who is a construction biologist, runs a building supply business, develops new clay product, is a local councillor, mother of four children, goes hunting and we don't know what else.

In her presentation, Heide Inhveen impressed everyone with the fact that, until the early 18th century, the word 'economy' was defined by a concept of careful housekeeping and the management and conservation of resources. The gender division between female-dominated housekeeping and male-dominated business is a rather recent phenomena, as is the profit-orientated economy.

Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen – also an academic - impressed with her extremely cool outfits (knee-length socks and Birkenstocks in winter) but even more with her compressed journey through human civilization and 10,000 year old cultural history of husbandry; a tradition which should please be remembered and practiced again.*

* From Kathrin Böhm's list of moments that impressed her during this class.



Study Trip to Rural Co-operatives

The Haus der Bäuerin (House of the Female Farmer), a multifunctional public building in the centre of the village of Birkach, was initially set up by the federal government and is now run by the village. The building has a slaughter house, fruit press, stage, community hall and a bar, kitchen, former washhouse and communal freezer. We're all impressed by the facilities – but Elisabeth objects, rightly, that these buildings were an attempt to make house-work more attractive for farmwomen, in order to keep them out of running the agricultural business.

Dorfladen Sulzbürg is a fully functioning village shop, set up by a group of local women after the last privately owned shop closed down. The shop offers a smart selection of food and household basics for the local German and Turkish community.

The Bauernmarkt Neumarkt (Farmers' Market) is self-run by local food producers, and offers weekly trade in seasonal food and small artisanal goods, such as cheese, candles, meat and honey.

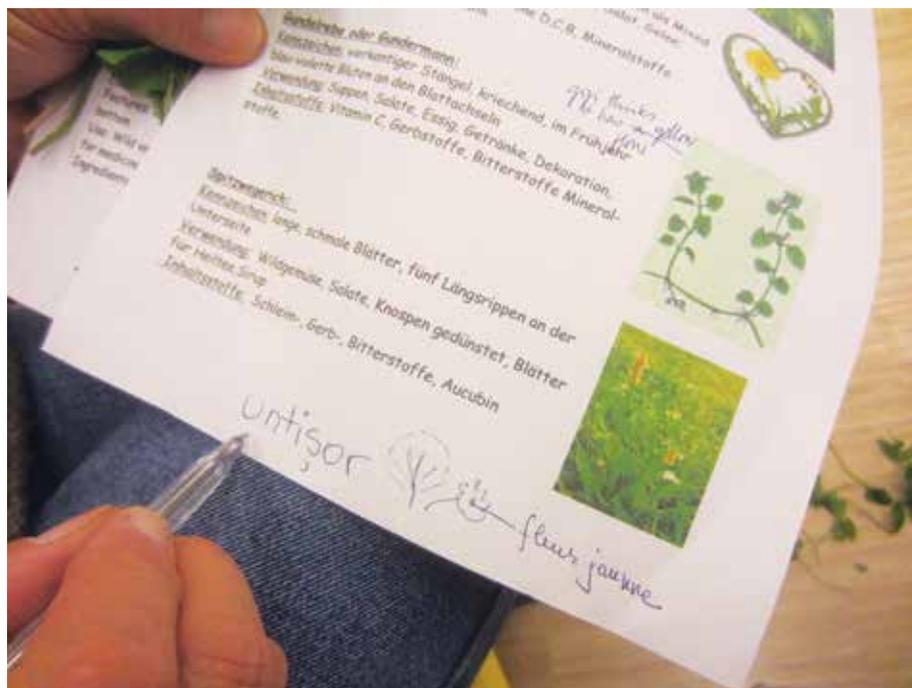


Wild Herbs and Their Use in Medicine and Food

Herb specialists Sylvia Hellmuth and Margit Graf (who's also a farmer) explain common weeds and herbs which can be used for cooking and medicinal use. Mihaela, Gigi and Mircea from Brezoi immediately join in, using drawings to introduce some rare herbs from the Brezoi mountains.







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Fermentation Workshop

Caroline Zeevat and Suze Peters from Rotterdam run a workshop on the benefits and possibilities of fermentation as a food preservation method, and introduce new ingredients and recipes.



Soyu-zuke recipe

Ingredients

- 200g greens (mustard, radish, chard, spinach, wild herbs)
- 45ml rice vinegar
- 45ml soya sauce (Japanese Kikoman)
- 20g (brown) sugar
- 5cm of fresh ginger root, grated or finely chopped

Method

Wash and dry greens thoroughly, cut in small pieces and put in a jar. Press down hard to get as much air out as possible. Dissolve sugar in the soya sauce and rice vinegar and add ginger (and chillies if you like it spicy). Pour over the greens and again press out air bubbles, to prevent greens from floating. Use a water-filled plastic bag on top to weigh things down. Ready after 48 hours. Remove plastic bag and enjoy. Store in the fridge.



Field Trip to Local Industries

Small family-run manufacturing businesses in the rural environment don't seem to advertise themselves much, and one needs to know they exist in order to find them.

Our first stop is Stickerei Höfer, a lace factory in Rattelsdorf run by Conny and Ernst Hofer, who both come from lace producing families in Austria and the former East Germany, and have found a niche market for decorative domestic lace. The two looms in their factory date to 1913.

The Kommunalbrennerei (communal still) in Unterzettlitz is run by the Leicht family, using parts from an old 1871 still to provide a distillation service for locals who have enough surplus fruit to make spirits. The 30-minute distillation run, which produces roughly 10 litres of spirit (depending on the fruit), costs €25 plus the alcohol tax which is charged by customs. You can produce as much spirit as you wish, but the fruit has to come from your own land.





Coffee and Cake Seminar: For the Future

We discuss provisioning, endowments, advice and other investment tips for the future. What might today's 'endowments' look like?

The group agrees that the one piece of advice they want to pass on to the younger generation in Höfen is to 'look after communal village life'. Coffee and cake are chosen as a motif to represent community spirit. This gets translated into a pattern for a new lace, to be made by Stickerei Hofer.



Bauernmuseum Bad Windsheim (in memory of Michael Back)

Trip to the plein-air rural museum in Bad Windsheim with its display of traditional Franconian farm buildings, gardens and public buildings, where Michael Back – our local specialist on local clay – ran the kiln.

Michael died suddenly in November 2014. His wife describes Michael as a curious bee, always looking for the next flower, and that the Eco Nomadic School had been his latest one. We feel that Michael represents everything that's good about local knowledge.



LEIPZIG



Leipzig sits at the intersection of the Via Regia and Via Imperii, two important medieval trade routes, and was once one of the major European centers of learning and culture. The city has one of the world's oldest universities (founded 1409) and became a major urban center within the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) after the Second World War. This was the birthplace of the grassroots resistance movement which ultimately led to the collapse of the GDR in 1989. Leipzig today remains an internationally-oriented city with a strong civic and cosmopolitan identity.

The nearby landscape is a large-scale open coal mining area, with disused pits being turned into a new lakeland environment. One of Germany's largest coal-fired power stations remains the main landmark.

GfZK

For a long time, the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst (GfZK/Museum of Contemporary Art) in Leipzig had a large slogan greeting its guests: 'Each work of art was once contemporary'. The museum's mission is to showcase the full range of contemporary art practices across its various buildings and outdoor areas, from studio painting to interdisciplinary café design, from community-led city development to garden sculpture. The museum's interpretation team develops ways of approaching art as a contribution to wider society, instead of preserving it as a niche topic exclusive to the art world.

In 2015 and 2016, the GfZK transformed the Gartenhaus (a building in their former coach house), into a public exhibition and production space for the International Village Show. The two-year-long project consisted of a continuous programme of public exhibitions, shops, workshops and events facilitated by art collective Myvillages. Myvillages invited 12 rural communities they had worked with previously to participate. The communities met each other and the museum audience at the specifically-redesigned Gartenhaus to exchange rural knowledge.

The Eco Nomadic School became part of the programme in the Gartenhaus when guests and projects from Ballykinlar, Brezoi and Friesland came to Leipzig.

CLASSROOMS

The GfZK Gartenhaus, the garden, auditorium, galleries and library, and nearby farms.

LANGUAGES

German followed by English, Dutch, Frysk and French.

Mediation as a Public Obligation

Julia Schäfer

Museums are places of learning. Part of the mandate of any art institution (particularly those that are publicly funded) is to help people learn: about the past, about how this past impacts on the present, and about how every different community (and, indeed, individual person) has a subjective understanding of both.

To fulfil this mandate, each institution has a number of paths open to it. One of them is to develop a programme and offer tours, do workshops with school groups, write accompanying texts, and provide information in established ways. This is not a new trend. Art exhibitions were already mediated in this manner in the early art association movement (Kunstvereinsbewegung), with instructions for contemplating artistic works existing as of the end of the eighteenth century. I call this classical art mediation. It is sometimes used by the GfZK to mediate between the art we present and the public we would like to address.

Besides this classic form, there is also integrated and inclusive art mediation.¹ For integrated mediation projects, we, as an institution, invite participation and co-production. Here the flow of consuming art is interrupted, and visitors and guests of the museum encounter the thing being exhibited – the art – in an active role. Not simply as a viewer, but as a co-maker or co-producer.

Finally, art mediation becomes inclusive when the boundary to day-to-day life blurs, occasionally to such an extent that visitors find themselves within an artistic work, but without perceiving it as such. Here, the experience of art becomes simply the experience of the everyday. When I find myself in these large 'readymades' of everyday life, which I'd never find at a museum, I don't feel alien. I do not look at what is around me first and foremost as art. The difference in expectations regarding what is offered in this situation, in comparison to being at a formal exhibition, gives rise to a positive tension, in which the things around me can have manifold meanings and roles.

When Borders Dissolve

If one works closely with artists who react very strongly to social processes, who make work that attempts to have

1 Julia Schäfer, *Vermittlung als kuratorische Praxis*, in *Wolfenbüttler Akademie-Texte*, vol. 22, *Wolfsburg*, Wolfenbüttler Akademie für kulturelle Bildung, 2006.



social and political impact, who select means of expression that can, in part, barely be differentiated from the means of other professions, et cetera: then mediation becomes vitally important, and necessary.

There is a splendid drawing by Sempé about this. In several sequences, a man observes how he first moves around in various places at home: cellar, bathroom. One then goes with him to the Maison de la Culture. He looks around and comes upon things that are not unfamiliar to him: the bottle dryer from the cellar, a corner of a bathroom, et cetera. He then goes home and sits in an armchair, thinking for a long time. And this is exactly the case. The topics and means of contemporary art praxis are so quotidian that they require a translation or also a sort of explanation of legitimacy. And, here, a central question remains: What does this have to do with me? Why is this bottle dryer art, but the other not? Why is the marmalade from Myvillages also art, but that from the wholefood shop not?

For two years, the Gartenhaus (Garden House) of the GfZK was transformed into an exhibition space. In eight presentations and a wide range of events and workshops, Myvillages presented its projects with communities from villages and/or rural areas around the world. The easily accessible space became a meeting place for people with various interests. Here, passers-by came upon art mediators, and artists encountered sports groups that regularly utilised the location. Children extracted tattoos or marmalade from the art vending machines without at first knowing that they were acquiring for two or four euros was part of an artistic work. The arrangement and naturalness of the location once again showed that dissolving borders, and doing away with institutional conventions, could become very useful in involving more people in the thinking process of artistic examination than if the series of projects had taken place solely in one of the main buildings.

Everyone left their day-to-day life behind to immerse themselves in the world of contemporary art, whereby they encountered familiar terrain. On the one hand, the architecture of the Gartenhaus promoted a feeling of the known and familiar. An encounter in the architecture of the new building would have been different merely from a physical perspective. Here, the surfaces are different. Apparently, as many think, the rules are also different. They then once again find themselves caught within the framework of art, with everyday life illuminated differently, revealed, or individual actions exposed. And, hence, far away from real day-to-day life, something of the everyday obtains another significance. Alone, this transfer is tremendously valuable and enriching. This can only be achieved by art in its inclusive form, through the act of mediation, through naming and framing things anew.

'Each Work of Art Was Once Contemporary'

This stood on a poster at the GfZK for a long time. As a museum, we present art that is up-to-date.

In recent decades, multiple boundaries between art and day-to-day life have dissolved: boundaries between artistic work and how to mediate them, and boundaries between the arts (applied, independent, visual, performing). This eroding of boundaries gives rise to a lack of stability for those who like to cling to art as a fixed thing. For those who have no expectations and no fixed images, this process of stripping levels of action or being allowed to act independently of their hierarchy is enriching. Here, doing away with rules is necessary, and this is where the power and the potential lies.

At the GfZK, we have dared and playfully tested this in many practical examples.² The GfZK is in the position to transform several different spaces with artistic works. Each work or exhibition has to deal with the location, the ground, the boundaries that artist, curator, public have to deal with. And each space gives rise to a different work and makes it possible to deal with the perspectives of visitors in another way. Shortly after the opening of the new building, many residents of Leipzig assumed that a new car showroom had opened. That would be just another experiment in how we mediate art, and how we help people learn.

Text translated by Amy Clement

² See: gfzk.de/foryou and gfzk.de/foryou/?cat=56

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**EACH WORK OF
ART WAS ONCE
CONTEMPORARY
ВСЯКОЕ ПРОИЗ
ВЕДЕНИЕ ИСКУ
ССТВА КОГДА-
ТО БЫЛО СОВР
ЕМЕННЫМ**



GERMANY

Höfen	Term 01	137
	Local Clay (May 2010)	
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	Term 02	147
	Rural Women's Economies (October 2012)	
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	Term 03	157
	Preserving and Manufacturing (October 2014)	
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Leipzig	Term 04	173
	Clashing Agricultures (September 2015)	
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	Term 05	185
	Lessons From Northern Ireland (March 2016)	
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	Where Does Art Go? (December 2016)	
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Brezoi Meets Friesland Meets Leipzig

A three-month-long public exhibition in the Gartenhaus, which brings different agricultural communities together using films, photos, goods and stories.









Learning by Displacement: Things you Wouldn't Notice at Home

In Friesland, it is common to scatter shells in courtyards and on paths. Two cubic metres of shells from Harlingen on the Wadden Sea are combined with Eco Nomadic School muscle power, to upgrade a footpath that meanders from the main building to the Gartenhaus. The footpath is now called 'Frysk Skelpepaad'.

Afterwards Mircea Onică from Brezoi and Thomas Thiele from Leipzig explain the principles and advantages of scything whilst comparing the fine differences in their equipment and approach. Everyone is offered a beginner's lesson, and the muscular approach from earlier is replaced by a more zen-like movement, which has low impact on both the environment and the human spine.









Market Garden and Multinational Agriculture

Tour of the collectively-run Anna Linde market garden in Leipzig and the multinationally-owned Osterland Agrar GmbH dairy farm in Frohburg, near Leipzig.







GERMANY

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DIY Still

Paddy Bloomer builds a still to produce a Northern Irish product which, in his words, can't be bought and brought along, but needs to be made. It's Poitín, a home-distilled spirit normally made from potatoes.

Paddy needs six hours to source all the elements and to assemble a working still, and spends, in total, three euros on glue.

The copper bugle in use is also an exhibit in the Gartenhaus, and is part of a new Village Product¹, the Twisted Bugle, which was developed in collaboration between Kathrin Böhm, the women of the Royal Air Force barracks in Ballykinlar and PS² gallery. Paddy produced the bugle in Northern Ireland.



¹ Village Products are made by Myvillages in collaboration with rural communities. They are rooted in local histories, resources and desires.



Social Caravan

The lesson learnt from Ballykinlar was, when in need of a communal space, just drop one in the middle of the community (see page 271). A cost-efficient way is to use a secondhand caravan. We placed one in front of the Gartenhaus for three months to make space to share stories and histories from Ballykinlar. The Poitin produced on day one was drunk there on day one.



GERMANY

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Beetsterzwaag Product Launch

Local goods developed during Eco Nomadic School workshops regularly become trans-local, and travel to public events and shops elsewhere.

In Leipzig, the new Village Product, *Wild Treasure*, from Beetsterzwaag is presented and explained by Durk Schroor and Wietske Lycklema à Nijeholt from Beetsterzwaag, together with Wapke Feenstra from Myvillages. The product remained in the GfZK version of the International Village Shop until late December 2016.





Conference

For this one-day convention, colleagues and collaborators from the wider network of the GfZK, Myvillages and the Eco Nomadic School get together to discuss where art will or should go next.

Art's departure from formalized exhibition spaces in the 1960s as part of a wider institutional and cultural critique has by now become widespread practice. Art can take place anywhere and take on any format. Context-specificity and localised engagement have become well-established frameworks for developing and making art. Art has gone everywhere, and we ask ourselves and the group which direction we want art to go in next.





Geology Tour with Geographer Ronny Schmidt







ITALY

Locations

- Vallagarina Valley
- Rovereto

Subjects

- Soil Club
- Interstizi Reattivi
AKA Visits to Rebel
Neighbours
- QuerciaLAB





THE VALLEGARINA VALLEY

The Vallegarina Valley is located in the southern reaches of the Alps, in northern Italy. It forms one of the major routes connecting Italy to Central Europe, with the Brenner Highway traversing the length of it. The valley itself can be seen as a 'high-performance' space, with most of the land given over to either the highway itself or to monocultural agriculture production, particularly intensive vine and apple growth. This spatial economy leaves little access to affordable land – a situation exacerbated by climate change, as rising temperatures mean previously marginal land becomes increasingly attractive for large-scale agriculture.

The culture of the district at first appears to reflect this situation: socially and economically conservative and plugged into a fully capitalist worldview. On closer inspection, however, a significant number of small-scale, radical and more or less collective projects come into view, especially in the field of agriculture and food production.

These forms of self-organisation have long historical roots here: the rulers of these mountainous areas historically encouraged people to settle by granting far more autonomy than to those who lived on the plains or closer to the political centre.



BRAVE NEW ALPS

It's in this context that Brave New Alps, a social design practice run by Bianca Elzenbaumer and Fabio Franz, have chosen to relocate themselves, moving back from the metropolis of London where they studied and started to practice, to the area where they grew up and which they know well.

Returning from a metropolitan area, Brave New Alps baggage was packed full of different experiences: of self-organisation around making the city bottom-up; of creating spaces for critical-yet-joyful collective learning; and of a network of people interested in practices of commoning. How could they activate these skills and experience in the space they'd grown up in?

The COMUNfARE initiative is their response. Literally 'commons-making' or 'making in common', COMUNfARE is a long-term, practice-led action research project, which aims to create new ways of working in the valley – for themselves and others – which can make best use of the urban and rural skills they know and share.

The project sets out to do two things: first, to understand the complicated dynamics that shape the valley; and second, to support and expand spaces in the area which can nurture other values and relationships than the narrow list prescribed by the market economy (profit, unlimited growth, individualism and the natural-cultural divide). These are 'the commons' of the projects title.

CURRICULUM – VALLAGARINA

The curriculum of the Eco Nomadic School in Vallagarina revolves around two different aspects of COMUNfARE.

Initially, Brave New Alps set out to find, visit and network with local groups, projects and actors working with similar goals in mind. Two projects were initiated to start this process: Soil Club (Circolo del Suolo), a series of events to bring together producers, economists and politicians who Brave New Alps recognised as creating the right conditions for local commoning; and Interstizi Reattivi (Reactive Interstices), a series of group field trips to rebel producers and alternative economic actors in northern Italy.

Following these the QuercialLAB was built, to act as a physical manifestation of the ideals behind COMUNfARE, where projects and activities can take place and intervene in the local economy.

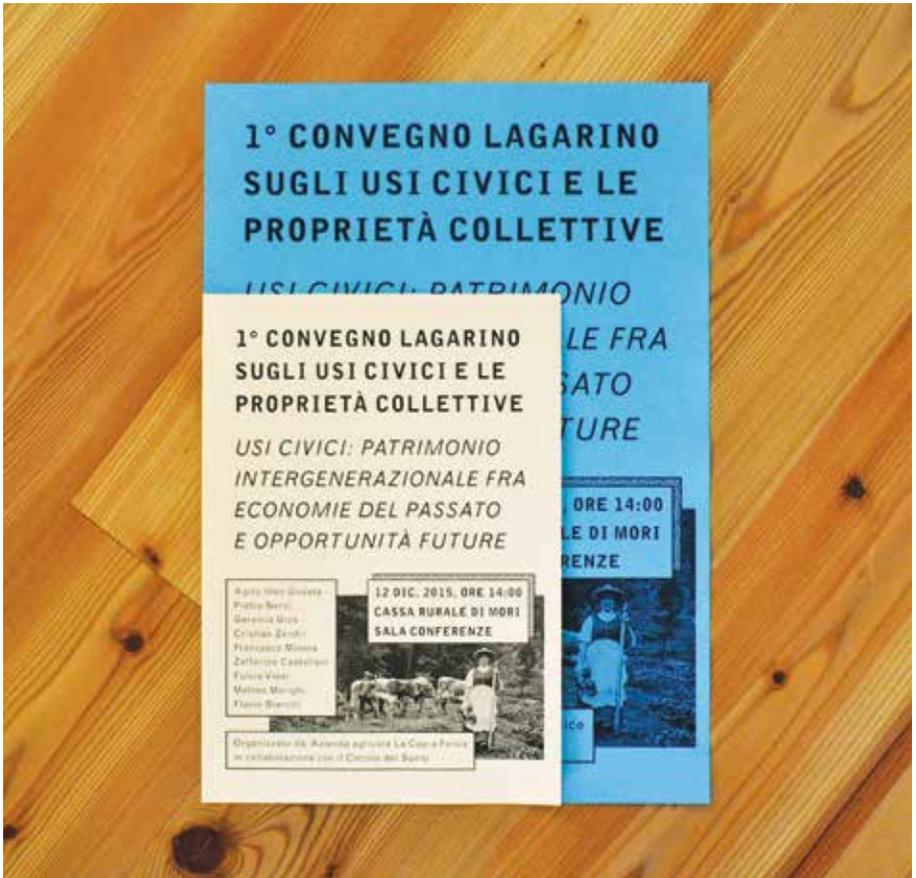
Soil Club and QuercialLAB were local programmes, running over several months, before the network of the Eco Nomadic School became part of the work and research on site.

CLASSROOMS

- Town Squares
- Bakeries
- Rebel Farms
- Mountain Retreats
- Brewery Kitchens
- Cohousing Spaces
- Historic Cereal Associations
- Disused Industrial Spaces

LANGUAGES

Italian, French, English, German, Spanish (there were lots of other languages too, but these were the working languages).





ITALY

Vallagarina
Valley

Term 01 205
Soil Club
(July - October 2015)

Term 02 209
Interstizi Reattivi
AKA Visits to Rebel
Neighbours
(May - November 2016)

Rovereto

Term 03 215
QuerciaLAB
(October 2016)

SOIL CLUB

Soil Club was a series of events to bring together people who create the material, social and political 'soil' that makes it possible to live well in the valley. Attendees included rebel wine makers, seed savers, leftist economists, people studying earthworms, and radical mayors (who are trying to revolutionise the bureaucracy that's preventing bottom-up initiatives from doing what they want to do).

Each Soil Club event would begin with a ten-minute talk by a different speaker, followed by a discussion and a shared meal. Soil Club was held in the summer and autumn, so that everyone could bring whatever was growing in their gardens: grapes, figs, blueberries, chestnuts, local wine. Over time it became clearer and clearer that, in an area that seems so conservative, extremely interesting things are growing and happening.





Quali sono i beni comuni
del nostro territorio?
Dove si trovano?
Chi se ne prende cura?
Quali sono le buone
pratiche che ruotano
intorno a essi? Quali
desideri e bisogni
soddisfano?

1° tappa di: **COMUNFARE** —
**VERSO UNA SCUOLA PER LA
PROGETTAZIONE POPOLARE
E IL FARE IN COMUNE**



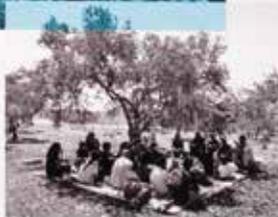
Il *Circolo del Suolo* è un progetto dedicato
all'explorazione e alla mappatura dei beni
comuni in Vallagarina e dintorni.



a cura di Branc New Alps

Biblioteca di Nomi
14 luglio — 4 settembre 2015
Primo ritrovo sociale: 14 luglio, 19.30

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ITALY

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INTERSTIZI REATTIVI AKA VISITS TO REBEL NEIGHBOURS

Monthly visits to 'rebel businesses' and organisations that exist in the grey area outside of the strictly legal or profit-making, including beer-makers, cultural centres and agricultural initiatives. The aim was to meet and get to know the people behind these initiatives, eat their produce and learn about the organisational structures, strategies and tactics they adopted to get around legal and economical constraints. The rule was: anyone who wanted to participate in the programme had to have a project of their own, either existing or one they wished to create.

The group would get together on the Sunday after the visit to talk about what they'd seen, and how it applied to their projects. By the end of the visits, a group of eight regulars had formed.

The name of the programme derives from Isabelle Stengers' work on interstices.

- Meeting hall of the Centro di Educazione alla Pace (Peace Education Centre), Rovereto.
- The library of Organisation für eine Solidarische Welt (Organisation for Global Solidarity), Brixen.
- The café of Die Bäckerei (The Bakery) cultural centre, Innsbruck, Austria
- The terrace of Il Masetto mountain retreat (The Little Farm), Terragnolo.
- Conference hall of the Province of Trento during the Solidarity Economy Conference, Trento.
- The winter garden of the organic training farm La Fonte, Mezzomonte.
- In the fields of the CSA Arvaia (Community Supported Agriculture 'The Bean'), Bologna.
- In the kitchen of Fermenti Sociali brewery (Social Ferment), Val Samoggia.
- In the community space of Ecosol Cohousing (Ecosol is an acronym of Ecological and Solidarity), Fidenza.
- In the headquarters of the local cereals association Göver (göver means grain in old dialect), Cavedine.







Interview with Ivonne Peroni

Learn to Act What did you learn?

Ivonne Peroni A lot. Overall, it's like having opened a lot of windows in my head. Meeting others is never like reading an article in a magazine. In particular, I learned about the determination that small initiatives require to overcome technical and bureaucratic obstacles; the necessity of using legal grey areas to propose something new; and developing new relationships between the natural and human environment.

LTA What did you share with the others?

IP I shared my aspirations for a more just, more humane world, in which relations are not just framed around immediate economic interest or convenience, and where there is an attention also towards the generations to come.

LTA Who did you meet?

IP Many young people who are prepared and determined (and this gave me optimism), but also older people who are a testimony to a collective dimension of action that got a bit lost over time. I especially met people with a shared dream, in opposition to the dominant idea of individualism, self-promotion and self-realisation conveyed by the media, on social networks and that, unfortunately, is also expanding in schools.

LTA What is the most surprising thing you learnt?

IP The collective dimension and its vitality. In every initiative we visited I found elements of newness. For example, when visiting the brewery Fermenti Sociali and listening to the words of Campi Aperti, I was surprised by the fact that both initiatives were born in an almost illegal context and that from there they developed and were able to later on fit into legal norms. But this illegality was a necessary condition for these initiatives to develop.

LTA Did the project change the way in which you perceive your skills and knowledge?

IP It did not change them, but it has surely strengthened them and given me a charge of optimism.

Ivonne Peroni – participant in Interstizi Reattivi. Ivonne is a high school teacher who in 2016/2017 was on a sabbatical. She is also the secretary of the Centre for Peace Education in Rovereto.

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QuerciaLAB
(October 2016)

QUERCIALAB

QuerciaLAB is a community-based research and resource centre, currently housed in a disused, 200m² industrial space in the valley's main town of Rovereto.

Brave New Alps initially envisaged the space as a print-and-design project for COMUNfARE. However, the project was soon totally re-envisaged and re-shaped by its neighbours: 80 asylum seekers who have been housed in a repurposed hotel next door.

Whilst, structurally, the former hotel is quite dilapidated – anything that's broken takes ages to get fixed, and the asylum seekers are housed five in a room – the cooperatives who manage it are very dynamic, and interested in self-organisation. The asylum seekers' active involvement in the space, together with the permission given by the cooperatives, led Brave New Alps to start rethinking what the space could be.

The resulting programme aims to work with both the old and new inhabitants of the valley, to think about different kinds of economies, constructing things together, and how they could live differently in this valley.

The Eco Nomadic School group arrived to help with the construction of QuerciaLAB.





Brief Together

Brave New Alps held workshops to develop a communal brief for the QuerciaLAB. Local residents, project partners from previous COMUNfARE workshops, and asylum seekers came together to explore what activities should take place in the space. The initial idea to create a social print shop for the dissemination of alternative knowledge was fused with the desire of the neighbours to have access to tools and equipment, a space for hairdressing, tailoring, physical workouts (a gym), DIY making and repairing, and holding cultural events.





Build Together

The next class saw partners from across Europe arrive in Rovereto to help, including architecture students from Sheffield, people from Brezoi, gardeners and artists from Leipzig, and community activators from Paris.

An intense week-long workshop saw participants come together to develop, design and build such items as: a mobile kitchen unit; a hair-dressing unit; shelving units for the print space; tables for a bricolage space; and (crucially) a heatable room on wheels (to combat the cold local winters).







Use Together

The result of the communal designing and building is an incredibly rich, self-directed and flexible space, where an enormous variety of users and uses co-exist. People use the lab to design and print publications, make clothes, fix table-football tables, hold music evenings and roundtable discussions, make food, pump iron, and experiment with non-capitalist forms of exchange.









Interview with Bianca Elzenbaumer (Brave New Alps)

Tom James So we're compiling a book to document the Eco Nomadic School, and the idea is to do something that's useful, which other people can use as tools within their community. So first question: what would you be interested in, if you were reading the book?

Bianca Elzenbaumer I think first and foremost, I'd be interested in how each project in the school works to involve the locals. Because, in a way, we're all activating situations of learning that are quite unusual for local people who mostly aren't from the art or design world, and who haven't been to university or art school. And I'd also be interested to know more about what people in the network do when they visit each other, how it works.

TJ So it's partly about how each of the projects work with their own people, but also about how the school works with each other?

BE For us, that's the super-interesting thing about the school. That when we go for the visits, on the one hand we learn about what the initiative does, how they engage with people locally. But we also learn how they manage this bigger group of internationals coming along, how they provide a way in. How do we translate what we do into different languages, make it understandable for people of different cultures and so on?

TJ I really want to write something for the book about English and foreign languages, because so few native English speakers ever learn another language.

BE Last time, when people came to Rovereto, we had English and French as our two languages. That wasn't just because of Europeans though – we had a group of migrants from West Africa working with us. So French became the main language in some of the working groups, and the French people had to do all of the translation.

TJ How did you get involved in the school?

BE We've known Kathrin for 6 or 7 years, and a couple of years ago, Fabio went to the Eco Nomadic School in Romania with Kathrin, and spent five days there with the Brezoi project, thinking about how the Odaja could be rebuilt. And I think Fabio really liked it, and just kept on being in conversation with her. There's also a link to the

University of Sheffield and Doina. We stayed in touch, and with all those conversations, it just made sense to get involved in the school.

We arranged for Kathrin and Doina to come to Italy in Spring 2015, to speak at a conference (so that the university could pay their travel expenses) and to give us a chance to show the context we work in. This gave us a few days to talk about the new application for the Eco Nomadic School, and what we wanted to do in Italy.

TJ One of the interesting things that keeps coming up about this project is that this way of working helps you build a post-capitalist, less consumerist, resilient society. And I hadn't really put that together with the fact that, as a school, you're really getting money from whichever sources you can. There's this idea of 'where's the money', 'what do we need to do' and putting them together.

BE For this round of the school each partner gets about €12,000 through the EU funding, for two years of work. And you have quite a lot of freedom with what you do with that money. You need to put on one local workshop, one international workshop, which both need to last five days. Then you need to travel to all these different places. The rest of the money is for expenses, and to pay yourselves a bit.

To have some money really helps in the economy of resilience that we're in; because one part needs to be in money, because some stuff needs to be paid. And it means that it frees up time for us to work on the project, and not have to do freelance work. And of course in Brezoi, the money is doubly important, because in Romania €12,000 is a lot of money.

And it also brings a lot of legitimacy. We decided to move back to where we grew up, in the southern Alps of Italy, and work here. And being able to say that this international group of people is coming along, and we're part of a European network, really gives us some kind of strength. People say, 'oh, you must be doing something interesting.' Local people are much more open to enter into conversation with us, because they see that other people are interested in what we do.

TJ How did the current project come about? Did you move back to start it, or was it that you wanted to move home and wanted to start something?

BE It was parallel. We had this plan of moving back and setting up a post-capitalist, feminist, queer maker space. Which of course meant that we couldn't tell anyone, because as soon as you say 'capitalist' around here, they're like, 'are you stuck in the seventies?' So we had to find a different kind of language to talk to people about what we

were doing. But behind the scenes, that was our plan.

We came up with a name COMUNfARE and a rough framework of activities. For the first year, we were just organising events, and meeting people, and trying to figure out who else there was out there that we might share our vision with.

Since last September it's been very intense, since we started to take on a building to develop it into a shared commons for those who've lived here a long time, and those who've just arrived.

As designers, when you're doing this kind of work, you know where you want it to be going, and at the same time you want it to be developed by others. We do have a vision for the space, but it's quite abstract, it's really seeing what works, and what galvanises people's energy to do things in the space. So at the moment, it's a lot about building things. We're building a room on wheels that can be heated, because of course an industrial space doesn't have any heating (and it's now -5 outside). And then people started to bring things from the former hotel to be fixed too. So they brought a broken bed, or a table-football had broken legs. It feels a bit like playing!

And the Romanian group from Brezoi built us a kitchen, when they were here. And so now we have a kitchen! Of course it's a European kitchen, so people are just improvising for the way they need to cook, but it's helping create a really good atmosphere. Because they're coming out of these hotel rooms, and creating a space that's actually interesting, and gives value to their activities. And the people from Sheffield built a mobile furniture piece for the hairdressers, because lots of people are hairdressers in this shelter.

TJ Why on Earth are lots of asylum seekers hairdressers???

BE I don't know! But their friends are coming from outside to get haircuts. So it's really cool. And the gym is still there, as well. It's kind of a weird space where lots of things are happening, where you can just hang out.

TJ But in that kind of environment, with those people, it sounds so important, and useful. All the projects across the network are linked up by this informal knowledge exchange at their heart. But yours sounds really informal.

BE The thing we're doing, it only works because it's so informal. People are suggesting we formalise it, you know, 'this could be a paid job, what you're doing.' But for now, we're really pushing against that, because it gives us the freedom to just come and do things. If it was a formal

project, and we said we were going to set up a print shop, but then found that people really wanted to build things out of wood, or fix broken stuff, we'd still have to do the print project. It would be 'you have to print something, and at the end of it you get a certificate.' And I think the asylum seekers really appreciate that informality, because usually they have to sign for every little fart they do, and then get a certificate at the end, and it's totally lifeless. But here, they want to come along with their smartphone and pose with the things they've built.

TJ Do you think doing it outside of that official framework gives you the freedom to do it how you want to do it, then?

BE Yes. And it also means that sometimes we might not go there for a week, and people aren't just sitting there waiting for us as the ones who are in charge. I mean, I wouldn't say it makes it a level playing field, because of course we are the locals and we speak Italian and we can go home, and don't have to go back to the bad hotel room at the end of the day. But it's a very different relation than we would have if we were paid social workers or paid artists to do this kind of engagement.

TJ You could call yourselves social designers, maybe! The idea of looking at incomers as people who can actually contribute to the community is really refreshing.

BE For now, we're having lots of interesting conversations, and meeting lots of amazing people, and it's good. We just hope at the end it will be good for them as well. If it's just good for locals, and not for the asylum seekers, then the project hasn't worked.

TJ What have you gained from being part of the network?

BE What we've really learned is how Kathrin and Doina work, how they organise and do things to be able to sustain projects. It's great to get that insight, because it's stuff going on behind the scenes which we have no idea how it's done. So, for example, sitting down with Kathrin, and being able to see how she writes an EU funding application, for instance, has been really valuable. You realise it's not out of reach, it's something that can be done and it's a great way to sustain collaborations with like-minded colleagues and friends across Europe.

TJ It's so interesting working on this project because it's all these different things it's so wide: there's the post-capitalist stuff, the school stuff, the social design stuff.

BE But that's the thing, it's different for each group in the network. Because I'm pretty sure that the Romanians would

have a very different opinion of what's going on. Because you're part of the network, then you make it what you need it to be.

TJ I think one of the questions we have to ask with this book is 'what is this book about?' What is the school!

BE I always say it's like a mutual aid thing. It seems like ten different projects across Europe who are doing really interesting stuff that's really difficult to categorise: let's support them, go out to meet them, and learn from each other. And I think that maybe Kathrin and Doina invited us into the network thinking, these guys really need some help to settle there and develop a practice! For us, it has been incredibly valuable.

THE NETHERLANDS

Locations

- Rotterdam
- Friesland
- Beetsterzwaag

Subjects

- Farms and the City
- Farmers and Ranchers
- New Village Product

MYVILLAGES AND OTHER HOSTS

Myvillages has been a key partner in the Eco Nomadic School from the start. Rather than focusing on one project in the Netherlands, we produced three different collaborations with three different communities: with food producers in and around Rotterdam, with young farmers in Friesland, and with the village of Beetsterzwaag.

Wapke Feenstra is a Rotterdam-based artist and founding member of Myvillages, who works with farmers, geologists, landscape designers, anthropologists and historians across the world, to reveal the embedded cultures and histories behind the way we use land.

Caroline Zeevat is a designer, gardener and community growing coordinator, who not only knows most of the growing spaces in Rotterdam, but also the food chain links between them.

Stadslandbouw Schiebroek-Zuid is a women-run gardening and catering group in the south of Rotterdam. The group uses green areas in their local housing estate for growing food, and runs a home-based food enterprise, using recipes from their different migration backgrounds.

Kunsthuis SYB is an artist residency in Beetsterzwaag. They offer a house, studio and gallery space in the main street of the village. Wapke took that site as a starting point to meet and co-create the new Village Product.

CLASSROOMS

- A rooftop farm
- A housing estate
- Various restaurants
- Tomato lab
- Wapke's studio
- A polder
- Dairy farms
- A community hall
- An artist residency space

LANGUAGES

English, Dutch, and Frysk.

THE NETHERLANDS

Rotterdam	Term 01	237
	Farms and the City (April 2013)	

Friesland	Term 02	251
	Farmers and Ranchers (March 2014)	

Beetsterzwaag	Term 03	259
	New Village Product (June 2016)	





ROTTERDAM

Having been bombed during World War 2, Rotterdam is no longer a nostalgic city. It's a harbour city where goods and people move, ideas and enterprises materialise, land is claimed and reclaimed. The harbour constantly moves further out and leaves vacant land behind – postindustrial areas which don't result from shrinking trade, but from the urge for current harbour operations.

The south-western edge of the city is more rural, opening up to a polder landscape (land below sea-level) which remains predominantly agricultural. Farmland in The Netherlands is expensive and has always been intensively used. It's simply too precious not to make a profit.

The farmland towards Den Hague is almost exclusively covered with modern greenhouses, producing mainly tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers for national and worldwide distribution.

Rotterdam also prides itself as a city for design, innovative architecture and experimental urban planning. It's a place that allows new ideas to be produced and tested, and is pragmatic enough to move on when things don't work.



High Contrast Farm Tour

The focus is on Rotterdam's agriculture, in the city, in the harbour and on nearby land. The places visited as part of the Eco Nomadic School reflect a great range of possible food growing activities: from guerilla to high-tech gardening; from municipal programmes to self-initiated; from professionally designed to simply well-planned by amateurs. An oyster mushroom farm in an abandoned tropical pool is probably the most exotic.



Tomato Seed Farm Rijk Zwaan

Extremely high-tech, global tomato seed producer located between Rotterdam and Den Haag. Specialist lab for global regional tastes and fashions in tomatoes, bespoke growing systems and high tech greenhouses. The tomatoes grow on pumpkin roots all year round.

Dakker, Central Rotterdam (p.218)

Vegetables, herbs, community garden. An extremely photogenic space.

Oyster Mushroom Farm, Tropicana (overleaf)

Mushroom farm in an abandoned water park, using coffee grounds collected on a bike tour across the city every morning.



De Buytenhof (above)

Tour with Wiard Visser on this family run fruit farm on the outskirts of Rotterdam. Diversified products, shop and café. Pick your own apples simply as an attraction, not as a more cost efficient way to pick.

Uit Je Eigen Stad, Port Rotterdam (below)

Market garden, hydroponics, mushrooms, restaurant and shop. Originally established as a not-for-profit community farm, but now reconstituted as an independent business to gain autonomy and stability.







Women Growers Tea and Tour

A visit to Stadslandbouw Schiebroek-Zuid, a women's growing and catering enterprise. Tea and a tour of the space are provided by the growers Nathalie Laats, Gul Karan, Fatma Yilmaz, Fatma Aktas.

In spring 2011 the Housing Co-operative Vestia started an urban gardening project in Rotterdam's Schiebroek-zuid, employing Caroline Zeevat as the project coordinator. Caroline started to work with residents on two vegetable gardens in the public spaces between the housing blocks. Today, there are 45 individual gardens of all kinds and sizes, growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers.

Community run lunches were organized to share the home grown food, and a small group of women started a small catering business, providing food stalls at farmers' markets such as Rotterdamse Oogst.









Tell Me What You Eat

Everyone who comes for an Eco Nomadic School session is asked to bring something to eat from home, something local, to talk about what they produce and like to eat. Hot smoked Bohemian ham mixes with herbal tea blends from neighbourhood gardens, honey from east London with home made Tzuika from Brezoi.

Wapke has prepared fresh white asparagus from Caroline's favourite vegetable stall on Rotterdam's weekly market, local ham and the first spring potatoes from De Buytenhof Farmshop, for a shared dinner with other colleagues at her studio in Rotterdam Zuid.



THE NETHERLANDS

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FRIESLAND

Friesland, or Fryslân in the local tongue, is home to around 650,000 people and is one of the 12 provinces of The Netherlands. The main language in the rural areas is Frysk, officially the second language of The Netherlands, used by just 300,000 people on a daily basis. In the north, the province has a heavy, clay soil, with grasslands used for hay and silage harvest. In the summer we see the iconic, black and white Frisian Holstein cow grazing. With a high-tech dairy industry, the region attracts lots of investment, yet the province is also a region with higher unemployment than The Netherlands' average.



CURRICULUM – FRIESLAND

*Farmers & Ranchers*¹ is a transatlantic exchange project with young farmers from two typical rural clichés: cowboy-land Colorado in the United States and the Dutch dairy-farming province of Friesland. The project aims to convey and compare the different farming traditions of their families, and their ambitions for the future. Both groups enter their adult farming lives as the landscapes they work undergo tremendous change: sea dykes are rising in Friesland, while the plains of Colorado suffer drought.

The three-year-long project takes these young farmers out of their local environment and encourages them to share their lifestyle with a larger audience, through photos and a documentary.

They were all round 15 to 17 years old when the project started, living with their parents on a farm, and eager to embark on a career in agriculture.

The documentary film *Farmers & Ranchers: Growing up in Changing Landscapes* was part-made during the Eco Nomadic School session, with the Dutch farmers devising an informative and representative tour of their area for their American colleagues.



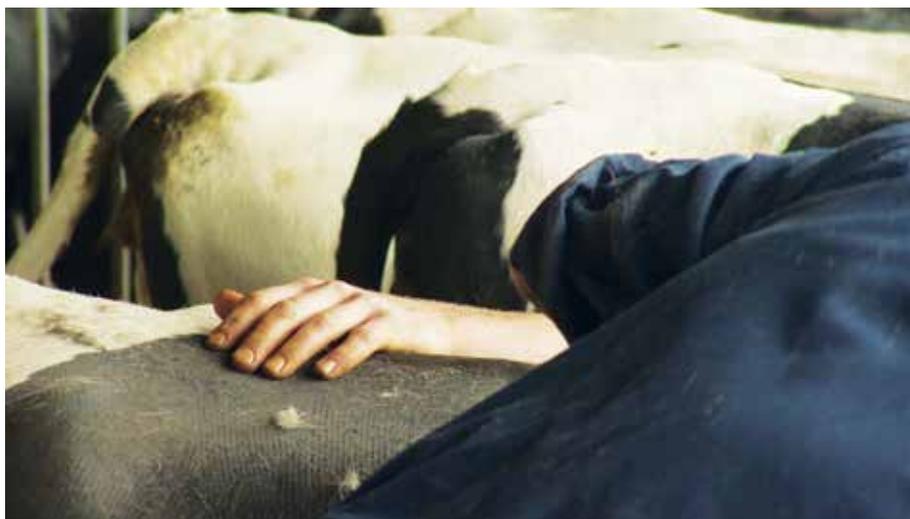
¹ *Farmers & Ranchers* is a co-production by Wapke Feenstra with the M12 Collective, Byers, Colorado. www.farmersandranchers.nl

How to Film Yourself in Order to Talk About the Future

Young farmers from Friesland explain their everyday reality to the young ranchers from Colorado. The film is all about self-reflection, in order to relate to others. What shapes my life and role as a farmer in this particular landscape? What makes me so certain that things should be done in this way? How to approach a future in farming and ranching?

Professional film-makers capture these reflections (and the surrounding landscapes) in beautiful detail.





Land Use and Farm Tour

During the Eco Nomadic School the young American farmers travelled to Friesland, where it fell to the young Dutch farmers to show them around and explain their land, lives and work.







THE NETHERLANDS

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BEETSTERZWAAG

The municipality of Opsterland, in Friesland, has a population of approximately 30,000, spread across sixteen villages. The biggest village, with over 7,000 inhabitants, is Gorredijk, the smallest is Oldeterp, with only 80. The municipal offices are in Beetsterzwaag.

Beetsterzwaag is well known regionally for the rehabilitation centre and care homes which have been built on land that used to be part of country estates. Most of the woodland is still privately owned. The landed gentry who ruled the roost here amassed huge fortunes from peat extraction and land development. At the end of the nineteenth century the peat workers, inspired by the Dutch socialist and anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846–1919), united to protest against the abysmal working conditions. That glaring inequality between rich and poor remains a hot topic.



CURRICULUM – BEETSTERZWAAG

What is local culture and how can shared memories feed into collective creation? How can the history and identity of the region be expressed in a new local product? Wapke Feenstra instigated a creative public process for the village of Beetsterzwaag, which resulted in *Wild Treasure*, a precious tradeable object which embodies many of the strong local narratives and histories. The process took place at the Kunsthuis SYB, a space for artist residencies located in the village.

This term of the school had fewer external guests, but used one of the school's regular techniques, collective product development, to create something that was then used in other countries' curricula. This was an exercise in making something extremely local, which would also have an international existence. In effect, it became a nomadic product.



A New Village Product: Wild Treasure

Stories are passed down from generation to generation about legendary figures, the regional landscape, untamed and wild, and how people lived in the past. One particularly intriguing story was about Dr. Tonckens in Beetsterzwaag, who is said to have inherited a fortune from the Van Teyens, a patrician family, under dubious circumstances. Did he hide it in his garden or Beetsterzwaag forest?

The new design was inspired by a typical local product: wâldbeantsje. These yellow beans were once the fare of poor people, but have recently found their way onto the menus of modern classy restaurants in the region. It was soon clear that the new product had to include the shape of this bean.

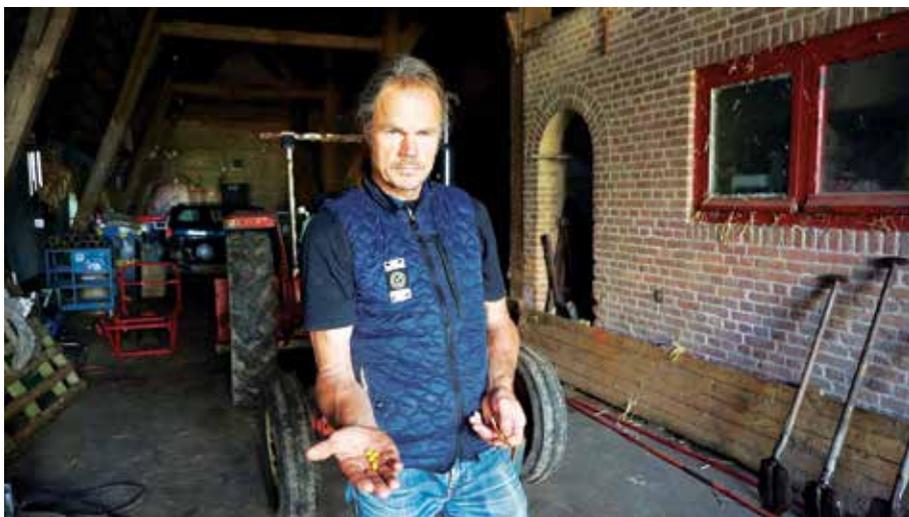
To shape the new product, two other particularly local skills entered the process: silver jewellery making and mole hunting. Douwe van de Velde, silversmith and owner of the town's goldsmiths, developed a silver locket that could contain the bean; whilst Jannes Wijnstra, a local health shop owner and amateur mole-catcher, used the traditional mole hunting technique to catch the animal for its fur. In past times, mole fur would have been used by the less-well-off to make ladies' coats, or decorate the black high hats of the landlords.

"This project was about so much more than the end-product. I felt out of place at first, because we started with talking and brainstorming, and Douwe and I are do-ers. But once we started delving, I felt enriched. The sessions made me think more about where I live. I became more aware of my surroundings."

Rinske Sieswerda, co-owner of
Goudsmidse Van de Velde (the
goldsmiths).

The proceeds from the sale of each *Wild Treasure* will be used to make another one, so there will always be ten in circulation.*

* Notes from a report by Agnes Winter







Opsterland Landscape Walk and Bike Tour

We walked as a living history lesson, to discover the hidden history behind the local landscape. Forests define the landscape around Beetsterzwaag. Wild animals such as deer, rabbits and pheasants have lived and roamed in these forests since they first appeared. Everybody hunted and poached in the past.

Another observation made during the walk was the stark contrast between rich and poor, which was endemic in Opsterland. Wealthy farmers and landed gentry ran the show and further enriched themselves by buying up land and selling peat. Around the same time, hordes of poor labourers worked their fingers to the bone on the land and cut peat for starvation wages. The stately mansions and landscaped parks and gardens remain.





UNITED KINGDOM

Locations

- Ballykinlar
- Todmorden
- Sheffield
- London

Subjects

- Do It Yourself
Cultural Centre
- Food Commons
- Field Trips to Self-
Organised Spaces
- Learn to Act
International
Workshop

ECO NOMADIC SCHOOL UK

The UK iteration of the Eco Nomadic School was the most geographically dispersed of all of the school's national groups. Classes took place across the entire country: from a village in Northern Ireland to the East End of London, via the city of Sheffield, and the hill town of Todmorden. This geographic pick 'n' mix reflects the dispersed way of working of the school's main partner in the UK, the University of Sheffield's School of Architecture (SSoA).

SSoA places a large emphasis on the social and political implications of architecture, engaging with real communities across the country. The Eco Nomadic School collaborated with two programmes of SSoA in particular: Live Projects, an intensive six-week programme that immerses students in a real world project with an actual client; and Building Local Resilience, a platform to bring together research across the wider university in climate, demographics, governance and new forms of economics.

Though geographically separate, all of the host projects with which we engaged were linked by their status as self-initiated, bottom-up or community driven. The curriculum can thus be summarised as 'doing it yourself when no-one else will do it for you'.

CLASSROOMS

- Village pavements
- Caravans
- Army barracks
- City farms
- Allotments
- Terraced shops
- Self-built housing estates
- Theatres in disused department stores.

LANGUAGES

English and French.

UNITED KINGDOM

Ballykinlar, Northern Ireland	Term 01 Do It Yourself Cultural Centre (June 2010)	271
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Todmorden, England	Term 02 Food Commons (October 2011)	281
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Sheffield & London, England	Term 03 Field Trips to Self- Organised Spaces (May 2013)	291
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BALLYKINLAR

Ballykinler or Ballykinlar, depending on which of the two 'communities' one belongs to, is wedged between the Mourne Mountains, the Irish Sea, and – cutting off access to the beach – a British Army camp. The adjacent Abercorn Barracks has dominated the village since 1902. The military provided many jobs, allegiances, and opposition, again depending on one's national/cultural identity.

The village is a condensed, rural microcosm of Northern Irish society, history, and politics, magnified by the presence of the army. It is hence similar to interface zones in Belfast, with its urban environment of segregated communities. During The Troubles, the army operated in Northern Ireland. Nowadays, they prepare for conflicts further afield. In 2014, the '2nd Battalion, The Rifles' were relocated to another Northern Irish camp. The Abercorn Barracks and its grounds are now only used for training and many jobs in Ballykinlar have been lost as a result.



HOSTS

Our hosts in Ballykinlar are Anne-Marie Dillon, PS² Gallery, Belfast, and the Forever Young Pensioners Group. Anne-Marie is a mother of seven children, local resident, artist, activist, and feminist (listed according to her own order of priorities). PS² is a voluntary artist collective and project space in the middle of Belfast, run by Peter Mutschler. The Forever Young Pensioners Group, based in the village, are self-explanatory.

CURRICULUM – BALLYKINLAR

Long before the Eco Nomadic School arrived, local artist and activist Anne-Marie Dillon, with the support of PS² in Belfast, had been producing a string of interventions, workshops and activities in the village to test forms of community space at a very basic, low cost level, yet with plenty of playfulness. As Anne-Marie states, 'just because we don't have a community centre doesn't mean we are not a community.'

Without funding or support from the local council, and in a context in which terms such as 'communities' are fraught with historical and sectarian tensions, this is easier said than done.

The Eco Nomadic School, as non-locals and representatives of the EU, could act as a neutral outsider in terms of entering the discussion, developing new collective ideas, and gaining access to contested spaces.

We probably learnt more than we gave.

A Community Centre in Three Steps:

- 1. Coffee Mornings
in the Street**
- 2. Dropping a Caravan**
- 3. Adding a Container**

The first and simplest action towards building a community centre was a series of coffee mornings, in which Anne-Marie literally placed chairs, sofas and tables out on the pavement in the middle of the village. When it rained, 'community' didn't happen.

The next stage was to create a physical place with shelter from the weather. The simple response to this was to drop a caravan in the middle of the village green. Once a week, sometimes more often, the caravan was used by The Forever Pensioners to talk, drink tea, play bingo, and recount histories.

The caravan was augmented by the addition of a shipping container, outside of and around which people continued to sit, politely occupying space for their community.





Show and Tell

In every location of the Eco Nomadic School, a show and tell is a simple way to help people talk about their community, and what it means to them. Everyone is invited to bring something that's 'local,' or represents where they come from, and to talk about it.





Visit to the Barracks (or How to Access Inaccessible Places)

The beauty of the Eco Nomadic School as an EU-funded, international project is that it grants the groups and participants involved an air of formal respectability. As such, we are collectively granted access to places that are almost inaccessible to locals. In this instance, we were welcomed into one of the most contested and defended spaces in the community: the British Army barracks.

The school was given a formal tour, complete with flags and DVD presentations.





UNITED KINGDOM

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TODMORDEN

Todmorden is a Victorian mill town, sitting high in the Upper Calder Valley of Yorkshire. Located at the confluence of three steep-sided valleys, the town is only a few miles from the top of the Pennine hills that split the north of England in two. Initially a centre of the wool trade, the town suffered a similar fate to most northern English industrial centres in the latter years of the 20th century, with the mills closing down and the industry moving elsewhere.

Today, Todmorden is a commuter town for the cities of Manchester, Leeds and Bradford. The town still interacts with its rural context, however, with easy access to the local Pennine countryside, an indoor and outdoor market, and an economy based increasingly around local food.



HOSTS

The hosts for the school in Todmorden are SSoA's Live Projects, in collaboration with Incredible Edible Todmorden: a campaign group for local food in Todmorden, who began growing food on disused land in the town, without permission, in 2008. Since then, the project has gone from strength to strength, gathering publicity, new projects and volunteers in equal numbers, and becoming a by-word for self-initiated urban growing projects in the UK.

CURRICULUM – TODMORDEN

The students choice of title 'Growing (in) Todmorden', summarises well two of its key aspects: how to grow food in Todmorden through various growing initiatives, and how to grow the town itself, through nurturing community and practices of a place.



Incredible Edible Town Tour



We gather in the Unitarian Church and are welcomed by the students. After a general introduction to the project, and some local food for lunch, Estelle Walsh, one of the key members of Incredible Edible, takes us on a tour of the town.

Our first stops are Mary's former rose garden, which she transformed into a public garden for growing and sharing vegetables three years ago, and a guerrilla gardening patch next to some car-parking spaces. Estelle explains that Mary took down the front wall of her garden, took out all the roses and planted vegetables instead, which she has offered to passers by for free ever since. There are small insect houses, a water butt, and an information panel explaining what each of the plants are and when they can be harvested.

By the parked cars, Estelle explains that the group furtively dug up the previous 'prickly shrubs' which were planted by the local authority to minimise maintenance. Such plants need little care, yet prevent other animals from nesting or feeding there, and (most importantly for the group) produce nothing edible. In their place, they have planted fennel and other herbs, things that you can eat and that 'smell nice'.

Estelle explains the group have a 'can-do' attitude. In this location and a number of others, they did not bother asking for permission, intuiting an endless bureaucracy, but went ahead and did it. The presence of 'prickly shrubs' demonstrated that no-one cared about this particular place anyway. The ecological imperative to 'just get on with it' is clear enough and their act of caring (for plants) in this location has been a success, because no-one else cared. But in other locations, where others do have interests, Estelle admits they have made mistakes.

We walk along the canal, where Incredible Edible have planted nasturtiums, blackberries, peas, beans and other vegetables. We arrive at the community herb garden, a space they have managed to carve out of the health centre car park. The garden is the result of long negotiations

with the Primary Health Care Trust, whom they have persuaded to donate the space. They also managed to dissuade them from planting prickly shrubs. In their place, the project has blackberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, rhubarb, as well as cherry trees and apple trees.

Raspberries instead of shrubs is a small but important victory. They have transformed a public space that no-one otherwise wanted to care for into spaces that are collectively looked after and productive.

We finish our tour by visiting the raised beds outside the community college and then police station. A group of around 50 volunteers goes around all the beds, taking care of the plants.

We ask how Incredible Edible manage to get so many people engaged? How do they organise volunteers? Estelle explains part of their strategy is about 'starting small'. People are invited to participate on very small and manageable tasks. Incredible Edible now have a database of around 200 local volunteers.

But what will make this sustainable? And how and why do people volunteer? At this point, an interesting discussion begins about the nature of participation and volunteering in the different localities. How is Incredible Edible able to get 200 people involved in an initiative like this in the first instance? Our Romanian participants, Theo and Radu, suggest that in their town of Brezoi, this would not be imaginable.

Estelle suggests that sharing and giving away food, as they have done with their gardens is one way. In Estelle's words, this kind of public garden is propaganda. But Theo and Radu are not so sure. They feel that there is something qualitatively different; that sharing publicly in their locality will be viewed with suspicion. But they also make us aware of a paradox, that is the incompatibility of an ethics of sharing and gifts, as a form of propaganda.

Dinner and Talk

We have dinner at Walsden, a piece of land owned by a local garden centre, to which Incredible Edible have managed to secure access on a five year loan. The site has three polytunnels which are used for growing salads sold in local restaurants; fruit trees planted around the perimeter; and high piles of manure which have been 'gifted' to the project by local farmers.

Dinner gives the Eco Nomadic School group the opportunity to get to know one another, and the chance to really listen to each other. The connections we make are difficult to describe without being reductive. These informal situations are important in giving confidence, inspiration and motivation to the group, and in building a network.



Mini Seminar on Food Commons

We start the second day at 9am in the church. We open with a discussion about commons. For some, like Mircea, Theo and Radu the concept of a commons is more appreciable. For others, especially urbanites, it is a notion that is more conflated with notions of public space.

We split into smaller groups and discuss further the subject of commons based on three key words from the Live Project group's research: 'Resources, Governance and Visibility'. The discussions go beyond simple practicalities: in speaking of resources, we cover material aspects like forests in Brezoi, beaches in Northern Ireland, and public spaces in Paris; as well as immaterial ones like humour, skills, knowledge and relations, like friendship.

From both the discussions during the workshop and at dinner, we each begin to grasp some of the different conditions facing groups in different localities, but with the identification of common issues for eco-civic practices.







All text for Todmorden adapted from an Agency report written by Sarah Broadstock, Kim Trogal and Doina Petrescu.

UNITED KINGDOM

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Heeley City Farm, Sheffield

Heeley City Farm is located on a steep hill near the edge of Sheffield city centre, where a bypass was planned in the 1970s. The bypass met stiff local resistance, however, and the plan was eventually dropped – only after the houses had been demolished. Without a plan for what to do on the site, the local residents association developed the idea of a city farm. Today, the farm is a thriving community venue, with livestock, wildlife gardens, an onsite vegetarian café, a petting zoo and space for health and well-being. The one remaining terraced house on the site has now been transformed into a demonstration house for green technology.



Hazlehurst CSA, Sheffield

Hazlehurst was a Community Supported Agriculture Co-operative on a 9 acre site in the Moss Valley, to the south of Sheffield. It was born out of the local Transition Town movement in 2010, when an ethical property developer bought the land, and gave the Transition Town group a two year option to set up a co-operative there. The co-op ran a veg box scheme, selling to local people provide a direct link between the production and consumption of food. As of 2017, Hazlehurst is no longer a going concern. However, the site is still used for food growing.



Walters Way, London

Walters Way is a famed 1980s self-build housing development in Lewisham, south-east London. The houses were designed by architect Walter Segal to be entirely modular and capable of being built by the average person, without recourse to any wet-trades (brick-laying, plastering etc.). They were built on a steep, uneconomic, council-owned site, by people waiting on the borough's council housing list. The self-builders traded their work for reduced rent. At the end of the project, the self-builders had the chance to buy the remainder of their homes from the council. All did so.



Farm Shop, London

Farm Shop is a vertically integrated food growing venue in an old Victorian terraced house in Dalston, East London. Once a derelict shop, it today bills itself as 'the world's first urban farming hub', with hydroponics, a café, a workspace, and a small garden.





UNITED KINGDOM

Ballykinlar, Northern Ireland	Term 01 Do It Yourself Cultural Centre (June 2010)	271
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Todmorden, England	Term 02 Food Commons (October 2011)	281
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Sheffield & London, England	Term 03 Field Trips to Self- Organised Spaces (May 2013)	291
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Sheffield	Term 04 Learn to Act International Workshop (June 2017)	297
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Learn to Act International Workshop

Learn to Act was a one-day, international workshop to explore the growing movement of alternative education projects taking root across our communities.

The workshop brought together a group of practitioners, teachers and friends from across Europe, to further explore some of the concepts, topics and problems brought up throughout the Eco Nomadic School. The format was a mix of presentations and hands-on, peer-to-peer workshops.

LEARN TO ACT SHEFFIELD, UK

Tuesday 6 June 2017

10.30am – 8pm

Theatre Delicatessen,
The Moon, Sheffield

An international
workshop on alternative
education and mutual
learning across Europe.

Talks:

RUTH MORROW
Queen's University,
Belfast (keynote)

DÓNA PETRESCU
Sheffield University
School of Architecture/
AAA, Paris

KATHERINE SCHM
Mythlings/Company
Dúnk, London

VIVIANA CHECCHIA
Centre for Contemporary
Art, Glasgow

MARTIN FRANKS
School of Organisation,
University of Leicester

JULIA UDALL
Studio Puppo/
Sheffield Hallam
University

Peer-to-peer workshops:

MIKE SCHALK
KTH School of
Architecture, Stockholm

**SILVIO MEDDESAN &
LAURA PANAT**
La Terrenut, Cba

STEVE BERGS
sa-Casco, Utrecht

PAUL STEWART
Alternative Art College,
Middlesbrough

MATT WESTON
Spacemakers, Brighton

VALERIA GHAZIANO
Möbius University,
London

JANNA GRAMM
Goldsmiths, University of
London

OLIVIER LEDERQ
Aoties & Coles, Paris

JORG STOLLMAIER
Institute for Architecture,
Technical University of
Bern

LISE AUTOURNA
Sheffield Hallam
University/Christiana
Research in Residence,
Copenhagen

BENCE KÖMÖSI
Architecture for
Refugees, Rijot Earth

KATHARINA MEYER
Architect, Berlin (Ibc)

ANDY JOY
Attendees are actively
invited to take part!

Learn to Act is a one-day, international workshop organised by the Sheffield School of Architecture and the Eco-Nomadic School, which aims to explore the growing movement of alternative education projects taking root across our communities. We're bringing together a group of practitioners and teachers from across Europe, to ask:

- How do you set up an alternative school to engage communities?

- What's the value of informal learning and teaching?

- How can we teach each other if we don't speak the same language?

- Can we understand these practices in terms of a civic pedagogy?

- Are we doing something radical?

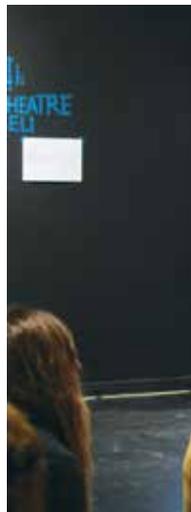
We'll be showcasing projects as diverse as container universities, refugee classrooms and rural peer-to-peer learning networks; and we'll be talking about our experiences running the Eco-Nomadic School, a ten-year-old, trans-European network of local learning projects.

Attendance is free. A shared lunch will be provided. Join us for a post-workshop dinner at the Foodhall project, Eyre Street, from 6pm.

The event is supported by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union and SSoA - University of Sheffield.

 Erasmus+

 SSoA





Contributors included:

- **Kathrin Böhm** and **Doina Petrescu** introduced the Eco Nomadic School.
- **Ruth Morrow** (Queen's University Belfast) on 'Civic Pedagogies in Critical Contexts'.
- **Lise Autogena** (Sheffield Hallam University/Christiana Research in Residence, Copenhagen) on 'Experiments in learning from Freetown, Christiania'.
- **Martin Parker** (School of Organisation, University of Leicester) on 'What's wrong with the business school?'
- **Julia Udall** (Studio Polpo/Sheffield Hallam University) on 'Solidarity economies and ecologies'.
- **Viviana Checchia** (Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow) on 'How can we create a school for civic imagination?'
- **Christoph Schäfer** (PlanBude, Hamburg) on 'How can local knowledge be scaled up to the level of urban planning?'

Workshops included:

- **Meike Schalk** (KTH School of Architecture, Stockholm) asked: 'How can we develop civic skills for strengthening democratic values?'
- **Paul Stewart** (Alternative Art College, Middlesborough) asked: 'Are alternative art schools just a proliferation of the neoliberal single market?'
- **Valeria Graziano** (Middlesex University, London) & **Janna Graham** (Goldsmiths, University of London) asked: 'What would the post-capitalist university feel like?'
- **Matt Weston** (Spacemakers, Brighton) asked 'Are universities doomed?'
- **Silviu Medesan & Laura Panait** (La Terenuri, Cluj, Romania) asked: 'Can informal education create civic groups able to advocate for their right to build the city?'
- **Katharina Moebus** (Designer/Researcher, Berlin) asked: 'How can we engage a truly diverse audience in alternative learning spaces?'
- **Bence Komlósi** (Architecture for Refugees, Planet Earth) asked: 'How important are personal relationships and networks in alternative educational projects?'
- **Steyn Bergs** (formerly of Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory) asked: 'What would it mean to study artworks for the commons, as a commons?'





The workshop was hosted by the Sheffield School of Architecture, and took place in the Theatre Delicatessen, a theatre in a disused Woolworths department store, in the city centre. Food was provided by Foodhall, a pay-what-you-can food-waste café and social centre, set up by SSoA graduates.

SCHOOL FOOD & DRINK



The school moved from country to county, town to village, rural to urban, yet some things never changed. Though the menu might vary, eating and drinking together as a school was the number one way to begin sharing our experiences, and getting to know other local people from far away.













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Learn to Act for an Engaged Everyday Life

Doina Petrescu

Our neoliberal capitalist times are marked by a crisis of reproduction not only of production, as the very basis on which things and life are produced is now under threat.¹ We are convinced that many citizens like us would like to become active with this essential reproductive work, and determine themselves the changes they want to see.

What is this learning that gives us agency to cope, resist and change current conditions? How can we 'make other worlds possible' from wherever we are and whatever our position: as practitioners, activists, artists, researchers, students and ordinary citizens? How do we prepare ourselves for this sustained reproductive work, both at a local and global scale?

At a time when most of us feel and fear a global political and environmental crisis, we argue for the necessity of learning to act.

Learning as 'the Practice of Freedom'

The Eco Nomadic School emerged from the collective motivation of a number of people, and quickly gained a political dimension based on the conviction that pedagogy and education do not exist solely in schools and in institutions, but also within the civic realm: in activist initiatives; through political struggles; through economic undertakings; and, ultimately, in everyday life.

The school is 'education as the practice of freedom', to borrow Freire's famous formula.² It expands the realm of education to forms and formats that do not exist within current institutions, being based on what I would term a radical inclusivity. No one is excluded. The only condition is being prepared to learn and to teach actively and immediately useful things, which will improve one's own life, and at the same time, the life of the planet.

Together with feminist theorists such as Nancy Hartsock,³ or Donna Haraway,⁴ we at the Eco Nomadic School state that knowledge is socially constructed, and it is therefore 'situated' and affected by the social position of the producer. This approach to education, which starts at the level of

1 Petrescu D, Trogal K. (eds) (forthcoming 2017), *The Social Reproduction of Architecture* (London: Routledge)
2 Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Continuum.
3 Hartsock, N (1998). *The feminist standpoint*

revisited and other essays. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press

4 Haraway, D (1988) *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the privilege of partial perspective in Feminist studies* Vol13 (3), pp 575-599

everyday life, challenges the dominant viewpoint, and provides 'partial visions' which are subjective, embodied and diverse. The Eco Nomadic School aims to contribute to these partial visions, allowing, through its diverse curricula, a continual 'mobile positioning' of civic researchers.⁵ This 'roaming eye' embedded in the field gives a better and more exact picture of reality than other, more generalist visions.

Learning as Commoning

The Eco Nomadic School has an open politics of knowledge, which valorises knowledge exchange from different sources and across sectors and locations.⁶ Learning to act for a better world is learning with actions, people, and landscapes, all at the same time; it is an attempt to consider education as a commons.

Commons are at the heart of the discussion on democracy. The thinkers of the commons have stressed the urgent necessity today for both reclaiming existing commons and reinventing new ones. This undertaking needs time and space for sharing, and new institutions and agents who can guide and frame this process: it needs continual and sustained 'commoning'.

The actors of the Eco Nomadic School understand the diversity of everyday knowledge as both an existing and reinvented commons. Civic education, in this respect, is a commoning process which includes the maintenance and reproduction of this everyday knowledge across locations and cultures.

Diverse Pedagogies

The economic geographer Katherine Gibson, a great friend of Eco Nomadic School, has coined the term 'diverse economies' to speak about the numerous projects of economic autonomy and experimentation that are proliferating across the world. To explain this, Katherine shows the drawing of an iceberg, whose small visible top represents the capitalist economy as we know it, and whose huge invisible mass represents the 'other' economies, including those economies that sustain life for a majority of the global population, hidden out of sight.

In an analogical manner, we can call these pedagogies 'diverse pedagogies' to emphasize their heterogeneous and inclusive nature, which spans a vast range of different types of learning: from scholarly to informal education, from academic institutions to rural and suburban communities,

5 See previous footnote.

6 J.K. Gibson-Graham (2008), *Diverse Economies: Performative Practices for 'Other Worlds' in Progress in Human Geography 2008 32 (5)* pp. 613-63

from elderly to youth and vice-versa. This nomadic school, without fixed location and affiliation, thus allows a diversity of knowledges and know-hows to circulate, without hierarchy between participants and in diverse formats.

Just like the 'diverse economies', diverse pedagogies sit underneath the small, visible part of education hosted in specialized capitalist institutions. They can be found at grassroots level, dealing directly with knowledge connected to everyday life and communal living.

Learning as Agency

The Eco Nomadic School is a 'relational' project which connects communities and therefore their desires and ambition and joys: but it is about much more than being social. The school, and taking part in the school, is a political act, which promotes civic responsibility on a local and trans-local level. Learning as part of the school is a form of empowerment for existing groups to start (and continue) diverse practices, where social, ecological and economical concerns meet and merge. *Learning to Act* is ultimately about how to gain agency.

Eco Nomadic School's learning outcomes were immediately useful to inform and increase the 'capability to act' of each participant. This is a reframing of Amartya Sen's 'capabilities' approach to development in the context of education.⁷ Sen's approach shifts the focus from economic growth to a more holistic, freedom-based idea of human development, in which engaged groups and communities have a role to play towards collective emancipation and greater resilience. At a moment when resilience has become an imperative across the globe,⁸ The Eco Nomadic School with its citizen driven pedagogy, prepares the grounds for such a resilient transformation.

Transversality

The beauty of European programmes such as Grundtvig or Erasmus⁹ is that they allow 'transversal' encounters. Encountering 'the other' in his/her own context and engaging productively with her/him was an important goal for the Eco Nomadic School.

Transversality here refers to a method of organizing learning across strata: a learning which is neither hierarchical (vertical) nor symptomatic (horizontal), but generates unexpected and continually evolving situations and encounters. Guattari has introduced the concept of 'transversality' to speak about resilient subjectivity in

7 Sen, A (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8 Lewis, M., & Conaty, P. (2012). *The resilience imperative: Cooperative transitions to a steady-state economy*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.

9 Both historic figures and scholars with a fundamental social critique who promoted at the time radical ideas and pedagogy. EU programmes often tend to be named in this noble way.

the context of capitalist regimes. 'Transversality' for him is related to the subject's capacity to engender a new existential territory and to be transported beyond it.¹⁰

'Transversality' was experienced by each of the Eco Nomadic School's subjects who opened up their own 'existential territories' to others and transformed this experience into a learning experience. Participants in the Brezoi workshop thus learned not only about how to shear sheep but also about life and subsistence economies in the mountains.

Communities of Practice

The Eco Nomadic School could be also understood through Wenger's notion of 'communities of practice', as an informal learning network that developed through informal groupings drawn together by common challenges, opportunities or passions.¹¹

These knowledge communities functioned by bringing groups together to share previous experiences from different contexts, thus leading to much more effective problem solving. For many, it was the first time they acted as co-investigators in this way. A good example is provided by the community of fermentation practices that grew within the Eco Nomadic School, with people from Brezoi, Amsterdam, Colombes and Höfen all sharing their own version of the simple schnapps. Likewise, there has developed a community of gardeners, a community of wood builders, a community of husbandry and household economies within the school.

There is also a community of artists, activists, cultural workers, designers, feminists, curators, all drawing on their own peer-to-peer learning networks, and the non-hierarchical practices they've created in their own work (such as Live Projects at Sheffield School of Architecture). Here, learning became learning from and with others through pedagogies based on 'ethics, democracy and civic courage'.¹²

These are times of responsibility and care, times of reinvention and change, times when everyone's skills, knowledge and affective power are the most valuable and when learning to act should indeed be on everyone's agenda.

10 Guattari, F. (2016) *Psychoanalysis and Transversality, Texts and Interviews 1955–1971* Cambridge : MIT Press

11 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

12 See previous footnote.

Knowledge is power but it doesn't mean you are right

Kathrin Böhm

After the three-day Eco Nomadic School session on Rural Women's Economies in southern Germany, I received a short report from five women in my home village.

The report doesn't mention the many places we visited, the many things we looked at nor the hands-on workshops. It simply says, 'we were impressed that so many people with different opinions could be together, talk together and make space for each other, without someone trying to take the lead.'

The Eco Nomadic School – however irregular and geographically dispersed it was – always managed to set an open tone and avoid presumptuous hierarchies. It was driven by curiosity on all sides, from the organisers and the guests, locals and incomers. Why would anyone come all this way? What's happening locally? What can we learn and what can we give back? To ask, 'what can we learn here?' assumes that there is something to be learned.

'Knowledge is power' is something that is understood by everyone. But knowledge is also lots of other things. It's individual, collective, sometimes static, often dynamic, relevant and forgotten, well articulated or scarcely communicated, spoken in a different language or applied in unfamiliar settings.

To be inquisitive about knowledge, what it means and what it could mean on the ground, made the Eco Nomadic School special. To learn that a certain kind of knowledge might be of use to others makes this knowledge a public good. It also adds a wider dimension to any local project, and allows the local to meet the more general and universal.

The groups were always extremely mixed in terms of the different types of knowledge they represented, from officially accredited academics to locally acclaimed all-rounders, and the school format allowed the mixing of forms of knowledge which often wouldn't meet, let alone interact. The Eco Nomadic School valued all of these types of knowledge, and allowed them to be to be appreciated and linked to each other.

This is very different to the experience of being threatened by knowledge. I grew up with the term 'the studied ones' (die Studierten), those who went to university and came back with different views and different language. This fear of incoming or imposed knowledge being used to determine the future of communities and overrun local desires, is of

course, valid. But, at the same time, viewing other people's knowledge first and foremost with suspicion is limiting.

To negate someone's knowledge, or deny the fact that they know something, is devastating. It is a fact that numerous communities have been deprived of being seen as knowledgeable and specialist. This has occurred in particular with the life skills and knowledge of agricultural and working class communities, which scarcely survive in post-agricultural or post-industrial time.

Intelligence and learning that has been passed down for generations is now becoming lost, and has little monetary value within the globalized capitalist dynamics that seem to dominate our individual and collective lives. These communities are no longer seen by wider society as holding any knowledge of value, and certainly not of any relevance to the future. Yet the members of these communities have a fiercely independent identity, and have always felt that they know enough to live how they want to live.

The Eco Nomadic School tried to be a practical and conceptual framework to support particular groups and communities in becoming aware and more confident with the knowledge they have and hold, and what it might be used for next.

To think you know nothing is awful.

To be told you know nothing is cruel.

To think you know something is personal.

To share what you know is public.

To use what you know collectively makes culture.

I Learn You

Tom James

How to communicate with one another is a critical question for the Eco Nomadic School. A trans-European collective of determinedly local projects, some rural, some urban, will, of course, all speak different languages, and have to make an effort to communicate with others, to be multilingual. Across the various classes of the school, the following languages were spoken: French, Romanian, Italian, German, English, Dutch, Frysk, Spanish, Turkish, as well as numerous local dialects.

Almost every single class has examples of translation within and between participants. The Romanian workshops conducted mainly in French, with translation to Romanian and then into English. The building workshops in the Italian alps that were led in English (the second language of Brave New Alps) and French, due to the presence of a large number of West African refugees. The Rotterdam market stall at R-Urban in Paris that spontaneously changed from Dutch to Turkish, as the food started to be cooked.

Sometimes this went beyond spoken language. When building the Odaja, drawings and diagrams were used to communicate. 'Dada' became a shared staple, meaning 'yes-yes' and not a reference to art history. A field dictionary was kept for many of the projects, with technical phrases (machine, timber, post, beam) alongside conversational words (thank you, I'm sorry, yes, no) written in all the active languages. Pictures of flowers were drawn, with beautiful names in different languages added below.

To a British,¹ native English speaker editing this book, this is nothing short of phenomenal. We were never really taught foreign languages very well at school. Even the language teachers seemed to think it was pointless, arcane, as useful to us as long division, when we could go anywhere in Europe and be answered in our own tongue. So for these projects to communicate across borders and boundaries so well seems, to me, miraculous.

It also gives a bittersweet feeling. First of all, there's the humour inherent in any translation. The strange idioms that need explaining, and which everyone has their own version of. The Germans are trying to milk mice; the English are watching paint dry; the Italians are going to the town hall to get a fart signed off. And there's the lovely, soft little mistakes of Euro-English, that stand out a mile, as they would to any native speaker of any language. 'They learned us' rather than 'they taught us'; 'Sheeps' instead of sheep. 'These days' used to describe Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, rather than the current epoch.

Two years ago, before Brexit and the fundamental questions it has raised about the EU project, this would have all just been cause for a little embarrassment and a wry smile. But now, suddenly, being a native English speaker is a strange, sad privilege. Suddenly the Euro-English that's spoken and written and shared through projects like the Eco Nomadic School is loaded with a different sort of meaning.

It isn't slick, persuasive or rousing. It's clumsy, confusing, and slow. In order to understand what's being said you have to close your eyes and concentrate on the words, on the strange place names or the unwieldy acronyms. Sometimes you have to run a sentence through Google Translate to try to understand what anyone is on about.

But it turns out that gradual fumbling for shared meaning was the point all along. Europe is supposed to be slow, and difficult, and confusing, because that's what mutual understanding is. It doesn't come overnight. It's hardwork. But so is diplomacy. And so is peace.

1 I'm English, but the cultural expression of that identity is currently limited to fat football fans with their shirts off, smashing up pavement cafes; Nigel Farage in a tweed jacket, laughing over a racist joke in a thatched pub; or tabloid newspapers demanding war with Spain over

the English colony of Gibraltar, which, as Spain is a member of NATO, means demanding we declare war on ourselves. So British it is. This is probably something else we'll have to deal with in the next twenty years.

Common Products, Common Goods

Kim Trogal

Some of the activities and projects in this book, such as The Non-Consumerist Shop for R-Urban or the new Village Products by Myvillages, have prompted me to think about the role of material things in making commons. What kind of relation might we have with 'things' which are not commodities, and whose trade or exchange might institute a different set of economic relationships? Living in a time when everything is becoming a 'product', from time, debt, DNA, body organs, digital code and more, turning our attention to products and material goods, seems quite crucial if we want to build economic, and ethical alternatives. If such things becoming products represent a crucial moment of enclosure, to what extent do products also present themselves as opportunities to reclaim the commons?

The expression *Common Goods*, introduced in this context by Kathrin Böhm, turns the conventional economic definition of the term somewhat on its head. In economics, 'common goods' usually denotes some shared resource, and is often accompanied by the idea that some things, by virtue of their particular quality, are more easily and naturally shared than others (language, water, air and so on). This has been heavily refuted by a number of political theorists such as Hardt and Negri,¹ Dardot and Laval,² or historians of the commons such as Peter Linebaugh.³ These scholars have shown that the common good does not rely on what it is *per se*, rather than the rules and relationships around it, which are constructed and agreed upon by that community. It is not the material quality of air, water, language or knowledge that makes it 'common' or the qualities of street lighting or vaccinations that make them 'public' (although all are under pressure): it is the result of political choices and *practices*.

In light of this thinking, the expression *Common Goods* starts to suggest that any good, or any product, could become the basis for practices and relationships of commons. The possibilities of what a common product or common good might be are quite expansive. They might include 'open source' objects, DIY or self-provisioned objects. A notion of common goods becomes quite tangible when looking at Kathrin Böhm and Myvillages' projects, where new forms of actions and communities emerge

1 Hardt, M. and Negri A. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, Mass
2 Dardot, P. and Laval, C., 2015. *Commun: essai sur la révolution au XXIe siècle*. la Découverte

3 Linebaugh, P., 2009. *The Magna Carta manifesto: Liberties and commons for all*. University of California Press

around the shared development of products. Equally, one could look to more traditional, rural practices, in which we find many things that are shared or done together as part of a group. Fishing communities mending nets together for instance, or the practices of mutual aid Kropotkin wrote about were often attached to objects, such as the collective irrigation of vineyards that hinged around common ownership of a water pump.⁴

Interestingly, in Kropotkin's account, the collective practices were able to survive aggressive legislations and enclosures,⁵ *when they were attached to objects and events*. It suggests to me that there is a potential in contemporary products prompting thinking about how they might work with practices to resist contemporary enclosures.

This is particularly significant in the current moment in which new forms of services are emerging around shared goods. These include things like hiring clothes and accessories rather than buying them, making use of car pools, bike pools, tool libraries and so on, practices which have been referred to as collaborative consumption or part of an 'asset-lite' lifestyle.⁶ While these change our relationship with our everyday objects and have the merit of bringing ecological advantages they mostly, however, constitute an extension of rent further into the world of artefacts and material goods.⁷ They constitute an expansion of private property that represents a troubling transferal of assets, in which it is clear that large multinational corporations will benefit from retaining resources as their private property, which in the past was not seen as necessary from a profit perspective.⁸

Working within, or for, the common then needs to become more than a vocabulary of sharing, collaborating, participating or the qualities of openness, recycling, repairing and so on, as desirable as these may be. As network theorist Pasquinelli puts it, 'An accurate

4 Kropotkin, P., 1987 [1902]. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. Anarchists Classics. London, Freedom Press. Pp. 180–207

5 In England between 1760 and 1844 over 4,000 Acts of Parliament were passed to remove all traces of common ownership of land and possessions (ibid.)

6 See for example Botsman, R. and Rogers, R., 2010. *What's mine is yours. The rise of collaborative consumption*. London: HarperCollins

7 Vercellone, C., 2010. 'The crisis of the law of value and the becoming-rent of profit'. Translated by Arianna Bove. Available: http://www.generation-online.org/c/fc_rent2.htm

8 As Jamie Lawrence, Senior Sustainability Advisor Forest and Timber at Kingfisher, points out, access to virgin wood and fibre has been so easy in the past that reusing fibre was never on the industry's agenda. In fact, the biggest economic efficiency gains have resulted from using more resources, especially energy, to reduce labour costs. Such a system had few difficulties delivering lower costs as long as the fiscal regimes and accounting rules that govern it allowed many indirect costs to remain unaccounted for – the externalities. Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013. *Towards the Circular Economy Vol. 2: opportunities for the consumer goods sector*. Pp. 16–17. Available: http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/publications/TCE_Report-2013.pdf

understanding of *the common* must always be interlinked with the real physical forces producing it and the material economy surrounding it.⁹

One of the lessons of investigating common products was the realization that every production is already the result of social cooperation. Every product is the result of combining social efforts and intellect, including the knowledge and know-how that is handed down over generations. Machinery and technology embody those collective knowledges, replicating people's (workers) actions and heritage. In speaking about a common good or common product, every product should be seen as *already common*.

9 Pasquinelli, M. 2008. *Animal spirits: A bestiary of the commons*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers

SHARED RESULTS



Every session and class of the Eco Nomadic School had outputs and results, too. Not just the physical products we created (the wool, the sauerkraut, the *Wild Treasures*) but reports, ideas, plans, and new ways of thinking about the projects we're doing. Here's a selection.

France

- 01) Compost toilet
- 02) Haystack
- 03) Prototype packaging
- 04) Turkish flatbread
- 05) Recipe Cards
- 06) Non-Consumerist Shop
- 07) Micro-conference on Collaborative Civic Resilience
- 08) Charter for Local Action Against Climate Change
- 09) Official Eco Nomadic School Postcard Set



02)

Romania

- 10) Drawings and diagrams for the new Odaja
- 11) Outdoor, low-tech kitchen
- 12) Packaging for Odai goods
- 13) Ad-hoc chainsaw products
- 14) 'Brutally Beautiful' Odaja promotional video
- 15) Tzuika
- 16) Wool tiles



04)

Germany

- 17) Fruit in clay (zero-waste clay-baked snack)
- 18) 30 jars of Soyu-zuke
- 19) 50kg of Sauerkraut
- 20) Höfer Lace
- 21) Village Produce Film
- 22) Friesian Shell Path



13)



17)



03)



04)



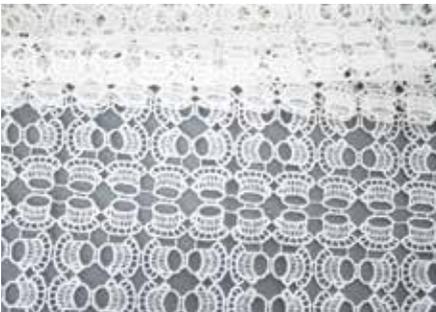
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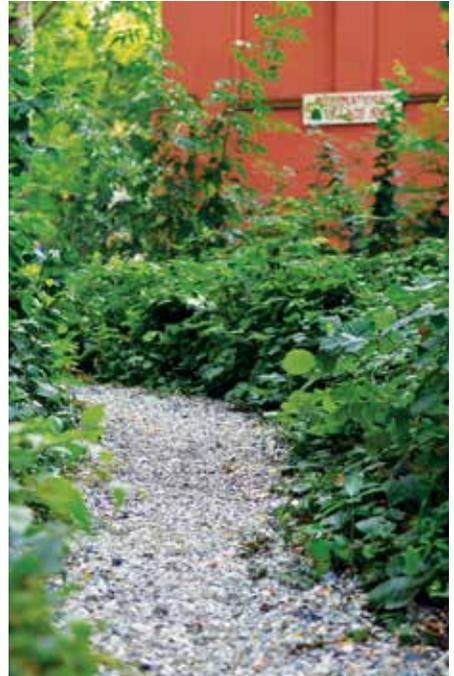
12)



15)



20)



22)



Italy

- 23) 'commun'Orto', a community garden in Rovereto
- 24) Presentation of Eco Nomadic School partner projects
- 25) Events on common lands in Trentino
- 26) Post-industrial space transformed into a community workshop
- 27) Physical structures including hairdressing unit, shelving and mobile kitchen
- 28) Outline of a communications strategy
- 29) Friendships and social support structures across the valley and Northern Italy



24)



27)

Netherlands

- 30) Farmers & Ranchers Film
- 31) Transatlantic rapport between Dutch and American young farmers
- 32) 'Wild Treasure' Village Product
- 33) Village Produce Film: 'Wild Treasure'
- 34) Report by Agnes Winter
- 35) Exhibition



31)

UK

- 36) Mini-seminar on Food Commons
- 37) Ballykinler Caravan Pot
- 38) International Schnapps Bar
- 39) Learn to Act International Conference
- 40) Official Eco Nomadic School Postcard Set
- 41) School of Architecture Live Projects in Todmorden, London and Rovereto



35)



25)



26)



29)



30)



32)



33)



37)



39)

People

We have tried to list the name of everyone who has been part of the Eco Nomadic School over the years. We went through reports and photos, asked around and tried to remember, but we fear that some names will not be on the list or might be misspelled. If it's you or someone you know then please accept our apologies and send us an e-mail, so we can at least attach a note to further copies of the book being sent out.

Abigail Humphreys	Camille Morin	Erna Gütthlein
Ablaye Mboup	Cara Jolly	Ernst Hofer
Adria Florea	Carlo Bettinelli	Fabiënne Dekker
Adrian Vărățiceanu	Carmen Gonzales Miranda	Fabio Franz
Adrien Dussouchet	Caroline Zeevat	Fanny Douville
Agnès Balseca	Carooline Zevaot	Fanny Farkas
Agnes Winter	Catherine Behague	Fatima Mouhib
Ahmed Shabaz	Catherine Tran	Fatma Aktas
Alain Camizuli	Céline Condorelli	Fatma Yilmaz
Alex Axintu	Cesar Gabriel Castillo	Fiona Woods
Alexandra Onică	Cherif Cherfi	Florina Mihalache
Alexandra Vasiliu	Chloe Gournay	Francien van Westernneen
Alice Wichtmann	Christian Ancuta	Franciska Zólyom
Amandine Albizzati	Christian Anicuta	Francoise Bernon
Ana Džokic	Christian Galarreta Danto	Françoise Prévot
Andrea Bischof	Christina Gütthlein	Frederique Sarkis
Andreas Lang	Christoph Schäfer	Gabriel Wolff
Andreas Oberhuber	Christophe Kotany	Gabriele Götz
Andreea Anghel	Ciprian Anghene	Gabriele Müller
Angela Finke	Claudia Acheen	Gabriele Penazzi
Anita Merzbacher	Claudia Trinzek	Gaja Meznarić Osole
Anna Smirnov	Claudiu Predușel	Geertjan Plooijer
Anna-Laura Bourignon	Clémence Kempinsky	Georgetta Onică
Anne Kersten	Colin Havard	Gerda Zijlstra
Anne Legrand	Conny Hofer	Gertrud Stowasser
Anne Linke	Constantin Petcou	Giampiero Benvenuti
Anne Marie Dillon	Costina Vărățiceanu	Giovana Zanghellini
Anne Marie Vuysteke	Cristian Caraș	Gisèle Sami
Anne Mourra	Cristina Cerulli	Gjalt Tjeerdsma
Anne Querrien	Cristina Predușel	Gul Karan
Anneke in't Veld	Cyrielle Abecassis	Gunda Derra
Annette Gütthlein	Dalton Eldringhoff	Hanappe Cyrille
Annie Engel	Daniel Demarque	Hannah Peek
Annie Jaquet	Daniela Dossi	Hanneke Jorritsma
Antje Schiffers	David Hammerstein	Haroon Saad
Arno Brandhuber	Denisa Enache	Heide Inhetveen
Åsa Sonjadotter	Dennis Huizenga	Heidi Böhm
Axel Schmidt	Doina Petrescu	Herke Epema
Bader Markus	Domenik Pasemann	Hildegard Lysek
Balseca Agnes	Dominik Renner	Hubert Sowa
Barbara Geralis	Dorian Gresoiu	Iain Davidson
Barbara Niklas	Dorian Predușel	Inderpaul Johar
Bärbel Batzner	Douwe van der Velde	Ingrid Fischer
Bence Komlósi	Dries van der Veen	Irinel Rebiga
Benjamin Poignon	Durk Schroor	Isabella Bonetti
Benoît Wulverryck	Eduardo Xerez	Ivone Peroni
Bettina von Dziembowski	Eirini Christofidou	Jaap Nijboer
Betty van der Kamp	Eline Nijboer	Jade Foucher
Bianca Elzenbaumer	Elionore Jabaud	Janneke van der Putten
Birgit Jauernig	Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen	Janneke van der Putten
Birgit Raab	Elissa Martin	Jannes Wijnstra
Blaz Beuerman	Elodie Cardinaud	Joanne Cunningham
Bogdan Vasilescu	Elsa Schneider	John Sampson
Brigid Claassen	Emilee Mickaliger	Joren Heise
Bryonie Reid	Emily Fickbohm	Jörg Stollmann

Jouke Ferwerda	Mélanie Bouissière	Seth He
Juan Piquemal	Mélanie Bouissière	Silvan Linden
Julia Rössner	Mia Petrescu	Silvia Hellmuth
Julia Schäfer	Michael Back	Silviu Medesan
Julia Udall	Michael Davis	Steyn Bergs
Juliane Lubkoll	Michael Grey	Susanna Wallis
Juri Bottura	Mihai Rares Ionescu	Tamara Härty
Kailey Haight	Mihalea Efrim	Theodor Teioşanu
Kate Rich	Miranda Pope	Thierry Mbouliobama
Katharina Moebus	Mircea Onică	Thomas Gunzelmann
Katherine Gibson	Mircea Vasii	Thomas Thiele
Kathrin Böhm	Miriam Wiesel	Tibault Labat
Kathrin Kappenberger	Monica Meza	Tom James
Katrin Möttlbauer	Murk-Jaep van der Schaaf	Valeria Graziano
Kerstin Dyemen	Natália Xavier	Veronique Faghel
Kha Nam Tzan	Nathalie Laats	Virginie Terroitin
Kim Trogal	Nathan Felder	Viviana Checchia
Kirsten Stoltz	Ndiritu Grace	Walter Böhm
Koen Blank	Nelu	Waltraud Derra
Kristina Brusa	Nick Green	Waltraut Müller
Kuba Szreder	Nicolae Stanculescu	Wapke Feenstra
Kylie Duncan	Nicole Döll	Wiard Visser
Laura Panait	Nils Wolfbauer	Wiebren Spoelstra
Laura Postlethwaite	Nina Hofer	Wietske Lycklema à Nijeholt
Legendre Florence	Nino Rizzo	Rinske Sieswerda
Léonard Nguyen Van Thé	Norbert Mayer	Wimke de Boer
Lise Autogena	Oana Pârvu	Xavier Natalja
Lise Skou	Olga Gartman	Xin Cheng
Lotta Lubkoll	Olivier Carl	Yaya Diarra
Lutzen Schroor	Olivier Leclercq	Yersel Kosova
Lyne Rose Soba	Özge Açıkkol	Yvon Pradier
Lysbeth Feenstra	Palmira Da Costa	
Maddalena Simoncelli	Paul Stewart	
Manola Corrent	Paulina Köst	
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Margarida Ferreira	Philipp Scharf	
Margau Goute	Pierre-Marie Cornin	
Margaux Tissot	Piet Vollaard	
Margit Czenki	Piquemal Juan	
Margit Graf	Rami Al Dhini	
Maria Elena Cavicchioli	Raphael Volkmer	
Maria Lind	Rareş Ionescu	
Maria List	Rasheed Naghman	
Maria Pasqualini	Raymonde Lacan	
Maria Ramos	Rebega Irinal	
Mariana Nițu	Rémi Noulin	
Marie-Claudine Duong	Renata Tyszczyk	
Marine Simon	Renate Neubecker	
Maritt Kuiper	Resi Derra	
Marjetica Portc	Rianne Andeveld	
Marlene Baum	Riccardo Govoni	
Martha Shields	Rinske Sieswerda	
Martin Eberle	Rinze de Boer	
Martin Leicht	Rita Schuller	
Martin Paquot	Ronald Van de Sompel	
Martin Parker	Ronny Schmidt	
Martina Dandolo	Rosa Leimbach	
Matt Weston	Rosanne del Prete	
Matthew Chamberlain	Roza El-Hassan	
Matthias Spielvogel	Ruth Morrow	
Mawuto Ojhowanou	Sam Brown	
Mechteld van der Loo	Sara Carlini	
Meike Schalk	Sara Vicenzi	
Meker Pascale	Sarah Kalcevic	

Contributing Writers

Kathrin Böhm is an artist and founding member of the artist group Myvillages and the art and architecture collective Public Works. Her collaborative work focuses on the collective production of public realms, trade as a public negotiation space and the everyday as a starting point for culture.

Mihaela Efrim is a science teacher, teaching in Brezoi high school, Romania. Brezoi is the small town where she was born, and where she has actively participated in the affairs of the community, beginning in the year 1990, the turning point when democracy was reborn in Romania. Mihaela was co-founder of FDCL in Brezoi.

Bianca Elzenbaumer is a co-founder (along with Fabio Franz) of Brave New Alps, a cultural association based in Rovereto, Italy, which engages people in rethinking social, political and environmental issues by combining design research methods with radical pedagogy, conflict mediation techniques and DIY making. Bianca also works as an Associate Professor at Leeds Arts University (UK).

Tom James is a writer and artist, based in London. He creates projects and publications to address the ambivalence he feels about the world that's coming our way. Tom's projects have been featured across the British press, whilst his cult fanzine, *Go*, is part of the permanent collection of the V&A.

Constantin Petcou is a Paris-based architect and co-founder of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) whose work stresses the intersection between architecture, urbanism and semiotics. aaa has been laureate of The European Prize for Urban Public Space 2010, the Zumtobel Prize for Research and Initiative 2013, and has been a finalist for the prestigious international competition Reinventing Paris 2015–16.

Doina Petrescu is a founding member of atelier d'architecture autogérée and Professor of Architecture and Design Activism, University of Sheffield School of Architecture/ Co-Founder, aaa Paris. Doina

is an activist, architect and educator dealing with commons-based resilience, feminist approaches and participative architecture in her research and practice.

Julia Schäfer is curator and art-educator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig. Her work focuses on the possibilities of art mediation in curatorial strategies. Julia studied fine arts, art education and German literature at the University of Osnabrück and Academy for Fine Art Dresden, and has also worked at the New Museum, New York.

Kim Trogal is a lecturer at the Canterbury School of Architecture, University for the Creative Arts, UK. Prior to joining Canterbury, Kim was a postdoctoral research fellow at Central St Martins, University of the Arts London, and a postdoctoral research assistant at the Sheffield School of Architecture, for the school's Building Local Resilience research platform.

Editors' Note

The book was put together through a collaborative editing process from official and unofficial reports, conversations, memories, photo archives, name-lists and emails. Text was gleaned from everywhere, cut up and boiled down. We've tried to credit where possible, but you might recognise your words rephrased or paraphrased.

Combine this with the ever-present issue of translation, and what was meant might have changed a little. Some of the fine-grain detail might be incorrect (perhaps you don't make that type of schnapps with that type of berry). We apologise if so.

Hopefully, however, our intention comes across: to produce a picture of where the school went, what we taught, and what we learnt.

Film Stills

Odai Produce filmed and edited by Ciprian Cimpoi, Dragos Hanciu and Alexandru Popescu pages 114–115

Wild Treasure filmed and edited by Murk-Jaep van der Schaaf and Jorrit Meinsma pages 263–265, 333 (#32, 33)

Farmers & Ranchers* directed by Wapke Feenstra, filmed by Gerco Jonker and Kim Shivley, edited by Ismael Lotz and Kim Shivley pages 252–255, 257–258, 332 (#32), 333 (#31)

* *Farmers & Ranchers* is a co-production by Wapke Feenstra with the M12 Collective, Byers, Colorado, and co-financed by the National Endowment for the Arts, Gates Family Foundation, Colorado Creative Industries, The German Federal Cultural Foundation, Stichting Doen (BankGiro Loterij Fonds), Tijnl Fonds (BPC), Omrop Fryslân and the Fries Museum.

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Judith Vorwerk pages 13 (bottom), 22–23

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Tom James pages 17 (top), 300–301, 333 (#40)

Kathrin Böhm pages 17 (bottom), 18–19, 20 (top), 21, 24 (top), 25 (top), 26–28, 40–47, 50–55, 61, 64–66, 80–97, 118–125, 130–157, 159–163, 174, 175, 179–182, 184, 186–187, 243 (bottom), 276, 279, 294–296, 305–307, 310, 311, 315, 327–328, 329 (#03, 04, 11, 12, 15), 331, 333 (#38)

Wapke Feenstra pages 20 (bottom), 24 (bottom), 158, 159 (bottom), 183, 188 (bottom left), 244–249, 250 (top), 260–261, 266–267, 312 (top), 329 (#20), 332 (#36)

Caroline Zeevat pages 238–239, 241–242, 243 (top), 250 (bottom)

Sam Brown pages 102–108

Courtesy APTNV page 109

Claudia Trinzek page 126

Courtesy APTNV page 127 (top)

Martina Schmid page 164

Wolfgang Thaler page 166

Sebastian Schröder pages 176–177

Fetsje de Jong page 256

Courtesy PS² pages 272, 277, 280

Learn to Act
Introducing The Eco Nomadic School

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This book is distributed by all partners and through the existing network of the Eco Nomadic School. To get in contact and/or to order a copy, please e-mail: kathrin@myvillages.org or aaa@urbantactics.org

A free PDF of the book is available on www.rhyzom.net

For the last ten years, a network of locally-based projects from across Europe have been visiting each other to learn, teach, share and discover the knowledge held in their communities. This network has involved projects, practices, participants and ordinary people from six countries, nine regions, four cities, two towns and six villages. This is the Eco Nomadic School.

The book is titled *Learn to Act*, because that's what we set out to do. The title is a clear proclamation towards a form of learning which is both an act of commoning and a moment in which knowledge becomes relative, collective and applied. *Learn to Act* is about the near future, how to act, and how to support each other.



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