University of **Reading**

Caring Infrastructures

Transforming the Arts through Feminist Curating with Care

PhD in Practice in Curating

Department of Art, University of Reading
in Collaboration with Zurich University of the Arts

SASCIA BAILER

March 2024

Declaration of Original Authorship

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Sascia Bailer

Word Count: 85.680

Abstract

This dissertation addresses the contradiction in the arts whereby care is a recurring theme of exhibition and event series (the "caring turn") yet uncaring conditions for art workers and audiences persist, taking the form of precarious labour conditions and inadequate support for cultural practitioners with caregiving responsibilities. Featuring a Marxist-feminist analysis of domestic and care work from medieval times until today, the study illustrates how today's visual art sector particularly excludes cultural practitioners who are carers.

Expanding from the author's participatory curatorial practice on care as artistic director 2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt, Germany, the dissertation establishes curating – with its etymological origin in the Latin *curare* ("to take care") – as a radically relational, infrastructural practice of care in search of a counter-hegemonic otherwise. It proposes understanding care as a curatorial method for constructing "caring infrastructures" within the arts. Caring infrastructures emerge from a methodological sequence revolving around the building of support structures that respond to the caring needs and capacities of artists, collaborators, audiences, and team members and that foster the conditions for their presence. This transformative approach identifies eight key building blocks for curatorial practice (e.g., communication, budgets, power) and illustrates how to alter them according to feminist care ethics (Joan Tronto). When taken together, they act as caring infrastructures. The study further explores the limits of curatorial care due to group conflicts, solitary struggles, and systemic contradictions within capitalism, curating, and care. It suggests transferring Chantal Mouffe's notion of "acting in concert" from activism to the arts, with various artistic and curatorial initiatives coming together in a counter-hegemonic effort of "caring in concert."

Incorporating autotheory and feminist research methods (Jane Gallop, Jane Tompkins, Lauren Fournier, Sara Ahmed), the dissertation aims to amplify marginalised voices, especially those of women and queer and racialised people. The research adopts a "polydisciplinamorous" approach (Natalie Loveless), prioritising affective attachments (Audre Lorde) over traditional disciplinary boundaries and blurring the lines between theory and practice in a process of "makingthinking" (Loveless).

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Art of Social Re/production

Image 1. Hannah Cooke, *Ada vs. Abramović*, 2018, set photograph. © Hannah Cooke & VG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2023.

The contemporary arts often conceive of themselves as particularly avant-garde. However, a peak behind the façade of shiny exhibition halls quickly reveals that there is a glaring gap between the idealised self-image that the arts seek to uphold and the glaring inequalities that sustain this field. The unequal conditions around care evident across society are not softened in the arts but rather increased to an alarming degree: While women earn on average about 18 percent less than men in

Germany, the gender pay gap within the arts and culture has, since 2014, ranged between an alarming 20 and 31 percent.[1] Not only are women artists paid less than male artists, but their works are also seen significantly less often in exhibitions. The initiative fair share! Mehr Sichtbarkeit für Künstlerinnen (Fair Share for Women Artists) points out:

> A museum like the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin, whose collection comprises about 1.5% women artists, is representative of comparable collections, but there is also an acute need to catch up in the contemporary field. The contemporary section of the Hamburger Kunsthalle currently includes only 19% works of art by women, the Museum Ludwig in Cologne 20%, and this despite the fact that the majority of art school graduates have been female for years (more than 60%).[2]

If a work by a woman artist does make it into an auction house despite the fatal gender gap for exhibiting ("gender show gap"), it fetches drastically lower profits. A comprehensive study, which examined 1.5 million auction transactions in 45 countries, found that, on average, women's works sell for around 47 percent less than men's. The study sums up: "Women's art appears to sell for less because it is made by women."[3] The decades-old rhetorical question of the Guerrilla Girls thus remains pertinent: "Do women have to be naked to get into museums?"[4]

The art world's conventions and sanctioning norms around who is considered an artist worthy of gallery representation, worthy of a solo show in a major museum, worthy of a prestigious grant, still seem tied to the long-standing archetype of a white, male artist-as-genius.[5] This ideal artist, as an essentially patriarchal figure, seems to continue to inhabit the imaginary realm of the arts and appears as a figure

1. Statistisches Bundesamt, "Gender Pay Gap nach Wirtschaftszweig," January 30, 2023, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Arbeit/Verdienste/Verdienste-GenderPayGap/Tabellen/ugpg-03-wirtschaftszweige-ab-2014.html.
2. fair share! Mehr Sichtbarkeit für Künstlerinnen / Fair Share for Women Artists, accessed July 12, 2023, https://www.fairshareforwomenartists.de/. My translation.
3. Renée Adams, Roman Kräussl, Marco Navone, and Patrick Verwijmeren, "Is Gender in the Eye of the Beholder? Identifying Cultural Attitudes with Art Auction Prices," *CFS Working Paper Series*, no. 595 (2018).
4. I first sketched out this scenario in Sascia Bailer, "Wie es um Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in der Kunst steht," *Monopol*, 2023, https://www.monopol-magazin.de/gender-gap-kunst-zahlen-bitte. The artist-activist group the Guerrilla Girls asked this question in 1989.
5. For further contextualisation, see Dorothee Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors – Competitors, Collaborators, or Team-workers?," *OnCurating*, no. 19 (June 2013).

who produces his work in the quiet absence of children, domestic chores, or any interruption at all. In 1971, the art critic Linda Nochlin famously asked: "Why have there been no great women artists?" Her essay foregrounds the institutional rather than individual preconditions that have historically shaped the lack of visibility and success of women artists:

> By examining in some detail a single instance of deprivation or disadvantage – the unavailability of nude models to women art students – I have suggested that it was indeed institutionally made impossible for women to achieve artistic excellence, or success, on the same footing as men, no matter what the potency of their so-called talent, or genius.[6]

Today, roughly fifty years later, we might have achieved some institutional changes to make it less difficult for women to partake in the art academy or overall art sector. Yet structural hurdles, particularly for artists with caring responsibilities, prevail. This relentless situation makes it essential to look at how, today, not only gender but also caring responsibilities – as an invisibilised feminised labour – intersect in the arts to produce inequalities.

Adopting this perspective first requires one to recognise that parenthood, as well as other caring responsibilities for family members and others, though little studied, is a basis for discrimination in the overall economy. A study by Germany's Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency found that 42 percent of parents experience discrimination in a professional context.[7] However, the figure in the arts, according to a survey by the Initiative Kunst & Elternschaft (Initiative Art & Parenthood), is more than twice as high. In this sector, 92 percent of the interviewed parents shared that they have faced prejudice and that their needs are rarely taken into account in the funding and scholarship landscape.[8] In neighbouring Switzerland, a recent study by

---

6. Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 176.
7. Sören Mohr, Johanna Nicodemus, Evelyn Stoll, Ulrich Weuthen, and Dr. David Juncke, *Diskriminierungserfahrungen von fürsorgenden Erwerbstätigen im Kontext von Schwangerschaft, Elternzeit und Pflege von Angehörigen*, Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2022, 184, https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Rechtsgutachten/schwanger_eltern_pflege.html?nn=305458.
8. *Elternschaft & Kunst. Arbeitsrealitäten von Eltern in den Freien Künsten* (Dresden: Landesverband Soziokultur Sachsen e.V., 2022); Marcia Breuer, "Mehr Mütter für die Kunst," 2019, http://mehrmütterfürdiekunst.net.

Visarte, the Swiss professional association of visual artists, concluded that only 7 percent of the artist residencies in that country are family friendly.[9]

While the research suggests that parenthood comes with considerable structural hurdles in the arts, it seems that "parenthood" is still not specific enough of an analytical category to understand how gendered exclusion in the arts operates. Research showcases how caring responsibilities specifically limit the success of artists who are women – and by extension, mothers – while fathers who are artists seem untouched by this dual role. This notion brings us closer to the deep-seated societal hang-ups surrounding artists who are also mothers. Art critic Elke Buhr, in the art magazine *Monopol*, refers to the simultaneity of art and motherhood as "the art world's last taboo," arguing: "Sex, death, politics: art can show everything today. But children? They are not a theme. Especially for their mothers, they are considered killers of an artist's career."[10]

A look at the list of the world's 100 most successful living artists, according to *Kunstkompass 2023*, confirms the prevalence of Buhr's stance. The list's "top 10" includes only two women (Rosemarie Trockel at 4, and Cindy Sherman at 5), both of whom do not have children.[11] The eight other artists ranked among the top 10 are all fathers. Looking at the top 10 female artists from the top 100, whose positions span from spot 4 to spot 43, we find that five have one child each. The visual artist Pipilotti Rist, ranked at 11, can therefore be considered the most successful living artist who is also a mother. If we, in turn, look at the top 10 male artists from the top 100, whose positions span spots 1 to 15, we will find that nine of them have children, amounting to thirty-two children in total. Jeff Koons – listed at 14 by *Kunstkompass*

9. Philippe Sablonier on behalf of Visarte Schweiz (Swiss professional association of visual artists), "Bericht zur Studie "Kunstberuf und Familie." Erkenntnisse und Handlungsanleitungen zur Vergabepraxis von Atelierstipendien," Visarte Schweiz, June 2023, https://visarte.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/0_Visarte_Studie-Kunstberuf-und-Familie_2023-07-04-def-D-mit-Illustration.pdf.
10. Elke Buhr, "Das Letzte Tabu: Kind und Kunst," *Monopol*, February 2019, 43.
11. The parental status of each artist is based on the research findings of STRG_F, "Warum sind Kunstwerke von Frauen weniger wert?" [Why are the artworks of women less valuable?], YouTube video, 18:30, posted June 16, 2020 by STRG_F, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwNY7YwWDqA. Since this research was conducted in 2020, I researched the missing artists individually (who had climbed up the ranks into the top 10 since 2020), using publicly available data from artists' biographies, listed on their gallery or their own websites, and the artists' social media accounts. For further details on the *Kunstkompass 2023* rankings, see appendix, section B.

23 – who has the highest auction sales of any living artist, and who recently sent 125 mini sculptures to the moon, has eight children.[12] To contrast the findings: the top performing male artists have 3.2 children on average, while the top ranking women artists have 0.5 children. These figures suggest that, today, it is common for successful male artists to be fathers but it is much rarer for successful female artists to be mothers. When successful female artists do have children, their number of children is limited to one.[13]

While I'm not primarily concerned with rankings and other metrics of success, I *am* interested in understanding – and shifting – the dynamics surrounding gender and caring responsibilities within the arts. The above example showcases that, when addressing gender equity in the arts, it is not enough to look only at "gender" in isolation; we also need to consider the artists' caring responsibilities. The already precarious position of women artists in the art sector becomes ever more fragile when set in concert with motherhood, whereas male artists' careers seem unaffected by their fatherhood. This discriminatory reality of mothers in the arts is mirrored in the research and writing by the art critic Hettie Judah, who asserts that "the old cliché that one cannot be both an artist and a mother has proven remarkably durable. […] [T]he cliché still bedevils artists today."[14]

"Why?" one wonders. Judah, who conducted numerous interviews with artists who are also mothers, mainly within the UK art sector, identifies old-fashioned prejudice as one central reason why the cliché persists: "to those who consider women artists an inferior proposition, artist mothers seem beyond the pale."[15] She

12. Meilan Solly, "Jeff Koons' 'Rabbit' Breaks the Auction Record for Most Expensive Work by Living Artist", *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 17, 2019, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/jeff-koons-rabbit-breaks-auction-record-most-expensive-work-living-artist-180972219/.
13. The following criteria are considered by Capital, the company that authors the annual *Kunstkompass* list: solo exhibitions in over 300 renowned international museums and exhibition centres such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York**,** participation in over 100 important group exhibitions each year, such as the Venice Biennale; reviews in leading art magazines, such as *Art in America*; acquisitions from leading exhibition venues, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris; Awards such as the Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo; and public art: the positioning of sculptures and objects in public spaces. For further details, see Linde Rohr-Bongard,"Kunstkompass 2023: Die Top 100 der wichtigsten Gegenwartskünstler," *Capital,* October 22, 2023, https://www.capital.de/leben/kunstkompass-2023--die-top-100-der-wichtigsten-gegenwartskuenstler-33923746.html.
14. Hettie Judah, *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)* (London: Lund Humphries, 2022), 9.
15. Ibid.

also cites mothers' apparent lack of "seductive potency of the artist as a countercultural figure" as a reason why they are often sidelined. Subsumed, within the cultural imaginary, under domesticity and conventional family life,[16] artists who are also mothers are regarded as the embodiment of "uncool" in an otherwise hip art field. But Judah also identifies quite tangible hurdles, conventions, and structural hindrances that make the arts inaccessible not only for artists who are mothers but also for other professionals in the field, such as curators.

Such prejudices and structural hurdles also formed the driving force behind the manifesto "Mehr Mütter für die Kunst" (More Mothers for/in the Arts) from 2019. Its initiator, the visual artist and photographer Marcia Breuer, describes the ways in which caring responsibilities within the arts are a central factor hindering the careers of mothers:

> If a working woman has children, this usually has relevant consequences for her further professional life in general and for her further professional career in particular, despite all protestations and according to all studies. If a woman artist has children, this leads her into a situation that makes the continuation of her artistic career almost completely impossible.[17]

A recent scandal around the awarding of the prestigious NEUSTART KULTUR grants by the Stiftung Kunstfonds in Germany, which occurred amid the Covid-19 pandemic, demonstrated how central public funders prioritise commercial galleries, art fairs, and male artists, thereby further cementing gendered inequalities.[18] Even their special grant for artists with children under the age of seven was not awarded according to the criterion of gender-equal distribution. In an open letter, the initiative Kind & Kunst München (Child & Art Munich) criticised the fact that forty-nine men and forty-two women, as well as three sets of partners, received the grant – even while mothers continue to shoulder the majority of unpaid care responsibilities, which, in turn, takes away important focused time from their artistic

---

16. Ibid.
17. Breuer, "Mehr Mütter für die Kunst."
18. Regular updates on the discourse around these public-funding instruments can be found BBK Berlin's website: BBK Berlin, "Neustart Kultur Programme: Aktueller Diskurs," 2023, https://www.bbk-berlin.de/kulturpolitik/neustart-kultur-aktueller-diskurs.

work.[19] It is precisely this "taking of time for art-making" – a pursuit which comes without fixed wages or a predictable career path – that contributes to the nagging guilt that parenting artists shared in their interviews with Judah:

> With childcare costly, how dare you spend money to work without guaranteed financial reward? How dare you take time for your work away from your children? How dare you bring children into the insecurity of an artist's lifestyle?[20]

Judah further elaborates that this guilt has a wider sanctioning cultural function: "With guilt, too, comes concern that the artist will be considered a selfish mother. […] How can they demand time and space for their own work?"[21]

The unruly gesture of prioritising artistic creation over social reproduction has sparked a discourse in which women who dare to both create and care are viewed through the lens of monstrosity: "A woman had to be a monster to be an artist," contends the surrealist painter and sculptor Dorothea Tanning.[22] Art writer Lauren Elkin, in her book *Art Monsters: Unruly Bodies in Feminist Art*, embarks on a search for what this particular conjunction of femininity, monstrosity, and artistic creation could entail. Borrowing from the novelist Jenny Offill's work, she cites the narrator of *Dept. of Speculation*: "Art monsters only concern themselves with art, never mundane things."[23] Such statements clearly separate artistic creation from social reproduction. Elkin continues this line of thought:

> Mother or artist, not both. You shall know the art monster by her dirty house, empty of children. Mothers who became art monsters did it by leaving or harming her offspring, through abandonment or suicide or abuse: Doris Lessing, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton.[24]

Yet, for Elkin, the notion of the art monster goes beyond the supposed binary of "artistic creation/social reproduction" to include subtle notions of what an artist might want to say through their work but has been socially conditioned not to. She

19. Bündnis Kunst & Kind München, "Offener Brief an den Vorstand der Stiftung Kunstfonds," 2020, http://www.kundk.xyz/images/K&K_Kunstfonds_Web.pdf.
20. Hettie Judah, "Full, Messy and Beautiful," Unit London, 2023, https://unitlondon.com/2023-05-31/full-messy-and-beautiful/.
21. Ibid.
22. Lauren Elkin, *Art Monsters: Unruly Bodies in Feminist Art* (Dublin: Penguin Books, 2023), 6.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.

explains: "So much of the discourse around the art monster thus far has focused on female artists' lives, but it seems just as crucial to look at their work: at what it was that they were so bent on doing that they ran the risk of being called a monster."[25]

From this perspective, artists who are mothers can be perceived as countercultural figures, as they operate outside the norms and roles that society has traditionally scripted for them.[26] Art historian Andrea Liss, in her book *Feminist Art and the Maternal*, argues:

> Motherhood, especially feminist motherhood, confuses the normalized order of gender and power. Feminist motherhood deranges the supposed natural and historical progression of culture. Feminist motherhood complicates the dominant institutionalized idea of motherhood.[27]

Those, who then challenge the institution of motherhood, particularly at the intersection with artistic production, run the risk of being cut out from the artistic field. "We who are addressing the taboos become the taboo," asserts the feminist artist Carolee Schneemann.[28] The discourse must therefore be appropriated, to reframe "art monster" as an emancipatory figure who actively deconstructs patriarchal norms and shifts the shape and boundaries of tabooed maternal topics and subjectivities.

When I first began my position as Artistic Director 2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt, Germany, I was intrigued by the work of the feminist art collective MATERNAL FANTASIES (who had received one of the institution's two Artist Advancement Awards for that year, laying the ground for our multifaceted collaboration.)[29] The collective of seven women and their children departs from these very tensions: the proclaimed taboo, the supposed impossibility of combining caring responsibilities – motherhood, in particular – and artistic

---

25. Ibid., 8.
26. In 2023, I was invited to be a curatorial advisor on the group exhibition *Myths of Mothers and Other Monsters* by the collective MARS – Maternal Artistic Research Studio, which took place at the art space L6 in Freiburg, Germany. See http://mars-space.net/#UpcomingExhibits.
27. Andrea Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal* (Minnesota University Press: Minneapolis, 2008).
28. Carolee Schneemann, quoted in Elkin, *Art Monsters*, 20.
29. As the collaboration with MATERNAL FANTASIES formed an essential part of my curatorial programming as artistic director 2019/20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, I return to their practice in more depth in chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice," particularly within the section 4.3.5.1.1 – "MATERNAL FANTASIES."

production. My experience collaborating with the collective over two years, both during and beyond my curatorial position at M.1, suggested to me that MATERNAL FANTASIES would gladly accept being called a "collective art monster" of sorts. An aim to shatter the dusty and restraining fixtures that maintain both the institution of motherhood(s) and the false dichotomy that artistic production and maternity are mutually exclusive seems to be the driving force behind the collective's work. Further, they aim to challenge the patriarchal notion of the white male artist-as-genius figure, who produces his work in the quiet absence of children. The artist figure that they put forth instead is one of multitudes – multitudes of people and voices, across generations, across spheres of quiet and spheres of constant interruption, across caring responsibilities and artistic explorations.

Image 2. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Wattenmeer*, 2020, film still from *Suspended Time, on Caring*

Albeit from a singular artistic position, the feminist artist Hannah Cooke also seeks to challenge the place of artists who are mothers within the arts. In the public conversation "Cut the 'or' between Art and Motherhood" (2021) between Cooke and myself, we discussed the generative component of anger evoked by such

proclamations and by our own experiences as caregivers in the art world.[30] In Cooke's case, it had led her to produce the photography series *Ada vs. Emin* (2018; Image 3), where she breastfeeds her daughter Ada in an exhibition-like setting.[31] She sits on a bed that looks much like *My Bed* (1998) by Tracey Emin. An iconic feminist artist, Emin had claimed a few years earlier that being a mother and an artist at the same time means compromise: "There are good artists that have children. Of course there are. They are called men."[32] The earlier analysis of the parental status of the ten most successful living artists confirms Emin's underlying claim that fatherhood and being "a good artist" are compatible, where as a pairing with motherhood is not.

30. Anna Akaltin, "(what it means to both) Care & Create," Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle, 2021, https://www.burg-halle.de/hochschule/einrichtungen/fempower/projekte/project/what-it-means-to-both-care-create-1/.
31. Hannah Cooke, "Ada vs. Emin," artist's website, 2018, https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/17/ada-vs-emin/.
32. Henri Neuendorf, "Tracey Emin Says Female Artists Can't Have Kids," Artnet, October 9, 2014, https://news.artnet.com/market/tracey-emin-says-female-artists-cant-have-kids-126940.

Image 3. Hannah Cooke, *Ada vs. Emin*, 2018, set photograph. © Hannah Cooke & VG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2023.

Ada vs. Emin can thus be regarded as an artistic response to Emin's statement that a woman artist would have to choose between art and motherhood (Image 3). Another iconic female artist, Marina Abramović, also raised concerns that art and motherhood are mutually exclusive, prompting Cooke to counter with the video installation *Ada vs. Abramović* (2018) (Image 1).[33] She restaged Abramović's

---

33. Hannah Cooke, "Ada vs. Abramovic," artist's website, 2018, https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/18/ada-vs-abramovic/. Marina Abramović, in an interview about her approaching seventieth birthday, shared that she had had three abortions in order to be able to dedicate her time and energy to artistic production, not to motherhood: "In my opinion [children are] the reason why women aren't as successful as men in the art world. There's plenty of talented women. Why do men take over the important positions? It's simple. Love, family, children – a woman doesn't want to sacrifice all of that." See Guelda Voien, "Marina Abramovic: I Had Three Abortions Because Children Hold Female Artists Back," *The Observer*, July 26, 2016, https://observer.com/2016/07/marina-abramovic-i-had-three-abortions-because-children-hold-female-artists-back/

famous performance *The Artist Is Present*, which took place at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2010, inserting herself into the performative setup while, again, breastfeeding her daughter Ada. Arguably, Cooke not only inserted herself into the works of iconic women artists, who stayed childfree for the sake of their artistic careers, but also inserted herself into an art sector that is structurally conditioned to exclude her as an artist and mother.

The photographer Katharina Bosse, like Cooke, had conveyed to her the rigid patriarchal narratives that her becoming-a-mother in the early 2000s would end her career as an aspiring young artist in New York. As collectors began to withdraw when her pregnancy became known, she chose to not artificially uphold the separation of her artistic self and her role as a single mother but rather radically fuse them. Bosse began the self-portrait series *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Mother*, which took shape between 2004 and 2009 – initially with her first child and then later with her second child as well.[34] The series playfully subverts the arrangements, lighting, and palettes of the Old Masters (an inevitably patriarchal construct in itself), creating scenes into which she inserts herself. The artist appears not in the demure manner of the Madonna-style mother and child but rather depicts herself with her infant(s) in an unpolished, raw, vulnerable and yet strong, unruly, and defiant fashion (Image 4).

---

34. For further background on the artist and the history of the series, see the catalogue Marie Darrieussecq and David Riedel, *Katharina Bosse: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Mother* (Paris: Filigranes Èdition, 2011).

Image 4. Katharina Bosse, *Winter*, 2005, photograph, from the series *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Mother* (2004–09).

With her *Portrait* series, Bosse partakes in an artistic tradition of defiant self-portraits where not only gender, sexuality, motherhood, and societal norms are renegotiated but also racial relations. In this sense, the photographer and multimedia artist Renee Cox, who was also a great source of inspiration for Bosse, is known for flipping stereotypical representations upside down. She uses photography to question and renegotiate racial relations, women's bodies and feminism, often subverting white-centric Christian depictions and narratives. In her series *Yo Mama* (1992–1996), she, as a Black woman, embodies a range of iconic and mythical

figures, including the Madonna, or Virgin Mary, in powerful, oversize photographs.

Image 5. Renée Cox, *Yo Mama*, 1993, photograph.

The black-and-white photograph *Yo Mama* (Image 5), which was featured in Marcia Tucker's 1994 show *Bad Girls* at the New Museum in New York, portrays the artist nude, only wearing heels. She embraces her toddler son, who is also nude, his body aligned horizontally to her upright position. Captured from a low angle, the artist exudes a determined authority through her gaze, challenging the typical humility associated with the Virgin Mary. Beyond the artist's aim to challenge racialised representation of Black and Brown subjectivities, the photograph confronts the prevailing perspectives in a white, sexist art world that continue to devalue

motherhood – both as a subject and as a dual role for artist who are mothers.[35]

Yet, these ambivalent negotiations on care work, maintenance work, gender equity, and structural exclusion are not a contemporary phenomenon within the artistic field. Rather, they continue the legacy of feminist artists since the 1960s who have radically challenged patriarchal norms through their work. Pertinent historical examples of feminist artists who boldly circumvented the imposed split between productive and reproductive labour in the late 1960s and 1970s include the artist Lea Lublin and her performance piece *Mon fils*, which took place at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris during the Salon de Mai in 1968. Amid bustling street protests in support of newfound freedoms, the artist cared for her seven-month-old son within the museum's premises. Through this act, she transformed motherhood and everyday life into a conceptual and political declaration, thereby challenging the conventions upheld by the very art institutions in which she placed her work.[36]

Another prominent example is Mierle Laderman Ukeles, who declared invisiblised care and maintenance work as art in and of itself.[37] Her work thereby collapsed the distinction between "art" and "mundane things" – a supposedly monstrous act that goes beyond scripted forms of femininity, as Elkin has put forth.[38] In the photo-conceptual piece *Dressing to Go Out/Undressing to Go In*, from 1973, the artist documents herself in black-and-white photos as she helps her young children dress and undress to go outside. When the work is displayed, a cleaning rag hangs next to the images, encouraging visitors to clean and maintain the work.[39] Ukeles's oeuvre – which at times involved her children, at others public maintenance

35. Jane Ursula Harris, "After the Master: The Copy as Origin and Renewal," *Flash Art*, February 17, 2020, https://flash---art.com/article/after-the-master-the-copy-as-origin-and-renewal/.
36. Hammer Museum, "Digital Archive: Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985: Lea Lublin, Artist, *Mon fils (My son)*,1968," accessed January 30, 2024, https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/art/art/mon-fils-my-son.
37. Mierle Laderman Ukeles's contribution to feminist art on care and maintenance was acknowledged and celebrated in her retrospective *Maintenance Art* at the Queens Museum, New York, September 2018–February 2019. For more information, see Queens Museum, "Mierle Laderman Ukeles: Maintenance Art," 2016, https://queensmuseum.org/2016/04/mierle-laderman-ukeles-maintenance-art.
38. As previously introduced in the discussion around the notion of "art monster" in Elkin, *Art Monsters*, 6.
39. Stefanie Graf, "Mierle Laderman Ukeles' Maintenance Art in 4 Works," TheCollector, April 12, 2023, https://www.thecollector.com/mierle-laderman-ukeles-maintenance-art/.

workers, and sometimes only herself performing care work – formed part of a transformative moment in the artistic field that renegotiated and substantially shifted (and arguably dissolved) the boundaries between art and life. Spearheaded by international artist movements, such as Dada in the early twentieth century and Fluxus in the 1960s and 1970s, a dematerialisation of the artwork had been initiated, bringing forth rich performance art and socially engaged practices, which remain constitutive of the contemporary art field.[40] It was amid these shifts that Ukeles produced her "Manifesto for Maintenance Art" (1969), in which she famously declares:

> I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) I "do" Art. Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art.[41]

Due to copyright regulations, this image is not displayed in the university repository version.	*Due to copyright regulations, this image is not displayed in the university repository version.*
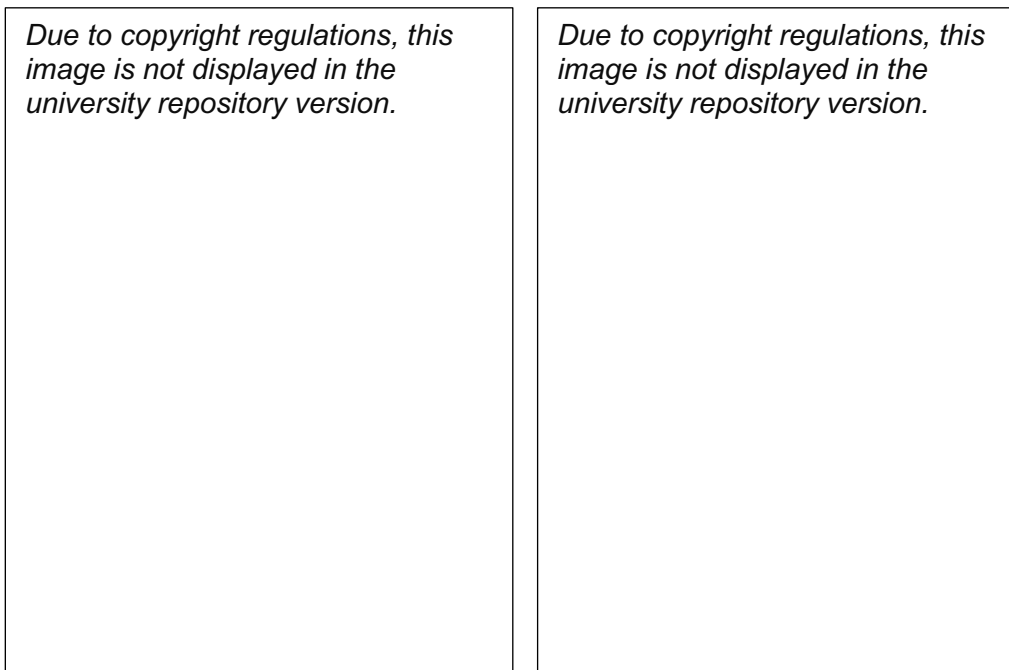
Images 6 and 7. Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Outside* (July 23, 1973), 1973, performance documentation, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut. Part of the Maintenance Art Performances series. © Mierle Laderman Ukeles.

---

40. For further analysis of the historical shifts within the arts, the processes of dematerialisation, and the dissolution of the boundaries between art and life, I recommend the following two publications: Nina Möntmann, *Kunst als sozialer Raum: Andrea Fraser, Martha Rosler, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Renée Green* (Cologne: Walther König, 2002); Dorothee Richter, *Fluxus: Kunst gleich Leben? Mythen um Autorschaft, Produktion, Geschlecht und Gemeinschaft* (Zurich: OnCurating, 2012).
41. Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition 'CARE,'" *Journal of Contemporary Painting* 4 (2018): 233–37.

Ukeles thus collapsed the distinctions between art, care and maintenance work, and labour as she, for example, washed the steps of museums (Images 6 and 7). Her performances demonstrated that maintenance work made all other kinds of work possible, including waged labour, artistic practice, and even "the revolution," as the art theorist Marina Vishmidt points out. Ukeles's artistic politics aligned with the claim of the women's movement that care work is foundational to all other work and suspended the division between symbolic and physical labour by legitimising maintenance work as part of art work.[42] Vishmidt argues:

> If the daily uncompensated labor performed mainly by women in the household could migrate to the museum and seek legitimacy as art, then it was no longer self-evident that this labour was any less "creative" than the kinds of activity hitherto enshrined as art, and no less public than socially necessary wage-labor.[43]

The radicality of Ukeles's work was not only to label mundane activities as "art" but to position this work within art spaces that tend to focus on results rather than on the social processes of care and maintenance that sustain them, thereby de-romanticising this labour: "[I]t's a drag; it takes all the fucking time. […] The culture confers lousy status on maintenance jobs = minimum wages, housewives = no pay."[44]

This process of (re)negotiating gender, care, sexuality, and the domestic realm also took place within the feminist exhibition *Womanhouse* (1972), initiated by artists Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro within the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts, Santa Cruz.[45] This site-specific feminist installation and performance space, which took over an abandoned Victorian house located on campus, was produced by students and included twenty-one feminist installations. Chicago states that the works addressed "the two biggest issues" of the 1970s: "sex

42. Marina Vishmidt, "The Aesthetic Subject and the Politics of Speculative Labor," *OnCurating*, no. 48 (September 2020): 71.
43. Ibid.
44. Laderman Ukeles, "Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969!"
45. One critique of *Womanhouse* is that it primarily focused on white, heterosexual, cisgender, and middle-class experience of womanhood in the early 1970s. See Vladimir Bjelicic, "Inside Womanhouse, a Beacon of Feminist Art," *Widewalls*, June 2019, https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/judy-chicago-womanhouse.

and housework."[46] The young, women-identifying artists began to deconstruct patriarchal societal patterns in the exhibition space and, along with it, to abandoned traditional canons of representation. They instead placed their lived experiences as women at the centre, reclaiming what were historically seen as women's crafts and materials as points of departure for emancipatory artistic works.[47] This is exemplified in the collaborative work *Nurturant Kitchen* by Susan Frazier, Vicki Hodgetts, and Robin Weltsch, which consisted of a bright-pink kitchen with eggs applied to its walls and ceilings that seemed to morph into breasts (Image 8). In another room, Sandra Orgel presented a female mannequin in a linen closet, her body violently intersected at the neck, chest, and torso by shelves (Image 9).[48]

46. Sarah Cascone, "Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's Epoch-Making Feminist Installation 'Womanhouse' Gets a Tribute in Washington, DC," Artnet, March 13, 2018, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/women-house-judy-chicago-national-museum-women-arts-1234649.
47. Ibid.
48. Neyat Yohannes, "Revisiting the Famed Feminist Exhibition 'Womanhouse' with an Intersectional Lens," Artsy, March 24, 2022, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-revisiting-famed-feminist-exhibition-womanhouse-intersectional-lens.

Image 8 (left). Susan Frazier, Vicki Hodgetts, and Robin Weltsch, *Nurturant Kitchen*, installation view in *Womanhouse*, 1972. Photo: Through the Flower Archive, Penn State University Archives, State College, PA.

Image 9 (right). Sandra Orgel, *Linen Closet*, installation view in *Womanhouse*, 1972. Photo: Through the Flower Archive, Penn State University Archives, State College, PA.

These various feminist art practices from the 1960s until today – whether singular or collective, whether within the public sphere or within the domestic realm – have contributed to a larger spirit of address and radical challenge to the status quo of women in society, the roles of mothers within the arts, and the patriarchal idea of the artist figure as a white male artist-as-genius.

These shifts within the artistic realm need to be read in the context of the activism of the 1970s, [49] a time when pointing to the blind spots and contradictions surrounding the relationship between women, care work, society, and the capitalist

---

49. Angela Dimitrakaki, and Kirsten Lloyd, "Social Reproduction Struggles and Art History," *Third Text* 31, no. 1 (2017): 1–14.

19

economy was central.[50] Wages for Housework, active in North America and Europe in 1972–77, was an important movement that challenged the naturalisation of care work as unpaid feminised labour under capitalism (Image 10).[51] The movement particularly identified the "multi-faceted, invisible, and unrecognised labour, indispensable and wealth-producing" work as "the hidden face of the wage world, its unpaid flip side."[52]

Image 10. Bettye Lane, *Bettye Lane Photographs, 1969–2000s*. Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. © Bettye Lane. Courtesy of Gary O'Neil.

Within the activist atmosphere of the 1970s to visibilise unpaid care work, the series *Post-Partum Document* (1973–79) of the feminist artist Mary Kelly stands as a

---

50. Mariarosa Dalla Costa, "Women and the Subversion of the Community," *Commoner* 15 (1971) was a pioneering text that sparked the international feminist movement, focusing on a group of marital tasks such as housework and domestic work – a movement whose interests were much broader than merely advocating for salaries for such work. Feminist groups varied in size and addressed a range of urgencies, including invisible aspects of family work and salaried women's work, abortion, medical practices, sterilisation, childbirth conditions, women's health, sexuality, social assistance, family allowances, housing conditions, education, family violence, sex work, and more.
51. Louise Toupin, *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist Movement, 1972–77* (London: Pluto, 2018).
52. Ibid., 1.

testament to the challenges that women face within an economic system that invisibilises and devalues their caring labour. Over six years, the artist meticulously documented her caring labour towards her son (K) in 135 small units.[53] In *Post-Partum Document* – contrary to the above-cited works of Lublin, Ukeles, Cox, Bosse, Cooke, and MATERNAL FANTASIES – Kelly *removes* herself and her son from the work as subjectivities; their relationship is rendered legible only through their everyday objects and the stains, marks, and scribbles that their relationship of care has left upon them. The work's metrics, diagrams, reflections, annotations, and timetables testify to the non-stop care work that does not allow for delays in attention but rather constantly insists on itself.

The labour of demystifying and challenging the status quo of domestic work through art is continued in the work of Patti Maciesz. The artist and mother, in a spirit similar to that of Kelly and Wages for Housework, tracks her unpaid labour and produces watercolour charts as tangible manifestations of this labour.[54] For the work *Fax the Patriarchy* (2017; Image 11), Maciesz faxed these invoices and timesheets to every local and state official in California as well as to the federal government. "So far I've sent over 1,000 faxes – every member of the lower and upper chambers of Congress with a fax number has received one," the artist states, "with a plea for universal child care."[55] Maciesz also produced on open-source online tool for tracking one's own unpaid labour.[56]

While this approach could be argued as taking the Wages for Housework's

---

53. Mary Kelly, "Postpartum Documents 1973–79," artist's website, accessed February 24, 2024, https://www.marykellyartist.com/post-partum-document-1973-79.

54. Another contemporary example of an artist who includes her children and their care relationship in her works is Lenka Clayton, with her pieces *Maternity Leave* (2011), *63 Objects Taken from my Son's Mouth* (2011–12), and *The Distance I Can Be from my Son (Supermarket)* (2013). See the artist's website at https://www.lenkaclayton.com. Further, Andrea Francke's *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood* (2012) serves as a contemporary example of an exhibition, publication, and discursive programme, in which the artist not only seeks representational visibility for the concerns of parents in the arts but envisions collective action towards alternative support structures. I return to this artistic project in chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice." For further reading, see Andrea Francke, *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood: A Collection of Pragmatic Propositions for a Better Future* (London: The Showroom, 2012).

55. Patti Maciesz, "Fax the Patriarchy," artist's website, 2017, https://www.artpatti.com/bill-the-patriarchy-1.

56. Patti Maciesz, "Bill the Patriarchy," accessed November 10, 2021, www.billthepatriarchy.com.

proclamations too literally – as suggested by the political theorist and writer Sophie Lewis in *Full Surrogacy Now* and the feminist activist and philosopher Silvia Federici in *Wages against Housework* – Maciesz's work sparks provocation and showcases the continued artistic and societal urgency to address the unresolved contradictions between capitalism and care.
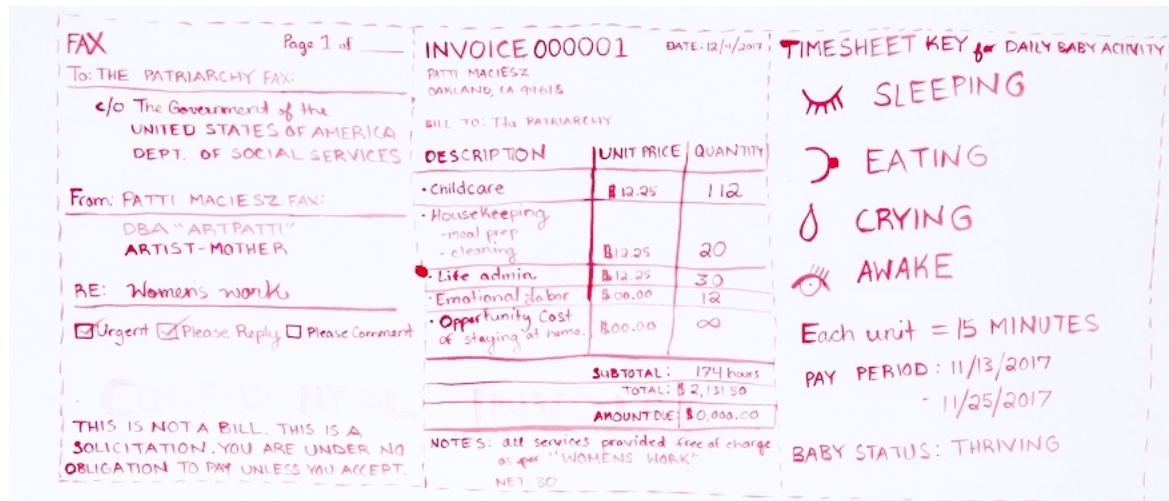
Image 11. Patti Maciesz, *Bill the Patriarchy*, 2017, performance.

The intertwined histories of artistic production and the gendered labour of care under capitalism, imposes particular burdens on artists who are mothers. While this dissertation complicates the notion of care to go beyond the idea of mothering as the primary form of care, the example of mothers in the arts pertinently shows how care is still ascribed to women – seemingly by default. It also highlights how, in a similarly unquestioned manner, the arts and society at large construct mental, social, financial, and physical hurdles to mothers' participation in the paid work force, in cultural life, and in self-determining their representation in the arts.

The Caring Turn within Arts and Research

Particularly within feminist exhibition-making since the 1970s, the notion of visibility has carried an emancipatory promise, serving to frame exhibitions as important spaces to renegotiate the visual and political recognition and representation of so-called marginalised social groups.[57] To attain better gender equity and a sincere diversity of voices, we must hold art institutions and curators accountable for building support structures so that staff, collaborators, and artists who are parents – mothers, in particular – can thrive in the arts. To quote the newly founded US initiative Museums Moving Forward:

> Art museums have experienced unprecedented strain and scrutiny in recent years. They have been called to reorient attention and resources toward diversity and equity, and museum workers have been calling for institutional interest in "social justice," increasingly explored in museum programming, to be matched with commitments to changing internal practices and cultural legacies that prevent workers from doing their best work. Simply put, it is not enough to diversify the artists we are collecting or exhibiting; we must take better care of our people too.[58]

This disjunction between the performative engagement with trending notions such as care, diversity, feminism(s), and social justice and the organisational realities of the patriarchal, white, and elitist structures of the art institutions that display these politicised works needs urgent address. With my dissertation, I am thus interested in shifting attention from the increasing citation of "care" within contemporary curatorial discourse and practice – through thematic, symbolic engagements with care – towards a need to structurally engage with care as a working method.[59]

Before dedicating our attention to how feminist care can be practised curatorially, let us consider the ways in which care has surfaced as a trending theme

---

57. Angela Dimitrakaki and Nizan Shaked, "Feminism, Instituting, and the Politics of Recognition in Global Capitalism," *OnCurating* no. 52 (November 2021); Johanna Schaffer, *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit: Über die visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2008).
58. Museums Moving Forward, "Report 2023: Workplace Equity and Organizational Culture in US Art Museums," accessed February 24, 2024, https://museumsmovingforward.com.
59. I further expand on the notion of "care as a (methodological) practice" in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures."

within the arts and academia – as I am not alone in witnessing the incredible rise in new feminist care-centred networks, exhibitions, publications, symposia, and event series. Feminist curator and scholar Helena Reckitt, for example, has noted an increased focus among curatorial research projects on the subjects of care and maintenance over the past fifteen years.[60] Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese share a similar observation, but locate this increase at a more current point in time:

> [A] recent surge of academic interest in care and its metonyms across multiple disciplines and subfields through recent or forthcoming volumes, symposia, conference panels, and keynote addresses – all announced between the time this issue's call for papers went out and the drafting of this introduction [around 2019–20] – considers how our current political and sociotechnical moment sits at the forefront of philosophical questions about who cares, how they do it, and for what reason.[61]

The two scholars clearly argue that care has re-entered the zeitgeist,[62] while the London-based Care Collective goes as far as to speak of "discursive explosions of care during Covid-19."[63] This phenomenon of increased attention to matters of care is visible not only within academia but also in the adjacent fields to art and curating. This introduction does not aim to quantify the number of events, exhibitions, publications, or symposia on care that have upsurged over a set period of time, as the specific timeframe of this growing attention to feminist curatorial and artistic practices is difficult to locate. Such shifts are often subtle, subjectively experienced, and possibly appear in waves, to use a metaphor central in conceiving the shifts within feminist discourses.

The marking of the current period as a "caring turn" in arts and research is motivated by the desire to grasp and make tangible the *momentum* by which the respective fields have shifted their attention towards the manifold facets of care. This

---

60. Helena Reckitt, "From Coping to Curious: Unlearning and Reimagening Curatorial Habits of Care," in *Curating with Care*, ed. Elke Krasny and Lara Perry (London: Routledge, 2023).
61. Hobart and Kneese, "Radical Care," 3.
62. Ibid., 1.
63. Andreas Chatzidakis, Jamie Hakim, Jo Littler, Catherine Rottenberg, and Lynne Segal, "From Carewashing to Radical Care: The Discursive Explosions of Care during Covid-19," *Feminist Media Studies* 20, no. 6 (2020): 1.

caring turn is characterised by the importance that care has gained as an umbrella term that provides a home to otherwise diverse, or possibly more fragmented, conversations on collectivity, responsibility, vulnerability, health, dis*ability, inclusion, gender, and feminism(s). As I note later on in this introduction, there are a multitude of readings around care, and this diversity is also reflected in the variety of foci explored as part of the most recent shifts towards care. Curatorial initiatives, exhibitions, and publications have addressed, for example, the relationship between the climate crisis and care;[64] the ethics of care in relation to feminist curating; art as care for the community;[65] care as labour and maintenance;[66] care as motherhood;[67] care as resistance;[68] care as resilience;[69] care as emotional labour and affect;[70] gendered care within the arts; care as gender equality; the commoning of care;[71] care within the digital realm;[72] collectivising self-care;[73] care as concern for spatial

64. Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, "Climate Care: Theory and Practice on a Natureculture Learning," Climate Care, 2021, https://floating-berlin.org/programmes/climate-care/.

65. Casa Gallina, initiated by Osvaldo Sanchez and Josefa Ortega. Accessed September 6, 2023. https://casagallina.org.mx/en/the-house.

66. Konsthall C. "Exhibition: Home Works," Curated by Jenny Richards and Jens Strandberg. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://www.konsthallc.se/en/info/home-works; Kunstraum Niederösterreich, "Care Matters," event series, Vienna, 2019, https://www.kunstraum.net/de/ausstellungen/95-care-matters-lecture-performance-main-tenant-hand-holding201d-les-maintenants-marlies-poeschl-und-podiumsdiskussion-ueber-care-kuration-und-communities.

67. M/other Voices, 2013–14, https://www.mothervoices.org/about/; Cultural ReProducers, accessed July 13, 2023, https://www.culturalreproducers.org/p/home.html; Mothersuckers, accessed July 13, 2023, http://mothersuckersproject.blogspot.com; Fuckermothers, accessed July 13, 2023, https://fuckermothers.wordpress.com; Spilt Milk Gallery, accessed July 13, 2023, https://www.spiltmilkgallery.com; Procreate Project, accessed July 13, 2023, https://www.procreateproject.com/.

68. Radical Collective of Care, "About / Contact," accessed July 13, 2023, http://radicalcollectivecare.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html; Dyana Gravina and Procreate Project, "Oxytocin Conference: Collective Care," 2023, https://www.oxytocinbirthingtheworld.co.uk/; TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and OnCurating, "Symposium: Commoning Collective Care," OnCurating, 2023, https://www.on-curating.org/Commoning-Collective-Care.html.

69. Elisa Giardina Papa, "Labor of Sleep, Have you been able to change your habits??," artist's website, 2017, http://www.elisagiardinapapa.org.

70. Dragona, Daphne, "Editorial: Affective Infrastructures," *Transmediale*, no. 3, "Affective Infrastructures" (October 2019): https://archive.transmediale.de/content/affective-infrastructures-0.

71. Ultra-Red, artist's website, accessed July 12, 2023, http://www.ultrared.org/mission.html.

72. Marina Sula, "Exhibition: Soft Power," 2016, https://galeriesenn.at/marina-sula-/; Kunstraum Niederösterreich, "Care Matters," event series, Vienna, 2019, https://www.kunstraum.net/de/ausstellungen/95-care-matters-lecture-performance-main-tenant-hand-holding201d-les-maintenants-marlies-poeschl-und-podiumsdiskussion-ueber-care-kuration-und-communities.

73. Social Muscle Club, artist's website, accessed July 13, 2023, http://socialmuscleclub.de/about/; GRAND BEAUTY, "Our Care Offer for This Society," accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.grandbeautyontour.org/was-wir-wollen.

justice;[74] queer caring communities;[75] care as anti-ableist inclusion;[76] care as anti-capitalist love;[77] care as solidarity;[78] and so forth.

A range of large-scale exhibitions have further addressed care by including readings around motherhood. Notable examples of such institutional survey exhibitions are the international exhibition *Mutter!* (Mother!), held at Kunsthalle Mannheim in Germany in 2021 and curated by Marie Laurberg and Kirsten Degel (Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark) alongside Johan Holten (Kunsthalle Mannheim), and the exhibition *Maternar/Mothering. Between Stockholm Syndrome and Acts of Production*, held at MUAC – University Museum of Contemporary Art in Mexico City 2021 and curated by Helena Chávez Mac Gregor and Alejandra Labastida.[79]

The *Mutter!* exhibition appears like a rather distant survey of motherhood that

---

74. Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny, and Architekturzentrum Wien, eds, *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2019); Francke, *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood*; Infrastructures of Caring Citizenship. Initiated by Isabel Gutiérrez Sánchez, accessed July 13, 2023, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucqbiig/index.html; Creating Collective Access, accessed July 13, 2023, https://creatingcollectiveaccess.wordpress.com; Platz Da!, accessed July 13, 2023, https://platzda2017.wordpress.com/uns/.

75. Jeremy Wade, "The Future Clinic for Critical Care – Trailer." Vimeo video, 2:30. Posted by Jeremy Wade, August 1, 2019. https://vimeo.com/351354126; CUNTemporary, "About," accessed July 13, 2023, https://cuntemporary.org/about/.

76. Sins Invalid, accessed July 12, 2023, http://www.sinsinvalid.org/vision.html; Park McArthur and Daniel S. Palmer, "Against Accommodation: Park McArthur. Park McArthur in Conversation with Daniel S. Palmer," *Mousse Magazine*, 2015, https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/park-mcarthur-daniel-s-palmer-2015/; Johanna Hedva, artist's website, accessed July 12, 2023, https://johannahedva.com;
Constantina Zavitsanos, artist's website, accessed July 12, 2023, https://constantinazavitsanos.com/news.html.

77. Alexa Karolinski and Ingo Niermann, "Army of Love: Film." The Army of Love, 2020. http://thearmyoflove.net/film.

78. Collective Disaster, "About," accessed July 12, 2023, https://www.collectivedisaster.org/about/; Maiz, accessed July 13, 2023, http://www.maiz.at; Nataša Ilić and Solvej Helweg Ovesen, "Soft Solidarity," Galerie Wedding, 2019, http://galeriewedding.de/sos/.

79. For relevant recent examples of exhibitions on motherhood, see Lentos Museum Linz, "Exhibition: Rabenmütter. Zwischen Kraft und Krise: Mütterbilder von 1900 bis heute," 2015, https://www.lentos.at/ausstellungen/rabenmuetter; Kunsthalle Mannheim, "Exhibition: Mutter!," 2021, https://www.kuma.art/de/mutter; Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, "Exhibition: Maternar / Mothering. Between Stockholm Syndrome and Acts of Production," 2021, https://muac.unam.mx/exposicion/maternar; Unit London, "Re-Naissance," accessed July 21, 2023, https://unitlondon.com; Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets, "Exhibition: Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance," StadtPalais – Museum für Stuttgart, 2023, https://www.stadtpalais-stuttgart.de/ausstellungen/mothers-warriors-and-poets-fuersorge-als-widerstand; Maternal Artistic Research Studio, "Exhibition: Myths of Mothers and Other Monsters," Kunstraum L6 Freiburg, 2023, http://mars-space.net/#UpcomingExhibits. In the last two exhibitions listed here, I was involved as co-curator.

included artistic works from the old masters up to contemporary artists, but without taking a clear political stance (Image 12). In contrast, *Maternar* is easy to identify, both visually and conceptually, as an intersectional feminist position that sought to engage with the contradictions around motherhood (Image 13). Both exhibitions, even if different in their political framings of motherhood, brought together a rich range of artistic voices from various periods and backgrounds.

Due to copyright regulations, this image is not displayed in the university repository version. Photography of artworks within a museum require the consent of the hosting institution.

Image 12. *Mutter!* exhibition, 2021, Kunsthalle Mannheim, installation view. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Due to copyright regulations, this image is not displayed in the university repository version. Photography of artworks within a museum require the consent of the hosting institution.

Image 13. A visitor looks at Cristina Llanos's *"El pacto secreto," Series of Exercises in Preparation to Childbirth*, 2014–21, in the exhibition *Maternar*, 2021, MUAC – University Museum of Contemporary Art, Mexico City. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

The two cited exhibitions on motherhood can be understood as situating themselves in this history of exhibitions and public programming that aim to establish mediated spaces for visibility. However, the politics of visibility and recognition is not inherently linked to emancipation; rather, it is ambivalent and contested, as non-self-determined forms of display can lead to the stigmatisation and further marginalisation of the subjects and themes displayed.[80] From a feminist curatorial position, it is therefore important to scrutinise not only what and who is made visible, but also in which form.[81] Over the recent years, much of the curatorial engagement

---

80. Johanna Schaffer, *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit: Über die visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2008).
81. I further this argument in chapter 5.2 in section "Proposition #2: Create the Conditions of Visibility for Underrepresented Perspectives."

with care seems to have occurred within the symbolic realm, through exhibitions and public programming that engages with care, feminisms, and gender, few structural changes that embrace the needs of caregivers and care-receivers have emerged, such as art institutions offering childcare during openings, residencies realising that they must consider caregiving artists,[82] or funding institutions becoming more sensitive to the needs of artists and researchers with caring responsibilities.[83] I argue that feminist curatorial practices have to go beyond the performative politics of display, to reach into the invisible (infra)structures that sustain its public moments. The caring turn within the arts and academia cannot be counted as a celebratory moment until the representational engagements with care are thought and practised *in tandem* with concrete manifestations of feminist care within the (infra)structures of the respective fields. This dissertation attempts to articulate an alternative roadmap for curating with care by critically engaging with care on thematic, representational, *and* (infra)structural levels – in discourse and in practice.

---

82. MOTHRA (residency), accessed July 12, 2023, https://mothra.ca/; La Becque Residency, accessed July 12, 2023, https://labecque.ch/.

83. The Germany-based Network Motherhood and Science is dedicated to making academia more accessible for caregivers by acknowledging their needs; see Netzwerk Mutterschaft und Wissenschaft, accessed July 21, 2023, https://www.mutterschaft-wissenschaft.de. The international network Cultural ReProducers advocates for more support for cultural practitioners in the arts and provides useful resources on their online platform at https://www.culturalreproducers.org/p/home.html,

Research Questions and Practice-Based Framework

Image 14. Leaflet for "Workshop on the Value of Care," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Artwork: Shira Richter, *Push*, 2005. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer. Translation of text: "What is the value of my work when it is invisible and unpaid?"

In taking serious the laid-out tensions, contradictions, and challenges of the artistic field in relation to feminist struggles, gendered labour, and the ethics of care, a pressing urgency emerges for feminist curators, artists, and cultural producers. This urgency asks us to promote other ways of seeing, acknowledging, practising, and supporting the entanglements of art and care work, and to thereby actively address and renegotiate the structural exclusions that the art sector currently upholds.[84] Feminist curatorial care must be able to hold the ambivalences of the representation

---

84. Structural exclusion is not only an issue within the visual or fine arts. The parents and writers collective Other Writers Need to Concentrate was formed after a member enquired with an artist residency whether their children were welcome and received this response: "And sorry to tell you that we do not accept little kids as it really troubles other writers who need to concentrate." Oftentimes such conflicts can serve as a point of departure for artistic works that challenge the aforementioned binary between "art or children" and the structural invisibilities in the field. For more information about their work, see the group's website at https://other-writers.de.

of care work and other central feminist concerns, but it also must be able to go beyond the symbolic realm by constituting real-world caring infrastructures for the presence of caregivers, as well as other marginalised subjectivities, within the arts.

Under my artistic directorship (2019–20) at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, I initiated participatory programming in the small town of Hohenlockstedt in rural Northern Germany – which forms the practice-based element of this dissertation. The curatorial programme served as a discursive framework in which these questions could be (re)negotiated and as a way to support artists with caring responsibilities and with care needs to practice their craft. The specific aim was to establish a synchronicity between the thematic, self-determined engagement with care and an actual implementation of support structures as tangible manifestations of care.[85] The participatory curatorial program, including its workshop series "Care for Caregivers" (Image 14) departed from the question: Who cares for the ones who care for others?

In view of the etymological root of "curating" in "caring" (from the Latin *curare*, "to take care"), in this dissertation I seek to challenge and renegotiate this set of relations: What could an anti-hegemonic curatorial practice of care look like? How can curating be conceived as a methodological practice that targets the (infra)structures within the arts to align them with feminist ethics of care? What are the potentials, agencies, and limitations of such an approach to curating with care?

These research questions are attended to throughout the six chapters of this practice-based, interdisciplinary doctoral dissertation, which weaves together theoretical and historical engagements from curatorial studies, gender studies, museum studies, (queer) feminist art history and contemporary art practices, social reproduction theory and the ethics of care, empirical research in the social sciences, feminist economics, philosophy, and sociological, epistemological, ecological, and political thought. These theoretical strands are set into fruitful dialogue with my own curatorial practice of care as artistic director during 2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung and culminate in a set of hands-on propositions as to how curatorial care

---

85. See chapter 4.2 – "Care for Caregivers: A Case Study of a Participatory Curatorial Programming on Care."

can be enacted through the building of caring infrastructures in the arts.

This practice-based dissertation revolves around questions of care from a range of angles: from the situated view of a caregiver, from the practice-based experience of a curator-as-carer, and from the activist perspective of a researcher critically engaging with the histories and ambivalences of care and social reproduction within the political economy but also within the arts as a precarious field of labour.

Across this dissertation, practice, theory, and critical (self-)reflection meander, build upon another, and challenge each other. Due to the local situatedness of my curatorial practice within Germany, most of the research (especially the empirical data) focuses on this terrain, in order to establish a political, economic, artistic, and theoretical framework that contextualises my curatorial practice and its respective field of social engagement. However, I bring together theories and practice-based examples from a range of scholars situated in various localities to enrich and complicate the historical and contemporary conditions of care within the arts in Germany. In the context of this dissertation, when I refer to "the arts" I mean the discursive and exhibitionary complex (museums, art foundations, independent spaces, cultural institutions) and not the commercial arts realm (art fairs, auctions, galleries), even though the spheres overlap on occasion. This dissertation attends in particular to the perspectives of thinkers and practitioners with relational, socially engaged, activist, and critical artistic and curatorial positions.[86]

My research and my curatorial practice come with a dedication to social engagement that is inseparable from an activist interest in challenging the status quo of curatorial, artistic, and care practices in a counter-hegemonic spirit. The notion of counter-hegemonic activism embedded in my research and my curatorial practice is influenced by the writings of the political theorist Chantal Mouffe, who defines

---

86. For a theoretical engagement with the history of socially engaged art, political art, and participation, see my bachelor's thesis "Sozialer (T)raum." Sascia Bailer, "Sozialer (T)raum? Über Das Politische Potenzial Der Kunst Von Joseph Beuys Und Rirkrit Tiravanija. Ein Kunsttheoretischer Vergleich" (Bachelor thesis, Zeppelin University, 2012). Claire Bishop has contributed many pertinent publications to this discourse; see, for example, Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," February 2006, 178–83.

"hegemony" as something

> obtained through the construction of nodal points, which discursively fix the meaning of institutions and social practices and articulate the "common sense" through which a given conception of reality is established. Such a result will always be contingent and precarious and susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic interventions.[87]

For Mouffe, however, radical politics does not equate to the complete withdrawal from existing hegemonic discourses and practices or merely oppositional actions. Rather, it takes the form of an *engagement* with the present hegemonic conditions, in order to rearticulate them. She writes:

> What is needed is therefore a strategy whose objective is, through a set of counter-hegemonic interventions, to disarticulate the existing hegemony and to establish a more progressive one thanks to a process of re-articulation of new and old elements into different configuration of power.[88]

For Mouffe this moment of anti-hegemonic "rearticulation" is central, as a complete withdrawal would otherwise feed into a potentially "chaotic situation of pure dissemination" that would create room for non-progressive forces to take over this process of rearticulation – which would likely not be in alignment with an anti-hegemonic spirit.[89] This anti-hegemonic rearticulation would have to be a collective process, one of "acting in concert" with other social groups, to construct what Mouffe calls a "chain of equivalence."[90]

By aligning my positioning with other initiatives around care, art, and gender, and by critically engaging with my own position of power and my own agency as artistic director 2019–20 at M.1 as well as a doctoral researcher, I have followed the activist call to seek out possibilities for a curatorial counter-model to the dominant forms of cultural production. The focus of my practice-based research revolved

---

87. Chantal Mouffe, "Critique as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention," transversal, August 2008, https://transversal.at/transversal/0808.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. According to Mouffe's proposition of "acting in concert," marginalised and disadvantaged groups will have to assemble their political strategies in order to undo the current hegemony. The argument is that through "chains of equivalence" and allied democratic struggles, they would collectively fight against different forms of subordination and seek broader transformation processes of existing power relations. For further elaboration on these ideas, see ibid.

around exploring my curatorial agency to promote questions of care not only at the level of the visible (e.g., in exhibitions, film screenings, and publications) but also in terms of the structural framework of the curatorial field, which oftentimes is invisibilised itself. Under the rubric of "caring infrastructures," my curatorial work concentrates on care as a theme for participatory engagement and artistic and discursive production and representation, while also fostering support structures that enable artists and participants with caring responsibilities and care needs to join the public programming.[91] My curatorial practice and this dissertation therefore challenge the conditions of the arts by rearticulating structural propositions for an *otherwise* – in alignment with related activist initiatives.[92]

Complicating Care

To offer an entry point into the uneasy terrain of care, I want to draw from the definition of "care" offered by the political economist Bengi Akbulut, which renders care of utmost sociopolitical relevance:

> Carework is a basic form of labor that sustains social life and enables any kind of social system to function; it is a field that all of us draw upon to survive. […] In that sense carework is a commons: it is the most fundamental basis of social reproduction to which we all contribute and to which we all owe our existence.[93]

Following Akbulut, there is no escape from care: all human and non-human beings require care throughout their respective lives, in different degrees and forms. We are each not only a caregiver but also a care-receiver. For the feminist political theorist Joan Tronto, the reciprocity of care is essential and its recognition "requires considerable bravery," namely, that every individual has to "admit human

---

91. This passage comes from my previous text Sascia Bailer, "Care for Caregivers: Curating against the Care Crisis," in *Curating with Care*, ed. Elke Krasny, and Lara Perry (London: Routledge, 2023).
92. For such counter-hegemonic articulations, see in particular section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures."
93. Bengi Akbulut, "Carework as Commons: Towards a Feminist Degrowth Agenda," Degrowth, July 20, 2017, https://www.degrowth.info/en/2017/02/carework-as-commons-towards-a-feminist-degrowth-agenda/.

vulnerability. We are care receivers, all."[94] She argues that most democratic political theories assume that autonomous actors exist as the starting point for democracy, thereby framing human dependency as a deviation from the norm – as a "flawed condition."[95] However, the myth that humans can live free from the support of others was pushed to the point of absurdity by the Covid-19 pandemic, as it laid bare the manifold tensions and contradictions between gendered norms, the neoliberal economy, care work, and supposed notions of autonomy. In this sense, the pandemic's sudden rise in early 2020 – which arrived in the middle of my curatorial project on care at M.1 in rural Northern Germany – both aided and intercepted my process of research-creation. During the pandemic, everyday acts of caregiving, which were the focus of my curatorial programme at M.1, became recognised as an aspect of society without which the system could not be maintained. Societies around the globe could no longer deny it: care is indispensable to life. Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic lent quite explicit visibility to societal structures and imbalances which, although widely discussed on a theoretical level, had seldom entered public consciousness so vividly before. I never could have imagined, at the beginning of my doctoral research, that care would become such a deeply discussed topic or that the pandemic would put the *conditions* of my curatorial work at M.1 to the test by making on-site gatherings impossible.[96]

While care in its myriad connotations across cultural contexts and languages withdraws itself from fixed meanings, Tronto and Berenice Fisher have put forth a useful definition of caring

> as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our "world" so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.[97]

This definition is rooted in the acknowledgement of entangled support

---

94. Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 146.
95. Ibid., 31.
96. I first made this point in Sascia Bailer, *Curating, Care, and Corona*, Kuratieren #6 (Hohenlockstedt: Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).
97. Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 103.

structures that stretch beyond the care relationships between parent and child, between the elderly and their younger carers, and rather includes a rich variety of caring relationships among humans as well as their responsibility towards the natural environment – a notion which is increasingly relevant in times of climate crisis.[98] However, despite the central social function of care that entangles each and every one of us in a life-sustaining web, the ways in which care is organised across societies, and the mechanisms that dictate who cares for whom, do not follow the parameters of equity. Rather, it is important to recognise that care is immensely unevenly distributed and that it therefore must be regarded as attached to wider issues of inequality, exploitation, and structural violence.[99] This notion is mirrored in Akbulut's argument, whereby she frames care work as historically "one of the most exploitative, flexible and invisible forms of labor performed by women."[100] Particularly, for Black women and other racialised women, care work forms the basis of exploitation not only within the (informal) labour force but also as owners of potentially pregnant and birthing bodies. In the UK, Black women are more than four times and Asian women two times as likely as white women to die during pregnancy, while in labour, or shortly thereafter.[101] The labour of care therefore reinforces social injustices while the persistent romantisation of care veils its oppressive forces,

---

98. I want to acknowledge the important curatorial and editorial work of my colleagues around care and climate justice: Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, "Climate Care: Theory and Practice on a Natureculture Learning," Climate Care, 2021, https://floating-berlin.org/programmes/climate-care/; Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny, and Architekturzentrum Wien, eds., *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019). For further reading, I suggest Selma James, *Our Time Is Now: Sex, Race, Class, and Caring for People and Planet* (Binghamton, NY: PM Press, 2021); Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Feminism* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2022); Vandana Shiva, "Manifesto on Economies of Care and Earth Democracy," Navdanya International, accessed July 11, 2023, https://navdanyainternational.org/publications/manifesto-on-economies-of-care-and-earth-democracy/.
99. Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese, "Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times," *Social Text* 38 (2020), 8.
100. Akbulut, "Carework as Commons."
101. "The risk of maternal death in 2019–21 was statistically significantly almost four times higher among women from Black ethnic minority backgrounds compared with White women (RR 3.90; 95% CI 2.51 to 5.87); this disparity is higher, but not statistically significantly so, than the disparity in 2018–20. Women from Asian backgrounds also continued to be at higher risk than White women (RR 1.85, 95% CI 1.23 to 2.71); this disparity is higher, but not statistically significantly so, than the disparity in 2018–20." For full study, see National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford, "Maternal Mortality 2019–2021," May 2023. https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/data-brief/maternal-mortality-2019-2021. Within German medical surveys I could not find data that specifically addressed differences in race in regard to maternal deaths.

upholding harmful narratives of care as a purely loving and selfless act.[102]

This dissertation thus complicates care and challenges who is naturalised to care for whom and on what terms. It scrutinises these questions within the context of the arts and contemporary, socially engaged curatorial practice. As curating is etymologically tied to the politics of care, this study articulates methodologies of how a curatorial practice of care can come into being in a way that does not reproduce care's oppressive and draining characteristics but which instead serves as an emancipatory method towards social transformation.

In the next section, I present three readings of care that are central to this dissertation. Taken together, these three dimensions of care highlight not only the ambivalences, contradictions, and tensions but also the transformative potentials dormant within the notions and practices of care – as care can serve as both a mechanism of oppression, through social conditioning, exploitation, coercion, and exclusion, as well as a concept for liberation,[103] democratisation (feminist care ethics), and arts-based social transformation (caring infrastructures).

Care as Social Reproduction

Firstly, this volume considers care within the framework of Marxist feminism, which understands care work as an essential labour to the capitalist system that, paradoxically, remains unpaid. Through this historical and theoretical lens, care work is understood as an exploited, gendered, classed, and racialised labour that reproduces the conditions of life (i.e., social reproduction).[104] This reading is complemented with feminist art historical and art theoretical positions that showcase

---

102. While care continues to be predominantly perceived as a feminised concept, there are also strands within critical studies of men and masculinity that investigate the relationship between masculinity and care, referred to as "caring masculinities." For more, see Karla Elliott, "Caring Masculinities: Theorizing an Emerging Concept," *Men and Masculinities* 19, no. 3 (2015): 240–59.
103. Maggie Nelson, *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint* (Dublin: Random House, 2021).
104. This dissertation gives a central place to this particular conceptual trajectory in chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands" to provide an understanding of the historical development of today's uneven distribution of care within the capitalist system.

how care within the arts has led to further marginalisations, particularly for artists who are also mothers. I follow the international Wages for Housework movement in its argument to understand care as a prism – as an analytical tool – to comprehend broader uneven sociopolitical and economic conditions within society. To regard care as a prism in particular allows a grasping of the marginalised position of women and racialised people within society and within the arts.[105] Thus the importance of this position within this dissertation stems from its capacity to render care as a central terrain for social justice while highlighting the transformative potential that lies within care: if the way in which care is organised across society plays a central role in reproducing inequalities, then altering the gendered, racialised, classed, and ableist conditions of care also carries a transformative potential for the wider society. This alludes to the infrastructural thinking that is central to this study.[106]

Care as Feminist Ethics

The ideas and propositions in this book depart from feminist care ethics as a democratising vehicle for transformative curatorial practices of care within the arts. According to Joan Tronto's notion of feminist care ethics, these democratic principles regarding human life are rooted in the recognition that all humans are interrelated and interdependent, all are vulnerable and fragile – and all are caregivers and care-receivers at the same time.[107] Upon this conceptual basis, Tronto allows us to conceive of care as a central democratic principle. She argues that "[n]o state can function without citizens who are produced and reproduced through care."[108] Her

---

105. Louise Toupin, *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist Movement, 1972–77* (London: Pluto, 2018), 3.
106. For further elaboration on this line of thinking, see section "Care as Curatorial Method Towards Caring Infrastructures."
107. Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 30–31.
108. Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 26. The full quote reads: "This move toward inclusion through paid work left unanswered one large question: Who does the care work? Contemporary democratic theory has virtually nothing to say, on the theoretical level, in answer to this question. Why should this lacuna be a concern for democratic theory? Because unless democratic theory deals substantively with the question of 'who cares,' it results in an account of politics that misconceives citizens and their lives, overvaluing their lives as workers, devaluing their lives as people engaged in relationships of care. No state can function without citizens who are produced and reproduced through care. If public

theoretical arguments challenge the boundaries between the private and the public, which have historically delineated matters of care as private ones. However, care needs to be recognised as a central *public* concern, a notion which Tronto refers to as "caring-with."[109] Through this dimension of caring-with, she identifies care as a democratising practice that is committed to justice, equality, and freedom for all:[110] "The goal of such practices is to ensure that all of the members of the society can live as well as possible by making the society as democratic as possible. This is the essence of 'caring with.'"[111]

Feminist care ethics, within this account, are therefore understood as a specifically care-centred framework for social transformation. From this position, feminist care ethics allow for an understanding of "curating with care" as a political, democratising, activist activity rooted in the recognition of our interdependencies. For Tronto, concerns of care cannot be separated from concerns of responsibility: "The task of a democratic politics is to affix responsibility, and as we come to recognize the centrality of care for living a decent human life, then the task of democratic politics needs to be much more fully focused upon care responsibilities: their nature, their allocation, and their fulfilment."[112] It is this close-knit entanglement of care and responsibility that I would like to transfer from the realm of democratic politics to the

---

discussions do not explicitly address this question, then the care dimensions of life remain hidden in the background."

109. Ibid., 94. The relationship between the ethics of care and the ethics of justice have a contested history, which particularly unfold between the two psychologists Carol Gilligan (one of the early, central voices of feminist approaches to feminist care) and Lawrence Kohlberg: "Gilligan faulted Kohlberg's model of moral development for being gender biased, and reported hearing a 'different voice' than the voice of justice presumed in Kohlberg's model. She found that both men and women articulated the voice of care at different times, but noted that the voice of care, without women, would nearly fall out of their studies. Refuting the charge that the moral reasoning of girls and women is immature because of its preoccupation with immediate relations, Gilligan asserted that the 'care perspective' was an alternative, but equally legitimate form of moral reasoning obscured by masculine liberal justice traditions focused on autonomy and independence. She characterized this difference as one of theme, however, rather than of gender. […] Later, Gilligan vigorously resisted readings of her work that posit care ethics as relating to gender more than theme, and even established the harmony of care and justice ethics (1986), but she never fully abandoned her thesis of an association between women and relational ethics." Maureen Sander-Staudt, "Care Ethics," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (peer-reviewed), accessed May 11, 2023, https://iep.utm.edu/care-ethics/. For further reading on Gilligan's position, see Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
110. Manuela Zechner, *Commoning Care & Collective Power: Childcare Commons and the Micropolitics of Municipalism in Barcelona* (Linz, Austria: Transversal Texts, 2021).
111. Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 30
112. Ibid.

curatorial. How can curators-as-carers partake in assuming responsibility for transforming the arts according to feminist democratic care ethics?

Already a range of curatorial approaches are indebted to Tronto's theory of feminist care ethics, such as Elke Krasny's notion of "caring activism," fusing activist ideas of curating with feminist care ethics to render legible the interdependencies within the arts.[113] In this way, the dimension of care as feminist ethics takes on a central role, as it serves as a moral compass for the transformation processes within artistic and curatorial practices. That is to say, feminist care ethics point in *what direction* and *how* rearticulations of the status quo within the arts should occur. In this dissertation, I argue that curators, due to their profession's etymological relation to care, must assume the responsibility of caring for the presence of a diversity of artists, audiences, and collaborators – while not neglecting care for themselves.[114]

Care as Curatorial Method towards Caring Infrastructures

The central importance of feminist care ethics lies in the capacity to translate them from abstract theories into lived practices within the arts – to make care as a method tangible in the form of practice-led actions for cultural practitioners who wish to ignite transformative processes within the arts and society. Under the rubric of "caring infrastructures," my research lays out key theoretical frameworks and practice-based propositions as to how this translation, through a relational, socially engaged curatorial practice, can occur. Building and critically reflecting on my own curatorial practice on care, I have developed the notion of "caring infrastructures" as a thought vehicle that allows care to be understood and practised as a curatorial methodology. Caring infrastructures are curatorially instituted support structures that respond to the multiple caring needs and capacities of artists, collaborators, audiences, and team members and which foster the conditions of their presence. Infrastructures, within this context, are understood – and made conceptually productive – as relational,

---

113. For an elaboration of Elke Krasny's notion of caring activism, among other feminist approaches to curating, see section 4. – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."
114. See section 5.2.1 – "Practice-led Propositions towards Building Caring Infrastructures."

invisiblised, malleable constructions that go beyond the scope of institutions. Their potential in relation to social transformation lies in their repetition, that is, their reproductive character, which allows them to uphold social structures, norms, and values – thereby not only enabling the reproduction of oppressive acts but also providing leeway for *reproducing otherwise*. Curating, itself understood as a relational, infrastructural activity that spans people, places, objects, and theories, is thereby situated as a potent practice that can actively reproduce otherwise. Critical thinking along the lines of infrastructures follows the trajectory that micro-political (curatorial) decisions can have positive effects throughout a chain of relations. Building caring infrastructures means to practice curating with care as a radically relational, meaningful, and situated practice across a variety of scales.

To establish caring infrastructures, I propose a set of curatorial methods that shift care from an abstract moral imposition towards a situated praxis of care. The curatorial methodology includes a close look at the multitude of scales and elements of a given curatorial undertaking (what I call "building blocks") followed by allocating and revising them according to the caring needs and capacities of the specific context. Feminist care ethics serve as the moral compass that guide and shape the ways in which the individual building blocks are rearticulated. Take, for example, the building block of budgeting. I propose to consider budgetary decisions as a central political curatorial concern that should focus on fair pay for all collaborating parties and that should avoid unpaid labour throughout the process. I make a case to consider a curatorial degrowth agenda to downscale curatorial projects to retain sufficient funds to pay all involved people fairly.[115] When taken together, the various building blocks – which have been critically analysed and readjusted in alignment with feminist care ethics – come together in a chain of supporting elements. Together, they form caring infrastructures.

In chapter 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures," I offer eight curatorial propositions for constructing caring infrastructures. These propositions emerge from my curatorial practice at M.1, thus

---

115. For further details, see Proposition #5: "Consider Curatorial Budgeting to Be Political" in section 5.2.1 – "Practice-led Propositions towards Building Caring Infrastructures."

also enabling me to make tangible the situated experiences in Hohenlockstedt and to cast them as useful learnings for the wider curatorial community. I thus offer these propositions towards caring infrastructures as a professional toolkit of transformation that can be carried out, adjusted, and implemented by curators, artists, and cultural practitioners in their respective contexts.[116] The idea of a professional toolkit shifts away from care as a gendered notion that implies that care is to be carried out by certain social groups, because caring comes "naturally" to them or because their values already align with feminist care ethics. By offering care as a curatorial methodology towards constructing caring infrastructures, I thereby offer it as an *ungendered* notion of practising care, as it detaches care from the association of scripted gendered norms to care and rather is enacted as part of a professional code of conduct.

As all three above-described dimensions of care evoke an entangled, ambivalent relationship between theory, practice, and reflection, they demonstrate the challenges of producing relevant knowledge for the wider community of curators who seek to practice with, through, and towards care. "Curating with care," in this volume, is used as an umbrella term for a range of feminist curatorial approaches that align with notions of feminist care ethics as a lens for social transformation. Many of these approaches are socially engaged, situated, relational, and participatory; some are also conceived as activist practices within museum or gallery spaces. I present my propositions towards caring infrastructures as one possible form of curating with care, sitting alongside the approaches of Maura Reilly's curatorial activism, Elke Krasny's caring activism, and Megan Johnston's slow curating.[117]

The strands of curating that this dissertation engages with are therefore inseparable from wider discourses around feminism(s), particularly the ongoing

---

116. This dimension of care is conceptually established in chapter 3 – "Histories of a Contested Terrain: Curatorial Care" and is further substantiated within the practice-based section 4.2 – "Care for Caregivers: A Case Study of a Participatory Curatorial Programming on Care" and section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures."
117. For further discussion on these feminist curatorial approaches, see chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."

heavily loaded political conversations around gender within feminist, trans, and queer scholarship and movements. As a feminist scholar and a cisgender single mother, I build my research on social reproduction theory, in which care work is understood as a feminised, oppressive labour within capitalism. While this dissertation acknowledges the troubled yet important role of "women" and "mothers" in relation to care work and domestic labour under capitalism, I use these terms not as biological but as historical, symbolic, and political categories.[118] These histories and presents are brought into conversation with the artistic, scholarly, activist, and writerly voices of communal, queer, single-parent, dis*able-bodied, and Black positions through the various curatorial and editorial facets of this practice-based dissertation.[119]

In this volume as in all communication, language holds the ambivalent, dual character of being able to address and to point out by reverting to established terms while containing the power to exclude and render already marginalised perspectives invisible.[120] This conundrum is voiced by Hettie Judah in her book *How Not to*

---

118. For conversations around gendered terms as symbolic, political, and historical categories, see Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 15; Rumaan Alam, Kim Brooks, Jessica Friedmann, Sheila Heti, and Meaghan O'Connell, "What It Means to Write About Motherhood, Part One," Literary Hub, October 24, 2018, https://lithub.com/what-it-means-to-write-about-motherhood-part-one/; Emilia Roig, *Das Ende der Ehe: Für eine Revolution der Liebe. Feministische Impulse für die Abschaffung einer patriarchalen Institution* (Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlage, 2023), 34. For the discourses around the social construction of gender, see Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage Classics, 2015); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*.

119. As I oppose the use of gender identities as binary biological categories, the care workshops at M.1 were always explicitly described as to being open for everyone with caring responsibilities in their private or professional lives, independent from the participant's gender identity or sexual orientation. However, limitations of accessibility for vulnerable groups are often found in such openness; certain social groups, instead of open invitations, need very specific address in order to feel safe and welcome. I discuss this conundrum between open language and specific address (which also excludes other lived realities) in the concluding chapter 6 – "Limits of Curatorial Care."

120. Particularly in official data, trans and non-binary perspectives are structurally excluded. The German statistic office states: "For methodological reasons, cases with the gender characteristics 'unknown' and 'diverse' (as of 2019) cannot currently be reported separately. Cases with these gender characteristics are distributed to the gender characteristics male and female using a defined recoding procedure." Statistisches Bundesamt, "Wie wird mit den Daten von Personen mit den Geschlechtsausprägungen 'unbekannt' oder 'divers' verfahren?," accessed July 11, 2023, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Bevoelkerungsstand/Methoden/Erlauterungen/geschlechtsauspraegungen.html . My translation. For an example of an empirical study on queer care communities, see Francis Seeck, *Care trans_formieren* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2021).
Non-binary and trans perspectives are not the only ones often excluded from official data generation: the perspectives of Black people – specifically in the German data landscape – also frequently go

Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents):

> Many involved feel very strongly about using the term "mother": in
> some cases because the figure of the mother carries huge cultural
> importance, in others because using the more neutral term "parents"
> conceals the gender care gap, and erases centuries of unpaid
> women's labour and exclusion. Many others feel equally strongly about
> using the term "parent", arguing that to continue framing this as a
> woman's issue perpetuates gender imbalance: instead, we should be
> reinforcing the idea that these questions are of equal importance to
> all.[121]

Caught in this uneasy set of tensions, this dissertation departs from the specific ("mother") as an analytical and linguistic tools to understand, criticise, and shift the power dynamics at play and, towards the end of the book, arrives at broader terms ("caregivers" and "care-receivers"). Through this approach, I hope to both acknowledge the troubled, gendered histories of care work while simultaneously contributing to the shift of care as a concern for everyone, regardless of their gender identities.[122] The intention is not to pitch often divisive perspectives against one

unaccounted for. Due to the lack of statistical information for African and Afrodiasporic people, the initiative AfroZensus launched its first census in 2020: Each One Teach One e.V. and Citizens for Europe, *Afrozensus 2020*, 2021, https://afrozensus.de/reports/2020/.

Apart from this lack in official data, much early thinking about reproductive labor among Marxist feminists also did not acknowledge that women of color, poor women, and immigrant women have long been employed in the paid care sector, where they cook, clean, and nanny for wealthier families – thereby becoming unavailable to care for their own. For more on this topic, see Shannon Mattern, "Maintenance and Care," *Places Journal* (November: 2018); Mignon Duffy, "Doing the Dirty Work: Gender, Race, and Reproductive Labor in Historical Perspective," *Gender & Society* 21, no. 3 (2007): 313–36; Mignon Duffy, *Making Care Count: A Century of Gender, Race, and Paid Care Work* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011); Eleonore Kofman, "Rethinking Care through Social Reproduction: Articulating Circuits of Migration," *Social Politics* 19, no. 1 (2012): 142–62.

Marxist thinkers have made more recent calls to revisit Marxism in respect of gender and class, paying special attention to queer and trans perspectives; see Holly Lewis, *The Politics of Everybody: Feminism, Queer Theory, and Marxism at the Intersection: A Revised Edition* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022); Jules Joanne Gleeson, and Elle O'Rourke, eds., *Transgender Marxism* (London: Pluto, 2021).

121. Judah, *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)*, 15.

122. For an enriching text on motherhood, I recommend the conversation between the writers Jessica Friedmann, Sheila Heti, Rumaan Alam, and Kim Brooks. There they share their internal struggles with the contradictions between the binary-coded research at hand and their desire to ungender motherhood. See their "What It Means to Write About Motherhood, Part One," Literary Hub, October 24, 2018. For an autotheoretical account that engages with queer parenthood, see Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf, 2015). On queering the maternal experience through artistic and discursive practice, see artist Dyana Gravina's website at https://dyanagravina.com. For transgender communities and the role of mothers, see Emily A. Arnold, and Marlon M. Bailey, "Constructing Home and Family: How the Ballroom Community Supports African American GLBTQ Youth in the Face of HIV/AIDS," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 21, nos. 2–3 (2009): 171–88.

another (nor to erase marginalised lived realities) but rather to raise curators'
awareness around the necessity to attend to the various caring needs and caring
capacities involved in artistic and curatorial projects.

Chapter Overviews

This practice-based dissertation is deeply rooted within feminist methodologies, not
only to theorise feminism but to actively practise it, as both a curator and a
researcher. It brings together strands of art historical, curatorial, political,
sociological, philosophical, feminist, and queer scholarship in order to challenge the
status quo of the arts and to propose hands-on curatorial strategies for sociopolitical
transformations within the arts and research. The different chapters build towards
this overall aim.

The first chapter of this book, "Methods as Feminist Practices of Care:
Inscribing the Self, Relational Politics of Citation, and Moving beyond Disciplinary
Boundaries," showcases the ways in which the lived experience of the researcher
can form part of the knowledge-creation process (auto-theory and auto-ethnography)
and establishes these as meaningful positions from which to speak, think, analyse,
and act. While this doctoral research is not the result of auto-ethnography or
anecdotal theory (per feminist literary scholar Jane Gallop) in a narrow sense, I
inscribe my lived experience into the research narration around care, curating, and
feminist research-creation as an act of micro-politics in resonance with the feminist
slogan of "the personal is political."[123] The overall argument of chapter 1 is that the
method in which we conduct our research contains the opportunity – or rather the
impetus – to counter the logics of heteronormativity, neoliberal productivity, and
compulsory monodisciplinarity as well as traditional perceptions of objectivity. I
articulate the ways in which these feminist propositions manifest in this dissertation
in 1) how the relation between lived experience and the academic text is negotiated;

---

123. "The personal is political" has been a core phrase of the feminist movement since the 1960s. Its
original authorship is unclear, as several feminists decline having coined the phrase and rather
attribute it to the collective social movements.

2) how citation politics can serve as a counter-hegemonic tool to construct an alternative approach for academic writing; 3) how theory, practice, and life inevitably inform one another; and 4) how disciplinary boundaries are navigated ("polydisciplinamory," after the art historian Natalie Loveless) and the role that the erotic (after activist and poet Audre Lorde) plays in navigating interests and curiosity. Taken together, these methodological principles explore how to put feminist theory into academic practice – as a method of care.

Chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands" sets the theoretical and historical groundwork in regard to the systemic contradictions of care, capitalism, and art. Through Marxist-feminist scholars such as Silvia Federici and Nancy Fraser and the Black feminist scholar bell hooks, the conditions of (private) care work, with its structural injustices, are analysed as a historically grown system that cannot be thought of outside larger political and economic conditions and social norms. This chapter attempts an – albeit brief – historical trajectory of the origins of the sexual division of labour in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the processes of de-commonisation of land and labour, and the lasting effects of these major transformations on the ideals of the nuclear family as a capitalist institution. The argument is that invisible codes, social norms, and juridical decisions up to today have cemented gendered divisions of labour that naturalise women as default caregivers. Chapter 2 looks at how such matters of care intersect within the art field in forms of discrimination, access, and representation regarding care work – motherhood, in particular – but also race.

In chapter 3 – "Histories of a Contested Terrain: Curatorial Care," I build on the historical and theoretical grounds of the previous chapter and shift focus specifically towards the contested histories and ambivalent relationships among curating, art, gender, care, and control. Departing from the etymological origin of "curating" in the Latin the verb "to curate" (*curare* = "to take care, to look after"), I argue that curating is tied to the politics of care and thus has to renegotiate these relationships and tensions on a continuous basis. Beginning in the 1970s, this chapter revisits the historical shifts in the associations between curating and care, beginning with the concept of the curator-as-carer, through the curator-as-author as

a so-called independent practitioner, and on to feminist artists-as-curators.

In the first part of chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice," I provide the contextual framework for my curatorial case study under my artistic directorship in 2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. In an effort of *thinking-with* (Donna Haraway, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa) and *practicing-with*, I introduce central scholars and practitioners from whom I have learned as a curator and a scholar, and with whom I regard my practice to be in alliance, in a spirit of companionship towards care. I consider in tandem and think through the following curatorial and artistic approaches and methods: slow curating (Megan Johnston), post-representational curating (Nora Sternfeld), curatorial activism (Maura Reilly), caring activism (Elke Krasny), exhibition-as-alibi (ruangrupa), curating-as-improvisation (curators of the 11th Berlin Biennale), the building of support structures (Andrea Francke, Céline Condorelli), and the practice of *affidamento* (Gabrielle Moser after the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective), as well as the multiple artistic and curatorial situated examples of Casa Gallina (Mexico City), HOMEBAKED (Liverpool), and Park Fiction (Hamburg); the various practices of *Arte Útil* ("useful art," around Tania Bruguera); and my proposition of *Curaduría Útil* ("useful curating"). Together, these approaches provide a rich array of inspirational sources and tools that have greatly co-shaped my curatorial practice and those of others in the field.

Drawing from these theoretical and practice-based companions, my curatorial practice, and the practices of others in the field produces a recalibration of what curating in relationship to care can entail. Beyond the traditional notion of "curatorial care for objects," the emphasis shifts towards care for artists, participants, collaborators, audience and community members, and fellow curators. This recalibration positions curating as a relational, useful, affective activity and ethicopolitical practice. The commitment to networks, assemblies, and encounters situates the social sphere as the fabric of a radically relational curatorial practice. This approach builds support structures for artistic practices and communal gathering, entwined with the physical-material manifestations of related social and artistic processes.

In the second part of chapter 4, titled 4.2 – "Care for Caregivers: A Case

Study of Participatory Curatorial Programming on Care," I shift from the analysis of companion practices towards my own participatory curatorial practice on care, presenting, describing, analysing, and critically reflecting upon the twenty-month programme at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt, located in rural Northern Germany, as a case study. First, I provide an overview of the concepts and formats of my participatory programming on care during my position as artistic director 2019–20 at M.1. By inviting the participation of women artists, most of them with caring responsibilities, and by engaging with local and regional caregivers, the programming addressed central tensions around care work through artistic methods, dialogic formats, and discursive events. Relational curatorial formats – such as the storytelling cafés "Holo Miteinander," the workshop series "Care for Caregivers," the exchange event "Social Muscle Club," and the interactive project *Archive of Encounters* – aimed to counter the hostile societal and economic mechanisms that continue to marginalise care work. The formats sought to foster rather tender links between the scales of the personal, the local, the everyday, and political democratic transformative processes – and to thereby facilitate the construction of new caring infrastructures.[124] In the chapter, I provide a sense of the conceptual framework and the individual curatorial formats and outcomes through recourse to examples. Inconclusion, I critically reflect on the programme's dis/continued processes with the aim to gather aspects that may have contributed to the ending of the curatorial cycle without the community-driven and self-organised continuation that my colleagues and I had envisioned for it.

In the fifth chapter, "Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures," I embark on a discursive journey to grasp the notion of "caring infrastructures," both in thought and in practice. In an effort to write-with and think-with (after feminist science and technology scholars Maria Puig de la Bellacasa and Donna Haraway), I engage with the writings that Joan Tronto produced during our collaborative editorial project "Letters to Joan," held as part of the event "CARING" at M.1 and Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin in June 2020.[125] Acknowledging the

---

124. This thought was originally presented in Bailer, *Curating, Care, and Corona*, 35.
125. Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, eds. *Letters to Joan* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Hohenlockstedt, Germany: M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).

project's continued theoretical and sociopolitical urgencies, I revisit passages from the letters exchanged between eight thinkers and artists in a close reading. Through a dialogic process of thinking-with Tronto, I establish infrastructures as malleable forms that carry the potential to reproduce otherwise. I re-emphasise curating as a relational, infrastructural activity of care and provide a deeper conceptual understanding of the elements of infrastructures – the "building blocks." The discursive text concludes that the rearticulation of the building blocks needs to be a radically relational one, in order to address the roots of the urgencies at stake. This radical rearticulation is shaped and guided by feminist care ethics, which acts as the defining factor that turns infrastructures into *caring* infrastructures. I articulate the notion of caring infrastructures as a curatorial methodological configuration, one that produces tangible frameworks for practising in congruence with feminist care ethics. Caring infrastructures within the arts are understood as the result of a methodological sequence centred around the building of support structures. These structures need to be responsive to the multiple caring needs and capacities of artists, collaborators, audiences, and team members across various scales, to foster the conditions of their presences. This part of the chapter forms the basis for the subsequent section, in which I present practice-based methodologies for enacting caring infrastructures as a lived practice of care within the arts.

Section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures" interweaves this notion of caring infrastructures with my own practice to put forth propositions on how to practice curatorial care with the infrastructural perspective in mind. Departing from my practice-based experiences, I home in on some of the central tensions of and lessons learned from my work at M.1, with the intention to formulate useful propositions for the curatorial community. I identify eight building blocks, among them budgets, communication, agency, and representation. I critically analyse and rearticulate each of these building blocks in a counter-hegemonic effort, rooted in the perspectives of feminist care ethics. The propositions aren't fixed and they aren't all encompassing, but they are a methodological proposition on how to enact and practice care curatorially – and how to expand on these building blocks by contributing to the construction of more caring

infrastructures within the arts. At the end of the chapter, I condense the propositions to produce what I call a "soft manifesto for caring infrastructures."

In the last chapter, "Limits of Curatorial Care," I critically reflect on the dangers, limitations, and contradictions around curatorial care and the concept of caring infrastructures. While I propose the latter as concept for an arts-based social transformation, it is equally important to highlight the factors that delimit its agency and potentials. These limitations are mainly rooted within the inherent contradictions between capitalism, care, and curating; curators' double-headed role as both reproducers of hegemonic power relations and spearheads of counter-hegemonic critique; romantised notions of care as a universally expandable asset; and locating the agency of social transformation within micro-political approaches, without connecting those to larger social movements. This dissertation thus makes a call to produce synergies with like-minded initiatives in a joint effort to "caring in concert."

By way of closing this introduction, I turn to an interview with Maggie Nelson, in which she describes how she wrote her novel *The Argonauts* in a variety of moods over time.[126] This account certainly also reflects similar shifts in perspectives and moods that have shaped my own research and writing process over the past five years – variously fuelled by anger in the face of ongoing structural injustices; deeply intrigued by societal mechanisms at work; fatigued by the status quo; facing insecurity and feeling unsettled in the light of the vast literature, theory, and practices on care; defeated by the inconceivable magnitude of contradictions and fault lines; hopeful in the light of theoretical or practice-based sparks of social transformation, which I wanted to hold on to very tightly. I do not aim to flatten out these waves of affective entanglement with the research at hand, which might transmit to the reader; rather, I wish to acknowledge them as the driving force behind this dissertation.

The affective entanglements across the six chapters of this dissertation have created an account that is many things at once: it is theoretical and practice-based, it

---

126. For the full account, see the Nelson's interview on the podcast: David Naimon, "Maggie Nelson: The Argonauts," *Between the Covers*, podcast, Podcast Republic, July 29, 2015, https://www.podcastrepublic.net/podcast/583648001.

is provocative in its methodologies and daring in its propositions, it is at times poetic in its style, and personal and self-critical in its reflections. It is a sharp analysis of uneven conditions and yet a hopeful plea for an otherwise. With this notion of "otherwise," I follow Indigenous studies scholar Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and media scholar Tamara Kneese, who emphasise that radical care is built on praxis, and thereby doesn't fall into traps of romanticising care nor ignoring its demons: "As the traditionally undervalued labour of caring becomes recognized as a key element of individual and community resilience, radical care provides a roadmap for an otherwise."[127] Within this practice-based dissertation, I spell out the agency, and limitations, of curatorial care in rearticulating such "a roadmap for an otherwise."

---

127. Hobart and Kneese, "Radical Care," 13.

1. Methods as Feminist Practices of Care: Inscribing the Self, Relational Politics of Citation, and Moving beyond Disciplinary Boundaries

> *Feminism is at stake in how we generate knowledge; in how we write, in who we cite. I think of feminism as a building project: if our texts are worlds, they need to be made out of feminist materials. Feminist theory is world making. […] It should not be possible to do feminist theory without being a feminist, which requires an active and ongoing commitment to live one's life in a feminist way. […] To be a feminist at work is or should be about how we challenge ordinary and everyday sexism, including academic sexism. This is not optional: it is what makes feminism feminist. A feminist project is to find ways in which women can exist in relation to women; how women can be in relation to each other. It is a project because we are not there yet.*

Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*[128]

Despite the space for criticality that it provides, academia is a normative space that prescribes disciplinary boundaries, upholds mechanisms of exclusion due to racial and social origins, and imposes heteronormative codes of conduct.[129] It is thus with great intention that I begin my methods chapter with this quotation by the queer-feminist theorist Sara Ahmed. The methods I employ undergird an attempt to not only theorise according to feminist thought but also to construct both the research and the curatorial practice element of my doctoral undertaking in alignment with feminist principles. Rather than writing *about* feminist theory, I seek to produce work that *practices* feminist care as a methodological framework. The overall intention of the following sections is to put feminist thought into practice in all the different methodological layers of my research and practice-based undertaking. In this regard, the "what" of feminist research finds its validation, its credibility, in the "how." Central to this methodological framework is the relationship between my experience as a researcher, a single parent, and a curator and the ways in which feminist methodologies challenge the supposed split between these positions. In this context,

---

128. Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 14.
129. For a dismantling of the (American) university, see Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2013).

I borrow the term "research-creation" from Natalie Loveless to describe artistic research at a doctoral level and to make transparent the inherent theory-practice nexus.

Thus, in the first part of this chapter I provide a range of feminist scholarly positions and methodological approaches that allow me to frame, analyse, position, and trouble my own experiences as a caregiver as a possible "productive encounter"[130] in relation to the research framework of this dissertation.[131] The four sections of this chapter go from the narrow to the broad. I first address note-taking and auto-theory in order to move through the ways in which the personal relates to wider social issues, and how this tension – this split between the self and the academic – can be challenged and integrated according to feminist methodological approaches, such as "situated knowledges" by Donna Haraway. In the second part, I home in on the relationship between lived experience, theoretical research, and curatorial practice. Following Loveless's proposition of "makingthinking," I argue that these fields became inseparable processes of knowledge production in completing this practice-based dissertation. Thirdly, I turn to the importance of affective ecologies of research and curatorial processes. That is to say, that it matters with whose thoughts we – as feminist researchers – build our own thoughts, that it matters how we cite and whom we cite. By exploring Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's notion of "writing-with care" and Ahmed's politics of citation, I propose a specific method of citation that aims to turn feminist theory into a relational practice of care. In a fourth step, I broaden the scope and turn to the relationships among the disciplines from which I draw by introducing Loveless's concept of "polydisciplinamory." I then move to the ways in which foci and interests (within this set of disciplines) were established, drawing from feminist activist Audre Lorde's concept of the "erotic."

---

130. Lisa Baraitser, *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 75.
131. This chapter focuses specifically on the methods used in this dissertation, and I elaborate on the influences and conceptual frameworks for the methodology of my participatory curatorial project on care in chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."

1.1 Taking Notes: On Navigating the Terrain of the Personal within the Academic

Over the past month, my son and I have both been experiencing a lot of illness; either I myself was sick or my son (twice, with a short interval of recovery), or other people whom we were supposed to work with (e.g., the jury members for the artist prize). This made the care situation much more dire, and my regular work structures collapsed. I am lucky to not have a boss I must justify my hours to, but still the amount of work doesn't go away. I try to work whenever he sleeps; having other people take care of him while he is sick is difficult. I try to, paradoxically, split the little time that I do have between caring for my son and doing curatorial and scholarly work on topics of care. The stress that emerges out of this simultaneity is both what limits, and yet drives, my work. The constant impossibility to reconcile these two is what makes me mad – mad in the sense that it keeps me restless, anxious, and upset. "There has to be a way!" I keep thinking to myself. "This unsolvable riddle needs to be solved! Yes, single mothering while writing a PhD and directing an art institution is absurdity – but it has to be possible." Or at least I want to believe so.

I trick myself into believing that organisation is the solution. My mind constantly generates organisational structures, timelines, dates, planning every detail of my upcoming months – while knowing that life can't be planned. So, I try to plan for the unplannable surprises of life, too. I come up with eventualities: Plan A – D or maybe F. And my mind never rests. It is very, very exhausting. The amount of effort that goes into creating a structure that allows me to produce professional work in a flexible, neoliberal world is quite unimaginable. And its unpaid and invisible. It is the infrastructure of care that will eventually enable me to produce other outcomes. But the existing (uncaring) infrastructure remains unquestioned. It is a given in a world that functions under a patriarchal order. It is what nuclear families have figured out, by assigning housework to one parent and income-generating tasks to the other, or by taking turns in paid labour in the workforce and unpaid labour in the home. Single parents do not have anyone to share the tasks with. The split of reproduction and production collapses in the figure of the single parent. They therefore depend on

state-subsidised childcare – which is a somewhat functional system for traditional jobs with very traditional hours (at least in Germany). For everyone outside the "norm," it becomes an existential question: What infrastructure allows my family to live? Something that I might want to call "caring infrastructures," as they help us to receive support, give care, and produce professionally, if desired. It is a network of survival and well-being.[132]

In my excessive overthinking, I thought an au pair would be a good solution for me – providing me with a 24/7 backup system, in case something went wrong. Just to know that someone was in the house, if I had to rush to a meeting or if one of us fell sick. But it took me two months of interviewing different candidates across continents, many, many WhatsApp messages, emails, and exchanges of draft contracts to realise that this would not work for me. Not at this point in time. The extra energy needed to be a welcoming host, to introduce the au pair to our family routine and values, would consume a lot of time and energy, which I currently do not have. Not to mention that at this time of transition, I simply could not offer a family routine. We have none. Everything is up in the air. Moving from one part of Germany to another, transitioning into a new job, introducing my child to a new town and a new daycare – and, after a few months, reversing the process: moving back, finding a new daycare … etc. When you think about it from a conventional perspective – it really doesn't make sense. What drives this situation is the heavily idealistic quest to produce a cultural project that alters the ways in which people relate to one another, trust one another, and care for one another – one that will provoke new forms of caring infrastructures through artistic interventions, which can eventually sustain themselves long after the project is over. But this vision is based on many, many variables. And the outcome is absolutely unforeseeable.[133]

Throughout the research process and the practice-based parts of my dissertation, I took reflective notes. They speak to the internal tensions that arise from my

---

132. As this field note shows, the notion of "caring infrastructures" has surged up in different facets of my thinking, writing, and curatorial practice. This notion has evolved over time through conversation with my peers, particularly Rosario Talevi and Gilly Karjevsky. The way I used the term in 2019 follows the same trajectory, but was not as defined as presented in this dissertation in 2023.
133. Field note, February 11, 2019

professional and academic engagement with care as a curator while single parenting a small child. They bring forth the invisible elements that sustain or disrupt and complicate the executing of a public programme on care in parallel to the writing of a dissertation such as this. Despite the crucial influence of these private circumstance to research-creation, such reports are commonly regarded as irrelevant to the final published research narration. Feminist researchers from the late 1960s onwards have criticised this supposed split between personal and academic realities. Literary scholar Jane Tompkins, for example, contests that in reality there is no such split:

> It's the same person who feels and who discourses about epistemology. The problem is that you can't talk about your private life in the course of doing your professional work. You have to pretend that epistemology, or whatever you're writing about, has nothing to do with your life, that it's more exalted, more important, because it (supposedly) transcends the merely personal.[134]

Tompkins describes this dichotomy as a "public-private hierarchy," which she recognises as the central condition of female oppression.[135] Tired of sticking to these conventions, she concludes: "I say to hell with it."[136] In solidarity with Tompkins, I dedicate this section to key feminist figures who have proposed methods of integrating their personal experience into their writings.

Before I turn to a brief theoretical overview of the field, I want to provide closer insight into the triangle of tensions around care and how it influences the ways in which I carried out my research. It spans, firstly, my experiences and positioning as a single mother; secondly, my academic engagement with social reproduction theory and care ethics; and, finally, my professional practice as a curator with a focus on matters of care. Each element of this aforementioned triangle affects the other, as often times these different aspects were carried out simultaneously: I would be mothering while hosting a public event; the conversations around the public event would influence my perspective and possibly open up new thoughts for my research; and my readings and engagement with different theoretical positions for my dissertation altered my perspective in regard to both my parenthood and my

---

134. Jane Tompkins, "Me and My Shadow," *New Literary History* 19 (1987): 169.
135. Ibid.
136. Ibid.

professional self. Due to my child's presence on my research trips, at professional engagements, and during exhibition and conference visits, many times these overlaps took the shape of disruption, of interjection, of seeming unproductivity. A semi-structured interview with the curator of a community-engaged project in Mexico City was interrupted several times by the crying of my child, his upset state making a focused conversation almost impossible. Many times, I had to rush through relevant exhibitions because he was exhausted and wanted to leave urgently. This lived reality resonates with the writings of psychosocial scholar Lisa Baraitser, in which she argues that "interruption forms the ground of maternal experience against which all other experiences are understood."[137] However, Baraitser continues by framing interruption as an *elusive* moment, in which "something happens to unbalance us and open up a new set of possibilities."[138]

With this intention to create a fracture, a crack, to make way for unforeseen possibilities, I turn to Haraway's much cited article "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" from 1988.[139] Haraway proposes to embrace the "split and contradictory self" as a way of engaging with diverse positionings and accountability.[140] For her, "[s]plitting, not being, is the privileged image for feminist epistemologies of scientific knowledge."[141] She thus famously – and fiercely – argues for situated knowledges, as

> politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity.[142]

This view from the body – the contradictions inherent to the embodied experience of care – surfaced during the first month of my appointment as artistic

---

137. Baraitser, *Maternal Encounters*, 74.
138. Ibid., 69.
139. For a historical contextualisation of this work, see Angela Dimitrakaki, "From Space to Time: 'Situated Knowledges,' Critical Curating, and Social Truth," *OnCurating*, no. 53 (June 2022).
140. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988), 586–87.
141. Ibid., 586.
142. Ibid., 589.

director 2019–20 of M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. On January 30, 2019, after the jury session for the Artist Advancement Award 2019–20 – which focused on artistic works at the intersection of social reproduction and social justice – I noted down the following thoughts:

Speaking of care – the paradox that happened in parallel is that my almost three-year-old son was sick with fever on the day of the jury session. He was very attached to his mom, crying a lot and generally very much unhappy with life. It was very difficult for my grandfather to take care of him for so many hours. Occasionally, my son was in the jury room, or I would spend some time in the apartment with them. It added an extra layer of stress – and made the stretch quite visible between a professional practice and the responsibilities of motherhood – even though the content of my profession is care work, it doesn't eliminate or smoothen the stretch. At around 11 p.m. I went to our apartment, expecting a sleeping child. And there he was, still awake. Both my grandfather and my son looked very exhausted from a very long day together. He luckily fell right asleep next to me once I was in bed too. We took the next morning together to recover from the day before, especially because I could barely sleep that night. All the applications went through my head, unsure whether we had made the right choice, feeling bad about eliminating all those other positions.[143]

This note speaks to the situated knowledge and the mundane experience and tensions of caregiving that are not merely add-ons to this theory-driven academic endeavour but rather form its basis and cannot be disentangled for antiquated reasons of objectivity.[144] Part of the critique of writing and research methods that

---

143. Field notes, January 30, 2019.
144. Concepts of objectivity have been contested by feminist positions, such as that of Haraway: "Academic and activist feminist inquiry has repeatedly tried to come to terms with the question of what we might mean by the curious and inescapable term 'objectivity.' We have used a lot of toxic ink and trees processed into paper decrying what they have meant and how it hurts us. The imagined 'they' constitute a kind of invisible conspiracy of masculinist scientists and philosophers replete with grants and laboratories. The imagined 'we' are the embodied others, who are not allowed not to have a body, a finite point of view, and so an inevitably disqualifying and polluting bias in any discussion of consequence outside our own little circles, where a 'mass'-subscription journal might reach a few thousand readers composed mostly of science haters. At least, I confess to these paranoid fantasies and academic resentments lurking underneath some convoluted reflections in print under my name in the feminist literature in the history and philosophy of science. We, the feminists in the debates about science and technology, are the Reagan era's 'special-interest groups' in the rarified realm of

depart from the self is that they emerge from "navel-gazers […], self-absorbed narcissists who don't fulfil scholarly obligations of hypothesizing, analyzing, and theorizing."[145] Communications scholar Della Pollock asserts:

> We don't have sufficient protocols for reading or writing the first person in scholarly discourse and are all too often left regarding it as incontestably determined or merely arbitrary, absolute or relative, esoterically remote or toxically close, and, either way: untouchable. This then radically delimits possibilities for practicing new subjectivities, for beginning to do in and through writing what theories of hybrid, multivoiced, engaged, and embodied social subjectivities have encouraged us to imagine.[146]

The insertion of the auto, the self, into a research context is thus a counterstrategy that destabilises established codes of conduct within academia while producing a rich, nuanced, and situated dimension within scholarly work. Auto-ethnography, for example, "seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)."[147] It is this intricate linking of "auto" and "ethno" which is crucial to a methodology that goes beyond navel-gazing and thereby serves as a methodological framework to challenge "canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act."[148] Further, such a method "acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist."[149]

From the cited perspectives, the potentials of a more enriching scholarly practice already unfold, a practice which seeks to do justice to feminist attempts to overcome the supposed split between the personal and the academic, and which challenges existing hierarchies and norms. In auto-theory, similar to as in auto-

---

epistemology, where traditionally what can count as knowledge is policed by philosophers codifying cognitive canon law. Of course, a special-interest group is, by Reaganoid definition, any collective historical subject that dares to resist the stripped-down atomism of Star Wars, hypermarket, postmodern, media-simulated citizenship." Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 575.

145. Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," *Historical Social Research* 36 (2015): 283.

146. Della Pollock, "The Performative 'I,'" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies* 7 (2007): 242.

147. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," 273.

148. Ibid.

149. Ibid., 274.

ethnography, "one's embodied experiences become the material through which one theorises, and, in a similar way, theory becomes the discourse through which one's lived experience is refracted," as feminist writer Lauren Fournier argues.[150] The personal is therefore set in a knowledge-producing relation to wider societal aspects.

This knowledge-producing capacity is asserted in anecdotes offered by feminist literary scholar Jane Gallop in her writings on anecdotal theory. Gallop's approach shifts focus to the uncanny details of everyday life, to trivial, quotidian narratives. She argues for the entangled roles that such details play in the production of theory: "Beyond theorizing anecdote, I would hope to anecdotalize theory – to make theorizing more aware of its moment, more responsible to its erotics, and at the same time, if paradoxically, both more literary and more real."[151] Natalie Loveless, whose feminist scholarly work on research-creation builds on Gallop, describes this approach as "a practice, [that] is not a simple call for overtly personal over impersonally abstract theory."[152] She rather argues for a critical reflection, a responsive movement between what appears as a particular account and what appears as "seductively generalizeable."[153]

To further expand on this notion, I want to quote at length the feminist scholar Stacy Young, as her position opens up the complexities, relationalities, and importance that fuse within feminist auto-theoretical writings:

> The power of autotheoretical texts lies, in part, in their insistence on situatedness and embodiedness. The writings' autobiographical nature clarifies the origins of their insights, and thus underscores the contingency of their claims. […] It also works as an invitation to the reader to examine her own multiple positions – in relation to the author/narrator (the relationship is always one of identification) and, by extension, to other readers and authors, and in relation to various aspects of the social structure. These texts combine autobiography with theoretical reflection and with the authors' insistence on situating themselves within histories of oppression and resistance. […] [T]hey present the lives they chronicle as deeply enmeshed in other lives, and

---

150. Lauren Fournier, "Sick Women, Sad Girls, and Selfie Theory: Autotheory as Contemporary Feminist Practice," *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 33 (2018): 658.
151. Jane Gallop, *Anecdotal Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 11.
152. Natalie Loveless, "Reading with Knots: On Jane Gallop's Anecdotal Theory," *Journal of the Jan van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique* 4 (2011): 27.
153. Ibid.

in history, in power relations that operate on multiple levels simultaneously."[154]

This passage beautifully captures the complex relational webs that unfold from situated experience and how this form of writing is much more encompassing, and relevant, than is acknowledged by the voices that dismiss the practice as self-centred. Rather than navel-gazing, I see this approach as a strongly relational, collectivising moment that builds on shared experiences and the production of situated knowledges while challenging the supposed split between the personal and the academic. It therefore also holds importance for collective, participatory interaction within research and the arts, as curator and writer Gilly Karjevsky articulates: "In particular, it [autotheory] has potential for the negation of the plural self, for addressing the tensions of collective work by asserting the embodied reality of each member of the collective."[155]

In the context of my own research-creation and participatory curatorial processes, note-taking – as first-person writing within an academic scenario – became a central strategy for me to observe, document, and make transparent the tensions that arose between my personal implications, field of study, and curatorial practice on care. While only a small selection of these personal notes has made it into the final document – as vignettes throughout this dissertation – the notes manage to reflect not only my conviviality with my curatorial formats but also the tensions that derive from them. At times they fall into the flow of the dissertation, at others they interject, interrupt, and thereby speak to my lived reality as a single caregiver that, in itself, is shaped by constant interruption, a lack of consistent focus, and ongoing financial and time precarity.

My situatedness in the precarity and contradictions of care allows me to formulate critical questions, thinking, and practices that are rooted within a lived experience – an experience that is not so much singular but collective, as the

---

154. Stacy Young, Changing the Wor(l)d. Discourse, Politics and the Feminist Movement (London: Routledge,
1997), 69.
155. Gilly Karjevsky, "Collective Autotheory: Contextualize, Embody, Resist," *Lerchenfeld* 66 (May 2023): 5.

societal structures mirror. This methodological approach encouraged me to critically analyse and reflect on my own conditions, in relation to social matters of gender, care work, and the wider economy, and to continuously challenge my own curatorial concepts, formats, and conversations "on the ground." Thereby, my personal experience as a caregiver entered into relation, into dialogue, with social reproduction theory, with empirical data on women's role within the wider economy, with artistic and curatorial projects that address the representation of women, queers, and with motherhood within the arts.[156] This interconnectedness alludes to the tensions that exist between one's *particular* experience and the larger societal, political, and economic mechanisms – by which the first always needs to be consciously understood *in relation to* the wider social group of which it forms a part. In my case, the personal experiences shared in this chapter are contrasted and contextualised with empirical data as well as a cultural, social, and political analysis of women and single mothers, in and outside of the arts, from medieval times up until today – thereby performing the shift from *auto* via *graphy* to *ethno*, or from *auto* to *theory*.

1.2   makingthinking: On the Inseparability of Life, Theory, and Practice

The methodological frameworks outlined in the previous section hold tremendous potential not only for the ways in which life and theory intersect but also for the ways in which practice and theory (and life) relate to one another, allowing for "theory in the flesh of practice" to emerge.[157] This process can be regarded as an active engagement, "a working-through of a series of life events that are intimately entwined with a theory-making practice in which neither has priority or can be disentangled from the other."[158] Loveless proposes the notion of "makingthinking" for

---

156. See chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands."
157. Jane Gallop, quoted in Loveless, "Reading with Knots," 27. Loveless built on this notion of Gallop's and developed the idea of "practising in the flesh of theory." See Natalie Loveless, "Practice in the Flesh of Theory: Art, Research, and the Fine Arts PhD," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37 (2012): 93–108.
158. Loveless, "Reading with Knots," 27.

projects of "research-creation" – a sister term she establishes for artistic research, which I, too, will use to address this practice-based research account – thereby rendering the distinctions between sets of daily practices irrelevant:[159]

> Working and weaving together the lines between not only disciplinary factions and political ideologies, but also between thinking and making, art and life, the personal and the political, the Fine Arts PhD, rather than crossing putative practice/theory lines, fundamentally reconfigures them in a profoundly feminist way, challenging the myth that the daily practices called "research," "theory," "academic," and "intellectual" labour are the reified other to the "embedded," "instinctive," "messy," "creative" labour of the artist.[160]

The notion of "makingthinking" resonates with how my own theoretical research and curatorial practice relate to one another: my writing process is fuelled by an oscillation between dedicated time for reading and extensive periods of curatorial practice on the one hand, and engagement with inspirational colleagues on the other.[161]

Before my artistic directorship at M.1 began in January 2019, I had already spent four months enrolled in my PhD programme. This allowed me to get started on readings and more conceptual concerns, which were inevitably tested and challenged once I transitioned into an extensive phase of practice, lasting twenty months. Although the focus was on curatorial practice, I retained one day per week to dedicate to reading, writing, and reflecting. My curatorial practice would push me towards pressing theoretical concepts, while my readings would inform my curatorial decisions in moving forward with the public programming. Once my position at M.1 ended, my professional practice transitioned into that of a curatorial freelancer (or "interdependent curator," as I will introduce later in this dissertation). This position highlights the complex dimensions around curatorial subjectivities, precarities, vulnerabilities as well as the lack of caring infrastructures. In this period, the tension between theory and practice took shape in the form of "time vs. money." Taking on more so-called opportunities in the neoliberal gig economy took away precious time

---

159. For her articulation of "research-creation," see Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.
160. Loveless, "Practice in the Flesh of Theory," 103.
161. Ibid., 100.

from my research and writing; however, rejecting offers was not something I could afford then, neither financially nor strategically. It was only when I switched my doctoral status from part-time to full-time that I was able to dedicate more time to writing, as my stipend increased respectively. Yet, even in that last phase, workshops, teaching, and lectures formed part of my professional life and created valuable feedback and food for thought. This was particularly so because these formats usually departed from my own practice, and thus opened up the ideas, concepts, and themes that I was working with to the public and an engaged discourse.

In line with Loveless's notion of "makingthinking, " I strongly regard my practice and approach to theorising as insuperably intertwined. It is precisely this interplay of making and thinking that comes to fruition within the previously described "triangle of care" (caregiving while researching care and curating with care) as a methodological framework for this research-creation. The implications of my role as a single caregiver formed the embodied experiences that I abstracted to construct curatorial formats and to contribute to the discursive fields of art, curating, and gender theory, while, simultaneously, I continued to immerse myself in research, reading and writing.

Thus in this practice-based PhD, both theory and practice, as a form of makingthinking, were mutually beneficial to one another without either turning into the mere illustration of the other. This approach both requires and produces vulnerability, not only for the researcher but also for the practitioner – for the human behind the written pages. As a consequence, received feedback and critique then is not limited to the written pages, to their content, style, and grammar, but rather encompasses the life choices, the methods, the ethics, the experiences, and the practices of the author. By incorporating personal elements into the process of research-creation, I open up not only my curatorial programming and my dissertation to critique but also the ways in which I relate to my child and how I lead my life. Thereby, life and research intrinsically overlap and produce vulnerability on various levels.

1.3   Writing-with-Care: On the Relational Politics of Citation

> *It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.*

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*[162]

While inserting the self into research-creation processes is highly important, it is equally necessary to highlight the relational, collaborative elements that sustain writing and practice in a feminist approach. Whereas the previous section aimed to challenge the ways in which academic methods relate to lived experience, this section seeks to resist the reproduction of the solitary writer in the ivory tower as the ideal of academic research. Feminist approaches to research and activism in particular have foregrounded the importance of working with others in thought and practice, on the bumpy road to an otherwise.

In this line of thought, Donna Haraway – in the context of this section a central figure of alternative, feminist methods – cites the ethnographer Marilyn Strathern, who has done lifelong work in Papua New Guinea, and her definition of anthropology as "studying relations with relations."[163] For Haraway, this approach allows for "[e]mbodying the practice of feminist speculative fabulation in the scholarly mode," continuing: "Strathern taught me – taught us – a simple but game-changing thing: 'It matters what ideas we use to think other ideas.'"[164]

Following this idea, citation becomes a relational practice, which Lauren Fournier considers to be "a mode of intertextual intimacy and identification" that makes way for the formation of community and communion within feminist contexts.[165] It thus matters who we cite: whose ideas we depart from, build from, and

---

162. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 35.
163. Marilyn Strathern, quoted in ibid., 34.
164. Ibid.
165. Lauren Fournier, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2021), 134.

think-with, as this act co-constitutes collectivities and renders legible interdependencies and contingencies. This is mirrored in Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's understanding of "thinking-with," a concept developed by Haraway, upon which she builds her argument for "writing-with." For her,

> writing-with, is not who or what it aims to include and *represent* in a text, but what it generates: it actually *creates* collective, it *populates* a world. Instead of reinforcing the figure of a lone thinker, the voice in such a text seems to keep saying: *I am not the only one*. Thinking-with makes the work of thought stronger, it supports its singularity and contagious potential. […] It builds relation and community, that is: possibility.[166]

However, writing-with also demands an ethics of care and the cultivation of response-ability to a "collective thinking and doing"[167] – an accountable knowledge construction that is nonetheless open to dissent ("dissenting-with").[168] This kind of knowledge creation is situated within a "multitude of relations that also make possible the worlds we think with. […] [R]elations of thinking and knowing require care."[169] Puig de la Bellacasa, in a next step, asks in which ways this form of care can be translated into a doing. How can care as a methodological principle be practised? She turns to Haraway's politics of quotation, as a style of writing that gives credit to a multitude of ideas and affects that sustain one's writing, including in Puig de la Bellacasa's case the works of fellow researchers, students, activist groups, and human and non-human friends. Quotation politics also trouble the norms of academic isolation that tend not to valorise these enmeshed webs of thinking-with – from within and outside academia.[170]

Sara Ahmed, in her book *Living a Feminist Life*, has likewise put forth a politics of citation that echoes these principles of "doing feminism," of writing feminism into the fabric of text. Ahmed articulates how she only cites "feminists of colour who have contributed to the project of naming and dismantling the institutions

---

166. María Puig de la Bellacasa, "'Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care," *Sociological Review* 60 (2012): 205. Emphasis in the original.
167. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.
168. Puig de la Bellacasa, "Nothing Comes without Its World," 205.
169. Ibid., 198.
170. Ibid., 202.

of patriarchal whiteness."[171] Inspired by her approach, I have also chosen to focus on citing feminist scholars – primarily women writers, queer writers, Black writers, writers of colour, artists who are mothers, and single-parent arts practitioners. In the framework of this dissertation, I have withstood the comfort of citing what is easily available: the ideas of white cis men. As Ahmed argues: "We cannot conflate the history of ideas with white men, though if doing one leads to the other then we are being taught where ideas are assumed to originate. Seminal: how ideas are assumed to originate from male bodies."[172]

Some of the theoretical positions and concepts I cite may have been put forth by white men originally, but I reference these ideas through the perspectives of feminists who have adapted, reworked, challenged, and added to the initial ideas (e.g., in the case of Marxist theory: (queer) feminist Marxism). I also write about and refer to white male subjectivities, not affirmatively but as a background against which I contrast my argument, which challenges these positionings. I use this approach, for example, in the section where I briefly outline the issues around the curatorial figures of Harald Szeemann and Hans Ulrich Obrist. I thus do not rely on their work as a foundation of knowledge creation but rather use it as a contrasting element to discuss questions of gender and power relations. This approach is therefore not rooted in the illusory fantasy that knowledge which "originated from male bodes" does not exist nor dominate nor matter.[173] I rather regard mine as a practice of *foregrounding* the voices of feminists, people of colour, queer people, and mothers within a system that is built to exclude them, where they might otherwise remain in the background and, due to their marginalisation within the dominant academic canons, be perceived as less valid academic positions.

It is, however, utterly important to not conflate this approach of foregrounding with an essentialist mission or a pursuit to establish a rigid diversity quota for one's

---

171. Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 15–16.

172. Ibid., 16; Katy Hessel, *The Story of Art without Men* (Portsmouth, NH: Hutchinson Heinemann, 2022).

173. Exceptions to the postulated norm are made either when white male scholars form part of a collaborative authorship, when their position is used to exemplify the patriarchal narrative that this dissertation aims to dismantle (in the case of, e.g., Adam Smith, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Harald Szeemann), or when they are authors of empirical studies, journalistic essays, or interviews. Further, I cite queer and non-binary scholars and activists, independent from their gender assigned at birth.

citational practice. Rather, it departs from the urgency to uncover and uplift voices that have been systematically silenced, while these voices share experiences of marginalisation due to their race, gender, class, sexual orientation, dis*abilities, or other forms of systemic exclusions. This position aligns with that of the Black scholar, writer, and cultural practitioner Natasha A. Kelly, who argues: "Only by creating a culture of knowledge that counters white Eurocentrism can anti-Black racism in particular and discrimination in general be sustainably abolished."[174]

Yet, as one moves away from the core of the approach of foregrounding "othered" voices, one increasingly encounters conceptual and political tensions at its fringes. Authors of such feminist politics of citation can find themselves confronted with complex questions of identity politics: Where does a white male subject begin and end? How to deal a white male author who specifically writes about feminism? An Asian or Black author who is male yet not explicitly feminist? We thus quickly arrive at the dangerous equation where skin colour or perceived gender comes to serve as a fixed indicator of a critical political positioning. I, therefore, *explicitly* do not want to venture into the outer fringes of this approach, as it runs the danger of turning into an overtly dogmatic undertaking fuelled by an assumption of fixed gendered and racialised identities. Such an end, I hope to make very clear, is not the aim of this approach. As a writer, editor, and curator, through this practice of foregrounding I aim to actively make visible what others might write off as too tiresome to seek out, simultaneously contributing to making "othered" voices readily available, too. This resonates with Ahmed, who argues: "Citations can be feminist bricks: they are the materials through which, from which, we create our dwellings. My citation policy has affected the kind of house I have built."[175]

In this regard, I do not wish to shy away from the ambiguities and tensions that arise from such a method. Rather, I specifically want to refrain from the modus operandi of perpetuating the "monologue of sameness"[176] of curatorial and academic

174. Natasha A. Kelly, *Rassismus. Strukturelle Probleme brauchen strukturelle Lösungen! (ePUB)* (Hamburg: Atrium Verlag, 2021). My translation.
175. Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 16.
176. Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), 15.

knowledge production. To cite Haraway, I wish to "stay with the trouble," to actively *work through* the set of tensions.[177] The aim is not to propose a bulletproof, fixed, and non-negotiable method but instead to open up a space of discourse around these citation practices by proposing one possible path forward. If desired, one could regard this methodological proposition an *anti-hegemonic provocation*, in a spirit similar to the one evoked by Katy Hessel's book title *The Story of Art Without Men*.[178]

Further, in the context of practice-based curatorial research, citations are to research what artists are to exhibitions: they are the "bricks" from which curators build their frameworks. As feminist curatorial activism centres on anti-hegemonic practices that address the "moral emergency" within the arts, it aims to produce exhibitions and public programming that represent a diverse range of artistic practitioners and speakers, as put forth by the curator and arts writer Maura Reilly.[179] I apply the same critical lens to this text. From a curatorial perspective, matters of inclusion are intricately tied to matters of representation. As a curator, whose practice relies on discursive and editorial strategies, I understand this dissertation as an expansion of such a representational curatorial space that aims to establish anti-hegemonic encounters of knowledges.

In reference to Haraway's notion of "companion species," Ahmed suggests the concept of the "companion text": "a text whose company enabled you to proceed on a path less trodden."[180] This notion beautifully creates an image of intergenerational, affective, and relational support networks between the researcher and the thinking and writing of others – a metaphorical image that also speaks to feminist curatorial relations. Ultimately, citation is the space of agency for each scholar and curator to shift the discourse, to carve out hidden voices and arguments, and to centre attention on negated issues, practices, and approaches, while recognising that academia and the arts as institutions uphold patriarchal, elitist, colonising world views and within which one must struggle to define new practices to

---

177. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.
178. Hessel, *The Story of Art without Men*.
179. Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*.
180. Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 16.

counteract their dominating narratives.

1.4   Un/disciplined: On the Erotic beyond Disciplinary Boundaries

In the same spirit of challenging the dominant modus operandi of academic writing, I want to turn to the hegemony of disciplinary boundaries. Well-established, and rather rigid, conceptions of disciplinary boundaries need challenging, as they are geared towards academic work which is traditionally based within one or two disciplines. Natalie Loveless's book *How to Make Art at the End of the World* can be read as a plea to rethink research-creation and the ways in which it relates to scholarly disciplines, academic institutions, neoliberal logics, and personal interests. Loveless proposes to queer the ways in which research-creation is conducted – "queer" understood as being "at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant."[181] For her concept of "polydisciplinamory," she draws parallels between academic disciplines and romantic and sexual relationships, as both are metaphorical spaces that carry the potential to be sites of entanglement or exclusion: "While queer theory commonly asserts that it is the queering, the undoing of (sexual/disciplinary) norms, that is at stake, the theoretically polyamorous steps in, in its wake, to invite us to develop and nurture attachment across multiple (sexual/social/disciplinary) sites."[182]

Loveless regards "monogamous disciplinarity" as a method of exclusion, whereas polydisciplinamory still allows for disciplinary acts yet counters the logic that a monogamous engagement with one discipline is the "only site of rigorous legitimacy."[183] She explains:

> I argue for the importance of learning to navigate the attachments that guide a "multiple" approach to research-creation (multiple in terms of discipline, method, and form) by drawing on the affective literacies of theoretical polyamory. Grounded in this literature, I propose the neologism *polydisciplinamory* as a way to differently structure our

---

181. David Halperin, quoted in Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 61.
182. Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, 62**.**
183. Ibid., 64.

negotiations of the affective attachments needed for a robust practice and theory of research-creation.[184]

While university departments, or individual supervisors, might be open to more experimental approaches to research-creation, most funding bodies available for doctoral research still follow rather traditional disciplinary conceptions and aim to measure the success of their funded students according to rigid metrics and contested categories such as "originality" and "academic rigour."[185] While my practice-based curatorial PhD is funded by the South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council under the category "Art History," it is housed in the Department of Art at the University of Reading and the Department of Cultural Analysis at Zurich University of the Arts, and, within that, the Postgraduate Programme in Curating. This complex departmental-bureaucratic research setup comes with potentially conflicting interests as far as disciplinary requirements and standards, despite the different entities' declared openness to interdisciplinarity. While transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to research have been popular for several years, Loveless's polydisciplinamory suggests a crucial distinction:

> Traditional interdisciplinarity, with its intertheory thrust, could be said to be about who (which disciplines) one commits to, while research-creation, as a polydisciplinamorous orientation, becomes about how one commits to producing new kinship ties not only in terms of content (the "who") but in terms of form (the "how").[186]

In the context of this doctoral research-creation, the "who" is the discourses around curatorial theory and practices, (queer) feminist art history and contemporary art practices, social reproduction theory and care ethics, and sociological, political, and philosophical thought. The "how" links me back to Ahmed's quote at the start of this chapter, with its emphasis on the importance of how research is created, how it relates to feminist struggles, and whether this theorising is rooted within feminist living versus feminist theorising only. Yet the "how" is also about how to navigate the

---

184. Ibid., 14–15.
185. This dissertation is funded by the UK-based Arts and Humanities Research Council's South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership in the category "Art History."
186. Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, 63.

maze of theories, interests, disciplines, debates, and tensions, and how to formulate a position within these tensions. For Loveless,

> polydisciplinamory, as a kind of eros-driven-curiosity, becomes an organizational principle for research-creation, one that helps tutor us in managing the frictions, dissonances, and different demands required by not only more than one discipline but more than one form, and to recognize these negotiations as always already imbricated in structures of power.[187]

This idea is that the subversion – the queering – of academic disciplines, which serves as a set of tools or principles to navigate these tensions, is rooted in a sincere dedication to how attachments within academia are formed and accepted. As the above quote already suggests, Loveless's concept builds on the work of Audre Lorde and her notion of the "erotic." In Lorde's understanding, the erotic is not to be conflated with the pornographic or the sexual;[188] rather, it is "an assertion of the lifeforce of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives."[189] In her foundational 1978 text "The Use of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," she speaks of the erotic as a source of female power and information:

> Beyond the superficial, the considered phrase, "It feels right to me," acknowledges the strength of the erotic into a true knowledge, for what that means is the first and most powerful guiding light toward any understanding. […] The erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge.[190]

Both in my research process and in the conceptualisation of my curatorial practice, I have had to push myself to allow this quiet intuition of "what feels right to me" to become a valid methodology for the how's and what's of my research-creation. It indeed takes tremendous effort to allow for the erotic – this sensation of "feeling right" – to become a sound decision-making tool within research-creation, to let the erotic be the central guide in lieu of the metrics of academic rigour,

---

187. Ibid., 70.
188. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Feminist Series (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), 54.
189. Ibid., 55.
190. Ibid., 56.

72

established canons, and disciplinary boundaries. This sensation resonates with Loveless's definition of "the drive I have been naming curiosity, a drive that erupts and takes us over."[191]

The interdisciplinary character of curatorial studies – with its wide range of influences, spanning disciplines such as philosophy, art history, psychoanalysis, critical theory, arts administration, political theory, ethics, and many more – means that there are no clear-cut, predefined demarcations to guide the disciplinary and methodological frameworks of a practice-based curatorial research project. Thus, the importance of "eros" as a guiding principle became crucial, for me, as far as how to make decisions and form attachments to themes, authors, perspectives, and artists. For example, in the conceptual and initial phase of my curatorial programming at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, I needed to carve out space for the erotic as a way to hold space for the unknown and the unexpected in the unfolding process. While I had applied to the artistic director 2019–20 position with a clear conceptual framework of the topics and issues around care that I wanted to address during the curatorial cycle, I, however, had not yet defined the specific formats, dates, exhibitions, or artists I wanted to invite. Even before my official start date, the institution had enquired about the dates of openings of the exhibitions so that staff could plan their vacations. Instead of setting fixed dates and curatorial formats prior to my curatorial cycle, I negotiated a three-month research phase at the beginning of my position. In this phase, no public programming would be held, so that I could acquaint myself with the institution, the village and its inhabitants, potential artists and curatorial formats, and socially engaged processes. In retrospect, I regard this process as one driven by Lorde's notion of the erotic as a way to provide space for "what feels right to me," despite having caused a feeling of vulnerability as I was deviating from the trodden paths of institutional curating – building a less robust shelter with lighter materials, to go back to Ahmed's imagery.[192] I am here stressing this element of my research-curatorial process because, in addition to countering institutional logics, it also felt "unproductive" at first and it required stamina to build a curatorial

---

191. Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, 70.
192. Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 16.

programme from a gut feeling, from the erotic as a driving force. Within the framework of curatorial activism, under which I situate this dissertation, it is the erotic that connects the seemingly personal patterns of attachment with wider social issues that are in urgent need of address.[193]

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

To summarise, the various above-outlined methodological lines, when taken together, are fused by the erotic, affect, situated experience, collectivity, vulnerability, and care in order to challenge dominant modes of research-creation and to propose a *feminist otherwise*. Similar to the ways in which auto-ethnography regards itself as a method that "attempts to disrupt the binary of science and art,"[194] in my PhD I aim to disrupt the entanglements and contradictions between the capitalist framework, my role as a single parent, and my institutional and non-institutional activities as a curator and researcher – by making them transparent. While this dissertation is not a result of auto-ethnography or anecdotal theory in a narrow sense, I nevertheless aim to inscribe my lived experience into the research narration around care, curating, and feminist research-creation, as an act of micro-politics in resonance with the feminist slogan of "the personal is political.[195]

In this chapter I have illuminated the motivations, ethics, and hurdles that shaped the ways in which this research-creation came into being, and I placed them in dialogue with different theoretical and methodological approaches that centre feminist and communal thought. I began by carving out feminist epistemological positions that call for a rethinking of academic protocols and the ways in which they relate to the researcher, including highlighting the tensions and complications of inscribing the self in an academic context. In the framework of this dissertation, I

---

193. In chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice," I explore Reilly's concept of curatorial activism in more depth.
194. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," 283.
195. As noted in the introduction of this dissertation, "the personal is political" has been a core phrase of the feminist movement since the 1960s. Its original authorship is unclear, as several feminists decline having coined the phrase and rather attribute it to the collective social movements.

have chosen to use personal vignettes that trouble and make tangible the subjective experience of caring while working as a professional curator and researcher on questions of care, including for this dissertation. This project is dedicated to the investigation of the personal attachments, curiosities, and intuitions that drive research-creation as a polydisciplinamorous undertaking. Driven by "what feels right," my dissertation is less concerned with feeding the mechanisms of exclusion borne by disciplinary traditions and more with allowing the erotic, as conceptualised by Audre Lorde, to guide knowledge creation. In following Sara Ahmed, I establish the ethics of citation as a feminist practice central to this dissertation, and thereby stress the importance of categorising this research project not simply as an act of feminist theorising but as a feminist practice itself.

The overall argument of this chapter is that in the method – in the way in which research is conducted – lies the opportunity, or rather the impetus, to counter the logics of heteronormativity, of neoliberal productivity, and of compulsory monodisciplinarity, as well as traditional understandings of objectivity. I have articulated how these feminist propositions manifest in my dissertation, namely, in 1) the ways in which the relation between lived experience and the academic text are negotiated; 2) how citation politics can serve as a counter-hegemonic tool to construct an alternative approach to academic writing; 3) how theory, practice, and life inevitably inform one another; and 4) how disciplinary boundaries are traversed ("polydisciplinamory") and what role the erotic plays in navigating interests and curiosity. I combine these methodological principles in order to explore how feminist theory might be put into academic practice – as a method of care.[196]

---

196. In chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice," I return to some of the methodological considerations of chapter 1. Situating myself in relation to my research process is furthermore relevant due to the ephemeral nature of my curatorial practice. Therefore, I describe my curatorial programming and analyse it through my own experience, lens of focus, and fragmented memory, which allows me to return to the ideas of Jane Gallop and Natalie Loveless. I make explicit the necessity for retrospective reflection and the assembly of the various methods, strategies, formats, and experiences created during the process of research-creation – as a way to honour the research and curatorial process as an end in itself. With this, I joined prominent contemporary curatorial platforms such as the 11th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art and documenta fifteen in Kassel – projects that dedicated themselves to sociopolitical, community-based processes that frame exhibitions as a means to produce encounters rather than abstracted products. These practices resonate with the central feminist research approach of auto-ethnography, which is both process and product.

Having laid the methodological groundwork of this dissertation, in the next chapter I embark on a theoretical and historical journey into the origins of capitalism and, with it, the sexual division of labour – which, still today, remains one of the defining characteristics of care work and forms a major ground for gender-based oppression.

2.   Economy of Invisible Hands

Feminism involves so much more than gender equality. And it involves so much more than gender. Feminism must involve a consciousness of capitalism.

Angela Davis, "Feminism & Abolition"[197]

The Covid-19 pandemic lent itself as a magnifying glass that brought forth central contradictions of the political and capitalist economic system, as a broad social formation, in relation to care work. When schools and childcare centres closed down as part of the lockdown measures and parents were still expected to continue their waged labour, societies worldwide experienced a central contradiction within the capitalist system, which has been voiced by Marxist feminists since the 1970s:

> Unwaged social reproductive activity is necessary to the existence of waged work, the accumulation of surplus value, and the functioning of capitalism as such. None of those things could exist in the absence of housework, child-raising, schooling, and affective care, and a host of other activities that serve to reproduce new generations of workers. […] Social reproduction is an indispensable background condition for the possibility of economic production in capitalist society.[198]

The official economy therefore depends on social reproduction whose value it disguises and disavows.[199] Against this backdrop, it seems indispensable that we critically question the invisible hand of the market, which the economist Adam Smith articulated in 1776 as the basic premise of capitalism and which continues to serve as a central premise for representatives of (neo)liberal thought.[200] Theologists Ina Praetorius and Regula Grünenfelder, the initiators of Wirtschaft ist Care (Economy Is

---

197. Angela Davis, "Feminism & Abolition: Theories & Practices for the 21st Century" (lecture, University of Chicago, May 2013).
198. Nancy Fraser, "Crisis of Care? On the Social-Reproductive Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism," in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentring Oppression*, ed. Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto, 2017), 23.
199. Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, *This Is a Manifesto for the 99* (London: Verso, 2019), 22, 25.
200. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (New York: Bantam Classics, 2003). Widely regarded as the founding father of capitalism, Smith's legacy as a promoter of free trade and the privatisation of public infrastructures is celebrated widely in neoliberal thought. For further analysis of Smith's life, ideas, and legacy, see Ryan Patrick Hanley, ed., *Adam Smith: His Life, Thought, and Legacy* (Princeton, IL: Princeton University Press, 2016).

Care), contest Smith's assumption:

> It supposedly provides everyone automatically with whatever they need as long as no limits are imposed on doing business. In reality this hand consists of many, above all women's, hands. The putatively free market economy is, in reality, dependent upon nature and certain people, above all women, to provide for everything, without the so-called financial incentives.[201]

In this light, Smith's suggested "invisible hand of the market" rather appears to be billions of invisibilised women's hands, whose labour sustains not only the paid economy but society as a whole.[202] The example of the German economy – to establish a socioeconomic context for my curatorial practice – showcases the significantly higher volume of unpaid (domestic and care) work in comparison to the paid labour sector. Through large-scale time-use studies for Germany in the year 2013, it was shown that people in Germany spend about 35 percent more time on unpaid work and related commuting time (89 billion hours) than they spend on paid work, including commuting time (66 billion hours).[203] To calculate the economic value of this unpaid domestic labour, the study of the German Federal Statistical Office set a net wage of 9.25 euros per hour for the labour performed at home.[204] This fictive net wage allows the study to conclude that, in 2013, "the gross value added of household production [unpaid domestic labour] with 987 billion euros is significantly higher than the gross value added in the manufacturing sector [paid labour] (769 billion euros)."[205] The often invisibilised sphere of social reproduction is thus 40 percent – and, depending on the model of monetary evaluation for this unpaid labour, up to even 127 percent – larger than the so-called productive sphere, which is measured and accounted for in a given nation's gross domestic product (GDP).[206]

---

201. Ina Praetorius, and Regula Grünenfelder, "Wirtschaft ist Care," Schweizerische Frauen*synode, 2020.
202. Ibid.
203. Norbert Schwarz, "Der Wert der unbezahlten Arbeit: Das Satellitensystem Haushaltsproduktion," (The Value of Unpaid Labor: The Satellite System Household Production), in Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, ed., "Wie die Zeit vergeht. Analysen zur Zeitverwendung in Deutschland. Beiträge zur Ergebniskonferenz der Zeitverwendungserhebung 2012/2013" [How Time Passes. Analyses of Time Use in Germany. Contributions to the Results Conference of the Time Use Survey 2012/2013] (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, 2017), 249.
204. Ibid., 250.
205. Ibid., 255. My translation.
206. Ibid.

Time-use studies in Germany further confirm that not only is the unpaid domestic labour sector larger than the paid sector of the overall economy but also that this unpaid domestic labour is predominantly performed by women. Another study of the German Federal Statistical Office suggests that women in German households perform 4 hours and 13 minutes of care work per day, while men perform 2 hours and 46 minutes, creating a "gender care gap" of 52 percent.[207] This gendered gap in caring responsibilities is mirrored in the figures for full- and part-time employment of parents. According to the study, only 6 percent of fathers in a relationship work part-time, whereas 71 percent of mothers with a partner work part-time.[208] This contributes to the fact that mothers earn only half the income men do across their lifespans and also earn 40 percent less than childless women throughout their lives. The expected income of a mother with three or more children is reduced to 70 percent across her lifespan compared to a childless woman ("motherhood lifetime penalty").[209] An international study on the phenomenon of the so-called child penalty, which takes a comparative approach, draws the following conclusion:

> [T]he existence of large child penalties is a pervasive phenomenon. In each country, the earnings of men and women evolve similarly before parenthood – after adjusting for lifecycle and time trends – but diverge sharply after parenthood. Women experience a large, immediate and persistent drop in earnings after the birth of their first child, while men

---

207. Nina Klünder and Uta Meier-Gräwe, "Gleichstellung und innerfamiliale Arbeitsteilung. Mahlzeitenmuster und Beköstigungsarbeit in Familien im Zeitvergleich" [Gender Equality And Intra-Family Division Of Labour. Meal Patterns and Feeding Work in Families Compared Over Time), in Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, "Wie die Zeit vergeht" [How Time Passes], 70. Despite the fact that the time spent daily on unpaid work increased by seven minutes for fathers from 2001–02 to 2012–13 and reduced for mothers by six minutes in the same period, mothers still perform 2 hours and 38 minutes more unpaid work per day than fathers. This gender care gap is furthermore connected to poverty in old age, which disproportionally affects women through a gender pension gap in Germany of 46 percent. These figures come from an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report from 2019 that laments Germany's position as the last-ranked industrialized nation on the list, seemingly a country with stubbornly prevailing so-called traditional family values. "For this reason, it is not possible to speak of an egalitarian division of labor between fathers and mothers on the basis of the time-use data. A clearly female connotation of unpaid work still prevails," as the study's authors, Nina Klünder and Uta Meier-Gräwe, conclude (ibid., 71).
208. Statistisches Bundesamt, "Alleinerziehende in Deutschland 2017," 2018, 33.
209. Bertelsmann Stiftung. "Frauen auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt: Aufholen, ohne einzuholen," March 18, 2019, https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2019/maerz/frauen-auf-dem-deutschen-arbeitsmarkt-aufholen-ohne-einzuholen

are essentially unaffected. Ten years after child birth, women have not recovered.[210]

The study shows regional differences, in which Scandinavian countries experience long-run penalties of 21–27 percent; English-speaking countries feature penalties of 31–44 percent; and German-speaking countries experience penalties as high as 51–61 percent.[211] In Germany, 52 percent of young men, between 18 and 35 years of age, still consider housework and child-raising to be the task of women.[212] Once partnerships break up, in 91 percent of cases the mother becomes the primary caregiver of the child(ren) – thereby forming part of the 2.6 million other single parents facing a poverty risk of 68 percent compared to non-single parents.[213] Upon retirement, women in Germany on average receive 42 percent less pension than men.[214]

A global study carried out by Oxfam for the year 2018 showcases that the German scenario is very much a worldwide phenomenon: the unpaid labour of women around the globe would have produced 10.9 trillion USD in value if that work had been paid with minimum wages.[215] That is more than the total earnings of the world's largest corporations, according to the Fortune Global 500 list, to which Walmart, Apple, and Amazon belong.[216] This labour, however, does not appear in any GDP calculation worldwide, even though no economy is sustainable without it.

210. Henrik Kleven, Camille Landais, Johanna Posch, Andreas Steinhauer, and Josef Zweimüller, "Child Penalties across Countries: Evidence and Explanations," National Bureau of Economic Research, working paper no. 25524, February 2019, 3, http://www.nber.org/papers/w25524.
211. Ibid.
212. Plan International, "Spannungsfeld Männlichkeit," 2023, https://www.plan.de/fileadmin/website/04._Aktuelles/Umfragen_und_Berichte/Spannungsfeld_Maennlichkeit/Plan-3_Pager_Maennlichkeit-A4-2023-NEU-V1.pdf.
213. Anette Stein and Antje Funcke, "Viele Familien ärmer als bislang gedacht," Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018, https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2018/februar/viele-familien-aermer-als-bislang-gedacht.
214. This figure is for a woman's retirement pay if only her own income is used as a basis. If her retirement pay takes into account her spouse's income, then the gender pay gap is 29.9 percent. Statistisches Bundesamt, "Gender Pension Gap: Alterseinkünfte von Frauen 2021 fast ein Drittel niedriger als die von Männern," Pressemitteilung Nr. N 015, March 7, 2023. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/03/PD23_N015_12_63.html.
215. Gus Wezerek and Kristen Ghodsee, "Women's Unpaid Labor Is Worth $10,900,000,000,000." *New York Times*, March 5, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/04/opinion/women-unpaid-labor.html.
216. Ibid.

Taking these figures into consideration, care as a feminised "labour of love" becomes a pivotal point that defines, and limits, the socioeconomic possibilities, well-being, and independence of women, and of mothers in particular. The empirical data render legible that the long path towards gender justice cannot be embarked upon without seriously addressing the conditions of social reproductive labour, and the ways in which societies and their respective economies organise private and public care work. Departing from this understanding of the intricate relationship between unpaid care work and gender inequality, the feminist Wages for Housework movement demanded already in the 1970s that this labour be recognised and no longer rendered structurally invisible – thereby addressing the deep-seated structural contradictions between the capitalist system and the ways in which it organises care work. The philosopher and activist Silvia Federici, one of the central figures of the movement, argues fiercely that the demand for wages for domestic work is a subversive strategy – a stepping stone to destroying capital: applying a wage to housework allows it to be recognised as work, and consequently to be refused; otherwise, protesting women are "seen as nagging bitches, not workers in struggle."[217] To regard unpaid domestic work as work thus becomes women's leverage to change their position in society, countering not only capitalism but also patriarchy.[218] Federici states:

---

217. Silvia Federici, *Wages against Housework* (New York: Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press, 1975), 3.

218. Germany, in 2013, experimented for roughly one year with offering a monthly allowance (of around 150 euro a month) for parents who cared for their children at home or organised their care work privately. This sparked a huge controversy within Germany. Opponents called it "*Herdprämie*," which roughly translates to "oven bonus," criticising that it would cement outdated gendered norms, keeping women behind the "oven" and outside the job market. Advocates regarded it as a support and necessary recognition of parents' care labour. For an overview of the debate, see Georg Meck, "Debatte ums Betreuungsgeld: Herdprämie," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, accessed July 13, 2023, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/wirtschaftspolitik/debatte-ums-betreuungsgeld-herdpraemie-11725961.html. It is only now, roughly ten years later, that feminist voices have again begun to speak up for governmental financial support for caregivers, as a way to soothe the gap between the carer at home and the person who receives a wage outside the home. Teresa Bücker, central feminist voice within the German media landscape, argues: "A truly feminist equality policy would therefore not only have to ensure that women are financially independent through gainful employment but also design a cash benefit for the period after the birth of a child until care begins that can better protect against dependency and violence. Having enough money of one's own is important to counteract a shift of power in the couple's relationship, which unfortunately often happens with children when one of the partners reduces their working hours or can contribute only little to the family income during parental leave." Teresa Bücker, "Ist es radikal, das Elterngeld für Reiche zu streichen?," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*,

> It is the demand by which our nature ends and our struggle begins because just to want wages for housework means to refuse that work as the expression of our nature, and therefore to refuse precisely the female role that capital has invented for us.[219]

By raising the issue of unpaid labour, the movement challenged the place of women in social organisation, the gendered division of labour, and women's place within the gendered economy. Federici argues that understanding the movement as a "revolutionary perspective" is crucial not only from a feminist viewpoint but for the entire working class.[220]

However, Wages for Housework received critique from the women's movement at large, as demanding wages for domestic labour "was seen as a step backward in the demand for women's equality rather than one of its essential conditions, as was claimed by the current's instigators and activists," the political scientist Louise Toupin reflects. According to Toupin, negotiating or redistributing housework was regarded as a private issue between partners. Back then, as today, a focus on promoting "family-job-reconciliation" was preferred.[221] The Wages for Housework movement was often misunderstood through being taken too literally, portrayed as "a bureaucratic reign of resentful accountancy" – this, despite Federici's pamphlet "Wages *against* Housework" (my emphasis) explicitly stating the subversive character of the demand – and thereby overlooking the momentum of utopia.[222] The political theorist and writer Sophie Lewis, whose work on the abolition of the nuclear family is indebted to the Wages for Housework movement, clarifies that "it's not us choosing to be economistic about gestation, it's capitalism. If we must cope to a kind of countereconomism regarding 'what they call love,' it is a needful demystification strategy."[223] She urges her reader to continue to understand the movement as a provocation that aimed to recognise housework as real work – and, moreover, exploited work – and thus developed one of the most important concerns of early

---

2023, https://sz-magazin.sueddeutsche.de/freie-radikale/teresa-buecker-elterngeld-kuerzung-kindergrundsicherung-92907. My translation.
219. Federici, *Wages against Housework*, 3.
220. Ibid.
221. Louise Toupin, *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist Movement, 1972–77* (London: Pluto, 2018), 3.
222. Sophie Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism against Family* (London: Verso, 2021).
223. Ibid.

second-wave feminism. In this regard, Wages for Housework needs to be considered formative for future generations of feminist activists, theorists, and artists.

2.1 Care as a Prism

What the gendered economy of care, with all its contradictions, showcases is the causal relationships between the gender care gap, the gender pay gap, and the gender pension gap.[224] The issues at stake need to be set into an *infrastructural* relation to one another; in this constellation, gendered private care work for children and ailing parents or partners , is not only a temporal occupation outside the paid workforce but also the pivotal point in a caregiver's life that economically, socially, and politically affects their upcoming decades, reaching into their pension years. I therefore argue for an understanding of matters of private care work, or domestic work, as a central node or a lens with which to analyse broader socioeconomic mechanisms, and social inequalities in particular.

Following a similar line of thinking, the Wages for Housework movement regarded unpaid housework as a *prism* "through which the multiple facets of women's lack of power over their lives in society as a whole could be seen, understood, and reassembled."[225] I want to expand the movement's position by considering not only unpaid housework but feminist care politics in a wider sense as a prism through which to analyse often opaque matters of gender, class, dis*ability, and racial justice. Considering larger infrastructural relationships, where care is regarded as a lens for intersectional critique, is common in a range of feminist positions. As the feminist scholars Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser argue in their "Manifesto for the 99":

---

224. "This means that women's retirement incomes were on average almost one-third lower than those of men. The reasons for this disparity are manifold: for example, women acquire lower pension entitlements on average over the course of their working lives, partly because they work in lower-paid industries than men. Women also work part-time more often, take more frequent and longer leaves of absence for care work, and are less likely to be in management positions." Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, "Gender Pension Gap." My translation.
225. Toupin, *Wages for Housework*, 3.

> For in capitalist society, the organization of social reproduction rests on gender: it relies on gender roles and entrenches gender oppression. Social reproduction is therefore a feminist issue. But it is shot through at every point by the fault lines of class, race, sexuality, and nation. A feminism aimed at resolving the current crisis must understand social reproduction through a lens that also comprehends, and connects, all those axes of domination.[226]

Ultimately, as long as reproductive labour is feminised, one has to address the wider realm of social reproduction in order to move in the direction of gender justice.[227] Hence, any new policies or changes in regard to how social reproduction is organised in a given society have far-reaching effects on other sociopolitical and economic sectors. For example, in the financialised capitalism of the twenty-first century, women have increasingly been recruited into the paid workforce via the narrative of emancipation, whereas many critics hold that this ideal of the "two-earner family" in reality demands women to perform a "double shift" – with a first shift of paid labour and a second unpaid shift at home.[228] As Fraser argues:

> As well as diminishing public provision and recruiting women into waged work, financialized capitalism has reduced real wages, thus raising the number of hours of paid work per household needed to support a family and prompting a desperate scramble to transfer care work to others.[229]

Fraser, like many other social reproduction scholars, notes that industrialised nations under contemporary financialised capitalism experience a "care gap," which manifests as a heightened demand for cheap care labour from the Global South. As

---

226. Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, *This Is a Manifesto for the 99* (London: Verso, 2019), 22. An understanding of the scope and mechanisms of social reproduction, however, is limited by the current methods that focus on the official economy, hence the GDP. The sociologist and psychologist Norbert Schwarz argues in his 2017 study "The Value of Unpaid Labor: The Satellite System Household Production" that "the regular representation of household production is of great importance in various indicator systems for measuring welfare. This is intended to move the focus beyond standard economic reporting to a comprehensive view of material welfare" (quoted in Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, "Wie die Zeit vergeht," 246.).
227. "Gender justice" is a term brought forth by Nancy Fraser. She proposes to understand gender justice as a "complex idea, not a simple one," thereby establishing seven key principles that would allow welfare states to reconceptualise the position of women in society. These seven normative principles include, for example, the Anti-Poverty Principle, the Anti-Exploitation Principle, Income Equality, and Leisure-Time Equality. Due to the complexity of Fraser's concept, refer to her in-depth definition of gender justice directly in Nancy Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (London: Verso), 115–123.
228. Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift* (London: Penguin, 2012).
229. Fraser, "Crisis of Care?," 34.

their societies age, industrialised nations are finding that their health care sectors lack professional care workers[230] and that more and more women are entering the waged workforce (and thus no longer perform many of the care activities historically ascribed to them). In short, they are in desperate need of care providers. In 2019, Germany estimated that 4.1 million (mainly elderly) people were in need of care; ten years earlier, there were only 2.3 million people.[231]

With this example, it becomes evident that one change within the complex system of social reproduction – i.e., white, middle-class women increasingly entering the paid workforce in the Global North – has far-reaching consequences on, in this case, women of colour around the globe. The ensuing creation of global care chains – whereby predominantly migrant women are urged to leave their own families behind to provide underpaid around-the-clock care for the youngest and most elderly populations of richer nations – make it clear that care is not only a matter of gender but also intricately interlocked with concerns of race and class.[232] Around the globe, the labour conditions for migrant care workers are utterly precarious. Oftentimes, they have no social security and have informally immigrated or hold very restrictive and temporary work and visa titles.[233] The already marginalised origin communities that such care workers migrate from experience a so-called care drain: a depletion of care resources locally. The private and public care sectors of the Global North thus benefit from the economic "underdevelopment" of the workers' origin countries, using it as leverage to maintain care as an undervalued, invisibilised activity.

Many feminists, including care ethics and Marxist-feminist scholars, argue that care needs to be valued – and renumerated – for its essential social function and that it cannot be regarded as a private issue without public concern. However, it is

---

230. Ursula Apitzsch, Marianne Schmidbaur, "Care, Migration und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit," Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, September 7, 2011, http://www.bpb.de/apuz/33149/care-migration-und-geschlechtergerechtigkeit.
231. Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, "4,1 Millionen Pflegebedürftige zum Jahresende 2019," 2020, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2020/12/PD20_507_224.html; Apitzsch, Schmidbaur, and Bildung, "Care, Migration und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit."
232. The concept was prominently positioned in the discourse by Arlie Hochschild in "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value," in *Justice, Politics, and the Family*, ed. Daniel Engster and Tamara Metz (New York: Routledge, 2015).
233. Apitzsch, Schmidbaur, and Bildung, "Care, Migration und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit."

important to understand that care, within the logic of capitalism, cannot easily be "valued more" as it is *devalued structurally* in order to remain cost efficient. The economist Susan Himmelweit explains the constraints to fair pay for domestic labour within the capitalist economy: "Where there is no productivity differential, employment will not be perceived as worthwhile unless wages are higher than the average paid to carers."[234] This phenomenon is reflected in the dynamic which occurs when a parent or other caretaker relative is paid less at their job outside the home than they would have to pay to a substitute caregiver. We thus have to recognise first and foremost that care within capitalist economies fulfils its socioeconomic role as a devalued service, and thus demands for greater visibility or value need to be connected to larger structural transformations – otherwise, these demands run the danger of remaining symbolic gestures of recognition that do not alter the structural violences embedded within systems of care. As such, care politics must be an expansive politics in order to address the urgency around care with political adequacy, as the sociologists Ursula Apitzsch and Marianne Schmidbaur argue:

> So far, it has not been possible to bring together the various strands of discussion around policies around women, family, social, health, tax, labor market, migration and foreign policy. To date, care work has not been seen as a central, coherent sociopolitical field and has not been dealt with accordingly. However, this is precisely what is needed in order to effectively meet the challenges of the future.[235]

Fraser raises a similar critique when she writes that the economy is only looked at as an economic system in its narrow sense, not taking into account the sphere of social reproduction – which sustains all other economic activities. She asserts that the strains on care that manifest themselves under the current regime of financialised capitalism have deep systemic roots within the structure of our social order. Yet the present crisis of social reproduction is an indication that something is "rotten" not only within the current form of financialised capitalism but in capitalist

234. Susan Himmelweit, "Can We Afford (Not) To Care: Prospects and Policy," in *New Working Paper Series (London School of Economics, Gender Institute)* (London: London School of Economics, 2005), 16.
235. Apitzsch, Schmidbaur, and Bildung, "Care, Migration und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit."

society in general.[236] She urges us to understand that the "crisis of care" is thus not a crisis that is immanent to the sphere of social reproduction but renders itself legible at the intersection, at the *boundary*, with the productive sphere – and that these "boundary struggles" change with each regime of capitalism.[237] Fraser claims:

> [E]very form of capitalist society harbours a deep-seated social-reproductive "crisis tendency" or contradiction: on the one hand, social reproduction is a condition of possibility for sustained capital accumulation; on the other, capitalism's orientation to unlimited accumulation tends to destabilize the very processes of social reproduction on which it relies. This social-reproductive contradiction of capitalism lies at the root of the so-called crisis of care.[238]

The philosopher calls for a massive reorganisation of the relationship between production and reproduction to overcome this care crisis, particularly financialised capitalism's "rapacious subjugation of reproduction to production."[239] If her assumptions are right, then adjustments to social policy will not suffice to overcome the ongoing care crisis.[240] Without specifying what the solutions would entail, Fraser argues for the need to reinvent and reimagine the ways in which social reproduction and production relate to one another, as the gendered separation between these two spheres continues to be a primary basis for women's subordination in capitalist societies. Taking up this effort of collectivising as a way to seek care justice and a renegotiation of the relations of re/production within the German-speaking realm, initiatives such as Wirtschaft ist Care, Care Revolution, Care.Macht.Mehr (Care.Power.More), and Equal Care Day have been demanding and building a care-centred economy that foregrounds reproduction over production.[241] They contribute to ongoing discourses and practices by providing "new models for care relationships and a care economy that centres not on maximising profits but on fulfilling the needs

236. Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," *New Left Review*, no. 100 (2016), 100.
237. Ibid.
238. Ibid.
239. Ibid., 117.
240. Ibid.
241. For further information, see Care Revolution Network, accessed July 7, 2023, https://care-revolution.org.; Care.Macht.Mehr, accessed July 7, 2023, https://care-macht-mehr.com; Equal Care Day Initiative, accessed July 7, 2023, https://equalcareday.de. Also see the publications Gabriele Winker, *Care Revolution. Schritte in eine solidarische Gesellschaft* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2017); Ina Praetorius, "Wirtschaft ist Care: oder die Wiederentdeckung des Selbstverständlichen," *Schriften zu Wirtschaft und Soziales. Band 16* (2015).

of human beings, and that does not distribute care work and care resources according to racist, sexist or classist structures."[242] Spearheaded primarily by women, these grassroots initiative have become central players in the various women's marches and feminist conferences, publications, and political conversations taking place across Germany and Switzerland. As Fraser argues, "for feminism, there can be no more central issue than this."[243] This reorganisation, this challenging, of the current economic system must therefore be seen as a central feminist concern, in which "care" is not only what is at stake but also what provides a lens to analyse the current conditions of social injustices and what serves as a call to action for an otherwise.

---

242. Care Revolution Network, accessed July 7, 2023, https://care-revolution.org.;
243. Nancy Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care," *Dissent*, 2016,
https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/nancy-fraser-interview-capitalism-crisis-of-care.

2.2 A Brief History of Care under Capitalism and Colonialism

Due to the central position of care within feminist care theories and within this dissertation, the following sections briefly trace the origins of these gendered economic constellations, drawing from the fields of history and Marxist-feminist scholarship on political economy, social reproduction, and colonial oppression to build a chronological account of the ways in which private care work was and continues to be organised. In this text, I trace the histories and genealogies of contemporary gendered, racialised, and classed inequalities. In order to grasp the historical longevity of these unequal processes and gendered and racialised norms – present in all scales and realms of society, including the art field – it is imperative to consider the historical shifts that shaped the contemporary societies of Central Europe and North America, as they were the seedbeds of capitalism. Other forms of economic systems have organised care work differently.[244]

For the above reasons, however, my focus lies on the transition from feudalism to capitalism in medieval Europe, after which I shift to examining the nineteenth century and the emergence of the Victorian ideology of gendered separate spheres between the public and the private, considering how these ideals not only oppressed women but also colonised peoples. The search for the origins of contemporary forms of oppression then moves into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, particularly homing in on the idealisation of the nuclear family and the invisible state infrastructures that continue to uphold the reproduction of this heteronormative ideal of family. This brief analysis of social reproduction in the Western sphere over the past several centuries forms the basis for the subsequent

---

244. For further references on care work under socialism and communist regimes, I recommend: Sabine Hering, *Social Care under State Socialism (1945–1989): Ambitions, Ambiguities, and Mismanagement* (Leverkusen, Germany: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009); Susan Grant, *Soviet Nightingales: Care under Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022). For a comparative approach through visual history, see the exhibition "Zwischen Fließband und Küche. Fotografien von (Care-)Arbeit in DDR und BRD 1960 bis 1990" [Between Assembly Line and Kitchen. Photographs of (Care) Work in the GDR and FRG 1960 to 1990], Berlin Museum für Fotografie, November 2022, https://kgi.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/portfolio-item/zwischen-fliessband-und-kueche-fotografien-von-care-arbeit-in-ddr-und-brd-1960-bis-1990/.

chapters of this dissertation – highlighting the urgency of care not only as a central theme of my curatorial work but also as a theoretical framework for critically analysing curatorial labour and its entanglements with emotional, affective, and exploitative mechanisms in a gendered economy.[245]

2.2.1 Historical Shifts: Towards Capitalist Relations

Marxist-feminist scholarship has contributed substantially to the unveiling of capitalism's gendered and racialised history and its ongoing creation of mechanisms of oppression.[246] This strand of feminist scholarly work has traced a genealogy of how the racialised, classed, and gendered capitalist system came into being and what role care work, or social reproduction, has played in the different capitalist regimes of the past centuries. The key function of this feminist historicisation is that it *denaturalises* women's domestic work as a natural vocation.[247] Fraser thus stresses the importance of critically tracing the history of how different regimes of capitalism have defined and sculpted the relationship between production and reproduction – which, she claims, is one of the "defining features of capitalist society" and hence should be at the centre of a critical analysis of capitalism.[248]

The historical specificities of different capitalist regimes indicate much of how and by whom social reproduction was organised in each era.[249] Such an expanded understanding of capitalism would entail both its official economy and its "non-

---

245. See also Nanne Buurman, "From Prison Guard to Healer: Curatorial Authorships in the Context of Gendered Economies," *OnCurating*, no. 51 (September 2021).
246. Tithi Bhattacharya edited a volume on social reproduction theory (SRT) that brings together essays that "build from Marx" and are concerned with "remapping class, recentering oppression." In her introduction, Bhattacharya describes SRT as an approach that displays an analytical irreverence to "'visible facts' and privileges 'process' instead. It is an approach that is not content to accept what seems like a visible, finished entity – in this case, our worker at the gates of her workplace – but interrogates the complex network of social processes and human relations that produce the conditions of existence for that entity. […] the fundamental insight of SRT is, simply put, that human labor is at the heart of creating or reproducing society as a whole." Tithi Bhattacharya, introduction to *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London: Pluto, 2017), 2.
247. Toupin, *Wages for Housework*, 187.
248. Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care."
249. Ibid.

economic" background conditions.[250] Fraser asks critical thinkers to enquire, for any given era, how much of care work is commodified, whether it is supported through the state or corporations, and to what degree it is located within households, neighbourhoods, civil society, or more than one of these.[251]

Taking up this line of thinking, sociologist Maria Mies's and activist and philosopher Silvia Federici's Marxist-feminist analyses of women's social role go back to the transition from feudalism to capitalism, where they locate the emergence of patterns of oppression that remain inherent to the capitalist economic system today. A key mechanism of capitalism that they both identify is its premise of exploiting resources – such as land, nature, and sociopolitically inferiorised labour according to class, race, and gender – for the goal of accumulating capital.[252]

Introducing criticism directed at Karl Marx's theories, Federici laments that his work does not include the "profound transformations that capitalism introduced in the reproduction of labor-power and the social position of women."[253] She continues:

> Nor does Marx's analysis of primitive accumulation mention the "Great Witch-Hunt" of the 16th and 17th centuries, although this state-sponsored terror campaign was central to the defeat of the European peasantry, facilitating its expulsion from the lands it once held in common.[254]

The early modern witch hunt was thus a mechanism to control and subordinate (peasant and artisan) women, "who in their economic and sexual independence constituted a threat for the emerging bourgeois order," as Mies argues.[255] Art historian Sigrid Schade makes a case to understand the depictions of

250. Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 101.
251. Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care."
252. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2014); Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (London: Zed Books, 1986).
253. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch,* 63.
254. Ibid. On primitive accumulation, Federici notes: "In other words, primitive accumulation consisted in an immense accumulation of labor-power – 'dead labor' in the form of stolen goods, and 'living labor' in the form of human beings made available for exploitation – realized on a scale never before matched in the course of history." Ibid., 64.
255. Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 81. Within feminist literature, art, and curating, the figure of the witch has become a symbol of empowerment and anti-capitalist resistance. For example, the exhibition "WITCHES" at TAXISPALAIS Kunsthalle Tirol, Innsbruck, Austria, 2021, curated by Nina Tabassomi, recently brought together artistic positions that reflect and expand on the

witches – in the form of illustrations, wooden and copperplate engravings, and panel paintings from around 1500 by Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach, and Hans Baldung – as key elements of the mass inquisition: these illustrations, as part of the tractates, manifested and reproduced the image of the "power of the witch" and hence intensified the inquisitorial persecution of purported witches in medieval and early modern times.[256]

The witch hunt, the peasantry's expulsion from its commonly worked lands, and the introduction of waged labour can be seen as central patriarchal-capitalist strategies that forced a radical reorganisation of social life, gender hierarchies, and divisions of labour. Prior to capitalist expansion, access to land and the commons was the basis for a different social order, albeit one that still had stark social stratifications. Despite the commons being dismissed as a source of laziness and disorder in sixteenth-century literature, it served a central role in the reproduction of small-scale farmers, or cottars.[257] Peasants' access to meadows and woods allowed them to keep cattle, gather timber, and harvest various foods, and it also provided space for social gatherings and for collective decision-making and work cooperatives:

figure of the witch within a contemporary context, see https://www.taxispalais.art/en/programm/ausstellungen/hexen/. Gender and art scholar Kristen J. Sollée, in her book *Witches, Sluts, Feminists: Conjuring the Sex Positive* (Los Angeles: ThreeL Media, 2017), anlayses the archetypes of "witch" and "slut" and how they have been used to police female sexuality and punish women. In the context of Sollée's book, as well as other feminist positions, these terms have been reclaimed as positive affirmations. Sigrid Schade's *Schadenzauber und die Magie des Körpers: Hexenbilder der frühen Neuzeit*, from 1983, provides a feminist art historical account of witches in the early modern age.

256. Sigrid Schade, *Schadenzauber und die Magie des Körpers* (Worms: Werner'sche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983). The mentioned tractates refer to a common medieval written work or treatise that was used as a means of conveying knowledge and information on a wide range of topics. Tractates could cover theology, philosophy, science, medicine, law, and more. These texts played a significant role in the transmission of knowledge and the development of intellectual thought during the Middle Ages.

257. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 71. The "commons" and "commoning" are broad terms that have become central in leftist thought and activism. Within the context of Federici's research, the "commons" is considered the opposite of the "enclosures" of capitalist processes. The commons thereby stand for non-capitalist, communally organised territories that allow for communal practices of solidarity and cooperation. For more on "commoning" see Camille Barbagallo, Nicholas Beuret, and David Harvie, eds., *Commoning: With George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici* (London: Pluto, 2019); Manuela Zechner, *Commoning Care & Collective Power: Childcare Commons and the Micropolitics of Municipalism in Barcelona* (Linz, Austria: Transversal Texts, 2021).

The commons were the material foundation upon which peasant solidarity and sociality could thrive. [….] The social function of the commons was especially important for women, who, having less title to land and less social power, were more dependent on them for their subsistence, autonomy, and sociality.[258]

Federici argues that women's access to communal assets and land in pre-capitalist Europe tempered women's subordination to men, "while in the new capitalist regime women themselves became the commons, as their work was defined as a natural resource, laying outside the sphere of market relations."[259] The new organisation of work turned women – particularly working-class women, as bourgeois women were "privatised" by men and the domestic sphere – into communal goods, which rendered their activities as non-work: "as a natural resource, available to all, no less than the air we breathe or the water we drink."[260]

Federici describes the expropriation of communal lands as a central historical moment in the transition from feudalism to capitalism during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Simultaneous to the global expansion of colonialism, land privatisation began in Europe in the fifteenth century. As part of this international phenomenon, European merchants expropriated much of the land of the Canary Islands to turn them into sugar plantations in the sixteenth century. By the seventeenth century, the Spanish had expropriated one-third of the Indigenous lands of the Americas.[261] Also on the African continent, the "slave-raiding" wrought excessive land loss.[262]

In Europe, land privatisation occurred through different means, including tenant evictions, rent increases, and increased state taxes that led tenants into debt.[263] These developments were forced upon communities either through war or religious reform, and they undermined their capacity for subsistence.[264] In the sixteenth century, English lords and rich farmers eliminated communal lands to

258. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 71.
259. Ibid., 97.
260. Ibid.
261. Ibid., 68.
262. Ibid.
263. Ibid.
264. Ibid.

expand their holdings, which Federici calls "enclosures."[265]

The loss of communal land can be considered a shared pivot point for a variety of shifts in how societies related to labour. All workers became much more dependent on the wage, while their landless condition provided their employers with more leverage to cut their pay and lengthen the working day:

> Not surprisingly, with land expropriation came a change in the workers' attitude towards the wage. While in the Middle Ages wages could be viewed as an instrument of freedom (in contrast to the compulsion of the labor services), as soon as access to land came to an end, wages began to be viewed as instruments of enslavement.[266]

Women's lives were especially negatively impacted by the land closures, as the economisation of life had made it much more difficult for women to self-support, confining them more and more to the sphere of reproduction – at a point in time when this labour began to be devalued completely.[267] Federici writes:

> With the demise of the subsistence economy that had prevailed in pre-capitalist Europe, the unity of production and reproduction which has been typical of all societies based on production-for-use came to an end, as these activities became the carriers of different social relations and were sexually differentiated. In the new monetary regime, only production-for-market was defined as a value-creating activity, whereas the reproduction of the worker began to be considered as valueless from an economic viewpoint and even ceased to be considered as work.[268]

Like today, reproductive labour earned a wage, though at lower rates, only when it was performed outside the home for a higher-classed social group.[269] Through this sexual division of labour, the social and economic function of the reproduction of labour power in private homes and its essential function in the accumulation of capital became invisible – and, still today, continues to be mystified as "women's labour," as women's natural vocation as care providers.[270]

After Federici's historical analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism

---

265. Ibid., 69.
266. Ibid., 72.
267. Ibid., 74.
268. Ibid., 74–75.
269. Ibid., 75.
270. Ibid.

from the fourteenth century onwards, it is useful to turn to Fraser's detailed analysis of more recent decades, as it distinguishes between three central capitalist regimes: 1) the so-called liberal capitalism of the nineteenth century, 2) the state-managed regime of the mid-twentieth century, and 3) the financialised capitalism of the present day. With each regime, she claims, came a specific organisation of social reproduction that produced a distinctive set of gender and family ideals. The liberal-capitalist vision of the nineteenth century created the Victorian ideal of "separate spheres"; the social-democratic model of the twentieth century created the "family wage"; and today's neoliberal financial capitalism fosters the ideal of the "two-earner family."[271] Fraser concludes: "In a nutshell: liberal capitalism *privatized* social reproduction; state-managed capitalism partially *socialized* it; financialized capitalism is increasingly *commodifying* it."[272]

The chapter thus far has sketched out the contemporary status quo of financialised capitalism, and the next section focuses in on the nineteenth century and its production of formative gendered and racialised ideals.

---

271. Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care."
272. Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

2.2.2   Devalued Labour: On Housewifisation and Colonisation

The nineteenth century, according to Fraser, is the regime of "liberal competitive capitalism," as it was characterised by ongoing industrial exploitation in Europe and colonial expropriation across the globe.[273] The state played a rather peripheral role that left workers to reproduce themselves "autonomously." This era also produced a new, bourgeois imaginary of domesticity and femininity.[274] In the early Victorian period – from 1780 onwards, with its peak in 1850 – the so-called doctrine of separate spheres[275] became central to the moral, social, political, and economic ordering of British society, then in other European countries, and later on in the United States.[276] According to the historian Susie L. Steinbach, before industrialisation the home and workplace had not been separate but rather overlapping spaces in which men and women worked side by side – even though they did not execute the same tasks.[277] Thus the emerging Victorian ideology in Great Britain played a central role in shaping gendered norms – norms that still affect traditional roles within families today:

> The doctrine of separate spheres stated that men and women inhabited different roles in society. Men were essentially public creatures; women were private creatures. Men went out to do battle in the worlds of business and politics; their identities centered on being workers or professionals, husbands and fathers who were good providers. Women remained at home, in the domestic sphere, where they ran their households, raised their children, and cared for their husbands. Men were fundamentally independent; women were dependent. Men were by nature sexually predatory; women were sexually passionless. Men were socially and politically dominant; women were morally superior.[278]

These beliefs were intensified through the influence of Christianity, which

---

273. Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 104.
274. Ibid.
275. Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 168.
276. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 99.
277. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 168.
278. Ibid., 166.

regarded women as responsible for the home and child-rearing.[279] Women were thus seen as the moral and spiritual centres of their families, as they were considered "naturally maternal" beings who would embrace their motherly role.[280] Steinbach points to the historical assumption in Great Britain that women were typically "not economic creatures," as they were expected to work without wages. Further, upon marriage, women were not able to legally own property nor enter into contracts (under the legal doctrine of *coverture*),[281] making them dependent on men seamlessly throughout their lives – first as daughters and then as wives.[282] In this light, women's efforts were conceptualised not as "work" but rather as housekeeping:

> Men spent their adult lives working hard. Women spent their lives bearing, raising, and educating children and running households. In practice, this meant that most women worked hard too. However, their work was unpaid and was not recognized as work or as economic activity at all; instead, it was classed as domestic activity.[283]

The feminist scholars Gisela Bock and Barbara Duden, in the influential essay "Arbeit aus Liebe – Liebe als Arbeit" (Labour of Love – Labour as Love) from 1977,[284] argue, following Marxist-feminist lines of thought, that "women are not only the 'heart of the family' but the heart of capital."[285] However, Steinbach suggests that

---

279. Ibid., 168.

280. Ibid., 166.

281. Coverture, also known as coverture laws or the doctrine of coverture, was a legal doctrine in English common law and American law that defined the legal status of married women. Under coverture, when a woman married, her legal identity was essentially merged with that of her husband, and she lost many of her legal rights as an individual. Upon marriage, she became a *feme covert* (Latin for "covered woman"), which meant that her legal existence was "covered" or subsumed by her husband's legal identity. Under coverture, a woman generally couldn't own property in her own name. Any property she brought into the marriage or acquired afterward typically became her husband's property. He had control over her property and income. Coverture was gradually abolished in the United Kingdom over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through a series of legislative reforms. For further reference, see the work of the historians Tim Stretton and Krista J. Kesselring, *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013) and gender scholar Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Wife* (London: Rivers Oram Press, Pandora List, 2001).

282. Ibid., 167.

283. Ibid., 172.

284. Toupin's book *Wages for Housework* includes a summary of the essay in English on pages 187–88. Bock and Duden were also key figures in the German iteration of the Wages for Housework movement (Lohn für Hausarbeit).

285. Gisela Bock, and Barbara Duden, "Arbeit aus Liebe – Liebe als Arbeit. Zur Entstehung der Hausarbeit im Kapitalismus," *Frauen und Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Berliner Sommeruniversität 1976* (1977): 178.

historically men, despite spending most of their days outside the house at work, were "deeply invested in the home," because, as she argues, "men made the domestic sphere possible through their work."[286] Fraser's argumentation bluntly counters Steinbach's proposition:

> Non-waged social-reproductive activity is necessary to the existence of waged work, the accumulation of surplus value and the functioning of capitalism as such. […] Social reproduction is an indispensable background condition for the possibility of economic production in a capitalist society.[287]

Bock and Duden furthermore point out that, under the model of the family wage, the state or businesspeople received two labourers for the price of one: in the so-called traditional setup of the nuclear family, the husband commonly worked outside the house for a wage, enabled by the unpaid housework of his wife. In such a scenario, his wage not only financially covers her unpaid housework but systemically hides it. Particularly in a new world order, where money had become a primary medium of power, the family wage structurally subordinated those who did not earn cash wages to those who did.[288] Bock and Duden conclude: "The invisibility of domestic work is a function of its unpaid nature."[289]

This emerging "housewifisation"[290] – saturated with and mystified by new, domestic ideals of femininity, as a product of the Victorian ideology of separate spheres – was mostly adhered to by the (white) middle class.[291] Normative concepts of beauty and grace, as well as projections of female hysteria, manifested in the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as art historian Sigrid Schade demonstrates.[292] These heavily gendered norms became powerful enough to even influence some of the social elites and, later on, parts of the working class, who, from 1840 onwards, aimed for the ideal of a wage-earning husband and a "non-working"

---

286. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 166.
287. Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care."
288. Ibid., 102.
289. Bock, and Duden, "Arbeit aus Liebe," 120.
290. Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 74.
291. Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 102.
292. Isa Härtel and Sigrid Schade, "Body and Representation," *Schriftenreihe der Internationalen Frauenuniversitat* 6 (2002): 75.; Ines Lindner, Sigrid Schade, and Sille Wenk, *Blick-Wechsel. Konstruktionen von Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989).

wife, portrayed as the "angel in the house" – however, this goal remained largely unattainable for the lower classes.[293]

Sophie Lewis historically positions motherhood in the US as an "institution of married white womanhood."[294] Enslaved Black women were not publicly recognised as women, let alone mothers or Americans.[295] "No other group in America has had their identity socialised out of existence as have black women," states the Black feminist theorist bell hooks.[296] Thus Black women were unable to make claims of kinship or "property to the fruits of their gestational labors."[297] Unmarried (white) proletarians were also dispossessed of their babies through eugenic and patriarchal laws.[298] In the nineteenth century, white elites on both sides of the Atlantic cultivated an ethics of "productive maternity" while perceiving the "excess production of babies among subaltern classes" as threatening.[299]

It is therefore crucial to emphasise the intricate entanglements of class, gender, and race in relation to social reproduction. These entanglements served as oppressive mechanisms within the newly established capitalist system. bell hooks regards the devaluation of Black womanhood as an extended product of sexual exploitation of Black women during slavery – an image that had not altered over hundreds of years.[300] She writes: "During the years of Black Reconstruction, 1867–77, black women struggled to change negative images of black womanhood perpetuated by whites. Trying to dispel the myth that all black women were sexually loose, they emulated the conduct and mannerisms of white women."[301] Caught in this contradiction, Black women in the US today continue to carry the painful history of being devalued and dehumanised as a way for white men to justify upholding

---

293. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 168.
294. Lewis, introduction to *Full Surrogacy Now*.
295. Ibid.
296. bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman* (London: Pluto, 1982), 7; in bell hooks, "Homeplace (A Site of Resistance)," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End, 1990), the author argues that the domestic sphere, despite its patriarchal order, served as a site of refuge for Black people in a world of white supremacy.
297. Lewis, introduction to *Full Surrogacy Now*.
298. Ibid.
299. Ibid.
300. Ibid., 53.
301. Ibid., 55.

sexist and racist divisions of labour. For example, from the perspective of an upper- and middle-class white women, lower-class white women and women of colour were portrayed as "fallen sisters" in the media, as hooks already argued in the 1980s.[302] Alongside this, white women were seen as physically and intellectually inferior to men and thus unable to perform the same tasks as men. To rationalise white women's mental and physical inferiority to men in tandem with Black women's ability to carry out "male" tasks, that is, "the black female's ability to survive without the direct aid of a male and her ability to perform tasks that were defined as 'male' work, white males argued that black slave women were not 'real' women but were masculinized sub-human creatures."[303]

To challenge these oppressive, dehumanising modes of representation of Black people by white people, I turn our focus to the African American feminist artist Betye Saar, who was active in the Black Arts Movement from the 1970s onward. While her work initially focused on the Black male body as a way to counter white feminism, she then turned to give particular attention to the Black female body, as a way to reclaim it from the oppressive visuals of the Jim Crow era. Saar is known for her artistic approach of assemblage, where she brings together derogatory found objects that reproduce negative stereotypes of Black people in the US and uses them in an emancipatory way. "I was recycling the imagery, in a way, from negative to positive, using the negative power against itself," the artist reflected on her work, nearly four decades later.[304]

---

302. hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 52.
303. Ibid., 71.
304. Betye Saar, "Influences: Betye Saar. The US Artist Reflects on the Art and Events That Have Shaped a Career Spanning Almost Seven Decades," *Frieze*, September 2016, https://www.frieze.com/article/influences-betye-saar.

Due to copyright restrictions, I was unable to include the artwork The Liberation of Aunt Jemima by Betye Saar in the public version of my PhD. If you should wish to view the discussed artwork, please see Betye Saar, "Influences: Betye Saar. The US Artist Reflects on the Art and Events that Have Shaped a Career Spanning Almost Seven Decades," Frieze, September 2016, https://www.frieze.com/article/influences-betye-saar.

Image 15. Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972, multimedia installation. Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, California. Photo: Benjamin Blackwell.

Her iconic 1972 piece *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* (Image 15) came into being four years after the death of Martin Luther King Jr. In it, she subverts the racist image of a found "mammy" figurine, a caricature of a Black slave, and turns her into a Black hero:

> She had a broom in one hand and, on the other side, I gave her a rifle. In front of her, I placed a little postcard, of a mammy with a mulatto child, which is another way black women were exploited during slavery. I used the derogatory image to empower the black woman by making her a revolutionary, like she was rebelling against her past enslavement.[305]

---

305. Ibid.

Such mammy figurines first emerged in the eighteenth century, when grotesquely stereotyped images of black women were used to sell kitchen products and other commercialised items (such as broom containers and pencil holders) that "served" their owners. In an almost perverse manner, these items were usually "placeholders," or "empty containers," for the everyday use of their white owners.[306] These objects can be closely linked to hooks's statement that Black women were seen not as women but as subhuman creatures – in this case, commercialised objectivations of racist stereotypes.

In 2007, the human rights activist Angela Davis – at the opening of the exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles – stated that the Black women's movement started with Saar's *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*.[307] This direct link between Aunt Jemima, the mammy figure used to advertise pancake mix and syrup, and the Black women's movement is not a coincidence, given the powerful interruption and subversion of racist stereotypes wrought by Saar's artistic work – which, in this case, renegotiated and challenged embedded ideologies of Black women as devalued creatures at a representational level. Saar's work thereby contributed to the rejection of the perpetuation of Black women's devalued labour within the capitalist economy.

In direct response to both white feminists' insistence that race and sex were two separate issues and Black activists' assertion that racism and not sexism was the main source of oppression, hooks voiced her conviction that "the struggle to end racism and the struggle to end sexism were naturally intertwined – to make them separate was to deny the basic truth of our existence, that race and sex are both immutable facets of human identity."[308] Seven years later, in 1989, the lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to reflect the interlocking

---

306. Alexxa Gotthardt, "How Betye Saar Transformed Aunt Jemima into a Symbol of Black Power," Artsy, October 26, 2017, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-betye-saar-transformed-aunt-jemima-symbol-black-power.
307. Saar, "Influences."
308. hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 12, 13.

effects of oppression.[309]

These ideologies of devaluation in regard to race, gender, and class – which intersect powerfully in Saar's artistic work – find their roots in the emergence of the patriarchal-capitalist mode of production that came out of the social reordering of Europe, the US, and the colonies that Europe "conquered." Maria Mies makes the convincing argument that colonisation must be regarded as the flipside to housewifisation:[310]

> It is my thesis that these two processes of colonization and housewifization are closely and causally interlinked. Without the ongoing exploitation of external colonies – formerly as direct colonies, today within the new international division of labour – the establishment of the "internal colony," that is, a nuclear family and a woman maintained by a male "breadwinner," would not have been possible.[311]

Similarly, Federici chose the characters of Caliban and the witch from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to stand as the two rebel figures of capitalist resistance for her book that takes their names as its title. For Federici, Caliban is an anti-colonial rebel who is also a symbol for the world proletariat, the body of which is equally "a terrain and an instrument of resistance to the logic of capitalism."[312] Contrary to *The Tempest*, where the witch is confined to the background, Federici aims to bring this figure to centre stage, as an embodiment of a range of female subjects – such as healers, disobedient wives, and women who dared to live independently – who capitalism sought to destroy.[313] As symbolic figures, both Caliban and the witch stand for

> the forcible removal of entire communities from their land, large-scale impoverishment, the launching of "Christianizing" campaigns destroying people's autonomy and communal relations. We also have a constant cross-fertilization whereby forms of repression that had

---

309. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, iss. 1, article 8 (1989).
310. Fraser, "Crisis of Care?," 27.
311. Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 110.
312. Federici, "*Caliban and the Witch*," 11.
313. Ibid.

been developed in the Old World were transported to the New and then re-imported into Europe.[314]

Interestingly, these repressive ideologies – as ways of devaluing certain forms of labour, and hence enabling an "economy of invisible hands" – had become quite influential, despite them being "just that – ideology, not lived reality,"[315] as Steinbach concludes. Fraser agrees that the theory behind social reproduction only partially aligned with everyday lives, as these caring activities were not exclusively bound to the private sphere but rather expanded into the public realm, including neighbourhoods, civil society, and public institutions – while some of this labour had already been outsourced or commodified.[316] At the same time, ideological underpinnings do have to be considered as crucial entities that come together in a powerful manner.

These same ideological forces also influence the mechanisms of value production within the arts. Also, in this context, anyone who deviates from the long-standing ideal of the white, male artist-as-genius – such as Black artists, women artists, artists with caring responsibilities – encounter structural obstacles that continue to mark their success as an "exception" to the norm, as the art theorist Isabelle Graw articulates in her lecture "Value on Shaky Grounds."[317] The monetary value of an artwork, as the measurement of success within capitalism, is closely connected to the biography of the author:

> Once an artwork sparks "fictional expectations" the desire for it will intensify. So, whether the artwork will be enriched with value or whether it won't be considered valuable depends on the recipients' projections about its future worth and credibility. Now these fictional expectations are of course not equally distributed.[318]

Graw builds her argument in the analogy between the arts and sports, both areas with immense gendered gaps when it comes to financial reward and the attention economy. She argues that the (higher) payment of men is rooted in their

---

314. Ibid., 2019.
315. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 168.
316. Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care."
317. Isabelle Graw, "Value on Shaky Grounds," unpublished manuscript, 2021s.
318. Ibid.

"future expectations," whereas women first have to *prove* their abilities and then are questioned as to whether they will be able to repeat their success in the future. Black artist and women artists, according to Graw, have been exposed to this lack of trust for centuries.[319]

Thus, fictive speculations about an artwork's author affect the value generation of the artwork itself. The artist functions as a guarantor of the value-form, to speak in the Marxist terminology of Graw. In the case of racialised artists and women artists, Graw speaks of value discrimination that echoes deeply rooted systemic racism and sexism.[320] The art theorist and critic concludes:

> As for the artworld we also shouldn't forget that this is a social universe that relies on unjustly distributed values, on a certain degree of value discrimination if you wish. One could even go so far to say that structurally speaking every market successful position here is reached at the expense of all those positions that remain invisible.[321]

Arguably, artists with caring responsibilities could be seen as a specific kind of artist who likewise suffers from value discrimination due to lack of trust – as a result of the rather grim "fictional expectations" associated with them, as artists such as Hannah Cooke and initiatives like Mehr Mütter für die Kunst have contested. This association between care as an inherently "unproductive" trait becomes apparent within the art system, as it does within society and the economy at large, and seems to be rooted in the racialised and gendered history of capitalism and its prevailing ideologies that shape the mechanism of value distribution.

---

319. Ibid. and Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
320. Graw, "Value on Shaky Grounds."
321. Ibid.

2.2.3 (Re)production Unit: The Nuclear Family as Institution

Following the Great Depression and the Second World War, Western nation-states had to save themselves from capitalism's self-destabilising elements by focusing on "public welfare." Particularly the working classes were no longer able to sustain their lives on their own, so "[i]n this situation, social reproduction had to be internalised, brought within the officially managed domain of the capitalist order."[322] Governments consequently saw the need to invest in health care, schooling, childcare, and old-age pensions, supplemented by corporate provision.[323] State policies of the twentieth century within North America and Europe furthermore built on the aforementioned Victorian model of separate spheres, promoting the seemingly more modern ideal of the "family wage" – which, again, only few families were able to achieve.[324]

Therefore, despite the ideology of separate spheres being "just" an ideology, this Victorian narrative continued to be upheld within the nuclear family as a key social, political, and economic infrastructure. The feminist writer Emilia Roig, in her book *Das Ende der Ehe* (The End of Marriage) argues: "The infrastructure within which love is supposed to unfold is cemented and regulated by marriage. Marriage is such a powerful cultural norm that it exerts influence even where it is not officially contracted."[325]

In a similar manner, Silvia Federici and Nicole Cox, who was a key fellow activist in the Wages for Housework movement, argue that the nuclear family, as an invention of "capital for capital,"[326] serves to institutionalise women's wageless labour and their dependency on men, but it also consequentially serves as a means to discipline men:

---

322. Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 109.
323. Ibid.
324. Ibid., 104.
325. Emilia Roig, *Das Ende der Ehe: Für eine Revolution der Liebe. Feministische Impulse für die Abschaffung einer patriarchalen Institution* (Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlage, 2023), 39.
326. Nicole Cox and Silvia Federici, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen* (New York: New York Wages for Housework Committee and Falling Wall Press, 1975), 7.

> For our wagelessness, our dependence in the home, has functioned to keep the men tied to their jobs, by ensuring that whenever they wanted to refuse their work they would be faced with the wife and children who depended on their wage.[327]

The nuclear family hence secures the status quo while simultaneously upholding heteronormative ideas of gender and sexuality. Queer sociologist Alan Sears argues that heteronormativity serves to naturalise and externalise forms of sexuality that are culturally and historically specific, "framing particular household forms and divisions of labour as products of human nature and as necessary foundations for a healthy human society across time."[328] Thus heterosexuality, which arose as a concept in the late nineteenth century,[329] formed *one* element of heteronormativity as a means to regulate sexual activities and to articulate and strengthen gendered norms that would justify "free" labour within the capitalist system.[330]

This history is why conservative political forces today have a strong and explicit interest in, literally, *conserving* the nuclear family. It offers a way to maintain a specific social order that entails racialised and gendered power relations and ensures the reproduction of the next generation of like-minded workers. As Sophie Lewis states:

> Drug users, abortion seekers, sexually active single women, black mothers, femmes who defend themselves against men, sex workers, and undocumented migrants are the most frequently incarcerated violators of this parenting norm. They have not been shielded by the fact that the Family today is now no longer necessarily heterosexual, with states increasingly making concessions to the "homonormative" household through policy on gay marriage.[331]

The queering of families to include same-sex partnerships and parenthood, single parents, solo moms who choose to reproduce via sperm donors, and "chosen families" and (human and more-than-human) kinships can all be seen as alternatives

---

327. Ibid.
328. Alan Sears, "Body Politics: The Social Reproduction of Sexualities," in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, ed. Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto, 2017), 172.
329. Gayle S. Rubin, *Deviations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 89.
330. Sears, "Body Politics," 173.
331. Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now*.

towards building strong support networks, outside of biological connections.[332] However, queer families are often framed as "deviations" from, and even as "attacks" on, not only the nuclear family as such but social norms altogether. These social norms alongside the traditional ideal of the nuclear family are portrayed as indispensable to the political and economic order.

The ideologies of gendered spheres and sexual politics seem to still prevail today, leading to the continued aspiration of the nuclear family, an ideal enabled and reinforced through invisible juridical infrastructures that contain and punish deviations from this social norm. An example of such an invisible mechanism that upkeeps the nuclear family is the German tax particularity known as *Ehegattensplitting* (spousal splitting). This practice financially rewards asymmetrical income structures in a married household, in most cases at the expense of women, who continue to perform most of the unpaid care work at home and who enter part-time positions more frequently and who, due to the gender pay gap, tend to earn less than their spouses. This tax model "makes it economically unattractive to break away from the norms of the 1950s, to which the tax system still corresponds with regard to marriage taxation. Thus, the single-earner-and-housewife-marriage is preserved – contrary to the clearly modernized social ideas."[333]

It comes as no surprise that this tax model originated in nineteenth-century Prussia,[334] where taxes were levied according to a household's form. Despite efforts to abolish joint taxation of married couples in the 1920s, the Nationalist Socialist regime restricted these efforts again in 1934 by introducing joint taxation and higher tax progression – certainly with the aim of keeping women out of the labour force, in accordance with Nazi family ideology.[335] After the war, the new German government

---

332. For an exhibition on queer families, see *Das Queere Familienzimmer*, Kunstraum Elsa, Bielefeld, Germany, 2023, which was curated by the photography artist Katharina Bosse. The insitution's webpage for the exhibition is available at https://elsa-art.de/2023/08/30/das-queere-familienzimmer/.
333. Gunda-Werner-Institut, "Weder fair noch sachgerecht: Das Ehegattensplitting steht contra Gleichstellung, Teilhabe und soziale Gerechtigkeit," Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2010, https://www.gwi-boell.de/de/2010/02/12/weder-fair-noch-sachgerecht-das-ehegattensplitting-steht-contra-gleichstellung-teilhabe.
334. Prussia (Preußen) was a German state located on most of the North European Plain, as well as some southern regions. It formed the German Empire when it united the German states in 1871.
335. Gunda-Werner-Institut, "Geschichte des Ehegattensplitting: Von der Nicht-Diskriminierung von Paaren zur Diskriminierung von Individuen," Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2010, https://www.gwi-

retained this tax model – even though the Federal Constitutional Court ruled, in 1957, that joint assessment in the form practised up until then violated the constitutional protection of marriage, because spouses should not suffer any systematic disadvantages as a result of their marriage.[336] However, *Ehengattensplitting* remains active still today, despite feminist efforts to restructure the taxation system in a more egalitarian way. The contemporary tax model in Germany thus continues to cement women's dependency on men's income, which has far-reaching economic consequences, particularly in the case of divorce, and is furthermore connected to elderly women's poverty (as pensions are distributed according to the income earned over one's lifespan).[337] Defenders of *Ehegattensplitting* argue that it supports families – yet the numbers show that 43 percent of the married couples who benefit from the tax alleviations are childless; meanwhile, unmarried couples with children do not benefit from the tax model.[338] This points to a double standard within the German legislation, where beneficial tax treatment is granted only to married couples while under social legislation unmarried partners are regarded as belonging to "marriage-like communal households" (for example, if an individual applies for social benefits, her unmarried partner is equally liable financially for her as if they were legally married).[339]

A similar double standard arises in the tax legislation for single parents. For one-parent families, which deviate from the norm of the nuclear family, a special tax benefit model was created. However, it remains in effect only as long as the single parent does not live in a household with another adult, regardless of whether this relationship is romantic, married, familial, or social. As a consequence, if a single parent chooses to live with friends or family as a support structure, they lose the tax benefit – even though the living arrangement might have only social and not financial merits.[340]

---

boell.de/de/2010/02/12/geschichte-des-ehegattensplitting-von-der-nicht-diskriminierung-von-paaren-zur.
336. Ibid.
337. Gunda-Werner-Institut, "Weder fair noch sachgerecht."
338. Gunda-Werner-Institut, "Geschichte des Ehegattensplitting."
339. Gunda-Werner-Institut, "Weder fair noch sachgerecht."
340. Ibid.

As feminists across the globe contest, governments continue to have too much control over women's bodies and reproductive rights. Such rights are limited by heteronormative morals that shape, for example, regulations regarding in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatments. The German health care system covers part of the costs of IVF for married heterosexual couples, but not for single women or same-sex couples, making it significantly more difficult for them to reproduce in cases of impacted fertility.[341]

This (state) control takes the form of invisible infrastructures that consist of laws, regulations, subsidies, tax benefits, and tax losses that shape and uphold the nuclear family. This ideal's moral and sexual codes, and the attendant mechanisms of control of women's bodies and social norms, continue to lie at the centre of many Western nation-states and their former colonies. Deviations from this norm, in the form of communal, queer, and other non-traditional forms of care are economically and sociopolitically punished, and, in some cases of activism and civic solidarity, even criminalised.[342] It thus comes as no surprise that the slogan "the personal is political"[343] has become so crucial for feminist movements, demanding that society recognise the so-called private sphere as a realm of broader political concern.[344]

341. Israel offers nearly full funding for IVF treatments to any Israeli woman, irrespective of her marital status or sexual orientation, until she has two children with her current partner. Consequently, Israeli women are the world's most intensive consumers of IVF, forming part of the government's "pro-natalists" mission. See State of Israel, Ministry of Health, "IVF – In Vitro Fertilization," 2021, https://www.health.gov.il/English/Topics/fertility/Pages/ivf.aspx; Daphna Birenbaum-Carmeli and Martha Dirnfeld, "In Vitro Fertilisation Policy in Israel and Women's Perspectives: The More the Better," *Reproductive Health Matters* 16, no. 31 (2008): 182–91.

342. The research collective Pirate Care has addressed the relationship between care and violence as well as solidarity and criminalisation in their artistic-curatorial-activist practices and writings. See, for example, Valeria Graziano, Marcell Mars, and Tomislav Medak (Pirate Care), "Care and Its Discontents," *New Alphabet School* (blog), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2020, https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/care-and-its-discontents/.

343. As noted in the introduction, "the personal is political" has been a core phrase of the feminist movement since the 1960s. Its original authorship is unclear, as several feminists decline having coined the phrase and rather attribute it to the collective social movements.

344. Federici and Cox elaborate on the importance of politicising the domestic sphere as a source for broader societal transformation: "Since the left has accepted the wage as the dividing line between work and non-work, production and parasitism, potential power and absolute powerlessness, the enormous amount of wageless work women perform for capital within the home has totally escaped their analysis and strategy. Thus, from Lenin through Gramsci to Benston and Mitchell, the entire leftist tradition has agreed on the 'marginality' of housework to the reproduction of capital and, consequently, the marginality of the housewife to revolutionary struggle. According to the left, as housewives women are not suffering from capital, but are suffering precisely from the absence of it. Our problem, it seems, is that capital has failed to reach into and organize our kitchens and

Such a widespread recognition would challenge the history and status quo of gendered norms, affecting, among other things, the sexual division of labour, women's economic (in)dependence, reproductive rights, and protections against domestic violence.[345]

<center>*</center>

The main intention of this chapter was to provide a historically informed understanding of how Western norms around care and gender stretch from medieval times up to the contemporary politics of the twenty-first century. Taken together, the sections of this chapter suggest that the contemporary conditions of private care work, with its structural injustices, must be regarded as a historically grown system that cannot be thought of outside of larger political and economic conditions and social norms. Women of all classes and races have been impacted by narratives that feminise domestic labour and care work and that exclude primarily women from the paid labour sector. The examples of the *Ehegattensplitting* tax and IVF support illuminate the legacy of, and the importance of continued struggle against, binary, heteronormative, patriarchal norms and regulations around care politics, reaching towards a framework that makes room for plural gendered realities and forms of kinship. Viewed through this lens, care is not a loving gesture between kin but a historically grown system – an invisible infrastructure – that regulates and dictates how care is organised socially and politically, ultimately predefining who cares for whom. Despite seemingly liberal, secular state politics, today a continued interest in upholding normative ideals of gender, reproductive rights, and the nuclear family prevails – ideals which, to a large extent, are co-controlled by governments and state legislators. The field of (private) care is rendered legible as a prism through which intersecting forms of oppression can be understood and contested, as the Wages for

---

bedrooms, with the two-fold consequence that a) we presumably live at a feudal or at any rate precapitalist stage; b) whatever we do in these kitchens and bedrooms is at best irrelevant to any real social change. For obviously, if our kitchens are outside of capital, our struggle to destroy them will never succeed in causing capital to fall." See Cox and Federici, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen*, 2.
345. Emma Dowling, *The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?* (London: Verso, 2020).

Housework movement aimed to do in the 1970s. The crisis of care is thus not a momentary phenomenon –a post-pandemic or post-financial crisis symptom – but rather an inherent trait of the capitalist system that subjugates reproduction to production.

Within the framework of this dissertation, the importance of this historical trajectory of care rests in the awareness it raises regarding the larger infrastructural system that upholds inegalitarian principles of organising care – a system which does not halt at the doors of the artistic and curatorial realm.[346] The feminist curatorial theories and artistic positions which I reference, as well as my own curatorial practice, aim to counter the normative logics of care that I have traced out in this chapter. The urgency to provide "care for caregivers" – as I will outline in chapter 4 – "Care for Caregivers: A Case Study of Participatory Curatorial Programming on Care" – stems from the historically grown exploitation and exhaustion of caregivers in the name of love.

---

346. The historical analysis of this chapter is woven throughout both the preceding and upcoming chapters, interjected with perspectives from the arts and curating. In the introduction of this dissertation, I sketched out the relationship between caregiving and artistic production, demonstrating how matters of care intersect within the art field to produce discrimination in the form of limited access and representation for artists with caring responsibilities. I touched upon works and initiatives by, for example, Hannah Cooke, Marcia Breuer (Mehr Mütter für die Kunst), and Patti Maciesz, whose efforts can be situated within a lineage stemming from feminist art making of the 1970s, such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the *Womanhouse* exhibition. I then argued, alongside Isabelle Graw, that the value system of the art world is not free of historically grown ideologies and hence discriminates against women and Black artists. With Betye Saar, I provided an example of how Black feminist art practices challenge racialised forms of objectivation.

3.   Histories of a Contested Terrain: Curatorial Care

The present chapter builds on the history of social reproduction discussed in the previous chapter while formulating a specific focus on the question of curating under capitalism, with special attention to the etymological origin of "curating" in the Latin verb *curare* – "to take care," "to look after." This chapter's aim is to complicate the relationship between curating and care, to deromanticise its coupling, and to unsettle the oppressive quality of curatorial care by unpacking its colonial, gendered, and classed histories and present entanglements. The following sections examine the shifts within the curatorial profession over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which transitioned from the notion of the curator-as-carer to the curator-as-author. This transformation is used to critically complicate the relationship between care and curating, as a profession that runs danger of turning into an uncaring practice of control. The chapter furthermore discusses emotional labour and affect as curatorial assets, and looks at how a curator's association with care yields different results according to hierarchies of gender, race, and class.

In an effort to carve out collaborative, less hierarchical, and interdependent curatorial practices, this chapter looks at artists who turn to curating and at feminist scholars, activist, and artists, who – alongside the emerging second-wave feminist movement of the 1970s – developed strategies to bring women artists into the visual and art historical field. My focus here lies not so much on an analysis of "great women" exhibitions, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, but rather on the gendered connotations of the curatorial profession – its shifts, potentials, and dangers – and its explicit or implicit relationship to curatorial care. In a next step, I focus on three examples of contemporary feminist concepts of curatorial practices that make explicit their relationship to care: Maura Reilly's "curatorial activism," Elke Krasny's "caring activism," and Megan Johnston's "slow curating." These positions allow for a tightened understanding of the intricate relationships between feminist politics, curatorial agency, and feminist care ethics. I then develop the idea of *Curaduría Útil*, analogous to artist Tania Bruguera's *Arte Útil*, as a socially engaged curatorial practice situated closely to the real-life issues of the people it engages. I

thus end on a call to action: to practice curating as a method of care. How I have negotiated the relationship between curating and care in my own practice is discussed in the next chapter, which builds on the historical and theoretical explorations of the present chapter.

3.1   Unsettling Curatorial Care

Curating is etymologically tied to care, a notion that offers a range of readings and dimensions: the Latin noun *cura* means "care," "attention," or "concern," hence the verb *curare* – from which "curating" originates – refers to "taking care," "attending to," "looking after," but also "to be concerned," "to worry." This dimension of care stems from the Germanic and Old English *caru*, meaning "trouble" or "grief," and in the Old Norse, *kör* stands for "bed of trouble."[347] In the present-day German verb *Sorge tragen* ("to take care"), this trouble-related reading of care is reflected, as it literally refers to "carrying worries or sorrow." This immanent tension between protective attention, affective care, worry, anxiety, and burdensome responsibility make not only *care as such* ambiguous, uneasy, and unsettling but also curatorial care, as feminist scholar and curator Helena Reckitt argues.[348]

These tensions around care are also inscribed into mythological accounts. According to some linguists, Cura is also the name of a mythological figure who appears in the *Fabulae* (Myths) by the first-century Roman author Gaius Julius Hyginus. This myth entails the creation of the first human. The goddess Cura creates the figure of a man from clay and asks Zeus to give the figure a soul and a spirit – and her name. While Zeus agrees to breathe soul and spirit into the figure, he claims the figure's name to be his own. When the goddess Earth arrives, she also insists that the figure be named after her – as it was formed from her soil. A fourth deity arrives, Cronus, who takes determined decisions among the gods and goddesses.

347. Reckitt, "Support Acts," 17.
348. Ibid.

He decides that Cura may own the figure throughout its lifetime, and after the figure's death, Zeus can stay with its spirit, and Earth with its body. Cronus also gives the figure a name: *homo* (human), due to its creation from *humus* (soil).

Curator and writer ILiana Fokianaki, who has carefully brought this myth into an arts and curatorial context, uses this story to carve out "the dual character of care. Cura forms and 'owns' humans but also carries their burden."[349] In my interpretation, Cura – already in her mythical manifestation – is an ambiguous, flexible, and invisiblised figure who forms the basis of (human) existence but is not granted public acknowledgement (e.g., through naming privileges), from whom modesty and restraint was demanded, and who loses (partial) agency over the fruits of her gestational labours. I thus rather want to foreground the agency to create, the struggle for power and control, and the anxiety of being invisiblised as defining characteristics of Cura. These lessons can be of relevance for conceptions of curating as an ambivalent professional practice.

Curatorial practice, due to its etymology and mythological references, is thus inherently tied to the politics of care, requiring curators to continuously renegotiate the relationship between their own practices and care, gendered norms, affect, hospitality, in/visibility, and the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. This brief exploration of the different readings and tensions around "curating" and "care" highlights the evolving but also ambivalent character of the curatorial profession.

3.1.1 Histories of Care and Control: Curating at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class

As the previous etymological, linguistic, and mythological overviews of care highlight, the notion of care is more complex and troubled than its first association with affect and happy feelings belies. In an effort to "unsettle care," the feminist science and technology scholar Michelle Murphy cautions "against the conflation of care with

---

349. iLiana Fokianaki, "The Bureau of Care: Introductory Notes on the Care-less and Care-full," *e-flux journal*, no. 133 (November 2020): https://www.e-flux.com/journal/113/359463/the-bureau-of-care-introductory-notes-on-the-care-less-and-care-full/.

affection, happiness, attachment, and positive feeling as political goods."[350] She observes an ongoing temptation within feminist scholarship to view "positive affect and care as a route to emancipated science and alternative knowledge-making without critically examining the ways positive feelings, sympathy, and other forms of attachment can work with and through the grain of hegemonic structures, rather than against them."[351] While Murphy speaks from a feminist technoscience studies perspective, her critical stance is of equal importance to scrutinising the non-innocent histories and present-day manifestations of curatorial care. In transferring her thinking from technoscience to curating, I slightly adapt the question from her article "Unsettling Care: Troubling Transnational Itineraries of Care in Feminist Health Practices" to the curatorial field by asking: "What is the caring work of [curatorial] criticism, of historicizing and situating, of tracking non-innocent genealogies, of making uneasy, of troubling, of unsettling?"[352] In following Murphy's line of questioning, I want to now begin to carve out the troublesome histories of curatorial care, as well as the past and contemporary situating of curatorial care within feminist ethics. Part of this process is a dedication to making transparent these non-innocent genealogies, but also stressing the importance of acknowledging the negative effects of radical care, which not only Murphy but also the Indigenous studies scholar Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and media scholar Tamara Kneese have articulated. The latter argue that radical care cannot be separated from "systemic inequality and power structures[;] it can be used to coerce subjects into new forms of surveillance and unpaid labor, to make up for institutional neglect, and even to position some groups against others, determining who is worthy of care and who is not."[353] These power struggles over who is deemed worthy of

---

350. Michelle Murphy, "Unsettling Care: Troubling Transnational Itineraries of Care in Feminist Health Practices," *Social Studies of Science* 45 (2015): 719.
351. Ibid. The positively charged connotations around care can become oppressive as they do not allow for a more nuanced and troubled relationship to care to surface; for example, the regret of motherhood is still considered a societal taboo. For further reading on the subject, see Orna Donath, *Regretting Motherhood: A Study* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2017).
352. I inserted "curatorial." Murphy's original statement reads: "What is the caring work of criticism, of historicizing and situating, of tracking non-innocent genealogies, of making uneasy, of troubling, of *unsettling?*" Ibid., 721. Emphasis in the original.
353. Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese, "Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times," *Social Text* 38 (2020), 2.

care also manifest themselves within the cultural sphere and its troublesome histories of exclusions. While curator and writer Yesomi Umolu recognises that museums were built as "repositories of knowledge and spaces of care," she emphasises that these spaces were built in service of civic society in the Western world and thus have been, since their inception, spheres of exclusion and privilege.[354] The envisioned betterment of the Western subject and society came at the expense of the other, as Umolu argues. Museums, and curatorial care, thus cannot be separated from the colonial history of collecting and amassing objects from around the world as an act of colonial violence against non-Western bodies, spaces, and societies.[355] Curating as a colonial enterprise took shape through installing museums outside Europe and the US, by introducing the role of the curator in non-Western contexts, and by appropriating – or rather, looting – cultural goods from colonised sites.[356] Here, the question of representation and power asymmetries becomes particularly vivid, as – in line with the academic fields of anthropology and ethnography – the exhibition represented a Western gaze onto "other" cultures and their artefacts.[357] The modern museum, and hence the genealogy of curatorial practice, needs to be regarded as closely linked to nation building, state ideologies, and the heteronormative values of a given society.[358] Yet, according to Umolu, museums have "obscured this violence in their missions of knowledge formation and caring for objects."[359] Rather, as Umolu continues, museums have positioned themselves, including their values and activities, as apolitical, as institutions of civic benevolence, without conscious recognition of their proximity to power.[360]

The history of the modern museum, which arose in the eighteenth century as

---

354. Yesomi Umolu, "On the Limits of Care and Knowledge: 15 Points Museums Must Understand to Dismantle Structural Injustice," Artnet, June 25, 2020, https://news.artnet.com/opinion/limits-of-care-and-knowledge-yesomi-umolu-op-ed-1889739.
355. Ibid.
356. For further reference on colonial history and the need to decolonise museums, see Shimrit Lee, *Decolonize Museums* (New York: OR books, 2022).
357. Ayos Purwoaji, "Uncharted Territory: The Roots of Curatorial Practices in Eastern Indonesia," *Curatography: The Study of Curatorial Culture,* no. 7, "The Heterogeneous South."
358. Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Brigit Bosold, and Vera Hofmann, introduction to *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating* (London: Sternberg, 2022), 15.
359. Umolu, "On the Limits of Care and Knowledge."
360. Ibid.

a result of the French Revolution – the Louvre Museum in Paris being the paradigmatic example – excluded not only the people to whom the amassed colonial objects on display belonged but also women on the European continent.[361] The public museum as a site of celebration of the "free man" turned into "a challenging and unsettling institution for women,"[362] as they were not recognised as citizens in France's 1793 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.[363] As cultural theorist and feminist curator Elke Krasny argues:

> Even though women were included in the public space of the museum, they were not included as free women, not as citizens. They were included as onlookers, as witnesses to the celebration of androcentric citizenship culture marked by the exclusion of women as citizen-subjects.[364]

Here it is important to note, that not only women were excluded from this notion of the "free man" in France but also slaves, children, and foreigners, rendering the modern museum a product of white male supremacy. This notion applied not only in the coloniser's countries but also in their respective colonies, where the format of museums was introduced as part of the colonial enterprise.[365]

---

361. Elke Krasny, "Reunindo feministas resistentes: curadoria de salôes e de jantares," in *Histōrias Das Mulheres, Histōrias Feministas*, ed. Adriano Pedrosa, Amanda Carneiro, and André Mesquita (São Paulo: MASP, 2019), 424.

362. Ibid., 425.

363. The French playwright and activist Olympe de Gouges crafted the 1791 "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen" in response to the 1789 "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" in order to shed light on the neglect of women in the previous declaration, wanting to assert women's rights as well as men's. For her full declaration, see Olympe de Gouges, "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, 1789," in *Tolerance: The Beacon of the Enlightenment*, ed. Caroline Warman (Cambridge: JSTOR Open Book Classics, 2016).
To provide further contextualisation: A new version of the "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen," penned in 1793, was a significant political document during the French Revolution. It was intended to establish the fundamental rights and principles of the French republic and was a precursor to the country's first republican constitution. One of the main differences between the 1793 declaration and the earlier "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" of 1789 is the former's emphasis on equality. In the 1793 version, equality is the prevailing right. Although the 1793 declaration did not have a lasting impact due to its suspension, it remains an important historical document that reflects the aspirations and principles of the French Revolution. For further reference with a special focus on gender, see Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

364. Krasny, "Reunindo feministas resistentes," 425.

365. Purwoaji, "Uncharted Territory."

3.1.2   The Curator-as-Carer

From the contested grounds out of which grew the museum also emerged the role of the curator, commonly framed as a "caretaker of objects." This curator-as-carer figure was traditionally responsible for the museum's collections, undertaking the direct maintenance, care, and repair of objects as well as the necessary research in order to best take care of them.[366] Well into the 1960s, curators were regarded as custodians whose main activity lay behind the scenes; the mediation and making public of art were secondary concerns.[367] The character of the curator's original tasks has been analysed to resemble caring, reproductive work with a focus on museum objects.[368] According to Krasny, "[t]his bears strong associations with the invisibilised and feminised domestic labour that takes care of reproduction behind the scenes in private, rather than with work performed in the public realm."[369]

Like Krasny, feminist art theorist Nanne Buurman also foregrounds the analogy between curatorial care for artworks and collections and domestic housekeeping, historically predominantly performed by women in a self-negating manner. Both function as "backstage agencies that had few public merits but adhered to a separation of spheres, in which the authority and autonomy of artists and men was secured by the invisible care labours performed by curators and women respectively."[370] From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, the gendered connotations of curating were thus in alignment with the feminised and romanticised codes of conduct for care work, with a shared sense of "modesty, restraint, and the negation of authorship," as Buurman argues.[371] This conception needs to be understood in the context of the prolonged history of the Victorian ideal of women as selfless mothers, behind-the-scenes carers, and desexualised

---

366. Elke Krasny, "Caring Activism. Assembly, Collection, and the Museum," *Collecting in Time* (2017), 3, https://collecting-in-time.gfzk.de/en. Published in conjunction with the symposium of the same title, GfZK – Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig, March 30–31, 2017.
367. Nanne Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at dOCUMENTA (13)," *OnCurating*, no. 29 (May 2016): 146.
368. Krasny, "Caring Activism," 3.
369. Ibid.
370. Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube?," 146.
371. Ibid.

hostesses. As early as 1971, feminist art critic Lucy Lippard argued that it was easier for women to be successful critics, curators, and art historians than to be an artist, as these activities were considered secondary – housekeeping – activities while being an artist was a primary activity, and so considered less natural for women.[372]

Within a curatorial context, this division of spheres allowed for a foregrounding of the artist on the basis of "non-authorial curatorial agency"[373] that prepared centre stage for the (historically predominantly male, white) artist as protagonist. This arrangement demanded the curator "to absent the self," as curator Alanna Heiss elaborates.[374] Along similar lines, curator and scholar Maria Lind critiqued Jens Hoffmann's curatorial role at the 2011 Istanbul Film Festival, whereby, according to Lind, his curatorial methodology overrode the art.[375] This notion is echoed in curator Hans Ulrich Obrist's self-proclamation as an *enabler* of artists' unrealised dream projects: "My role is to help them," he argues, and the artists' work should not have to subordinate itself to the curators vision.[376] His seemingly modest emphasis on being a "helper" appears almost ironic once it is cross-read with his alleged "star curator" status and his not-so-modest reputation as a global art world jet-setter.[377] This perspective makes clear that the voluntary *choice* to modestly position oneself in the backstage is a (white, male) privilege.

It is thus imperative to critically analyse and stress how curatorial care and affect operate in association with different gendered connotations. As Reckitt has demonstrated, the associations of care and affect have very different impacts depending on the social status and gender of the curator.[378] While women dominate

---

372. Julia Bryan-Wilson, quoted in Reckitt, "Support Acts."
373. Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube," 146.
374. Alanna Heiss, quoted in ibid.
375. Jens Hoffmann and Maria Lind, "Conversation: To Show or Not to Show," *Mousse Magazine*, December 2011.
376. The full quote reads: "But for me, it was important to be close to artists and not subordinate their work to the curator's vision. I've realised that the curator's role is more that of enabler. The Italian conceptual artist Boetti told me to pay attention to artists' unrealised projects. Many artists have not been able to realise their fondest projects. My role is to help them." Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Hans Ulrich Obrist: The Art of Curation," interview by Stuart Jeffries and Nancy Groves, *Guardian*, March 23, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/23/hans-ulrich-obrist-art-curator.
377. Heiko Prigge, "Sagen Sie jetzt nichts, Hans Ulrich Obrist," *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, February 2, 2017, https://sz-magazin.sueddeutsche.de/ein-interview-ohne-worte/sagen-sie-jetzt-nichts-hans-ulrich-obrist-83346.
378. Reckitt, "Support Acts," 10.

the curatorial field, they are subjected to an asymmetrical pyramid of power in the operation of museums, according to the feminist scholar Katy Deepwell.[379] In this system, the positions at the top of the pyramid are predominantly held by (white) men, and the lower ranks are reserved for women, who are continuously rendered as the "keepers of culture" (rather than cultural producers).[380] Women's positions in the art sector are often those of the assistant, the "hostess," or the intern – positions that are most frequently invisible, temporary, or replaceable. As their (informal) job descriptions include affective abilities, their "love" of the arts forms the paradoxical basis for their un- or underpaid status. This status is further entrenched by an emphasis on modesty and reserve, which justifies the "sacrifice of wealth and fame," which, again, can be linked to the high proportion of women curators.[381] This reality is mirrored in empirical studies that also show that women in the arts perform a higher level of unpaid labour than men, and when they do receive pay, it is lower than men's.[382]

Here, we can see a clear parallel between the dominant gendered societal narratives that uphold unpaid care work, which operates similarly within the arts. That is to say, the curator's "labour of love" for the art is considered their reward. The artist and theorist Hito Steyerl draws these parallels:

> I'd guess that – apart from domestic and care work – art is the industry with the most unpaid labor around. It sustains itself on the time and energy of unpaid interns and self-exploiting actors on pretty much every level and in almost every function. Free labor and rampant exploitation are the invisible dark matter that keeps the cultural sector going.[383]

---

379. Katy Deepwell, "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," in *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, ed. Janet Marstine (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 65.
380. Ibid.
381. Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube?."
382. BBK Berlin in its 2018 study identified that women artists in Berlin on average earn 28 percent less than men artists (notice how familiar "women artists" sounds compared to "men artists"). For the city of London, the survey *Create London 2015* identified that 32 percent of women were likely to have done unpaid internships compared to 23 percent of men. Create London, *Survey: Create London*, 2015, http://www.createlondon.org/panic/survey/; BBK Berlin, "Gender Pay Gap / Gender Show Gap in der Bildenden Kunst," *3. Fördersummit des BBK Berlin* (2018).
383. Hito Steyerl, "Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy," *e-flux Journal*, no. 21 (December 2010): https://www.e-flux.com/journal/21/67696/politics-of-art-contemporary-art-and-the-transition-to-post-democracy/.

The result is neoliberal self-exploitation, which in itself relies on social privilege, as, paradoxically, only those from wealthy family backgrounds can *afford* to work for free or low pay.[384] This scenario disproportionally affects women, who are historically and socially conditioned to self-exploit in the name of love and passion for their work. This feminised brigade of precarious-yet-privileged art workers contributes to the cultural sphere of "dark matter," by entertaining the hope for future payouts in the form of recommendations, contacts, and networks that will eventually lead to secure employment at prestigious art institutions. In the meantime, they rely on affective renumeration as a substitute for financial reward.[385] Capitalism's tendency for speculation does not leave the arts out of the equation, as the art theorist Marina Vishmidt makes clear:

> Besides artistic work – whether it is recognized as "labor" or not – unpaid labor in the cultural sector (typically internships, as well as the more humdrum self-exploitation characteristic of this work) is paradigmatic of speculation as a mode of production since this kind of labour is presented as a speculative investment in one's human capital, with its hallmarks of affective excess, self-management, and submissive auto-valorization.[386]

In the art world, the (often female-identified) young artist's and curator's desire "to make it" seems to provide the art scene with easy access to free emotional and affective labour that is necessary to sustain the social relations between the artists, private donors, prestigious audience members, and art organisations. For Reckitt, "deploying affective labour in order to maintain social relations is a key curatorial skill."[387] As a result, the curator's personal charm becomes their "distinctly affective power."[388] However, being associated with care can both increase and decrease artists' and curators' status, depending on their gendered, racialised, and classed backgrounds. For curators, emphasising their care and closeness to art may lead to an increase of affective power, whereas for artists and educators enacting a caring

---

384. Reckitt, "Support Acts," 9.
385. Emma Dowling, "Valorised but Not Valued? Affective Remuneration, Social Reproduction and Feminist Politics beyond the Crisis," *British Politics* 11 (2016): 452–68.
386. Vishmidt, "The Aesthetic Subject and the Politics of Speculative Labor," *OnCurating*, no. 48 (September 2020): 71.
387. Reckitt, "Support Acts," 8.
388. Ibid.

engagement with the general public can lead to a decrease in status. The fragile and precarious status of art educators became grotesquely visible during the pandemic, when their freelancer status precluded them any financial security during the Covid-19 lockdowns or when museums and galleries around the world began to first layoff educators.[389] A spokeswoman for the Museum of Modern Art in New York said, for example: "With the open-ended closure of the museum, there will be no new contract assignments to offer to a group of excellent freelance educators who work on [an] as-needed basis to give paid tours and lectures across New York City, including at MoMA."[390] Such a statement makes clear that, in the case of art-educators-as-carers, an association with reproduction over production becomes oppressive.[391]

Care within the arts, and the curatorial profession in particular, thus has a dual character: it can be both an enabler and a hinderer of status. Hence, the association or rejection of care, hospitality, modesty, or "curatorial innocence" – as Buurman proposes in respect to the figure of Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, curator of dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012 in Kassel – is a situation of ambivalence, where intentionality cannot always be located:

> As a hostess, she [Christov-Bakargiev] was – on the one hand – able to blend into the background like the Angel in the House, while – on the other hand – presenting herself as the main subject of d(13). This oscillation between foreground and background, opacity and hyper-visibility makes it difficult to determine whether this "coy ploy" was a masquerade or mimicry, an affirmation of clichés or their subversion.[392]

This example brings forth the changing and indeterminate notions of the curator-as-carer, and highlights how this historical trajectory of the curatorial profession is revived and complicated in contemporary curatorial figures.[393]

---

389. Gareth Harris, "Wave of Museum Educator Redundancies Worldwide Sparks Open Letter," *Art Newspaper*, April 23, 2020, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/04/23/wave-of-museum-educator-redundancies-worldwide-sparks-open-letter.
390. Ibid.
391. Nora Sternfeld, quoted in Reckitt, "Support Acts," 8.
392. Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube?," 156.
393. For those interested in understanding the discourses around Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, I also recommend Nanne Buurman, "CCB With. Displaying Curatorial Relationality in dOCUMENTA (13)'s The Logbook," *OnCurating*, no. 33 (June 2017).

3.1.3   Independent Curating: The Curator-as-Author

While the curator was framed as a backstage caretaker within museums until the 1920s, this notion shifted over the course of the twentieth century, particularly after the 1960s, into an idea of the curator-as-author.[394] As part of this shift, Krasny argues that the association of curating with its literal core – care – was actively suppressed, as the belief prevailed that "care as invisibilised and feminised labour does not yield aesthetic and intellectually relevant production."[395]

According to Buurman and the feminist curator and scholar Dorothee Richter, this shift gave birth to the curator as an independent exhibition-maker – now aligning with the traditional conception of the (male) sole artist-as-genius – and marked a trend towards the "masculinization of curating."[396] In this light, the hierarchical and discriminatory connotations connected to curating's etymological root are hard to negate. The curator Kate Fowle notes that, in the English language, "curator" refers to "guardian" or "overseer," implying that "a curator is someone who presides over something – suggesting an inherent relationship between care and control."[397] Curator Joanna Warsza seems to depart from this shared understanding when she asks: "How do we overcome, dismantle and change the patterns of the power of selection disguised as care, the authority of judgement, the asymmetry of many relations in the art world and the extractive curatorial attitudes to many artists"? Warsza recalls that, in French, a curator is "la/le commissaire," awakening associations of the police (as in a "commissaire de police"). She argues that instead of guarding general law and order, the curator controls the borders of what is "good art."[398]

This dual tension between care and control is further exemplified in the

---

394. Krasny, "Caring Activism," 3.
395. Ibid.
396. Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube?," 147.
397. Kate Fowle, "Who Cares? Understanding the Role of the Curator Today," in *Cautionary Tales: Critical Curating*, ed. Steven Rand and Heather Kouris (New York: apexart, 2007), 10.
398. Joanna Warsza, "The Elephant Is Bigger than the Room: Documenta Trouble and Curatorial Responsibility," *Paletten*, July–August 2022, https://paletten.net/artiklar/the-elephant-is-bigger-than-the-room.

problematic working relationship between the artist Robert Smithson and the curator Harald Szeemann during documenta 5 in 1972. In this instance, Smithson's critique of Szeemann's curatorial style was co-opted by the curator himself, who published the artist's statement in the exhibition catalogue:[399]

> Cultural confinement occurs when a curator thematically limits an art exhibition instead of asking the artists to set their own limits. One expects them to fit into fraudulent categories. Some artists imagine that they have this mechanism under control, while in reality it controls them. Thus, they support a cultural prisonhouse that escapes their control. The artists themselves are not restricted, but their production most certainly is. Like asylums and prisons, museums also have inpatient departments and cells, namely neutral spaces that are called "galleries." In the gallery space a work of art loses its explosiveness and becomes a portable object cut off from the outside world. […] Could it be that certain art exhibitions have become metaphysical scrapyards? […] The curators as wardens still depend upon the debris of metaphysical principles and structures because they know no better.[400]

In drawing analogies between prisons and museums, between curators and wardens, the ambiguous relationship between curatorial care and control becomes tangible in this excerpt by Smithson. Thus, the curator's emphasis on independence and authorship can come at the expense of care.[401] In the case of Szeemann during documenta 5, his "view focused entirely on himself as author, and he considered the exhibition to be an image of one single worldview," as Richter concludes in her analysis of his self-understanding and self-positioning as a curator vis-à-vis the invited artists.[402] In such instances, the supposedly *cared for* – the artworks and artists – run the risk of losing their voice to the curator-as-author. The ambiguous association of curating with care therefore oscillates between the promise of protection, support, and affection and this risk of lost voice and agency for the artists and artefacts taken care of.[403]

---

399. Dorothee Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors – Competitors, Collaborators, or Team-workers?," *OnCurating*, no. 19 (June 2013), 46.
400. Robert Smithson, quoted in ibid.
401. Krasny, "Caring Activism," 3.
402. Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors," 46.
403. This passage originally appears in Sascia Bailer, "Care for Caregivers: Curating against the Care Crisis," in *Curating with Care*, ed. Elke Krasny, and Lara Perry (London: Routledge, 2023).

While artists attempted to overcome this hierarchy by becoming their own curators, it was a mission hard won. Already in the 1960s – roughly ten years before Szeemann's exemplary position of "curator-as-warden" – newly arising artist groups were challenging the existing norms of artistic production, audience engagement, market relations, and social forms.[404] The Fluxus movement, for one, was a dematerialised, social artistic practice that put existing hierarchies in the arts into question.[405] The multiple activities and roles that the artist George Maciunas – the main organiser and chief ideologue of Fluxus – performed, such as organising, naming, presenting, budgeting, and managing public relations, have multiple overlaps with the role of an independent curator, as Richter notes: "his attempts to subsume as a meta-artist the works of other artists under a single label ('Fluxus') recall the role of a contemporary curator."[406] In this regard, artistic figures paved the way for the position of the independent curator, a figure that would emerge only in the 1970s onwards.[407]

3.1.4   Feminist Artists-as-Curators

This period of the 1970s and 1980s was a crucial moment not only for the formation of artist-led curatorial practices but also for the feminist movement within Europe and the US, along with the emergence of dedicated feminist curatorial practices. The latter were initially also put forth by feminist artists, reacting to the lack of representation of women within the exhibitionary complex. Deepwell, in her essay "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," asserts that up until the late 1960s, women artists formed less than 10 to 20 percent of major art collections at large museums and their representation was slowly increasing in the gallery and temporary exhibition sector.[408] It comes as no surprise that much of the

---

404. Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors."
405. For more on Fluxus, see Dorothee Richter, *Fluxus: Kunst gleich Leben? Mythen um Autorschaft, Produktion, Geschlecht und Gemeinschaft* (Zurich: OnCurating, 2012).
406. Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors," 53.
407. Ibid.
408. Deepwell, "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," 67.

early feminist art historical research and efforts to revise canons and put forth feminist exhibition-making was practised outside traditional art institutions, such as galleries and museums.[409] Many of these profound changes within the arts were driven by feminists active as artists, art historians, activists, thinkers, and public intellectuals,[410] who were largely left to fend for themselves, without institutional support. Particularly women artists fostered initiatives that the traditional art sector failed to provide:

> The women's art movement emerged through group exhibitions and actions by women artists organized thematically and polemically around feminist issues, often self-organized and not "curated" by others. Women artists coming together collectively questioned the effect of the solo show in the culture industry and instead chose to develop through a politics of collaboration. The artists became their own curators.[411]

Catherine Elwes, an artist-cum-curator, shares how the non-hierarchical, collaborative curatorial methodologies developed by artists in the 1970s, in parallel to the emergence of the feminist movement, aided them throughout the ensuing decades.[412] Their goal was to counter the celebrity status of curators – which would upsurge in the 1980s and 1990s – as a way to maintain focus on the artistic works themselves. Ultimately, they wanted to provide visibility for their marginalised voices

409. Sigrid Schade and Silke Wenk, "Strategien des 'Zu-Sehen-Gebens': Geschlechterpositionen in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte," in *Genus: Geschlechterforschung/gender Studies in Den Kultur- Und Sozialwissenschaften: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Hadumod Bussmann and Renate Hof (Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 2005), 158; Deepwell, "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," 75.
410. Elke Krasny, "Curatorial Materialism. On Independent and Co-Dependent Curating," *OnCurating*, no. 29 (May 2016): 96. In the 1980s in Italy, a relational practice of *affidamento* (entrustment) emerged within feminist collective groups. Research by Helena Reckitt finds that "[a]ffidamento diverges from the second wave feminist focus on horizontality and equality to recognize differing levels of competence among women, which form the basis for female relationships of trust. The adoption of affidamento represented a move away from mass campaigns for institutional reform and political equality in the early 1980s, towards the creation of autonomous feminist culture and interpersonal relationships. It responded to an impasse within feminist collectivity, where the denial of difference led to the dominance of certain voices, the passivity of other group members, and the suppression of desire." Helena Reckitt, "The Feminist Practice of Affidamento (Entrustment)," lecture, *Affidamento – Creating Feminist Solidarity in Art and Curating*, Migros Museum, Zurich, 2015, video, 38:35. https://migrosmuseum.ch/en/videos/symposium-affidamento-creating-feminist-solidarity-in-art-and-curating-helena-reckitt-the-feminist-practice-of-affidamento.
411. Deepwell, "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," 75.
412. Catherine Elwes, "A Parallel Universe: The 'Women's' Exhibitions at the ICA, 1980, and the UK/Canadian Film and Video Exchange, 199–-2004," in *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, ed. Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007).

within an exclusionary art system. However, the aforementioned proclaimed "modesty" of curators as backstage agents appears in a different light when artists become curators, as they take up curating with their own agendas in mind: "And then of course, because I am not absolutely altruistic in my curating activities, I often use the shows I help to create as an opportunity to make visible my own practice," Elwes admits.[413]

Many of the techniques, procedures, roles, and tasks associated with self-organised artists-as-curators in the 1960s and 1970s overlapped with what curators adapted as independent practitioners at a later stage. While the roles of artists and curators aren't always clearly distinguishable, Richter argues that curators have taken these self-organised artistic procedures and turned them into hierarchical constructions.[414]

In a next step, I therefore want to shift the focus onto the relationship between women artists, exhibition-making, and certain feminist *curatorial* strategies: how they aimed – and continue to aim – to unsettle canonical, hegemonic formations within the arts and what controversies come from these aspirations.

3.1.5   Historical Feminist Curatorial Strategies: Countering the Canon

The activism of feminist artists and art historians in the 1960s and 1970s brought forth a series of exhibitions at large museums centring on women artists. These shows – some of which, in retrospect, have entered the canon of early feminist exhibition-making – include Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris's *Women Artists, 1550–1950* (1976, Los Angeles County Museum of Art) and *Künstlerinnen International, 1877–1977: Frauen in der Kunst* (Women Artists International, 1877–1977: Women in Art, 1977, Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin). Both exhibitions shared the radical goal of inserting women into the canon of art history.[415] This same effort

---

413. Ibid.
414. Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors."
415. Deepwell, "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," 69.

manifested itself in the 1980s in the form of promoting "great women artists," presented as a revisionist supplement to the masculine art historical canon. More liberal arts curricula began to incorporate study of the life and works of Frida Kahlo and Georgia O'Keeffe in parallel to celebrated male artists. However, this intention also fuelled a selective hyper-marketisation in the cultural industry – if not a fetishisation – of these individual women artists, whose images now adorned calendars, mugs, bookmarks, and greeting cards.[416] These feminist shifts within exhibition-making and art history are therefore not without contradictions.

That is to say, the celebratory emphasis on a handful of women artist was another way of cementing the binary conception of gender and its hierarchy, as art historian Sigrid Schade argues: "Thus, women could then assert themselves *because* of their difference, if (or as long as) it did not contradict the respective formulation of artistry, which remained unquestioned as 'masculine.'"[417] Ultimately, feminist research had uncovered that the stereotypes of the "feminine" formed the binary background that the ideal of the "male creator" needed in order to oppositionally construct itself.[418]

The much practised feminist curatorial strategy of revision falls into a similar trap of cementing masculinist power hierarchies, despite its attempt to crack them. As the art theorist Griselda Pollock argues, "such revision does not grapple with the terms that created that neglect."[419] Or, in the words of art theorist Susan Hardy Aiken, "One might, by attacking, reify the power one opposes."[420] Revisionist curatorial missions thus assume a Western, white, masculine canon as their central point of reference and accept its hierarchies and mechanisms of exclusions as a natural given.[421] Curator and writer Maura Reilly asks:

---

416. Ibid., 70.
417. Wenk, "Strategien des 'Zu-Sehen-Gebens,'" 159. My translation and emphasis.
418. Ibid., 155.
419. Griselda Pollock, quoted in Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), 25.
420. Susan Hardy Aiken, quoted in ibid.
421. Reilly sketches out a range of curatorial "strategies of resistance," which alongside revisionism, include the creation of area studies and relational studies, which aim to install intersectional approaches. For more, see ibid., 24.

Which counter-hegemonic strategies can we employ to ensure that more voices are included, rather than the chosen, elite few? What can we do as arts professionals to offer a more just and fair representation of global artistic production? Should we be working towards a global art history, an art without borders? Should we aim to abolish canons altogether, arguing that all cultural artifacts have significance – in other words, should our goal be a totalizing critique of canonicity itself? Should we be creating new, alternative canons?[422]

These pending questions lead me to scrutinise further the relationship between feminist curatorial practice and counter-hegemonic endeavours. In the subsequent chapter, these ambivalent histories are further negotiated within the situated context of my curatorial case study at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in rural Northern Germany, while keeping up the dialogue with wider discourses of the field. As such, the next section shifts from a more historical analysis towards contemporary practices and theoretical approaches, with an aim to contextualise the practice-based curatorial case study, which is then elaborated and critically reflected upon in the following chapter.

<center>*</center>

This chapter has sketched out the ambivalent historical relationship between care, curating, gender, and wider feminist struggles and the curatorial, thereby laying the groundwork for the upcoming chapter, which engages with contemporary examples of feminist, relational, and care-centred artistic and curatorial practices and theoretical approaches. This chapter departed from the question of how the relationship between curating and its etymological root, *curare*, can be understood and complicated. The chapter first looked to unsettle this relation by drawing from the colonial, patriarchal, and bourgeois histories of museums and the curatorial professional. It then carved out the shifts in how the curator has been conceived over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, transforming from a notion of the curator-as-carer to the curator-as-author. The latter, so-called independent curator shines a light on curating's potential risk to become an uncaring practice of

---

422. Ibid., 23.

control. The chapter then, accordingly, addressed the histories of artists who, from the 1970s onwards, turned to curating in an effort to circumvent the power hierarchies and gatekeeping mechanisms of the museum and gallery system. Such artists put forth methods and strategies that were later adapted by independent curators from the 1980s onwards. This development was particularly driven by feminist artists, activists, and scholars, who aimed to challenge the biased canons of art history, which – up until today – favour the works of the white male artist-as-genius. However, challenging the art canon proved to be an ambiguous enterprise in itself, as such an action runs the danger of cementing the existing power dynamics of patriarchal capitalism.

4.   Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice

Building from the historical negotiations between curating, care, relationality, care ethics, and the larger feminist project, I seek to now carve out the more contemporary conversations around these fields. The aim is to provide context via both discourse and practice for my own participatory curatorial programming – which I curated as artistic director at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in 2019–20. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to a detailed description of that curatorial programme, its concepts, formats, successes, and shortcomings.[423] Before we embark on a discursive and practice-based exploration of curating, care, relationality, hospitality, participation, and situatedness, I want to reflect on the relationship of curating with feminist practice.

While curating exhibitions of women artists is what has most commonly been labelled as "feminist curatorial practice," the definition is much more complex. Katy Deepwell emphasises the necessity to distinguish carefully between the category of "women's art" – referring to artistic works produced by women – and the category of "feminist perspectives" within the arts, including art history, curating, and criticism, as "[w]here the content of an exhibition is art made by women, this does not of itself make the exhibition a feminist one."[424] Deepwell further elaborates that exhibitions of women artists exhibitions have also been curated by male curators as well as through the self-organisation of women artists through social clubs and societies since the mid-nineteenth century.[425] Additionally, within the contemporary art scene, which has a preponderance of women-dominated galleries and museums, we do not see a particular commitment to showcasing women artist or putting forth feminist curatorial frameworks.[426] Simply because a show was organised by women or included women's artworks does not mean it has a feminist ethics, conception, or impact, nor does it mean it meets a certain qualitative level of exhibition curation,

---

423. See section 4.2 – "Care for Caregivers: Case Study of a Participatory Curatorial Programme on Care."
424. Deepwell, "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s," 68-69.
425. Ibid.
426. Ibid., 65.

one dedicated to advancing aesthetic, political, or social arguments.[427] Deepwell

therefore makes a case to define the feminist curation of women artists' work along

the lines of feminist theory and feminist art history, such as how they are negotiated

within the planning of the project, their reception in relationship to wider political

debates, and the questions of the women's movement that the project raises.[428]

From this standpoint, feminist curating aims at carving out alternatives to "traditional

(patriarchal) models of authorship, production and community," and thereby actively

uncovers and challenges deeply entrenched societal patterns, as Dorothee Richter

articulates.[429]

  Elke Krasny has likewise pondered on the relationship between feminism and

curation: how – and if at all – such a feminist curatorial practice could be defined.

She reminds us that early curating appeared to have been disengaged from politics

and social movements, but that curatorial practice has always been part of "(critically

addressing) the politics of how art and culture are produced, shown, mediated,

analyzed, and made public."[430] Krasny stresses that both feminist thought and

curatorial practice and thought are inseparable from political and social questions:

> It Is specifically the feminist turn In curating that foregrounds how
> feminist thought needs to address the politics of curating. Feminist
> thought provides the methods of analysis in working out how curating is
> responding to specific historic conditions and how curating does or
> does not address the social changes wrought by feminism within these
> specific historic conditions. Curating as a social practice is part of the
> historic conditions which feminism seeks to change.[431]

While the question of feminist curating must remain an open one, requiring

renegotiation for each specific context, these voices nonetheless suggest that the

feminist quality of a curatorial undertaking does not come in the form of a

disinterested ticking of boxes (e.g., quotas) but through a dedication in thought,

---

427. Ibid., 68–69.
428. Ibid.
429. Dorothee Richter, "Feministische Perspektiven des Kuratorischen/auf das Kuratieren," in
Zeichen/momente. Vergegenwärtigungen in Kunst Und Kulturanalyse, ed. Sigrid Adorf and Kathrin
Heinz (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2019), 184.
430. Elke Krasny, "Feminist Thought and Curating: On Method," *OnCurating*, no. 26 (October 2015):
54.
431. Ibid.

practice, and methodology to wider feminist societal struggles.

I further argue that a curatorial practice's feminist spirit is closely aligned with its dedication to anti-hegemonic counter-practices. Curator and writer Maura Reilly has thus coined the notion of "curatorial activism," as a form of feminist activism, as it is dedicated to establishing a "curatorial corrective" as a way to combat the "moral emergency in the art world."[432] She demands a heightened representation of marginalised social groups, thereby addressing ongoing discrimination in gallery representation, auction price differentials, and inclusion in collections and exhibitions.[433] With her curatorial approach, Reilly aims to counter the hegemonic art system – including its histories, institutions, markets, and press – which continues to favour white male creativity over the exclusion of all others.[434] Curatorial activists thus actively go against the marginalisation of artists who are non-white, non-Euro-American, and non-male, including those who identify as women, feminist, and queer.[435] By challenging the art system's status quo, its mechanisms and hierarchies, and by "promoting the margins over the centre," curatorial activists work towards a more inclusive art world, and society at large.[436] For Reilly, her curatorial position is inseparable from her activism: "My driving force as a curator is therefore wholly activist; my aim is to be consistently counter-hegemonic."[437]

For myself as a practitioner who came to curating via an activist mission to enhance and connect caregivers through curating – as a caregiving practice – I connect with Reilly's social justice agenda. However, Reilly's approach is primarily conceptualised and applied within a rather traditional institutional art context. There, a shift towards diversification is certainly much needed; however, I believe it crucial to expand the notion of curatorial activism to include a much more situated and

432. Maura Reilly, "What Is Curatorial Activism?," ARTnews, November 7, 2017, https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/what-is-curatorial-activism-9271/.
433. Ibid.
434. Maura Reilly, Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), 21.
435. Ibid., 72.
436. Ibid., 21. For a critique of thinking along the lines of margins versus centre, see Angela Dimitrakaki, "From Space to Time: 'Situated Knowledges,' Critical Curating, and Social Truth," OnCurating, no. 53 (June 2022). For a more insurgent position towards rethinking the margins, see Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "From the Margins," Cultural Anthropology 9, no. 3 (August 1994): 279–97.
437. Reilly, Curatorial Activism, 21.

contextual practice – be it from within or outside museal spaces. Curatorial activism must embrace the ecosystem of the arts as a whole, including its workforce, its sociopolitical contexts, its collaborators, its contents, and its processes, in order to produce what I later present as "caring infrastructures."[438] The 2023 report of the newly formed US-based initiative Museums Moving Forward conveys a similar sentiment:

> Art museums have experienced unprecedented strain and scrutiny in recent years. They have been called to reorient attention and resources toward diversity and equity, and museum workers have been calling for institutional interest in "social justice," increasingly explored in museum programming, to be matched with commitments to changing internal practices and cultural legacies that prevent workers from doing their best work. Simply put, it is not enough to diversify the artists we are collecting or exhibiting; we must take better care of our people too.[439]

I thus argue that the "curatorial corrective" of curatorial activism needs to be an expansive counter-hegemonic practice that enacts curatorial care within a variety of facets – including the ethics, people, objects, processes, and infrastructures that form part of the given curatorial undertaking. Philosopher Meng-Shi Chen's essay "Ethics of Curating" also builds from Reilly's work, among that of other scholars of philosophy, art, and curating, and equates the question "What is the ethics of curating?" with asking not only "What is a curator?" but also "What kind of person do I want to be?" For curators, the definition of one's own practice is thus very closely connected to the question of one's personal ethics: "As in the case with other occupations, a professional ethic usually replaces personal ethics when an individual practices her profession; yet in curating, especially for independent curators, it is the personal ethic that becomes professionalized."[440]

While curators within institutional employment follow predefined roles and duties that align with their work contracts, independent curators have nearly no

---

438. See chapter 5 – "Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures" for further elaboration of the concept.
439. Museums Moving Forward, "Report 2023: Workplace Equity and Organizational Culture in US Art Museums," accessed February 24, 2024, https://museumsmovingforward.com.
440. Meng-Shi Chen, "Ethics of Curating," *Curatography*, no. 5 (2021): https://curatography.org/ethics-of-curating/.

formal prescription of conduct.[441] Here, Chen emphasises the etymological origin of "curating" as "caring" or "care-taking practice" with its intersubjective and intimate relations that demand "an ethical interpellation and response."[442] Also art historian Miguel Ángel Hernández-Navarro returns to curating's original meaning to situate responsibility at the core of a curator's professional role:

> In a world where responsibility is questioned and has disappeared from the individual sphere, curators have the single duty of being responsible individuals. That is why curating is an ethical profession because, from the very etymology of the term, its task is to take care and be in charge of things, "to be responsible for 'things.'"[443]

As I showcase later on with more practice-based examples, artistic practices since the 1960s have become more and more ephemeral, socially engaged, and less object focused. Likewise, curatorial practice has become concerned with the responsibility not only for "things" but also for intersubjective relations within the wider ecosystem that span across artists, community and audience members, staff, founders, board members, the press, researchers, and many more. Following this thought, the historical emphasis on the "independence" of curators is taken to be *ad absurdum*, as the discipline at its core is interdependent and co-dependent – making the questions of curatorial ethics ever more pressing.

Due to these conceptual tensions, several feminist scholars have chosen to refer to themselves as "interdependent" or "co-dependent" curators rather than independent ones.[444] This recognition is, ultimately, rooted within a feminist care ethics that advocates for the acknowledgement that all humans are interrelated and interdependent, all are vulnerable and fragile – and that all humans are caregivers and care-receivers at the same time.[445] These feminist ethical principles of care have become a central point of departure for a range of feminist, queer, and crip positions. Musician, performer, writer, and artist Johanna Hedva poetically proclaims in their

---

441. Ibid.
442. Ibid.
443. Miguel A. Hernández-Navarro, "The Curator's Demands: Towards an Ethics of Commitment," *Manifesta*, no. 12 (2012): 7.
444. For example see: Cité des Arts Paris, "Appointment: Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez Appointed Cultural Programmes Manager," 2021, https://www.citedesartsparis.net/en/news-appointment-natasa-petresin-bachelez-cultural-programmes-manager.
445. Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 30-31.

letter to the political theorist Joan Tronto (as part of an editorial project by Rosario Talevi, Gilly Karjevsky, and myself in 2020):[446]

> I'm so tired, Joan. I am exhausted. I want to scream, "but independence does not exist!" and I want my voice to be the air. "We are by default interdependent! We are ontologically, always, forever dependent!" I want this little flame of an idea to creep into blood streams, get inside guts. People will breathe it in and feel their insides warm. The trick, of course, is that it's already in there, we already know this, deep down, on a cellular level, that we are enmeshed, that a body is simply a thing that requires support, which means it requires support all the time. Behind our belly button, at the base of our skull, in the strings of our fascia, we know it: that care is simply another word for living. To be alive is to need care. To be alive is to give care and to take it, and the distinction between these two things is a shimmery,137eightless boundary that easily disappears. But the idea that we are sovereign, able agents of our own self-actualized telos holds us in its arms, with an embrace like a chokehold.[447]

With their call for a recognition of our enmeshed being, Hedva hits the heart of what the ethics of care are commonly defined as:

> Normatively, care ethics seeks to maintain relationships by contextualizing and promoting the well-being of care-givers and care-receivers in a network of social relations. Most often defined as a practice or virtue rather than a theory as such, "care" involves maintaining the world of, and meeting the needs of, ourself and others.[448]

Tronto, the receiver of Hedva's poetic declarations, argues for a feminist ethics of care as a central democratic principle, as any state is reliant on its citizens, who are "produced and reproduced through care."[449] Since the 1980s, Tronto has offered ways to make the concepts, ethics, and practices of care more tangible and has proposed four phases of care, which she later amended with a fifth phase of "caring with."[450] In this final phase, Tronto argues, the caring needs and the ways in

---

446. Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, eds. *Letters to Joan* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Hohenlockstedt: M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).
447. Johanna Hedva, "Dear Joan," in ibid., 66.
448. Maureen Sander-Staudt, "Care Ethics," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (peer-reviewed), accessed May 11, 2023, https://iep.utm.edu/care-ethics/.
449. Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 26.
450. The first four phases are: "1. Caring about: At this first phase of care, someone or some group notices unmet caring needs. 2. Caring for: Once needs are identified, someone or some group has to take responsibility to make certain that these needs are met. 3. Care-giving: The third phase of caring

which they are met need to be consistent with democratic commitments to justice, equality, and freedom for all.[451] She further elaborates: "The goal of such practices is to ensure that all of the members of the society can live as well as possible by making the society as democratic as possible. This is the essence of 'caring with.'"[452] Feminist care ethics, within this account, are therefore understood as a specifically care-centred framework for processes of transformation within the arts and society.

From this position, feminist care ethics as a framework for social transformation allow for an understanding of curating with care as a political, democratising, activist activity – of "caring with" – that rests in the recognition of our interdependencies and the need to co-constitute processes of solidarity and of commoning care.[453] In an effort to care-with, relational curating serves as a critical practice of caring for support structures and artistic and sociopolitical processes that foster caring alliances – and thereby counters hegemonic patterns of relating to one another. Particularly within the intricate framework of socially engaged practices, care is a matter that feminist curators and artists cannot shy away from.

In building from both Tronto's ethics of care and Reilly's approach of curatorial activism, Elke Krasny proposes the notion of "caring activism," which interweaves curatorial activism with feminist care theory.[454] This approach is concerned with the political dimension of public space and the ways in which the museum, as the shelter of (art) collections and the host of assemblies of people, can become truly public –

---

requires that the actual caregiving work be done. 4. Care-receiving: Once care work is done, there will be a response from the person, thing, group, animal, plant, or environment that has been cared for. Observing that response and making judgments about it […] is the fourth phase of care." Ibid., 22–23.
451. Ibid., 23.
452. Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 30
453. Manuela Zechner, *Commoning Care & Collective Power: Childcare Commons and the Micropolitics of Municipalism in Barcelona* (Linz, Austria: Transversal Texts, 2021). For further engagement with this notion of caring-with as a democratising and transformative vehicle for the arts, see chapter 5 – "Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures."
454. When I speak of feminist care theory, I primarily refer to the approach laid out by Tronto, as established in the introduction. Further central voices of the feminist care ethics discourse include Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2013); Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Eva Feder Kittay, "*Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

where access is no longer bound to nation-states, gender, or class.[455] Basing her approach on a feminist ethics of care also allows Krasny to frame curating as always co-dependent; caring curating, then, is "a form of activism that works with the politics of such co-dependencies, and renders them legible."[456] Making curatorial decisions, to attend to the well-being of both the caregivers and the care-receivers, is what makes interdependent curating a simultaneously ethical and political practice. A curatorial practice that is rooted in care ethics thereby also shifts the boundaries of what is commonly considered a private concern and embraces those matters as public ones.[457] Taking up Chen and Hernández-Navarro's formulation,[458] Tronto also regards concerns of care as intricately connected with concerns of responsibility:

> The task of a democratic politics is to affix responsibility, and as we come to recognize the centrality of care for living a decent human life, then the task of democratic politics needs to be much more fully focused upon care responsibilities: their nature, their allocation, and their fulfilment.[459]

As I explore in upcoming chapters, feminist care ethics can serve as a moral compass for transformation processes within artistic and curatorial practices; they point in *what direction* and *how* rearticulations of the status quo within the arts should occur – and thereby build the theoretical underpinning to the construction of caring infrastructures.[460]

As the multiple discursive strands around feminist curating and care ethics have shown, the notion of "curating with care" does not stand for *one* particular approach to curating; rather, it serves as an umbrella term for a range of feminist, queer, activist, and socially engaged practices. Thus, taking serious Tronto's care

---

455. Krasny, "Caring Activism," 9.
456. Ibid., 3.
457. Tronto argues that questions of care should not be considered private issues but rather acknowledge as a political concern of every democracy: "To take caring seriously as a kind of political concern upsets many of the starting premises of contemporary life in democratic societies. Because entrenched patterns of thought scripted care as a private matter, to include care as a public concern upsets the distinction between public and private life." Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 143.
458. For Chen and Hernández-Navarro's formulation in regard to curating and responsibility, see chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."
459. Ibid.
460. For the role of feminist care ethics within transformation processes within the arts, see section 5.1 – "Thinking-with Joan Tronto: In Search of Caring Infrastructures."

ethical formulations, we, as feminist curators – who are cognizant of our professions etymological root in care – have to articulate in thought and practice, how we can attend responsibly to matters of care from our respective position of power. [461]

4.1 On Practising-With: Situating One's Practice in Relation to Others

As approaches to curatorial care are never fixed, granted, nor universally applicable, feminist curators have to articulate what "curating with care" means for their specific context, and they have to continuously renegotiate this understanding within its respective web of relations and power dynamics. I thus want to retrace this thought process for myself to contextualise my practice, thinking, and self-understanding as a curator and to explore how my approach of curatorial care relates to other practices in the field.

In February 2019, one month into my artistic directorship at M.1, I made a note to myself about how I aimed to situate myself as a curator both in the local community and in relation to rather traditional conceptualisations of curatorial practices. I regard this note as a writing exercise, in which I attempted to articulate what my approach to curating with care could entail in its specific context.

As a curator in Hohenlockstedt, I want to provide a platform which consists of a physical site of encounter but also to provide a social framework that allows different groups to gather, exchange ideas, and negotiate the current problematics around care work and to envision more just futures! My role is not to predetermine the content, the learning outcomes, or the event outcomes; I want to provide a social and in part physical architecture – a framework – that allows for these conversations to happen. In the literal sense, as a curator I also see myself as a caretaker of public

---

461. Moving forward, I present a selection of curatorial approaches engaging with care that serve as a theoretical and conceptual framing for my own curatorial practice, which I introduce in the subsequent chapter. Once I have introduced the theoretical foundations and my practice-based curatorial project in chapter 4, I formulate, in section 5.2.1 – "Practice-led Propositions towards Building Caring Infrastructures," the notion of caring infrastructures, which I regard as an expansion of the presented feminist approaches to curating with care.

and intimate discussions on care work and I want to find ways to foster, enhance, connect, and share these conversation and practices. In this, I draw a connection to the traditional role of a curator who sought to gather, (re)compose, and share objects/artworks; but I specifically focus on social processes. Objects, and therefore exhibitions with objects, are not my focus – they only become relevant when they speak to a social process out of which they emerged or to which they speak. In this setup, the social and political focus of an artwork or initiative is key, using artistic outlets as ways to communicate, engage, and politicise diverse audiences or to envision more just futures. This approach has an activist notion to it: it seeks to provoke, shine light on, and alter the current circumstances. The alliances between everyday practices of local residents, regional politics, and cultural institutions and cultural workers are what makes it a relevant vehicle for social transformation.

My curatorial approach is also highly research focused. It is embedded in a dense web of scholarly, artistic, and curatorial work, which makes my work reflective and responsive to historical and current discourses. It also means that I take time to listen to the local population, to test ideas, to make propositions, to gain trust, and to collectively build upon this. This also comes with the challenge to not only come up with a rather low-key programme in order to welcome everyone but also to develop a sensitivity for what works and what doesn't within a local context, and to choose the right moment of when to challenge the community with alternative concepts, aesthetics, and interventions.

In this whole process, I am absolutely dependent on others, on existing networks, on existing social groups and community, and on the goodwill of engaged individuals "to take me into their community." Without these "informants," I wouldn't be able to make the propositions that I aim to make. This dependence is very important, as it makes my practice humble and a genuine community practice. It is nothing I can do by myself – I can listen, converse, propose – but the community defines the process and eventually the outcomes, too. This requires quite a bit of flexibility in the programme, one has to stay flexible and open-minded enough to change the programme along the way if the community doesn't seem to catch on to it. If the workshops are never fully booked, the responses are mediocre, then we

have to find other solutions … it is an open-ended, radically relational process.[462]

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of my academic pathway and my then recent entry into the curatorial field with a dedication to social processes, I experienced a sensation of feeling out of sync with, or even of rejecting, the term "curator" as a self-description. This hesitation to identify with the term "curator" was also echoed by the socially engaged artist collective ruangrupa, who were invited to curate documenta fifteen (June 18 to September 25, 2022) in Kassel: "We also had an uneasiness with calling ourselves curators and we avoided the term when we could."[463]

To me, it seemed that "curator" served as a categorisation for the purpose of allowing an external person to understand what I was doing, but it didn't align with my own understanding of my practice. Part of the process of becoming-a-feminist-curator, and identifying as such, included the acknowledgement that my approach of a socially engaged, relational practice was a legitimate curatorial practice, as it formed part of a wider movement in artistic and curatorial discourse and practice that allowed for an expansion of the understanding of a curator's role. The process of becoming-a-feminist-curator thus needs to be traced and made transparent as a collaborative endeavour that is indebted to a range of influential practitioners and scholars. For this, I want us to recall Sara Ahmed's notion of a "companion text," which builds on Donna Haraway's notion of "companion species." For Ahmed, a companion text is "a text whose company enabled you to proceed on a path less trodden."[464] This notion creates a compelling image of intergenerational, affective, and relational support networks between the researcher and the thinking and writing of others – a metaphorical image that also speaks to feminist curatorial relations. This idea of companionship is closely aligned to the notion of thinking-with, also put forth by Haraway, which Maria Puig de la Bellacasa further developed into the notion of writing-with. For Puig de la Bellacasa, this concept creates collectivity through the

---

462. Field note, January 25. 2019; for further field notes, see appendix, section C.
463. ruangrupa, in an interview by Kate Brown, "'Risks Come With the Concept': Documenta 15's Curators Reflect on a Controversial, History-Making Show," artnet, 2022, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/documenta-15-ruangrupa-2179250.
464. Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 16.

process of thinking and knowing, thereby countering "the figure of a lone thinker."[465] She also describes the processes of thinking-with and writing-with as processes of care, where collective and accountable knowledge creation takes place, and where we can "explore ways of taking care for the unavoidably thorny relations that foster rich, collective, interdependent, albeit not seamless, thinking-with."[466]

As a feminist curator, I am interested in shifting from the entangled spheres of thinking-with and writing-with that inform our discourses to an understanding of *practicing-with* that highlights the multiple companionships, "the company one chooses to keep,"[467] the sources of inspirations, and the friendships that accompany, support, nourish, and co-shape our curatorial practices. The notion of *practicing-with* allows for a fruitful engagement with other practitioners with whom we might entertain real-life or spiritual companionship, making transparent our sources of inspiration while not shying away from dissenting with and diverging from their positions or perspectives.

In the following section, I carve out intersecting thematic clusters central to contemporary feminist and socially engaged curatorial practices "with care," such as relationality, ephemeral processes, and feminist and counter-hegemonic engagements. Each section, centring on the thematic foci of each cluster, contains a selection of practitioners, projects, and thinkers with whom my curatorial project shares a spirit of alignment and companionship, with whom I consider my curatorial work to be in *practice-with*. This contextual framing – with its situating in thought and in practice of my curatorial programming at M.1 – is followed by a description of the locality of Hohenlockstedt, the concepts and formats of the programming, its ambitions, and its possible shortcomings in the second half of the chapter.[468]

---

465. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, "'Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care," *Sociological Review* 60 (2012): 203.
466. Ibid., 205.
467. Céline Condorelli builds from Hannah Arendt's notion of "company" and complicates this idea for the field of art and architecture. See Céline Condorelli and Avery F. Gordon, "The Company We Keep: A Conversation with Céline Condorelli and Avery F. Gordon. Part One," how to work together, 2013, https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/celine-condorelli-the-company-we-keep-a-conversation-with-avery-f-gordon-part-one/.
468. I introduce my curatorial practice in the second half of chapter 4, in section 4.2 – "Care for Caregivers: A Case Study of a Participatory Curatorial Programming on Care."

4.1.1 On Situating, Radical Relations, and Useful Curating

Curator Megan Johnston's notion of "slow curating" greatly influenced the development of my participatory curatorial work in Hohenlockstedt. For Johnston, the socially engaged curatorial approach of slow curating

> consciously and directly connects to the context and in particular to notions of the local, employs relational and collaborative processes, and in doing so reaches out to diverse communities. It is not necessarily about time, although it is temporal in terms of relationships. Rather, the process involves a meaningful and deep understanding of the immediate context, working with local experts to learn about the cultural politics and poetics of place, and exploring conscious and unconscious issues that affect everyday life.[469]

In this scenario, it is important to allow for sufficient time to engage with place and people and to encourage "open-ended proposals and outcomes that can be decided by different people and at different times in the process."[470] In doing so, the demarcations of curatorial and educational work are deliberately softened. At M.1, I too, carved out spaces of assembly that not only blurred the boundaries between educational, artistic, and curatorial frameworks but which also fostered open-ended processes and time periods in which no public programming would take place, where a meaningful engagement with the local community could unfold, in order to gain a sincere understanding of my immediate, everyday context. Such socially engaged approaches to curating contain the potential to challenge the boundaries between the art institution and its immediate environment. A relational, situated curatorial practice thereby transcends the merely art institutional realm by building relationships across communities and contexts. The relational webs that span between the involved artists, the participants, and the wider community create a social space that makes architectural boundaries fade into the background while foregrounding human relations and interactions.[471] According to the art theorist Nina

---

469. Johnston, "Slow Curating," 26.
470. Ibid.
471. Nina Möntmann, *Kunst als sozialer Raum: Andrea Fraser, Martha Rosler, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Renée Green* (Cologne: Walther König, 2002).

Möntmann, arts-based social spaces function as partial publics which are dynamic, heterogeneous, and temporary, turning the museum's walls into "porous membranes" and thereby squeezing artistic actions out into the local political and cultural space.[472]

From this position, a relational and situated curatorial practice expands from the site of the museum (or art institution), producing a rippling effect that spills over into the sociopolitical realm of a given site. Elke Krasny proposes the figure of the "urban curator," a contextualised practitioner whose work can "take on the form of art, of communication, of building, of discourse, of community organizing, of legal action, of supportive self-organization, of exhibition making, of protest, or of any other form relevant to the case at hand."[473] Due to the contextual nature of urban curating, Krasny frames it as a radical relational practice. The idea of a "radically relational practice" that exceeds the realm of the art institution had become central to my practice; however, it was not situated in an urban but rather a rural context. For Krasny, urban curating is entrenched in "the aesthetic and political consciousness of solidarity" and is sincerely aligned with wider social justice struggles of the given context.[474] In the context of my curatorial programme at M.1, the focus was not on "the mere representation of social relations."[475] Instead, I sought to create a foundation for intervening in the social fabric and practising solidarity with existing social movements, as put forth by the art mediator and curator Nora Sternfeld in her approach of post-representational curating.

The need to respond and act in meaningful alliance with wider social struggles also resonates with artist's Tania Bruguera's proposition to regard art as a "useful tool," as a device for exploring possibilities to transform society through and with the arts. In Bruguera's approach of *Arte Útil* (useful art), which has spawned a

---

472. Ibid., 10.
473. Elke Krasny, "Urban Curators at Work – A Real-Imagined Historiography," in *Planning Unplanned – Towards a New Positioning of Art in the Context of Urban Development*, ed. Barbara Holub and Christine Hohenbüchler (Vienna: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2015), 120.
474. Ibid.
475. Giulia Palladini and Nora Sternfeld, "*Taking Time Together. A Posthumous Reflection on a Collaborative Project, and Polyprgasmic Disobedience. A Dialogue between Giulia Palladini and Nora Sternfeld*, CuMMA PAPERS #6 (Helsinki: CuMMA, 2014), 1–2. For further reading in relation to queer and feminist curating that is closely aligned with social movements, I recommend Krasny, Lingg, Fritsch, Bosold, and Hofmann, *Radicalizing Care*.

collaborative platform of the same name (under the direction of Bruguera and curator Alistair Hudson), artistic practice should meet a number of criteria:

1) Propose new uses for art within society

2) Use artistic thinking to challenge the field within which it operates

3) Respond to current urgencies

4) Operate on a 1:1 scale

5) Replace authors with initiators and spectators with users

6) Have practical, beneficial outcomes for its users

7) Pursue sustainability

8) Re-establish aesthetics as a system of transformation.[476]

Part of the platform of "useful art" is the artist-led participatory project HOMEBAKED, spearheaded by Rotterdam-based artist Jeanne van Heeswijk. Her work involves a sincere dedication to eye-level collaboration with the community she is collaborating with, oftentimes with the goal of a self-determined continuation of the project by members of the community. The HOMEBAKED project, begun in 2010 as part of the Liverpool Biennale, is situated in an area of the city that had been labelled a "market failure" and became the subject of a government-backed renewal plan, which saw a large number of residential and commercial properties demolished to make way for new homes – a plan that stagnated in the economic recession of 2008, leaving the community in limbo.[477] The artist initiative asked "how the local community could take matters into their own hands regarding the development of their neighbourhood and a common future."[478] In 2012, the Homebaked Community Land Trust was born with the goal of refurbishing an old bakery building to provide a space for community, a workspace for social enterprise, and affordable housing (Image 16). Today, the bakery is a self-sustaining cooperative business "offering local jobs, great food, a place for many different communities to meet and exchange

476. Arte Ùtil (platform), accessed March 10, 2023, https://www.arte-util.org/about/colophon/.
477. Homebaked – Community Land Trust, "Story," accessed February 24, 2024, https://homebaked.org.uk/about-us/story/.
478. Jeanne van Heeswijk, "Projects: Homebaked Bakery, Liverpool, Jan 2012," accessed February 24, 2024, https://www.jeanneworks.net/projects/homebaked_bakery/.

– as well as a way to invest into the local economy for community benefit."[479] The challenge, which was achieved in this example, is to insert artistic and curatorial action into a community context and to make it self-sustaining, thereby going beyond the temporary framework of arts-funding.

Image 16. Customers about to enter HOMEBAKED's communal bakery in Liverpool. Photo: Arte Util Platform.

Another long-term, locally situated, arts-based practice of resistance within a gentrifying neighbourhood is that of the Hamburg-based artist duo Margit Czenki and Christoph Schäfer. Similarly to Heeswijk's dedication to shifting processes of depletion or gentrification, the two artists seek to strengthen the local community

---

479. Homebaked – Community Land Trust, "Story," accessed February 24, 2024. https://homebaked.org.uk/about-us/story/.

through radically participatory formats that inspire a different vision of the future – one that attends to the needs and desires of the community rather than the preferences and logics of investors and financial markets. Hence, their processes are preceded by sessions of active listening, of reaching into the communities at stake to gain an understanding of their desires. Czenki and Schäfer call this process "*Kollektive Wunschproduktion*" (collective desiring production).[480] However, the artists seem to understand these processes of activation not as a diffuse "stimulus to participation" but rather as "an attempt to make private and subjective desires publicly expressible and negotiable as politically relevant statements," as the art mediator and scholar Wanda Wieczorek elaborates.[481] *Kollektive Wunschproduktion* is therefore seen as an artistic method to translate a multitude of individual perspectives into a collectively designed form.

Image 17. Margit Czenki and Christoph Schäfer using the lockdown moment to restore the otherwise heavily used tulip-patterned tartan field Tulpenfeld by Nesrin Bigün in Park Fiction. © Park Fiction Archiv 2020.

---

480. Their notion of *Kollektive Wunschproduktion* references philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who favor the idea of *desire* as a productive force rather than as a responsiveness based on lack. For more, see Park Fiction, "Kollektive Wunschproduktion," accessed February 24, 2024, https://park-fiction.net/kollektive-wunschproduktion/.
481. Wanda Wieczorek, in Park Fiction, "Kollektive Wunschproduktion." My translation.

Czenki and Schäfer's work, together with many actors from the arts as well as civil society, aggregates around the ongoing initiative Park Fiction (established 1994), in Hamburg's heavily gentrified neighbourhood of St. Pauli. The park was collectively fought for and communalised as the area's last public greenspace – after the city had already promised it to investors for a large-scale building project. The public park was collectively envisioned through the process of *Kollektive Wunschproduktion* and was successfully brought into existence through years of resistance.[482] In this process, the artists, however, do not consider themselves to be "service deliverers" to the community, whereby the members could expect their wants to be fulfilled by others. Rather, they created a framework – rooted in radical pedagogy and leftist research methods – that would enable the community members to collectively self-organise to strive to realise their desires. For example, due to the high degree of impoverished community members, a vacation spent under palm trees was not an option many had – and, so, a desire to include such an element in the park emerged in the collective process. Today, the park is known for its metal palm trees that overlook the Elbe river and harbour, inviting community members and guests to indulge in the sensation of hammocking under palm trees (Image 17), while lending itself to a constant reinterpretation of its symbols.

The Park Fiction initiative serves as an international example of grassroots activism that spans artistic and political methods to resist gentrification and to build a leisure space for the common good. In the spirit of *practising-with*, I have learned from Czenki and Schäfer's approach to depart from and collectivise around everyday struggles and to use artistic methods to democratise public engagement and decision-making processes for the public good.

Another approach to these concepts is the curatorial, quasi-grassroots initiative is InSite/Casa Gallina (2013–18), which was similarly dedicated to long-term community engagement and artistic collaboration. Under the artistic direction of

---

482. For an overview of the project and its development over time, see Park Fiction, "Park Fiction: An Introduction in English," accessed February 24, 2024, https://park-fiction.net/park-fiction-introduction-in-english/.

Josefa Ortega and Osvaldo Sánchez, the five-year project focused on the traditional neighbourhood of Santa María la Ribera in Mexico City. While the project officially wrapped in 2018, it continues today in another form under the artistic direction of Ortega, but without the institutional affiliation with InSite, a public arts organisation. Since its inception, the Casa Gallina itself has lain at the heart of the project. Casa Gallina is a house that functions as a community centre, conceptualised and built for and with the communities in which it is located. Still today, it also hosts a small chicken coop (Image 18 and 19).[483] The programme during their first five years had three conceptual pillars: through "Co-participations," artist were commissioned to produce new works in the context of long-term residencies; "Saberes" [Knowledges] was an educational platform that included a community garden, workshops, and training for professional development; and "Synergies" intended to forge alliances between the different local and regional actors and artists.[484] Art theorist Nina Möntmann describes Casa Gallina as an alternative infrastructure that "responds flexibly to specific local contexts and permits informal approaches and organizational processes that allow a maximum of participation."[485] This notion is reflected in the way the project's work processes are organised, which are non-hierarchical and operate without assistants. Many team members come from the *barrio* itself, resources are sourced locally, and shared lunches are prepared collectively. Möntmann concludes her observation: "Everyone is responsible for this, giving rise to a natural flow of attention, of taking care and looking after one another. At Casa Gallina, the 'care of the self' is extended to the communal 'we.'"[486]

---

483. Pablo Lafuente, ed., *Experiences of the Common Good: InSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood* (Mexico City: InSite/Casa Gallina, 2018).
484. Nina Möntmann, "Withdrawal into the Public Sphere: InSite/Casa Gallina as a Model of Hospitality and Alternative Infrastructures," in Lafuente, ed., *Experiences of the Common Good*, 238.
485. Ibid., 240.
486. Ibid.

Image 18. Casa Gallina's community garden in Mexico City, with its name-giving chicken coop at the far end, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 19. Casa Gallina's interior provides space for informal encounter, reading, workshops, and shared meals, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

InSite/Casa Gallina's multifaceted approaches to collaboration between artists and community members, their collective food production and shared meals, and thee sense of hospitality at the Casa Gallina, as a centre for non-hierarchical encounters, were all very influential to my own curatorial practice.[487] I took inspiration from the ways in which Ortega and Sanchez set the curatorial in service of the local community's needs, thereby enabling long-term exchanges and alliances between local, regional, and international artists, researchers, residents, and other diverse

---

487. After the first iteration of Casa Gallina (2013–18), the project continued independently from the arts organisation InSite Mexico, with the funding support of the German Schöpflin Stiftung. Today, Casa Gallina remains active and publicly accessible under the artistic directorship of Josefa Ortega. In February 2021, I was able to visit Casa Gallina and speak with Ortega in the framework of a research collaboration with InSite Mexico (funded by the South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council). Due to the ongoing pandemic, I was not able to witness any live programming but I visited the space and learned about the organisation's new programming, which, in its second iteration, has a greater focus on environmental justice. For more information, see the project website of Casa Gallina at https://casagallina.org.mx.

agents. Reflecting on the conceptual principles they had to establish for the project and the difficulties that arose from countering the entrenched modus operandi of the art world, Sanchez in conversation with Ortega shares:

> But we knew that the type of commitment that we aspired to would go through an emotional entanglement, through the complex requirements of an ethics of care, and that this is the proto-political framework sine qua non of any collective intention for change.[488]

The statement showcases that, even if the cited artistic and curatorial frameworks did not focus on care as a theme, they must unavoidably deal with the ethics of care as a mode of social engagement, hospitality, and collectivity – and must build lowered barriers of access and foreground activities that centre on the needs and desires of the community rather than institutional or external logics. The relational nature of these situated practices, which require a sincere engagement with one's immediate context, rely not only on prolonged commitment but also on emotional entanglements and openness to transformative processes, which require oneself to be affected, touched, as well.

These artistic and curatorial examples can thus be understood as radically relational practices within the rubric of urban curating, according to the notion put forth by Krasny. Yet, I argue, their geographic locality isn't the defining metric of their radical relationality; rather, it is their methodology of engagement, their sincere situatedness within their communities' everyday struggles, and their counter-hegemonic spirit that seeks to retain agency within the hands of the many. A socially engaged curatorial practice – whether situated within a rural, suburban, or urban context – requires conscious engagement with its immediate context and a heightened sensitivity to the communal and spatial environment of one's practice, and it must be in alignment with wider social movements. Hence, whether the sites of encounter are disenfranchised parts of London, Mexico City, or rural Germany, they can be summarised as, to borrow anthropologist Anna Tsing's phrase, "out-of-the-way places." Tsing's notion, presented in the text "From the Margins," thereby

---

488. Pablo Lafuente, in conversation with Josefa Ortega and Osvaldo Sánchez, "Network Imaginaries: Neighborhood, Affects and the Politics of Locality," in Lafuente, ed., *Experiences of the Common Good*, 156.

opens a way out of the rural/urban dichotomy, offering a way to reframe locally situated practices as a political act in reclaiming their "marginality."[489]

Expanding from Tania Bruguera's notion of *Arte Útil* and the above-explored situated and radically relational artistic practices that aim to make useful contributions to the wider community, I want to suggest the notion of *Curaduría Útil* (useful curating). This relational curating approach can likewise respond to social urgencies by coming closer to the lived realities of the community; by challenging the working mechanisms of the arts through a critical curatorial activism; by turning audiences into users; and by imbuing curatorial practice with a sociopolitical purpose. *Curaduría Útil*, then, can be understood as a socially engaged curatorial practice that is sensitive to its immediate environment, that is committed to producing caring processes of co-creation with the community at stake, and which challenges the hierarchies of participation, seeking to co-produce its processes at eye-level and according to a feminist ethics of care. This effort aims to make curatorial practice *useful* for social struggles and movements and to remove it from the inaccessible spheres of the art market, high-end galleries, and elitist museums. Intentionally engaging with the situated context in a useful manner is considered a form of curatorial caretaking for sociopolitical concerns that builds a foundation for the construction of caring infrastructures – a notion to which I will return later.[490] *Curaduría Útil* must be understood as a relational, contextual practice that is inseparable from wider social (justice) movements and which, through artist-led processes, fruitfully links local, situated experiences to wider sociopolitical matters.

A possible contrast between *Arte Útil* and *Curaduría Útil* might lie in the role of useful curating to establish support structures that not only enable community encounters and the addressing of societal issues but also provide the conditions for social practice artists to bring their works into being. In such a scenario, useful art and useful curating go hand in hand, as their incentive is rooted within care for the

---

489. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "From the Margins," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (August 1994): 280.
490. For the conceptual establishment of the notion of caring infrastructures see chapter 5 – "Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures."

community's needs. Bruguera further elaborates: "useful art is about transforming people's lives, even on a small scale."[491] If this holds to be true, then useful curating creates the conditions for these transformative community- and arts-based processes to emerge and to be sustained. Useful curating assumes responsibility for the creation of support structures ("caring infrastructures") for both communities and arts to flourish in meaningful ways (meaningful here is not defined by the markets but rather by whatever enhances meaning within a community's own framework of reference). We thus arrive at an understanding of relational curating as a practice that unfolds its caring capacities in actualising its meaningful and useful responsiveness and support structures within its immediate environment – a notion, which I aimed to embrace as artistic director 2019–20 at M.1 in rural Northern Germany.

4.1.2   In Lieu of Art Objects: On Process, Ephemerality, and Improvisation

The larger turn toward relationality, assembly, and encounter within the arts has newly legitimised what were formerly alternative curatorial practices. The rise of community-oriented, relational approaches to art and curating as well as discursive and practical shifts within the curatorial field posit new challenges for curators, as their work often consists of process-based and ephemeral encounters that do not produce art objects in a traditional sense. To understand exhibitions, or public moments of display, as testimonials of social processes redirects the hegemonic focus on art objects historically maintained by art markets and traditional museums, galleries, and other exhibitionary platforms. In this shift, social encounters are moving more and more into the foreground of curatorial platforms, turning social relations into curatorial fabric. When process is given heightened attention, then the unruliness of collaborative processes can become central forces within curatorial projects that build affective ecosystems.

---

491. Tania Bruguera, quoted in "Art Term: Useful Art Association," Tate Britain, accessed on September 26, 2023, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/u/useful-art-association.

In this line of thinking, the curators of the 11th Berlin Biennale 11 (BB11) – María Berríos, Renata Cervetto, Lisette Lagnado, and Agustín Pérez Rubio – explicitly emphasised the importance of the social and participatory processes that led to the multisite exhibition project, which ran between September 5 and November 1, 2020. In several instances, the exhibition spaces of BB11 showed ephemera from performances, community engagements, and community assemblies rather than art objects in a traditional sense. For the curators, the exhibited objects seemed to point to participatory processes rather than serve as artworks in the sense of "singular objects." This dedication to social processes was echoed in the collaborative, processual working methods of ruangrupa when curating documenta fifteen in Kassel. ruangrupa went as far as to declare the exhibition an "alibi" for the social processes that had preceded documenta's public moment:

> We use our festivals, our exhibitions, our events as an alibi. As an alibi to learn something together, to experience something together, and to build certain type of ecosystems. […] Exhibitions in themselves, if they are only exhibitions, are not interesting for us. […] But if it is useful in a bigger sense of things, if an exhibition hosts conversations for example or as a support structure for the whole process, then it is still an effective way of working.[492]

---

492. ruangrupa, in an interview by Franz Thalmair, "Interview with ruangrupa: Our Exhibitions Are an Alibi," Platform 6 – documenta fifteen, 2020, https://www.documenta-platform6.de/ruangrupa-our-exhibitions-are-an-alibi/.

Within the artistic-curatorial complex that celebrates and idolises the format of the exhibition, it appears radical to challenge the role of exhibition in collaborative processual projects. At documenta fifteen, the Fridericianum building – commonly the nexus for exhibitions within the multi-site art event – was turned into "Fridskul" (Fridericianum as School). The central lobby space served as "a repository for shared resources, such as knowledge, stories, and experiences,"[493] which was collectively activated and organised (Image 20).

Image 20. Fridskul assembly with visitors and members of different art and activist collectives, Kassel, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

These activities and mindset reframe exhibitions as the support structure – as the "thing underneath" – that allows for conversations and processes to flourish and to become public, rather than as the celebrated "outcome" that seemingly overwrites the (invisible) processes that occurred prior to its opening.

For the curators of BB11, this conceptual dedication to social processes let

---

493. documenta fifteen, "Fridskul – Fridericianum as School," accessed February 24, 2024, https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/fridskul/.

the exhibition take the back seat while emphasising the project's intricate connection to feminist care ethics:

> The idea of process, that is at the core of our project for the Biennale, is also a way of understanding this kind of [feminine] voice. Also, by slowing down the machinery of the Biennale itself, in favour of more sustainable relationships with the locals and with the idea of care. All these are modes of trying to change our ways of doing and saying, which are based on feminist and queer accounts.[494]

With a similar dedication to processual modes of working, Phila Bergmann and Thea Reifler, directors of the Zurich art space Shedhalle, created a curatorial platform for process-based art called Protozone. This curated series of events and exhibitions forms a five-year curatorial cycle (2020–25) that oscillates between low- and high-intensity phases. The curators, who align their practice with queer-feminist discourses, play with traditional exhibition formats by laying bare the processes which are often obscured: "You can imagine it like an exhibition that opened one week too early. There are artworks installed, but some are in the making. Some of the artists are still present, and you can get in contact with them in different ways."[495]

Such experimental, temporal approaches to curating can also be regarded as a pathway to letting go of a certain sense of curatorial control, as it brings forth the unexpected, the unplanned, within the curatorial project. For BB11, Cervetto, one of the co-curators, shared how the negotiation of social and organisational process requires improvisational skills:

> We bring different ways of doing things. […] Improvisation comes into play, but also a different way of planning, in which things are not so regulated. We are always in this negotiation, between a less formal structure and an established institution, trying to generate more porous and fluctuating processes that adapt to the requirements of each situation.[496]

In extension on their emphasis on improvisation, I regard these approaches –

---

494. Agustín Pérez Rubio, in conversation with Katerina Bruch, "11th Berlin Biennale: On the Human Condition," *OnCurating*, no. 46 (June 2020).
495. Thea Reifler and Philipp Bergmann, in an interview by Myriam Boutry, Arianna Guidi, and Jose Cáceres Mardones, "Shedhalle Contaminated," *OnCurating*, no. 48 (September 2020), 203.
496. Bruch, "11th Berlin Biennale."

similar to the methodology of *bricolage*[497] – not only as a characteristic of feminist curating but also of feminism as such. Sara Ahmed declares improvisation to be a form of self-assembly: "Feminism is DIY."[498] In the context of feminised care work, the reality of constant interruption, of having to put oneself together on a recurring basis, also becomes central.[499]

For the purpose of my own curatorial process at M.1, a feminist reinterpretation of curatorial-process-as-*bricolage* aided me in recognising the constant interruption of the curatorial process due to private care work and the increased need to improvise, to tinker, during the course of action as a lived reality to be accepted.[500] While this approach – in its masculine noun form of *bricoleur* – alludes to stereotypical images of a male tinkerer or craftsman, I aim to shift this connotation by reframing it as a feminist practice. That is to say, to give shape to the idea of the *bricoleuse.*[501] The *bricoleuse* instead of shying away from non-linearity, interruption, tensions, and do-it-yourself approaches, embraces them – which, I argue, following Ahmed, make these curatorial undertakings feminist ones. Hence, feminist relational curating carves out space for social processes with its detours, its necessary improvisation, its potential messiness, and its interruptions, whether due to the needs of children who form part of a curatorial setup, conflictual scenarios

---

497. In alignment with Sara Ahmed, this curatorial process reminded me of the methodological approach of a bricoleur or bricoleuse – a tinkerer who improvises with what is at hand – following the methodological DIY approach that anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss puts forth. In an effort to follow Ahmed's call to understand this tinkering, these DIY practices, as feminist practices, I also seek to reconceptualise the notion of *bricolage* (which etymologically refers to processes of the unexpected, of improvisation, detours, luck, and spontaneity – ultimately leaving the bricoleur with a different outcome than originally anticipated).

498. Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 27.

499. Ibid.

500. According to psychosocial studies scholar Lisa Baraitser, interruption needs to be seen as a particularly maternal experience. I thus argue it is of feminist concern to embrace interruptions, as they may occur within relational curatorial encounters. For Baraitser these interruptions always contain an elusive moment that might bring out unforeseen possibilities. For further reading, see Lisa Baraitser, *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 74.

501. This aligns with the approach of the museum scholars Regina Wonisch and Roswitha Muttenthaler, who have reinterpreted the concept of bricolage as part of a feminist art historical analysis of exhibitions to bring together their key methodological approaches. They write: "In the sense of a bricolage, we have taken methodical approaches from the arsenal of already existing ones, converted them and combined them for a new application," as museal representations often lack adequate discourses to do justice to the complexity of the research matter. See Roswitha Wonisch and Regina Muttenthaler, *Gesten des Zeigens. Zur Repräsentation von Gender und Race in Ausstellungen* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2015), 62.

during group sessions, or other spontaneous interventions that one cannot pre-plan for. This paints a picture of a curatorial practice that is not primarily concerned with the politics of a polished display of traditional art objects but rather stays with the trouble of social engagement – and recognises the encounter on a 1:1 scale, and not its *ex-post* representation, as the "thing" worth striving for.

4.1.3 On Hospitality, Inclusion, and *Affidamento*

Another dimension of ephemeral, process-based curatorial and artistic initiatives is the notion of hospitality. While the curators and scholars Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer argue that a "curatorial situation is always one of hospitality,"[502] I argue that the heightened shift towards relationality, encounter, and ephemeral processes increases the political nature of the matter. From this perspective, curating

> implies invitations – to artists, artworks, curators, audiences, and institutions; it receives, welcomes, and temporarily brings people and objects together, some of which have left their habitual surroundings and find themselves in the process of relocation in the sense of being a guest. Thus the curatorial situation provides both the time and the space for encounter between entities unfamiliar with one another.[503]

During my programming at M.1, we created welcoming atmospheres, as spheres of hospitality, to lower hurdles of access and to draw people into the art institution, to engage with questions of care, and to connect with others. In the creation of these welcoming frameworks, the provision, or at times even the joint preparation, of shared meals was central.

---

502. Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, eds., *Hospitality: Hosting Relations in Exhibitions* (London: Sternberg, 2016), 8.
503. Ibid.

Image 21. Britto Arts Trust invited food lovers to join their artistic food cooking and sharing project at PAKGHOR – the social kitchen during the one hundred days of documenta fifteen in Kassel, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Food is not only a basic human need but also holds a crucial social function – one that many artists have explored, particularly since the 1960s, when art became more socially engaged, ephemeral, and experimental. One of the more prominent examples is how the international Fluxus collective engaged with food in the form of curated feasts, collaborative cooking experiments, and interactive and edible art multiples.[504] However, Fluxus was not the first artistic movement to use food as a material. In the 1930s, the Futurists used real food as an artistic medium to launch their "attack on cultural decadence, habituated ritual, and institutionalized culture."[505] In the 1990s, particularly with the artistic positions of practitioners such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, food became not only an artistic material but a means to produce art-

---

504. Hannah Higgins, "Food: The Raw and the Fluxed," in *Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life*, ed. Jacquelynn Baas (Hanover, MA: Hood Museum of Art, 2011), 13.
505. Ibid.

based social situations.[506] Through his cooking and serving of Thai curries in New York art galleries, Tiravanija aimed to create micro-utopian spaces of togetherness.[507] These kinds of approaches have become very common in the contemporary art scene, for example during documenta fifteen, where Britto Arts Trust created the PAKGHOR social kitchen, which served free food during the one hundred days of the arts festival, freshly prepared each day by a range of artistic collectives (Image 21).[508] Though not all forms of arts-based togetherness have been recognised as political in a transformative sense,[509] yet some of these food-based practices within the arts take an overtly political stance, such as in the approaches of Michael Rakowitz's "Enemy Kitchen" workshop,[510] Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski's Conflict Kitchen restaurant,[511] and Daniel Fernandez Pascual and Alon Schwabe's Cooking Sections project,[512] to name a few.[513]

Building from these histories of collective cooking as artistic and curatorial methods of community engagement and political practice, the programming at M.1 used reoccurring shared meals for assembly and informal exchange. The presence of food (be it shared lunches or simply coffee and cake) thereby served to create a framework of hospitality and trust-building, while simultaneously attending to the

506. Bailer, "Sozialer (T)raum? Über Das Politische Potenzial Der Kunst Von Joseph Beuys Und Rirkrit Tiravanija. Ein Kunsttheoretischer Vergleich" (bachelor thesis, Zeppelin University, 2012).
507. In my undergraduate thesis, I contrasted Rirkrit Tiravanija's and Joseph Beuys' concepts of art as a means of transformation: ibid.
508. documenta fifteen, "PAKGHOR – the social kitchen by Britto Arts Trust," accessed February 24, 2024. https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/calendar/pakghor-the-social-kitchen/.
509. For the curator Nora Sternfeld, participatory formats need to include the possibility to challenge and renegotiate the "rules of the game," not just to partake in the game. See Nora Sternfeld, "Um die Spielregeln spielen! Partizipation im post-repräsentativen Museum," in *Das partizipative Museum: Zwischen Teilhabe und User Generated Content. Neue Anforderungen an kulturhistorische Ausstellungen*, ed. Susanne Gesser et al. (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2012). Arguably softer formats, such as the situations created by artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, do not contain the transformative moments to alter the modus operandi of the arts but rather obscure or novelise them.
510. Michael Rakowitz, "Enemy Kitchen," artist's website, accessed July 13, 2023, www.michaelrakowitz.com/enemykitchen.
511. Conflict Kitchen, initiated by Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski, artist website, accessed September 25, 2023, http://www.conflictkitchen.org/about/. In 2014, as the first graduate student fellow for art and social justice at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics in New York, I organised a student event with Conflict Kitchen.
512. Cooking Sections, initiated by the artists Daniel Fernandez Pascual and Alon Schwabe, artist website, accessed July 23, 2023, https://cooking-sections.com.
513. For further references, see Dani Burrows and Aaron Cezar, eds. *Politics of Food* (London: Sternberg, 2019).

bodily needs of the participants. The provision of food further needs to be seen in alignment with social reproduction theories, where care is a much more encompassing notion that includes everything needed to reproduce one's livelihood, including the nourishing of one's body.

However, curatorial gestures of hospitality – whether through the medium of food or otherwise – are never neutral acts that inherently "include everyone." Curatorial hospitality as a networking activity between a variety of actors thus operates "between an unconditional welcoming and acceptance of the other on the one hand […] and, on the other, the marginalizations and exclusions legitimized through various rules and regulations in the field."[514] Even a decidedly relational, situated curatorial practice with an explicitly welcoming gesture cannot avoid the conundrum between providing care and hospitality for some while rendering that care inaccessible to others.

The dual character, the tension between inclusion and exclusion while crafting spaces of hospitality for a specific group, became visible in a recent museum practice: the public LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern in Dortmund, Germany, announced "Safer Spaces" for their 2023 exhibition *Das ist kolonial* [This is colonial], where, once per week, for a few hours, the exhibition space was reserved for BIPOC visitors only. This created a public outcry, predominantly stirred up by ultra-right-wing populists (mainly around the party Alternative for Germany (AfD)). Their narrative was that now white people would be excluded from the museum and that the museum had introduced "apartheid" practices. These discursive defamations of the activist practice of safer spaces were taken up by mainstream media outlets, further fueling the outrage. [515] This example showcases the difficulties that art organisations face when creating spaces of hospitality, care, and accessibility for the so-called marginalised few. These gestures must be recognised as a counter-practice, as they challenge institutional structures commonly geared towards audiences with white

---

514. Von Bismarck and Meyer-Krahmer, eds., *Hospitality*, 8.
515. For further information, see LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern, "Das ist kolonial," accessed September 26, 2023, https://zeche-zollern.lwl.org/de/ausstellungen/das-ist-kolonial/safer-space/; and Elke Buhr, "Ein Lehrstück im Anti-Wokeness-Kulturkampf," *Monopol*, September 1, 2023, https://www.monopol-magazin.de/museum-safer-space-kommentar.

privilege, which thereby often end up unwelcoming and unsupportive for non-white audiences.

In the context of inevitable hierarchies, power dynamics, potentially conflictual encounters, mechanisms of exclusion, neoliberal co-option, and institutional tokenism, curatorial care needs to be a practice of responsibility: "To claim responsibility in recourse to the term *curare*, reconfirms an authority that offers protection, respect, and recognition on the one hand, but at the same time also determines the status and say or lack of say given those taken responsibility for."[516] As in the case of LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern, curatorial-care-as-responsibility can take the form of crafting spaces for encounters that pay specific attention to the lowering of barriers for audiences that are often structurally neglected within the arts.

Image 22. Andrea Francke's workshop area during the exhibition *(in)visible*, at the Showroom, London, 2012.

---

516. Von Bismarck and Meyer-Krahmer, eds., *Hospitality*, 8.

A further example of challenging structural exclusions in the arts is the project *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood* (2012) by the artist Andrea Francke (Image 22). Part of the Communal Knowledge programming at the Showroom in London, the project aimed at not only visiblising everyday caring labour but also providing support structures for audience members with caring responsibilities to be present in the space.[517] Francke's experience of becoming a mother while an art student at the city's Chelsea College of Art and Design shifted her attention to the lack of public concern and conversation around childcare as well as the provision of childcare as a prerequisite for cultural participation for the caregiver.[518] Francke's project at the Showroom directly continued a project she first set up during her master's exhibition, which included a temporary childcare space that was co-designed and co-run by other parents and nursery workers. The artists used old manuals from the 1960s and '70s to build unbranded, DIY toys to populate the space (Image 22). "The toys worked in a very similar way to adventure playground sites. We had very simple starting points, children and parents would build toys that would then be re-appropriated by the next visitors," the artist shares in retrospect.[519] Ultimately, the project was rooted in her personal experience as an art student who became a parent, yet we must acknowledge that her experience wasn't an isolated one but the product of structural deficiency in the arts and society at large. Francke explains:

> What really bothered me was that whenever I brought the subject up with the other students their reaction was that they didn't have children so they didn't care. Suddenly I was part of a different group called "parents" and I couldn't

---

517. The Showroom's Communal Knowledge program was a locally situated curatorial initiative that focused on London's culturally diverse Church Street area. Curated by Louise Shelley from its inception in 2010 until 2018, long-lasting relationships built between residents, artists, community groups, and organisations were enhanced through collective projects, such as gardening and zine-making, thereby regarding "each and every person involved in them as a collaborator." The artist-led project One of My Kind took place in 2017 and established collaborations with, among others, the self-organised migrant union Justice for Domestic Workers to develop pamphlets on education and survival. The different formats of Communal Knowledge were aimed at "finding ways to re-think or 'unlearn' established norms, values, codes, roles and relations, to create visibility, and to produce an alternative body of knowledge gained through communal activity and experience." See the Showroom, "Communal Knowledge," accessed February 24, 2024, https://www.theshowroom.org/programmes/communal-knowledge.
518. Andrea Francke, *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood: A Collection of Pragmatic Propositions for a Better Future* (London: The Showroom, 2012), 6.
519. Ibid.

make them see us. We were invisible and our struggles would remain invisible.[520]

The *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood* project, despite its temporariness, ought to remind us how we, as feminist curators, need to pay attention to a variety of social groups, even if we do not belong to those groups, and must craft accessible, relational, and structural support structures that allow for their presence in the arts. This understanding of curatorial-care-as-a-support-structure, particularly for caregivers, became a central method within my curatorial practice at M.1.

The understanding of curating as a supportive and affective relationship is also in close alliance with the notion of *affidamento* (entrustment), a concept and feminist practice that emerged from the Italian Milan Women's Bookstore Collective in the 1970s. As the feminist literary scholar Teresa de Lauretis describes it: "The relationship of entrustment is one in which one woman gives her trust or entrusts herself symbolically to another woman, who thus becomes her guide, mentor or point of reference – in short, the figure of symbolic mediation between her and the world."[521] However, this relationship of entrustment acknowledges disparities and is not merely built on similarities: "Both women engage in the relationship […] not in spite but rather because and in full recognition of the disparity that may exist between them in class or social position, age, level of education, professional status, income, etc."[522] The friendships among women that may emerge from relationships of entrustment can thus be seen as affective frameworks of learning, empowerment, and solidarity.

Curator and art historian Gabrielle Moser transfers this activist concept to the gallery space and argues that *affidamento*, as a curatorial methodology, "has the capacity to transform galleries into spaces where the generative potential of social differences is foregrounded – rather than repressed – and where intergenerational knowledge, and its attendant affects, can be shared."[523] Intergenerational encounter,

---

520. Ibid.
521. Teresa de Lauretis, quoted in Gabrielle Moser, "*Affidamento* as Curatorial Methodology: Feminist Approaches to Pedagogy and Curating in the work of EMILIA-AMALIA," *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 12, no. 2 (2023): 266.
522. De Lauretis, quoted in ibid.
523. De Lauretis, quoted in ibid, 266.

across differences of class, gender, and ethnic origins, also characterised the encounters at M.1, where participants ranged from toddler age to eighty-four years old, some with a background in arts, academia, or pedagogy, and others in farming, military service, or nursing. Their differences were not levelled but rather formed points of departure for debate, mutual learning, support, and, at times, the fostering of new friendships.

Approaches such as those of Francke and the praxis of *affidamento* were essential companions-in-spirit during my curatorial programming at M.1, as they provided legitimacy to depart from individual experiences and to set them in conversation with structural frameworks of discrimination – which need to be counteracted collectively. These artistic and curatorial methods also serve as examples to further scrutinise where curatorial care in the arts is directed, which social groups are the recipients of one's curatorial hospitality, and how to ensure the presence of those who are often left unseen or unrecognised. Similar to Francke, I aimed to counter the structural invisibilisation, isolation, and lack of support structures for caregivers within the arts by providing care for caregivers through my curatorial programming.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

In an effort of *practising-with*, I have introduced central practitioners from whom I have learned as a curator and a scholar, and with whom I regard my practice to be in alliance, in a spirit of companionship. We have considered multiple curatorial and artistic approaches and methods together – such as slow curating (Megan Johnston), post-representational curating (Nora Sternfeld), curatorial activism (Maura Reilly), caring activism (Elke Krasny), exhibition-as-alibi (ruangrupa), curating-as-improvisation (curators of BB11), the building of support structures (Andrea Francke, Céline Condorelli), and the practice of *affidamento* (Gabrielle Moser after the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective), as well as the multiple artistic and curatorial situated examples of Casa Gallina (Mexico City), HOMEBAKED (Liverpool), and Park Fiction (Hamburg); the various practices of *Arte Útil* (around Tania Bruguera); and my proposition of *Curaduría Útil*. These approaches provide a rich array of inspirational

sources and tools that have greatly co-shaped my curatorial practice and those of others in the field. They form part of a framework of companions in thought and in practice who have tested and advanced artistic and curatorial approaches and methodologies in regard to care, hospitality, democratic principles, social processes, ephemerality, self-organisation, and feminist counter-practices – and who have countered the co-option of these by art institutions who adhere to these methods only to boost their image and institutional prestige.[524]

As indicated at the beginning of the chapter, my identification with the term "curator" was not a given and required an active process of rearticulating, both in thought and in practice, what a curatorial practice of care could look like in the specific instance of my artistic directorship at M.1 in 2019–20. Building from the above theoretical and practice-based companions has allowed me to reframe what curating entails: curating with care as a relational, useful, affective activity and ethicopolitical practice goes beyond the historically grown focus on the curatorial care for objects; rather, it shifts its intention towards curatorial care for artists, participants, collaborators, audience and community members, and fellow curators – a process that is enmeshed with physical-material manifestations of the related social and artistic processes. This dedication to networks, assemblies, and encounters turns the social sphere into the fabric of a radically relational curatorial practice for which and from which it builds support structures for artistic production and communal growth.

The processual nature of relational curating made it such that the act of searching for companionship was ongoing and continued throughout the programming at M.1, and beyond. The next part of the chapter provides a detailed introduction to the geographical context as well as the concept and formats of the curatorial programming that emerged from these relational webs of companionship. This introduction is followed by a critical reflection on the programme's successes and limitations as part of a relational curatorial practice with care.

---

524. Von Bismarck and Meyer-Krahmer, eds., *Hospitality*, 11.

4.2   Care for Caregivers: A Case Study of a Participatory Curatorial Programme on Care

The practice-based aspect of this doctoral thesis comprises my curatorial practice as the artistic director 2019–20 of M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in rural Northern Germany. In parallel to entering my PhD programme in late 2018, I began my twenty-month curatorial position at M.1, which ran from January 2019 to October 2021 – and therefore was struck, midway, by the Covid-19 pandemic.[525]

For this research-creation, my curatorial cycle at M.1 serves as a case study to further investigate the prospects and challenges of a curatorial practice dedicated to care and to retrieve useful knowledge for the curatorial and research community. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the background of the curatorial programme and the curatorial concept, and I also introduce central formats of the curatorial cycle through outlining several examples. As established in the previous sections, I sought to explore the potential of curating as a relational practice of care towards artistic and sociopolitical processes in the framework of the curatorial cycle at M.1 – and thereby I aimed to foster caring alliances, and to counter-hegemonic patterns of relating to one another.

Together, the contextual, conceptual, and practice-based sections of this chapter form the basis for the subsequent chapter, in which I explore the notions, shapes, and agencies of caring infrastructures. While the term "caring infrastructure" was already present as a conceptual notion (and a title) for the curatorial formats at M.1 and Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, it came to be a central thought vehicle throughout my research as well as in my ongoing curatorial practice, through which I aim to mobilise curatorial care as an infrastructural, political practice. Within that framework, the case study serves as in-depth analysis of curatorial methodologies of care, which I derived from this situated practice. I then formulate propositions on *how* to practise curatorial care – with the aim of highlighting the value of the case study

---

525. The curatorial cycle was originally intended to last eighteen months. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was extended for another two months, which we had hoped would provide us with enough time to repeat the closing programming on-site after the first lockdown.

as a knowledge-producing curatorial process.[526]

Due to the space limitations of this doctoral dissertation, the presentation of the curatorial formats occurs through selected examples; the full overview of each public format can be found in the appendix.[527]

4.2.1   Notes on Locality

For the participatory, site-specific curatorial programme I developed at M.1, the municipality of Hohenlockstedt, with its six thousand residents, constituted the social, political, and spatial context. In the 1950s, the former army camp Lockstedter Lager acquired a civilian name – Hohenlockstedt (Holo, for short) – but it continues to be characterised by its military past both architecturally and in terms of its social order. While rurally located, Holo is located in a central axis between urban hubs: the distance to both Kiel to the north and Hamburg to the south is around eighty kilometres. In a sense, Holo lies in the geographic heart of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, yet it is rather remote from central infrastructural nodes, requiring car or bus connections from the closest train stations. Politically, the region shows a mix of social-democratic and conservative forces, as 31 percent of the votes in the most recent local elections went to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and 24 percent to the Social Democratic Party (SPD).[528] Interestingly, the local grassroots initiative Bürger für Hohenlockstedt (Citizens for Hohenlockstedt; BFH Holo)[529] received almost 42 percent of votes in 2023, more than the two established national parties. BFH Holo seeks to strengthen local clubs and networks and to invest in the maintenance of public pools, sports centres, the youth centre, and the night taxi that connects the town with the surrounding villages and train stations. This

---

526. The reflective knowledge derived from the case study is laid out in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures."
527. See appendix, section A.
528. Der Landeswahlleiter des Landes Schleswig-Holstein, "Amtliches Endergebnis: Gemeinde Hohenlockstedt," Wahlen SH, May 2023, https://www.wahlen-sh.de/grw/gemeindewahlen_gemeinde_010615189042.html.
529. BfH – Bürger für Hohenlockstedt, "Dafür steht die BfH," 2023, https://bfh-holo.de/ueber-uns/dafuer-steht-die-bfh/.

emphasis on communal infrastructures, get-togethers, exchange, and the celebration of "village life" was also a central experience upon my arrival to Holo as a newcomer.

However, upon my arrival, I had several informal conversations with town residents and learned from Hohenlockstedters that, unlike the other surrounding villages, Holo did not have a town hall, and that generally there was a lack of meeting spaces where community would be able to come together without restrictive costs or logistics associated with it.[530] The highly active associations and clubs as well as various church groups usually had their own established spaces. But smaller clubs – especially those unaffiliated with religion or established trans-regional associations – had difficulty finding meeting spaces, particularly since more and more pubs and restaurants in the village were shuttering. It was therefore important to me to deeply consider the possibilities for curating as a relational praxis that, in Holo, would attempt to create non-hierarchical spaces for encounter, to make support structures in the social sphere visible, and to strengthen and expand these. The idea was to open up alternative collective pathways of action that would counteract the societal marginalisation of care work and to propose a platform for solidarity and collective care that could live on even after my curatorial cycle had ended. In the later section "Dis/continuities" (4.5), I reflect on the potential reasons why this plan did not occur as intended.

4.2.2   Notes on Community Building

The curatorial programming followed the immanent urgencies, attachments, and necessities that unfolded throughout the process and also explored the intersections where I sensed that my own personal experience in regard to care work was in resonance with that of the local participants. It was important to me that the programme speak to the people – above all, to those who were performing care work in a wide variety of forms – and that their themes be heard, meaning that the

---

530. For more information on the informal conversations, see the upcoming section 4.2.2 – "Notes on Community Building."

questions of exploration should not be far removed from the participants' day-to-day lives, instead finding their origin therein.[531] Even if the conception and organisation of the events were to be designed institutionally, the programme arose from togetherness: exchange, assembly, and participation were central from the beginning. Hence, without the participants' regular attendance, without their contributions in both action and thought, the programme would have missed its mark.[532]

In order to let the programme emerge from the community rather than imposing it from the outside, I moved to Hohenlockstedt for four months when my official appointment began – with my then three-year-old son and with my almost eighty-year-old grandfather as support – to investigate: *What does care mean in Hohenlockstedt? Who looks after whom, and in what form?*

I began by setting up informal interviews with residents from Holo and the wider region. First, the M.1 team pointed me to regular visitors who also performed different kinds of care – as parents, as community organisers, as volunteers. Through active listening to their stories and their backgrounds, I slowly established a better sense of the place and its people in relation to care. Through these conversations, I was also introduced into a relational web of community carers, as one conversation partners would often point me to other relevant figures in town. These conversations weren't academic or formalised in any way; they were rather an open invitation to enter into conversation with a newcomer to town who was interested in establishing a participatory framework. The conversations also weren't limited to a specific time period but rather were an ongoing part of the curatorial process. I sat in the schoolmasters' office to learn about local youth engagement; I sat in a farmer's kitchen to discuss how she and I would collaborate on homemade food for one of our events; I sat on an elderly woman's veranda eating a dessert which she had made from herbs and flowers from her garden, learning about her life as a teacher, as a community organiser, as a mother of five, and as a herbal expert;

---

531. I first presented this passage in Sascia Bailer, *Curating, Care, and Corona*, Kuratieren #6 (Hohenlockstedt, Germany: Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).
532. This also comes from ibid.

and I sat at a table with a group of retirees during a women's-only brunch, which was organised by a church. I also attended mother-and-baby group meetings and *Kontakt Cafés* (conversation cafés) for migrant women; I visited other art-, care-, and dis*ability-related projects in the wider region; and I joined traditional public events around town.

These conversations allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the local context that I was immersing myself – and my curatorial project – in. However, it did not lead to an immediate audience for my curatorial programming. The building of trust with individual members of the audience, and the removal of barriers to access, required substantial time resources, which became a central part of my curatorial work. In my notes, I remarked:

Generally, I think it's really beautiful to see that after half a year of my job there, I actually managed to establish a sense of community, a sense of belonging and a platform for exchange, learning and community organising. This is a really rewarding experience.[533]

However, the path up until that moment had been tiring and often felt very dire. The following excerpt from my field notes traces the difficulties in establishing a community of local caregivers who were open to connecting and engaging with these subjects within an arts context:

The last few days before the workshop with Shira Richter [the second workshop in the programme][534] were quite nerve-wracking: for a long time, we only had four registrations. And, of course, I had done quite some financial stretching to get an international artist from Israel to Hohenlockstedt. I felt like I had done everything I could to get more registrations: I posted it in many different Facebook groups, had gone to intercultural women's meetings, had personally reached out to the attendants of the last workshop, had sent out 1,000 flyers to regional organisations, had specifically researched and contacted academic institutes with a gender focus, had distributed the flyers to strangers on playgrounds. It was only last-

---

533. Field notes, August 29, 2019; see also appendix, section C.
534. A full overview of the curatorial programming is presented in section 4.4 – "Evolution of a Curatorial Conception."

minute that a few more registrations came in. In the end, we were around ten participants with a very wide background in age, culture, and experiences. One elderly couple from Holo had joined who weren't always easy in their approach and their specific needs, but throughout the course of the workshop I really began to value their presence. They were really open about their dis*abilities, which created a safe space where people would be allowed to make themselves vulnerable; one of them was also the only man who attended the entire workshop. About an hour into the workshop, another Jewish male from Israel joined; he was the main caregivers of his two children. He then actually had to leave quite early – because of his care duties at home. One other female attendant had already been there for the motherhood workshop, and it was great to see her again in this workshop. Two other women were students from the Hamburg-based art school [HFBK University of Fine Arts Hamburg] and came for our joint archival project.[535] *One woman had travelled eight hours by train to join our workshop – she is a single mother and brought her five-year-old daughter. Their vacation had been cancelled, so they used their vacation time and budget to join this workshop.*

[…] The next day, two participants from the previous day couldn't join anymore, but three new participants showed up. […] After the workshop, some participants stayed longer and had more in-depth conversations with Shira and with other group members, some already signed up for the next workshop … all in all, it all went really well and it was a great, emotionally engaging, and intellectually stimulating workshop![536]

This excerpt shows the anxiety, the affective effort, the invisible labour, and the ongoing uncertainty that sustains a curatorial labour of care. Every upcoming workshop required me to re-engage with potential audiences that were specific to the focus of the artist's workshop (as a workshop on isolation might attract a different audience than a workshop on motherhood). This labour – curating the potential audience for each event – was tiring and time-consuming, but it formed the basis of

---

535. This project was called *Archive of Encounters*, upon which I elaborate in section 4.4.4 – "ART: Discourse & Artistic Production on Care."
536. Field notes, July 9, 2019; see also appendix, section C.

the relational-curatorial programming itself and hence was nothing to compromise on. The social engagement of a situated curatorial practice is to be honoured and cannot be detached from framing one's curatorial practice as one of hospitality.[537]

Over the course of the curatorial cycle at M.1, a steady group of "regulars" was built, which also brought in new members through word of mouth. This group provided consistency over the different formats (e.g., the workshop series and the storytelling cafés) without becoming a closed group lacking malleability to incorporate new participants and perspectives.

Image 23. Participants share lunch during the "Workshop on Trust" with Myriam Lefkowitz, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

---

537. For further discussion on the ambivalences of hospitality within curatorial practice, refer to section 4.1.3 – "On Hospitality, Inclusion, and *Affidamento.*" Further, I suggest the publication by Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, eds., *Hospitality: Hosting Relations in Exhibitions* (London: Sternberg, 2016).

4.2.3   Notes on Retelling the Process

Since it is not possible to reconstruct – and make fully accessible – two years of ephemeral events, conversations, and exhibitions, this account must take a fragmentary form. However, these retrospective fragments are intentional and rooted in honesty – a methodological approach for artistic research that has been articulated by the cultural studies scholar Anke Haarmann. She suggests an understanding of the methodological demands placed on artistic research as being similar to those placed on philosophy: "both do not follow a pre-set canon of rules and a catalogue of methods, but rather develop their respective methodology from the researching question and practice itself, but with the claim of the highest consistency."[538] Haarmann emphasises the importance of making the research-creation process accessible. For this, she uses the German term *Nachvollziehbarkeit*, which could translate to "transparency" or "comprehensibility," a notion that seems to resonate with Natalie Loveless's conceptualisations of curiosity-driven research, which should embrace the "premise of and promise of radical (emergent) honesty."[539]

Not only was my research process driven by curiosity, as well as the erotic (in Audre Lorde's sense), the necessities of the moment, the circumstances of the pandemic, and intuitive and improvised actions, as I elaborated in my methodology section – but my curatorial process also followed these approaches. I therefore deem it necessary to make this process transparent and comprehensive through an honest rapport, rather than forcing it into "remarkably unreflective methodological corsets"[540] for the sake of the institutionalisation of curatorial and artistic research.

This approach challenges long-standing traditions within artistic production, which historically has relied on the "incomprehensibility of its genesis" to make it

---

538. Anke Haarmann, "Künstlerische Praxis als methodische Forschung? Zur kunsthistorischen Ermöglichung einer künstlerischen Forschung," Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ästhetik, September 2011, http://www.dgae.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Haarmann.pdf.
539. Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 64.
540. Haarmann, "Künstlerische Praxis als methodische Forschung?," 7. My translation.

"mysterious and mystical," as Haarmann argues.[541] According to her research, it was particularly the conceptual art of the twentieth century that began to incorporate the process of production into the artistic work itself, making it perceptible and comprehensible to the viewer.[542] She therefore argues for "individual, concrete, artistic, conceptual works, to work out their methodological strategies in terms of production aesthetics, not prescriptively but *retrospectively*, and at the same time to examine them critically in terms of their immanent stringency."[543]

I want to stress the importance of reconfiguring the narrative of research-creation *retrospectively*, rather than following the pretence of a predefined, rigid lineage that one can simply put into action. It is precisely this retrospective investigation of the curatorial process – grounded in "radical honesty" – which I aim for in this practice-based dissertation, and thereby a refusal to shy away from difficult topics, conflicts, or tensions.

The curatorial cycle at M.1 included seventeen workshops, seven newly produced artworks (including film, performance, and audio pieces), four publication launches, six conversations and talks, four performances, two exhibitions or displays of artworks, and three screenings of artists films. As mentioned, attempting to discuss and reflect on each programme point individually would exhaust the format of this dissertation. Thus I return to Jane Gallop's "anecdotal theory" as a way to shift focus onto key moments, which I will examine more closely and set into conjunction with other highlighted moments as a way to provide a sense of the theoretical and knowledge-producing value that derives from these encounters. This approach also grants legitimacy to retell "the story of the curatorial programming" from my own lived experience, from the "view of the body," to return to Donna Haraway. This element is crucial, as it rejects the implicit claim that there exists an objective perspective through which to narrate past events. The retelling of the story of the curatorial cycle is, rather, rooted within personal lived experience,[544] it is retrospective, it is

---

541. Ibid., 5.
542. Ibid., 7.
543. Ibid., 5. My emphasis.
544. As previously elaborated on in the introduction to this dissertation, see specifically page 41 and onwards.

fragmentary, it is anecdotal, and yet it is honest in its refusal to shy away from difficult aspects.

By shedding light on specific aspects, situations, and perspectives of and around the curatorial programming at M.1, I aim to fuse the *anecdotal* character of the narrative with a reflective and critical impetus, in order to turn the process into a series of knowledge-producing acts.[545] My curatorial practice allowed me to work through difficult curatorial questions – in practice – which gave way to a reflective abstraction and possible theorising around curatorial practices of care. I share the learnings from this curatorial process in the upcoming chapters.

In sum, the presented approaches to curatorial-process-as-method can be regarded as reflective, retrospective considerations that aid in shaping and making transparent and comprehensible to the reader the curatorial-artistic processes that laid the ground for the programme. I have used the three introductory sections of this chapter to provide a contextual sense of the setting in which the curatorial practice took place, and in the subsequent sections I share an overview of the curatorial formats, followed by a detailed reflection on the curatorial methodologies in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures," which entails propositions for how to enact a curatorial practice of care.

---

545. This can be seen in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures" and chapter 6 – "Limits of Curatorial Care."

4.3   Evolution of a Curatorial Concept

My appointment as artistic director at M.1 during 2019–20 was preceded by an open call, to which I responded with a two-page concept of what I envisioned for my eighteenth-month curatorial residency (due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the term was extended by two months). To begin, I want to share the initial curatorial concept, as it builds the foundation for the curatorial programming, which I introduce in later sections.

4.3.1   Initial Curatorial Concept

Who Cares?
Visibility and Networking for Caregivers in Hohenlockstedt

Poverty among the elderly and children, a shortage of trained workers, a lack of day care spaces, abuse of caregivers, burnout among single parents, neglected nursing home residents – in short, care is in a deep crisis that is not necessarily new. In contrast to German, there is the succinct term "care/to care" in English, which encompasses all caregivers who give their care and nurture others: parents, relative caregivers, kindergarten teachers, and so on. Care work – whether within an institution or as "domestic work" – often remains invisible in the public sphere, creating social and economic precarity in the process. A new study by the Bertelsmann Foundation shows: "The situation is particularly drastic for single parents. If their poverty risk rate was 46 percent according to earlier calculations – and thus already very high – it is 68 percent based on the new method."[546] In view of

---

546. Anette Stein, and Antje Funcke, "Viele Familien ärmer als bislang gedacht," Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018, https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2018/februar/viele-familien-aermer-als-bislang-gedacht.

this social emergency, relatively little has been stirred up in politics and among the public. One would almost like to ask: Who cares?

It is possibly the art context that can develop new strategies for approaching this complex topic. Interestingly enough, the term "care" has increasingly appeared in this context in recent years, which relates to the etymological origins of the word "curate" (*curare* (Lat.) = to take care of, to nurture). The Swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist outlines this change in an interview with the *Guardian* (2014): "In Roman times, it [curation] meant to take care of the bath houses. In medieval times, it designated the priest who cared for souls. Later, in the 18th century, it meant looking after collections of art and artifacts."[547] Contemporary curatorial practice has increasingly opened up to sociopolitical themes that explore the boundaries between art and society. Viennese curator Elke Krasny describes curating as a "radical relational practice" that addresses social, political, and economic issues from the inside and participates in and drives processes of change.[548] The New York–based curator Maura Reilly even speaks of the need for a "curatorial activism" by which social injustices can be settled through critical curating that focuses on diversity and equality.[549]

As a single mother and interdisciplinary cultural practitioner working at the intersections of art, social justice, and urban space, I am interested in this very tension between care as a social activity and care as activist curating. How can curatorial practice relate to the crisis of care; make visible the invisibility of care, whether that of single parents, relatives, or paid caregivers; and weave new patterns of relationships that counteract the marginality and isolation of caregivers? It is in this context that curation, as a radical relational practice, has the opportunity to test its activist potential by producing care for caregivers – creating relationships, networks,

---

547. Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Hans Ulrich Obrist: The Art of Curation," interview by Stuart Jeffries and Nancy Groves, *Guardian*, March 23, 2014.
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/23/hans-ulrich-obrist-art-curator.
548. Elke Krasny, Urban Curators at Work – A Real-Imagined Historiography," in *Planning Unplanned – Towards a New Positioning of Art in the Context of Urban Development*, ed. Barbara Holub and Christine Hohenbüchler (Vienna: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2015), 119–32.
549. Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018).

exchanges, alliances, and visibilities.

As Mexican curator Osvaldo Sánchez said in one of his recent lectures, the political lies in the specific.[550] So what might such a curatorial practice as care look like in the context of Hohenlockstedt? Who are the caregivers in this community of six thousand inhabitants? What is the status of care in the public life of Hohenlockstedt, and what synergies, platforms and alliances are still necessary to support caregivers in their work and possibly also to enable transregional associations?

What stories are hidden behind the 13 percent of single parents, or behind the nearly 60 percent who represent the ageing portion of the community? And who are the 3 percent of people who came to Hohenlockstedt from abroad?[551] Who is involved in the lively club life of the Housewives' Union, the Old and Young Leisure Association, the Hohenlockstedt Rural Women's Association? Who is part of the Association for the Hard of Hearing, the Kellinghusen/Hohenlockstedt Social Association, or the Senior Citizens' Advisory Council? And who feels excluded – whose needs are perhaps not represented? Is there any exchange between the individual associations?

To nourish these questions, I would like to take M.1 LOKAL [M.1's community engagement programme] as a starting point for my research-based curatorial practice. With its already existing social structures, it offers space to get to know the residents, their stories, and their already existing engagements and to build on it through joint activities. From here, new social webs can emerge, allowing me to participate in the community's associational life, for example. The institution's curatorial programme would build on this participatory, relational process, developing formats that address local needs – and create visibilities for them.

This participatory process will be supported by bringing in relevant artistic-

---

550. FABRIC for Schöpflin Stiftung, "Event: Talk with Osvaldo Sanchez about Casa Gallina in Mexico City," February 10, 2018. https://fabric.place/fabric-talks-february-8-to-10-park-fiction-exrotaprint-casa-gallina-sak-loerrach/.

551. Zensus Datenbank, "Zensus 2011: Hohenlockstedt," accessed July 14, 2023, https://ergebnisse2011.zensus2022.de/datenbank/online?operation=find&suchanweisung_language=de&query=Hohenlockstedt#abreadcrumb.

curatorial actors through lectures and workshops to exchange ideas with Hohenlockstedt residents. Possible guests could be, for example, the Hamburg urban artist Christoph Schäfer, the socially engaged curator Elke Krasny, or the founders of the initiative Radical Practices of Collective Care.[552]

Since the process is – and must be – an open one, the outcome cannot be predicted. It may be a workshop series, a multigenerational house, a mutually supportive programme for single parents, a platform for new work formats around the county, an intergenerational language club, or a cultural programme compatible with caregiver hours. Whether these processes are made visible in a final symposium, a summer festival, an online platform, or a (travelling) exhibition is ultimately dictated by the process that precedes them. In this sense, curating is taken seriously as a relational practice that aims to make care tangible and visible for caregivers.

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE:

1st semester (January–June 2019): Research & Exchange
Getting to know each other
At events that are part of M.1 LOKAL (esp. cooking club, film club, and village magazine). Based on this, contacts can be made through the club and in the public space of the community. The premises of M.1 are used for this purpose.

Research & exchange

In parallel, I would like to undertake international research on artistic-curatorial positions that deal with the topic of caregiving. I would like to make this research publicly available and, based on it, initiate a series of events that will bring the project-makers into exchange with Hohenlockstedt residents.

Articulating wishes together

From the phase of getting to know each other and exchanging ideas, a solid basis of

---

552. Radical Collective of Care, "Building Power in a Crisis of Social Reproduction," 2016, http://radicalcollectivecare.blogspot.de.

trust is to be created in the first few months. Needs, wishes, and public failures in the care sector may be articulated and alternatives thought about together.

2nd semester (July–December 2019): Planning & Implementation
From needs to concrete actions
From the ideas collected, joint approaches to solutions are forged, leading to concrete project planning, including time and budget planning. Subsequently, the joint implementation of the project(s) begins.

3rd semester (January–June 2020): Sharing Experiences & Creating Visibilities
Create continuity & visibilities for projects
The process will be published on the website and possibly in a small publication. At the end, an exhibition with symposium and/or closing festival that shows the experiences of the past year and at the same time can act as a networking opportunity with other actors. The public formats will be developed participatively in the course of the project. Projects must be solidified by then so that they can be carried forward by the community itself.

In retrospect, the key questions and topics which I laid out in my initial concept (written in February 2018) remained more or less the same in the actual programming, and would also become central to my PhD research. As I unfolded my curatorial position at M.1, I had to recalibrate this initial concept and test its feasibility – and value – for the respective context.

4.3.2　　Scales of Care: Overview of the Curatorial Cycle

I may have already arrived to Hohenlockstedt with a heightened sensitivity towards locality, relations across scales, and networked infrastructures in relation to the position of artistic director.[553] However, the decision on the specific formats, events, invited artists, and temporalities of the curatorial programming remained open. In this initial phase of conceptualisation, I conceived of "scale" as an organising principle of the programming, moving from the immediate and the local, via the regional, and towards more transregional networks and support structures. This approach regarded the local as the space of agency from which to connect to a wider range of actors, networks, and discourses. It also countered the hegemonic logic by which the rural is perceived as "inferior" to urban cultural hubs – whereby the rural realm is not considered to be a producer of knowledge or cultural practice but rather, at most, the receiver.[554]

For the twenty-month curatorial cycle, I developed three conceptual programming streams under which I organised the different formats: I. LOCAL: Care for Caregivers, II. ART: Discourse & Artistic Production on *Care*, and III. FUTURE: Collectively Building Future Support Structures (Image 24). The different programme streams were not detached from one another; rather, there were interrelations among the artists and audiences involved and the themes negotiated. In the following sections, I present curatorial examples of each of the programming streams.

---

553. For a contextual introduction to relational artistic and curatorial practices, see the first part of chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."
554. For further discussion on the rural and the margins, see Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "From the Margins," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (August 1994): 279–97.

I. LOCAL

Care for Caregivers

Care-work is diverse, but the problems are often the same: chronic overload, lack of self-care, increased isolation. The same issuesare also present in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. In a series of workshops led by (inter-)national artists, these themes are in the foreground. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local caregivers will be made possible -- and care will be provided for those people who mostly care for others.

Care for Caregivers

MAY 2019 - DEC 2019

Social Muscle Club

JAN 1

II. ART

Exhibitions & Artistic Production on *Care*

Within the realm of artistic freedom, new strategies can be developed to address these complex issues around Care. Artistic practice that is located at the interface of social reproduction and social justice is our main focus. Through theme-specific prizes, artistic interventions, exhibitions and collaborations with regional art academies we support curatorial and artistic practice on Care.

Archive of Encounters

APR 2019 - JUN 2020

Exhibition: Advancement Awardees 2019/20

MAY 2020 - JUN 2020

III. FUTURE

Collectively building future support structures

Considering the alarming state of contemporary social conditions, relatively little action is taken by public organizations and political actors. One has to ask: Who cares?
Various positions from art, activism, academiaand society are to be brought together in order to think about a future of solidarity in our society across all sectors. What support structures are needed in art and society to make inclusion and equality a reality? Which approaches already exist, which deficits are hardly questioned?

Holo Miteinander

FEB 2020 - JUN 2020

Caring Infrastructures

JUN 2020

Image 24. Sascia Bailer, "Artistic Direction 2019/20: CARE," overview of curatorial concept for M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt (screenshot from M.1's website).

4.3.3   LOCAL: Care for Caregivers

Image 25. A local resident passes by M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, featuring large banners that ask: "Who cares for caregivers?," 2019. Drawing: Katharina Bruderhofer. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

"Who cares for caregivers?" was written in bold letters on large yellow banners that hung in the front windows of M.1, inviting passers-by to reflect on this question (Image 25). This question was central to the overall curatorial cycle, but particularly to the first section of the programme, which departed from the dilemma that careworkers suffer from chronic overload, lack of self-care, and increased isolation – issues that were equally present in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. In a series of six workshops led by national and international artists, these issues were foregrounded on a monthly basis. The aim was to provide the participants – all of whom performed care work in their private or professional lives – with tools and knowledge that they could integrate into their everyday lives. The intention was to

foster the recognition, exchange, and networking of local caregivers and to provide a sense of care for those people who primarily cared for others.

Image 26. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Bettina Winkler-Marxen.

Part of this programme stream was the opening event "Social Muscle Club" (April 2019), which invited the residents of Hohenlockstedt to come together in a celebratory and easygoing atmosphere to train one's skills of giving and taking (a.k.a. their "social muscles") (Images 26–30). Jill Emerson, an artist and co-founder of this initiative, ran this first "Social Muscle Club" – whose motto is "Training our social muscles: Practising giving and taking" – in Hohenlockstedt. At this opening event for the curatorial programme, over one hundred people formed several small exchange groups as part of moderated roundtable discussions. Gestures, assistance, and objects were offered and accepted as part of an activity where participants wrote their wishes, as well as what they were able and willing to give, on

slips of paper. Thus a micro social network was constructed that transcended the space of the art institution, thanks to the appointments made between people – to take walks together, play chess, mow the lawn, or practice Spanish. Some months after the "Social Muscle Club," I met two older women whom I had sat next to at a table. I was delighted to see them again. They explained to me that they had become friends at the event and now took walks together regularly. This outcome makes clear how this experiment served as an invitation to strengthen actions of solidarity in everyday life at a local level, including the possibility for new encounters to produce relationships of care. This festive get-together served as a successful icebreaker between myself as a newcomer with a new curatorial agenda ("care"), invited artists, and the local audiences. Thus the "Social Muscle Club" paved the way for the participatory framework of the upcoming twenty-month curatorial programme.

Image 27. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 28. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 29. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 30. Offers that were left untaken at "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

To engage with the central question of the curatorial cycle – and to curatorially address the societal urgencies around care, as laid out in the introductory chapter – I initiated the workshop series "Care for Caregivers" (May–November 2019).[555] Six workshops directed by international artists – Liz Rech and Annika Scharm, Shira Richter, Manuela Zechner, Myriam Lefkowitz, GRAND BEAUTY (Frauke Frech and Hengame Sadeghi), and Julieta Aranda – addressed themes such as trust, isolation, collective self-care, role expectations, value, and recognition, and thus created a space for exchange, alliance, and the visibilisation of care work.

The workshop series formed part of a participatory, locally situated curatorial programme that aimed to explore the relationship and the agency that might derive from the coupling of curating and care. With this goal in mind, I engaged in practice with the theoretical tensions between gender, curating, care, and participation.[556]

Image 31. Workshop participants sharing lunch in the garden at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

555. Sascia Bailer, for M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. "Artistic Direction 2019/20: Care," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, http://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/2019-2020.
556. I sketched out this relation in the previous chapter 3 – "Histories of a Contested Terrain: Curatorial Care."

Over the course of half a year, M.1 hosted one workshop per month, which took place on a weekend and lasted either one or two days (from 11am to 4pm), with a shared lunch break. The number of the participants was usually limited to twenty, and the average number of participants ranged between ten and fifteen, spanning an age range of fifteen to eighty-four years. Due to free on-site childcare, a number of children of all ages were always present, as well as, at times, teenagers with dis*abilities. Each workshop addressed a different topic, which corresponded to what had surfaced as a relevant theme during my research phase and for which I invited artists who work with these topics. Sometimes, the focus of the theme changed slightly through conversation with the artist, to better suit their interests and expertise. Together, we would formulate a central question for each workshop, which then was used as the opening line for each workshop's invitation leaflet.

Image 32. Leaflet for Liz Rech and Annika Scharm's "Workshop on Motherhood," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

For example, the initial workshop of the series (in May 2019) addressed the tensions between liberating and oppressive categories related to motherhood by

asking: "Which role expectations do we live as mothers and which ones would we like to put forward?" (Image 32). Directed by the Hamburg-based performance artists Liz Rech and Annika Scharm, the participants were invited to question societal role models for motherhood. Both artists spoke from a feminist position as mothers, as creatives with caring responsibilities, and as initiators of research-based performance projects that critically address reproductive labour within society.[557]

The two facilitating artists invited the ten participants from the region around Hohenlockstedt to performatively explore their everyday lives through artistic exercises using their voices and bodies, and to challenge existing narratives around motherhood (Images 33 and 34). Since the participants brought highly diverse approaches to motherhood (adoption, stepmotherhood, single motherhood, consciously without children), the result was an inspiring engagement with the ambivalent relationship between notions of care and motherhood.

---

557. Taking their feminist approaches into consideration, they seem to stem from an understanding of the theoretical tensions around care work, gender, and feminist practices that I sketched out in chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands." The two performance artists Liz Rech and Annika Scharm, together with Nora Elberfeld, Angela Kecinski, Hannah Kowalski, Sylvi Kretschmar, Teresa Monfared, and Regina Rossi, continued to collaborate around questions of motherhood in their ongoing performative research project BEYOND RE:production. See the project webpage at https://motheringintheperformingarts.wordpress.com

Image 33. Exercises with voice and body, facilitated by Liz Rech and Annika Scharm as part of the "Workshop on Motherhood," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 34. Facilitated role-play to collectively reflect on practices of motherhood, facilitated by Liz Rech and Annika Scharm as part of the "Workshop on Motherhood," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Other events of the series also aimed, like the workshop on motherhood, at challenging common understandings of a range of notions related to caring responsibilities. In the workshop "Vegetable Resistance – What Are We Seeds For?," run by Julieta Aranda, it was the question of time, as a political aspect of caregiving, that we critically explored. The invitation card asked: "What kind of future is dormant in us?" (Image 35).

Image 35. Leaflet for Julieta Aranda's "Workshop on Time," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

The two-day workshop departed from the premise that time is socially constructed and culturally charged, particularly within the framework of neoliberalism. The artist expanded on the capitalist version of time as productivity, which renders non-productive moments as a "waste of time." With a mix of seriousness and irony, Aranda shared with the participants that she was only interested in "wasting time together," as an anti-neoliberal practice. After an intensely

discursive first day, which also included collective reading sessions of writings by the science-fiction novelist Ursula K. Le Guin and the viewing of political cinema, the second day was dedicated to collective cooking (Image 36). Here, children were explicitly welcome, and the artist announced that this part of the workshop was a way to politicise time by spending it collectively and making it unproductive in neoliberal terms:

> On the second day we will cook together with our children. We will take a closer look at our ingredients in order to make abstract concepts of time more accessible: What potential lies dormant in a seed (immanence), which later becomes apparent, for example, in the form of a carrot (latency)? How can we take this as a starting point to think anew about our hidden potentials and aim for a future that lets us grow? And how do we ourselves become time, a time that is our own?[558]

Image 36. Collective cooking session, facilitated by Julieta Aranda as part of the "Workshop on Time," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

---

558. For a full workshop description, see M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "A Workshop on Time by Julieta Aranda: Vegetable Resistance – What are We Seeds For?," 2019, https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/kalender/2019/11/23/ein-workshop-zum-thema-zeit/.

For a moment, I want to home in on the notion of "a time that is our own." It is around this notion that various strands of gendered, societal, and economic pressures overlap to make time within the cultural sphere not only political but also a sensitive matter. It is a question of power and agency – how much "free time" one has access to and how one's time is divided between paid labour, unpaid domestic labour, and leisure and recovery time.[559]

It is precisely this fragile junction between phases of recovery, agency, and collective well-being in a diminishing environment that makes the question of self-care a political one. This relationship between care for others and care for the self was explored in the workshop "Collective Self-Care," run by two members of GRAND BEAUTY from Leipzig, an intercultural beauty salon, in which care experts both with and without migration backgrounds, autodidacts, and beauty professionals work together.[560] For their workshop at M.1 in October 2020, they posed the central question: "What kind of relationship do you have with yourself and what kind of relationship does this allow you to foster with your peers?" This query also highlights the correlation between individual and collective well-being (Image 37). In particular, the context of caregivers, who have the tendency to neglect their own needs in favour of the care-receiver's, was made central.

Through conversations, mindfulness exercises, and collective mapping sessions, the participants were invited to explore their own needs. In the workshop's second part, the participants came together to explore self-made beauty treatments. Using ingredients that can be found anywhere, whether in Hohenlockstedt or Karachi, the participants produced their own masks for hair and face, beauty drinks, and special treatments for teeth and nails. For me, the beauty of this day lay in the encounter between students in their early twenties with participants in their sixties, seventies, and mid-eighties; between Afghan and former East and West German

559. Teresa Bücker, *Alle_Zeit: Eine Frage von Macht und Freiheit. Wie eine radikal neue, sozial gerechtere Zeitkultur aussehen kann* (Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlag, 2022).
560. More information on GRAND BEAUTY is available at their website, "Our Care Offer for This Society," accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.grandbeautyontour.org/was-wir-wollen. https://www.grandbeautyontour.org/was-wir-wollen.

women; and between the two participating men. The latter pair discussed the lack of conversation about "caring masculinities" and the internalised toxic patterns of masculinity that insist on the totalising narrative of "strength," which doesn't provide space for male vulnerability, care, or self-preservation.[561]

Image 37. Leaflet for GRAND BEAUTY's "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Hengame Sadeghi, who co-hosted the workshop together with GRAND BEAUTY founding director, Frauke Frech, spoke to the political importance of creating safe spaces for women in Afghanistan, Sadeghi's home country, where they are able to tend to their needs. As a member of GRAND BEAUTY, Sadeghi shares how beauty rituals provided a safe space for women in Afghanistan and how this coming together of women only, in a separate room, was a source from which they

---

561. For further reference, see Karla Elliott "Caring Masculinities: Theorizing an Emerging Concept," *Men and Masculinities* 19, no. 3 (2015): 240–59.

derived the energy and mental strength to continue everyday life in a conflict-ridden country. The doing of nails, hair, and makeup was a means to an end – that end being collective well-being in a women-only safe space. This is a practice she continues to promote and teach within her socially engaged work with GRAND BEAUTY .

The two workshop facilitators also contextualised the importance of beauty treatments as a way to build intercultural bridges between so-called newcomers to Germany and the local residents (Images 38–41). Here, they "understand beauty as a gesture of solidarity. In our intercultural salon, the languages of beauty connect beyond the boundaries of language and cultural differences."[562] Through regular beauty sessions in public spaces, migrant woman offer their services – makeup, hair, nails, and so on – to passers-by, creating contact zones that otherwise might have not occurred. Frech emphasises the importance of migrant women taking the role of experts "in a world that is diminishing,"[563] that treats them as less valuable, less recognised contributors to society.[564]

---

562. M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "GRAND BEAUTY: A Workshop on Self-Care," 2019, https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/kalender/2019/10/26/ein-workshop-zum-thema-selbstfuersorge/.
563. Sara Ahmed, "Selfcare as Warfare," *Feminist Killjoys* (blog), August 25, 2014 https://feministkilljoys.com/2014/08/25/selfcare-as-warfare/.
564. In Proposition #8: "Care for the Self" (page 277) in chapter 5 – "Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures," I return to this notion and formulate it as a counter-hegemonic strategy.

Image 38. Collective writing exercise, "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," facilitated by GRAND BEAUTY, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.
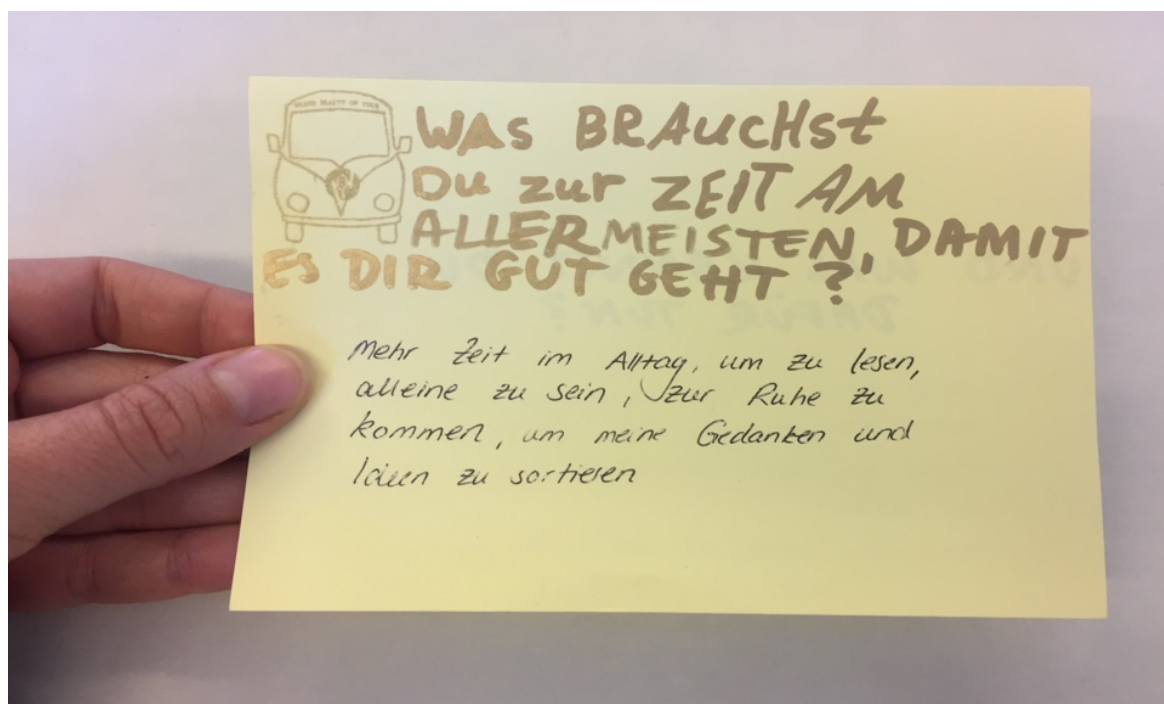

Image 39. Example of an outcome of the collective writing exercise "Workshop on Collective Self-Care" with GRAND BEAUTY from the series "Care for Caregivers" at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer. The text on the card reads: "What do you currently need the most to be well?" The response says: "More time to read, to be alone, to find tranquility, and to sort my thoughts and ideas."

Image 40 (left). Workshop-facilitator Hengame Sadeghi (GRAND BEAUTY) in conversation with another participant, while preparing a natural mask, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp- Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.
Image 41 (right). A participant puts a self-made natural mask onto another participant's face as part of the "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," facilitated by GRAND BEAUTY, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

As the workshop series "Care for Caregivers," within the LOCAL stream of the curatorial programme, set out to do, the curatorial formats created direct engagement with the local caregiving community, touching upon themes relevant to them via artistic and participatory methods. Over the course of more than six months, a small community of regular attendants was fostered, many of whom returned to several events throughout the curatorial cycle. Therefore, not only was a consistency in themes created throughout the various formats but also a consistency in relations, which spanned across the three programme streams.

4.3.4   FUTURE: Collectively Building Future Support Structures

The FUTURE programme stream followed the intention to collectively build future support structures, beginning from the local.[565] In this section of the programme, various positions from art, activism, academia, and society were brought together in order to think about a future of solidarity in our society across all sectors. What support structures are needed in art and society to make inclusion and equality a reality? Which approaches already exist? Which deficits are hardly questioned? This stream consisted out of three event series: the solidarity storytelling café "Holo Miteinander" (February–June 2020), the cross-institutional online symposium *CARING* (June 2020), and the closing event for my curatorial cycle at M.1, "Caring Infrastructures" (October 2020).

4.3.4.1   Storytelling Café Series: "Holo Miteinander"

The first FUTURE event series was the solidarity storytelling café "Holo Miteinander," which translates to "Holo Together." As the storytelling cafés also took place once per month on a weekend, they continued the rhythm begun by the workshop series "Care for Caregivers," while broadening the thematic focus from care in a narrow sense to solidarity and community care in a wider sense. Together with decision-makers from various community sectors, the M.1 team launched five storytelling cafés on the topics of mobility, living, working, eating, and leisure. The idea was to co-create a solidarity platform that held the potential for its participants to continue the programming in a self-organised way, to collectively discuss and shape alternative futures of care within the region.

---

565. The ART stream included publications and formats with a reflective character that, in the context of this dissertation, produce a more fruitful discussion after an introduction of the full range of curatorial formats. Thus, contrary to the order in which the programmes were actually presented, this section now addresses the third part, FUTURE.

Image 42. "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café on mobility, at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

My M.1 colleague Claudia Dorfmüller, the inclusion activist Antje Hachenberg and myself developed this series as a locally rooted platform for exchange and solidarity alliances, making use of the underused café area at M.1.[566] The project received funding from the Federal Agency for Civic Education within the framework of MITEINADER REDEN (Talk to Each Other). This nationwide pilot project targeted at rural areas funded a total of one hundred projects between 2019 and 2021. Within this rural-activist framework of the "Holo Miteinander" project, we sought to pave the way for a future of solidarity in Hohenlockstedt, one which promotes and values the village community, care work, and inclusion. The project aimed to network local actors from the area through a platform for exchange and action (Images 42 and 43).

566. Antje Hachenberg – who is a regular visitor of M.1, a very active advocate for inclusive housing, a freelance moderator, and a mother to two children, one with mental disabilities – had shared the open call of the Federal Agency for Civic Education with my colleague Claudia Dorfmüller. Dorfmüller is the co-director of M.1, and leads the programming M.1 LOKAL, which – as the name suggests – focuses on community-engaged projects. As the open call touched on questions of collective care, we decided to apply to the open call together and turn it into a collaborative project, in the event the funding was successful.

The storytelling sessions were co-moderated by local activists, aligning with existing social initiatives and making accessible the tools and knowledges that these practices had already allocated for this specific region. Our goal was to work together to care for the community and to counteract the acute care crisis through community solidarity. We did this by establishing the café room in M.1 as an easily accessible, low-barrier platform to gett to know each other, learn from each other, and exchange ideas. Participants included both those from the surrounding area affected by and interested in the topic as well as people already working on these issues. We dedicated ourselves to listening to each other and to creating awareness for the needs of different life situations. The task of the process was to collaboratively transfer this "new" knowledge into stable, sustainable solidarity structures in Hohenlockstedt.

Image 43. Antje Hachenberg moderates the conversation during a "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

The conversation processes of "Holo Miteinander" were co-shaped by the Berlin-based artist duo Polyphrenic Creatures (Ulrike Bernard and Marei Loellmann). They guided the dialogic process, carried out artistic interventions, and ultimately created a sound collage that hints at the multiplicity of vulnerabilities, needs, and

capacities inherent to the community. In their artistic practice, the artist duo initiates performative situations in which listening plays a central role. As part of the storytelling café, they themselves became the listeners and co-shaped this listening and sharing process for the other participants through various artistic interventions.

For their performative intervention *Gedankenkekse* (Thought Cookies) the artists shared homemade red O-shaped cookies with the audience, served from a large violet vessel (Image 44). Each of the round cookies held a paper roll in its hole, featuring various poetic and reflective questions or short texts, which Polyphrenic Creatures chose according to the thematic focus of each storytelling café session. Through this act, they prompted the conversation with "food for thought" and welcomed feedback, answers, and thoughts after the session in the form of letters or conversation (Image 45).[567]

It was Bernard's and Loellmann's active presence throughout the conversations that formed the material basis for the creation of their sound piece, which was supposed to artistically reflect and document the process of the storytelling cafés. The sound work, titled *Umrisse – In den Rissen* (Outlines – In the Cracks), thus does not feature, for example, recordings of the participants' voices but rather is a collage of the artists' observations and memories of the conversations. The participants' individual stories were transformed into a polyphonic space of resonance for the ideas and needs of differently lived realities. In the work, they retell these conversational fragments using their own voices, and thereby recreate these intimate stories while abstracting them, and simultaneously protecting the individual participants. For the twenty-minute sound piece, these fragmented stories were woven together into a carpet of collective experiences, reflections, and thoughts.[568] While holding space for intimate encounters, the artistic work still grants retrospective access, with a documenting effect, to the kinds of themes and conversations explored in the storytelling series.[569]

---

567. During the pandemic, this process shifted to analogue letter exchanges between the participants and the artist duo.

568. More detailed description of the contribution to Polyphrenic Creatures in section 4.4.4 – "ART: Discourse & Artistic Production on Care."

569. Polyphrenic Creatures is an interdisciplinary collective founded by the artists Ulrike Bernard and Amelie Marei Loellmann. Since 2014, they have devoted themselves to the utopian and fantastic

under the guise of reality in dialogic exchange formats, live audio dramas, and audio walks. To do justice to their incredibly rich, sensitive, and intimate sound piece *Umrisse – in den Rissen* (Outlines – In the Cracks, 2020), we wanted to share the work with the participants of the storytelling cafés and the general audience in a collective listening session, as part of the on-site closing event "Caring Infrastructures." However, as we were unable to run this event as envisioned, we shared the digital version with the participants to immerse themselves in the sound piece on their own terms. I lament the missed opportunity to engage in this experience collectively. Also, as a curator, I would have hoped to have been able to provide an adequate listening environment for the artists to share their newly created piece. The work, nonetheless, remains accessible in the digital realm of M.1.
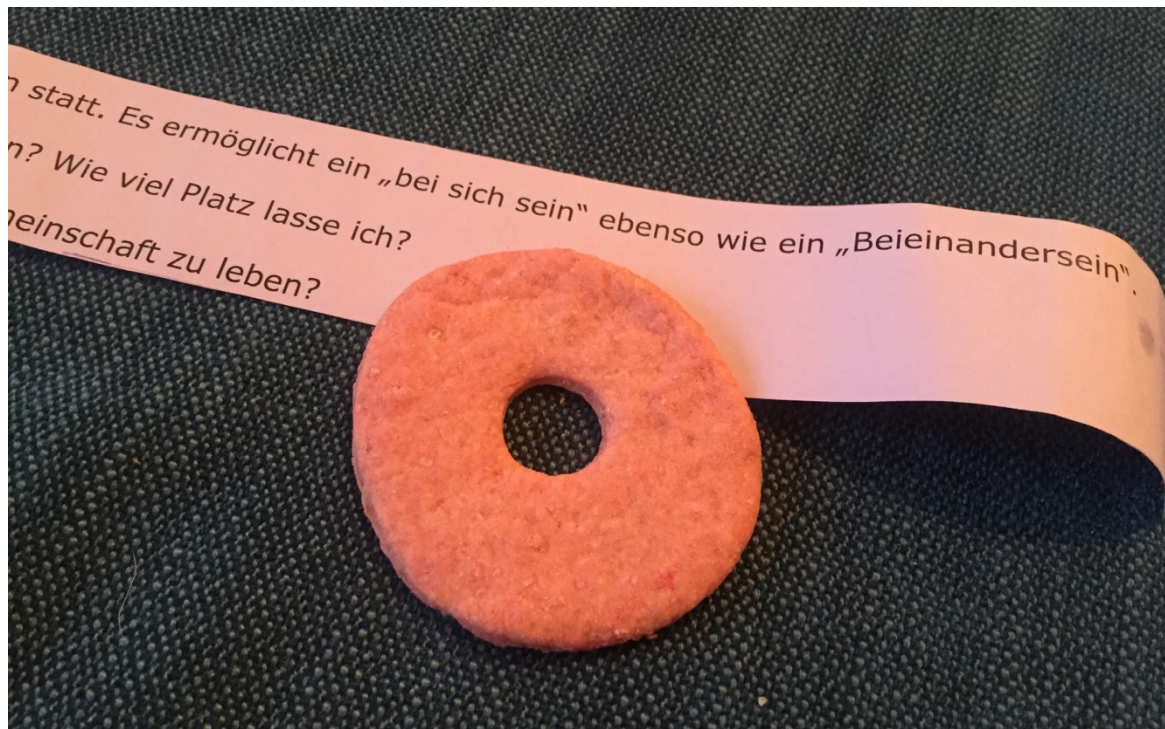
Image 44. *Gedankenkekse* (Thought Cookies), an artistic intervention by Polyphrenic Creatures during a "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Sascia Bailer.
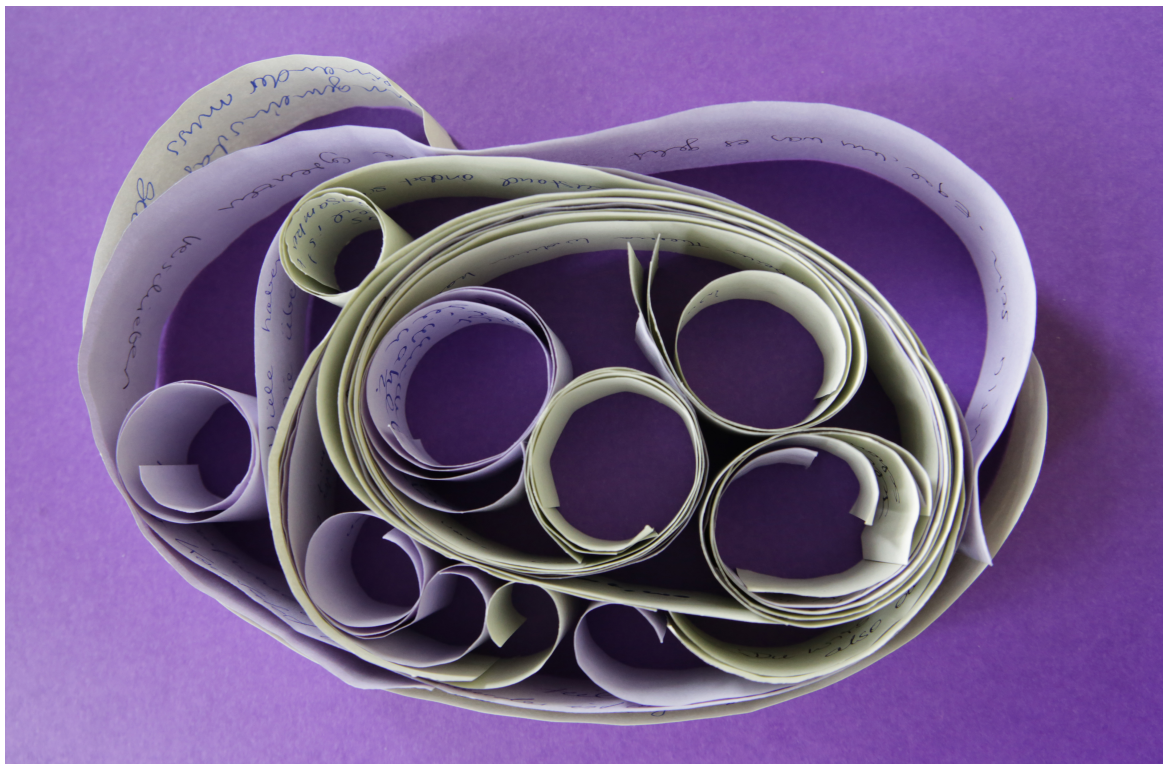

Image 45. *Gedankenstränge* (Train of Thought), an artistic intervention by Polyphrenic Creatures during a "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Polyphrenic Creatures.

4.3.4.2 Collaboration with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt: New Alphabet School on "CARING"

While building from these locally rooted, arts-based formats of solidarity and care, it was important to also establish transregional alliances with artists, curators, organisations, and other actors with a similar social justice agenda. The New Alphabet School (NAS) edition "CARING" was conceived as a collaboration between Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) in Berlin and M.1, and I co-curated it with the curatorial collective Soft Agency (Gilly Karjevsky and Rosario Talevi).[570] Due to the then arising pandemic, our programme for June 2020 was altered in very unexpected ways. The three-day programme – originally conceived as a collective journey from Berlin to Hohenlockstedt with public programming at the sites of destination and departure and en route – had to take place virtually and included conversational lectures, performances, film screenings, workshops, artist talks, and the publication *Letters to Joan*, which offered a written dialogic format.[571]

The curatorial concept focused on "care as the recognition of all bonds between both humans and non-humans; between humans and their systems, their infrastructures and institutions, and to attend to their fragility." The event description continued with guiding questions:

---

570. In early 2019, I participated in the first iteration of the New Alphabet School (NAS), title Unlearning Place, which took place at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, initiated by curator and editor Olga von Schubert. Over the course of almost a week, sixty cultural producers, activists, and scholars from around the world came together to challenge engrained norms of patriarchal, racist, ableist, and classist capitalism. This programme thus allowed for a range of like-minded actors from around the world to connect and to exchange ideas, strategies, and visions. For the upcoming two years, the next iterations of NAS were to be hosted by various members in their respective communities. One of the curatorial themes, set by von Schubert and her colleagues at HKW, was CARING. Other participants and contributors from the Unlearning Place iteration had also expressed an interest in the topics of care, such that the interdependent curators and urban and architecture scholars Gilly Karjevsky and Rosario Talevi (who cooperate as the collective Soft Agency) and myself found one another and began to collaborate with the intention to co-curate an event together under the CARING rubric. The event was conceived as a collaboration between HKW and M.1, with the three of us as co-curators, in close conversation with the curators and other collaborators of NAS.
571. For detailed programming, see appendix, section A. The curatorial project brought together a range of scholars, artists, curators, and activists, such as Júlia Souza Ayerbe, Malu Blume, Edna Bonhomme, Loren Britton, Johanna Bruckner, Teresa Dillon, Andreas Doepke, João Florêncio, Johanna Hedva, Elke Krasny, Henry Lyonga, MATERNAL FANTASIES, Romi Morrison, Mwape J. Mumbi, Polyphrenic Creatures, Pallavi Paul, Helen Pritchard, Helena Reckitt, Patricia Reed, Eric Snodgrass, Yayra Sumah, and Joan Tronto.

As concepts of care can also provide us with an ethical and political framework for action, it situates the human as a caretaker; a custodial figure in the ongoing recuperation of a broken planet and its people. How can we practice care across different scales – the personal, the collective, the rural, the urban, the atmospheric – in order to sustain more-than-human worlds? And how can we proceed to a thinking and doing with care in a way that challenges the uneven labour conditions upon which the field operates?[572]

The "CARING" edition of NAS could thus be seen as an extension of the locally situated curatorial programming at M.1, which was aiming to engage with other scales of care via collaboration, to insert itself into the urban realm, and to connect with wider global discourses and international artistic positions.

To produce a written complement to the event, we conceived the lettered exchange *Letters to Joan* between the care ethics scholar Joan Tronto and a range of scholars, artists, and writers.[573] Tronto, who introduced the concept of care into political philosophy, arguing for a caring democracy, became the central node for an exchange of letters on care.[574] As co-curators, we invited eight thinkers and artists to write open letters to Tronto, in which they share thoughts on the current state of care from their different experiences during the global pandemic – and Tronto responded. Collectively, the *Letters to Joan* span genealogical, political, and planetary approaches.[575] We imagined these letters and their responses as making up a

---

572. Haus der Kulturen der Welt and M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "CARING – 4th Edition of the New Alphabet School," New Alphabet School, June 2020, https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/category/caring/.

573. *Letters to Joan* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Hohenlockstedt, Germany: M.1 Arthur Boskamp- Stiftung, 2020) is edited by Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, with contributions by Edna Bonhomme, Johanna Bruckner, Teresa Dillon, João Florêncio, Johanna Hedva, Elke Krasny, Patricia Reed, Yayra Sumah, and Joan Tronto.

574. Even before the pandemic interrupted our physical programming for HKW and M.1, we – Karjevsky, Talevi, and myself – had considered an editorial project that would extend existing discursive formations on care. We considered putting two key figures of care theories into dialogue, without asking them to physically travel internationally (because we consider it counter-productive to our cause of thinking about care for more-than-human worlds, but also because some of these scholars are not physically fit for travel due to age or illness). We therefore wanted to revert to a more traditional mode of exchange: the letter. As the pandemic appeared on the horizon, we decided to expand on this idea and make it a more expansive exchange of letters between a range of scholars, artists, thinkers, and activists on the notion of care during the pandemic.

575. To provide a brief overview of the content of the letter exchange: Yayra Sumah proclaims that "care is not love" and reflects on the confusion of motherhood with care. Elke Krasny highlights how this current pandemic hit women hard. João Florêncio points to the contested notion of "home" in times of self-isolation. Edna Bonhomme writes "a litany for surviving Black death." Johanna Hedva points to the revolutionary potential of the bedridden body. Teresa Dillon turns our attention to more-

landscape of care – a relational map one can read from one's own personal position, as we collectively begin our long journey to creating a world imbued with care as a norm, as a democratic order. With this emerging map of care, it's possible to see how far the concept stretches – and how essential it is as an alternative paradigm.[576] We were touched by the intimacy that the writers display in their letters, and by the depth and attention with which Tronto responded to each of them.[577] The lettered exchange further holds tremendous inspiration for the theoretical and conceptual engagement with care within this research-creation, as I continue the process of "thinking-with" Joan Tronto in the next chapter.[578]

4.3.4.3   Closing Event: "Caring Infrastructures"

The multivoiced, interdisciplinary event "CARING" was hosted online at HKW in June 2020 and continued at M.1 in Hohenlockstedt on October 24 and 25, 2020, with the event "Caring Infrastructures." Due to the largely English-speaking and academic tone of the HKW event, it was incredibly important to me to host a second, on-site edition tailored to the local audience, in terms of language, format, location, and mode of communication. As this event was also to be the closing event of the curatorial cycle, it was incredibly difficult to imagine how it would be possible to conclude a socially engaged curatorial programme without another face-to-face encounter.[579]

Conceptually, the event proceeded from the local as a starting point and presented a series of talks, workshops, film screenings, and community forums that focused on encounters based in care and solidarity. Artistic, design-based, activist,

---

than-human care concepts and the internet of life. Patricia Reed describes the co-dependency of care and knowledge, especially when thinking in planetary dimensions. Finally, Johanna Bruckner follows particles as they escape from the earth's atmosphere and form new caring constellations in our sky.
576. This passage comes from our editorial text for *Letters to Joan*; see https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/letters-to-joan/.
577. The compilation of letters formed part of the edited publication for the New Alphabet School on CARING and was made available for free downloading on the project blog: ibid.
578 . See section 5.1 – "Thinking-with Joan Tronto: In Search of Caring Infrastructures."
579. I reflect on these tensions in my chapter "Care without Bodies" in Bailer, *Curating, Care, and Corona* and in this account in section 4.4 – "Dis/continuities."

and local initiatives invited the audience to reflect on care practices from different perspectives and to design long-term caring infrastructures.[580] The curatorial concept stated:

> Social norms and often unquestioned values act as invisible infrastructures that determine how we shape interpersonal relationships: In what way do we care for ourselves, for each other and for our communities? As rigid as these norms and values may seem, they have the potential to be carriers of social change: Can we unlearn traditional mechanisms of exclusion and design new social protocols that focus on collective care and solidarity? Can our society become more inclusive by incorporating ethics of care into our social infrastructures?[581]

However, the irony of the occasion was that the second lockdown would end up occurring on that same weekend in October, so the event had to be reconceptualised again, from the local back to online. However, due to the sustained relations with the community – and the programming being in German – it still managed to be a successful, and surprisingly intimate and engaged, online programme, with lectures, film screenings, artist talks, the presentation of projects, and community conversations.

Taken together, these three event series within the FUTURE programme stream expanded from the local towards the establishment of wider networks of alliances and discursive formations. They were sustained by collaborations with other local initiatives, regional and international institutions, and collaborative curatorial processes, and driven by the idea of co-founding or strengthening infrastructures of support, resistance, and alliance in Hohenlockstedt and beyond.

---

580. The event continued the New Alphabet School's CARING edition from June 11 to 14, 2020 (co-curated by Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi) in cooperation with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. It was generously supported by Förderstiftung des Kreises Steinburg and Kulturstiftung des Landes Schleswig-Holstein. This event marked the closing of the curatorial cycle 2019–20. See appendix, section A, for the full programming.
581. For the full text, see appendix, section A or visit M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "Symposium: Caring Infrastructures," October 2020, https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/2019-2020/future/infrastrukturen-des-zwischenmenschlichen/.

4.3.5   ART: Discourse and Artistic Production on Care

Alongside my intention to curatorially support the strengthening and building of local-regional support structures, solidarity platforms, and community tools, it was also my goal to support artistic, curatorial, and editorial processes that would critically address questions of care. Thus, for the programme stream ART, I was working from the argument that, within the realm of artistic freedom, new strategies could be developed to address the complex issues around care. Artistic practices located at the interface of social reproduction and social justice were the main focus. Through theme-specific artist prizes, artistic interventions, publications, and collaborations with regional art academies, the programme sought to support curatorial, editorial, and artistic practices on care.

This rubric of ART involved three commissioned artistic interventions: the archival art and design project *Archive of Encounters*, by students of the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HFBK Hamburg); the sound work *Umrisse – In den Rissen* (Outlines – In the Cracks), by Polyphrenic Creatures; and a second sound work, entitled *Atmospheric Escape: Fabulating Care*, by Johanna Bruckner. It further included the commissioned digital performance *Love and Labor. Intimacy and Isolation. Care and Survival*, a performance between mothers and children in a state of lockdown, organised by MATERNAL FANTASIES, and four publications: two artist monographs, the first by Malu Blume and titled *What We Could Have Become: Reflections on Queer-Feminist Filmmaking*, and the second, by MATERNAL FANTASIES, called *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s): On Radical Care and Collective Art as Feminist Practices* (both Onomatopee, 2021); the anthology *Letters to Joan* (HKW, 2020); and my reflective booklet *Curating, Care, and Corona* (Verlag der Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).[582] The latter two publications are open access and

---

582. At M.1, each artistic director is expected to write a small publication at the end of their curatorial cycle. While the publications form a series, which adhere to a common visual and conceptual framework, the content and style of the publication is rather open. I decided to do a reflective publication that would weave practice-based and theoretical considerations around my curatorial programming into one another, with the goal to make them accessible to a wider audience. Under the title *Curating, Care, and Corona*, I produced a piece of writing that is reflective of the political conditions, my curatorial practice, and the encounters and conversations with the local audiences, yet it is also a highly personal rapport. My intention was to produce a bilingual publication about the

have been circulated widely and used in teachings in different international contexts.[583]

4.3.5.1　Artist Prize on Care

The basis for several of the artistic and discursive formats of the ART stream was the artist prize that the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung awards every two years to two young artists (or art collectives) with a connection to Northern Germany. The winner receives 3,000 euros (4,000 euros for groups) and access to an artist's apartment and studio in Hohenlockstedt for three months, as well as further funding and curatorial and editorial support to realise an exhibition or final presentation as well as an artist monograph.

As artistic director 2019–20 at M.1, part of my formal tasks included conceptualising and implementing the open call for artists, selecting the jury, curating the exhibitions, and editing the publications. In the framework of my curatorial focus on care, I therefore also tailored the open call to artists with critical practices that address questions of care:

> Considering the alarming state of these social conditions surrounding care, relatively little action can be noticed within public and political debate. One has to ask: *Who cares?*

> Within the realm of artistic freedom, new strategies can be developed to address these complex issues around *Care*. We are looking for critical artistic positions at the intersection of social reproduction and social justice – in short, art that cares for care. Applying artists may define *Care* widely, ranging from an understanding of care for social, ecological, spatial and technological processes, to care as an artistic investigation of intercultural, intergender, intergenerational forms of co-habitation within rural and urban territories. Of interest are also: artistic practices that explicitly address the complexities around the ongoing care crisis; that develop new strategies on the tensions around

---

programming that would be accessible to the local audience yet also relevant to scholars and theorists who work on similar intersections of curating, care, and social transformation. See Sascia Bailer, *Curating, Care, and Corona*, Kuratieren, no. 6 (Hohenlockstedt: Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).

583. To avoid overstraining the limits of this dissertation, I am unable to discuss each outcome of this programming stream in depth. Rather, I focus on a few examples and provide a general overview of the formats. For a full overview, please refer to the appendix.

invisibility/visibility, private/public; that challenge the contemporary imbalances around gender and race within care work and propose alternative future visions; that critically examine isolation and social exclusion; that connect disparate social groups and allow for the emergence of alliances or possibly even new social infrastructures of care.[584]

The jury selected two artistic positions that critically addressed care work, community, and gender, developing their visions of a caring future in very different ways.[585]

4.3.5.1.1 MATERNAL FANTASIES

The Berlin-based feminist art collective MATERNAL FANTASIES consists of seven women and their children and uses everyday materials and environments to create otherworldly realms to challenge the rigid narratives around motherhood within society and art history. Their often experimental aesthetics disrupts audience expectations of mother and child imagery and the perception of maternal care as a purely affectionate, loving, and selfless activity. It is thus not merely at a representational level that MATERNAL FANTASIES seeks to promote other ways of seeing and understanding the entanglements of art and motherhood: their work is shaped collaboratively with their children, and collective reading and writing sessions inform their work as much as their myriad lived experiences do. In deciding to integrate their children into their artistic process, they also integrate the absence of quiet. The children's personalities, moods, and (un)willingness to participate substantially shape the artistic outcomes and point to the delicate ethical foundation upon which their processes rest. As mothers and artists, how do they balance the desire for quality image production with the needs and wants of their children – priorities that are often in conflict? Who decides which images make the final cut?

---

584. For the full open call, see appendix, section A.
585. I extended jury invitations to Elke Krasny (based in Vienna) and the socially engaged artist Jeanne van Heeswijk (based in Rotterdam). Unfortunately, Krasny fell sick in the week of the jury session, so it took place without her. Ulrike Boskamp, founding director of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, also formed part of the jury, alongside to myself.

Will the children feel uncomfortable watching themselves when they are older? Can children be authors of artistic work? These questions point to the fact that MATERNAL FANTASIES operates in fairly uncharted territory, which in turn highlights the timeliness of their work.[586]

In the framework of their fellowship at M.1, the collective produced the experimental film *Suspended Time, on Caring* (2020; Images 46–48), the digital performance piece *Love and Labor. Intimacy and Isolation. Care and Survival* (2020, Image 49), and the publication *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s): On Radical Care and Collective Art as Feminist Practice* (2021, Onomatopee; Images 50 and 51).[587]

---

586. For the historical trajectory of motherhood and art-making, return to the introduction of this book.
587. The artist monograph *Reassembling Motherhood(s): On Radical Care and Collective Art as Feminist Practice* is the result of MATERNAL FANTASIES two-year fellowship. It invites the reader to learn about and from the collective's artistic methods by offering insight into their working process. As both a handbook and an archive, this publication is an important contribution to the field of feminist art-making, uniting reflective essays, autobiographical writing, performance scores, selected artworks, and a manifesto for a caring economy. It thereby documents MATERNAL FANTASIES' critical engagement with motherhood(s) on personal, artistic, and societal levels – producing eccentric visibilities and concrete counter-strategies in a field in which invisibilities of care prevail. Sascia Bailer, Magdalena Kallenberger, and Maicyra Teles Leão e Silva, eds. *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s): On Radical Care and Collective Art as Feminist Practices* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2021).

Image 46. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Blumenwiese*, 2020, film still from *Suspended Time, on Caring*

Image 47. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Wattenmeer*, 2020, film still from *Suspended Time, on Caring*

Image 49. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Love and Labor. Intimacy and Isolation. Care and Survival*, 2020, screenshot from online performance. For the event CARING at HKW, MATERNAL FANTASIES produced the new digital work "Love and Labor." Taking place on Zoom, this performance with mothers and children during the lockdown allowed the viewers to peek into their homes, where artistic production exists alongside domestic tasks and childcare.
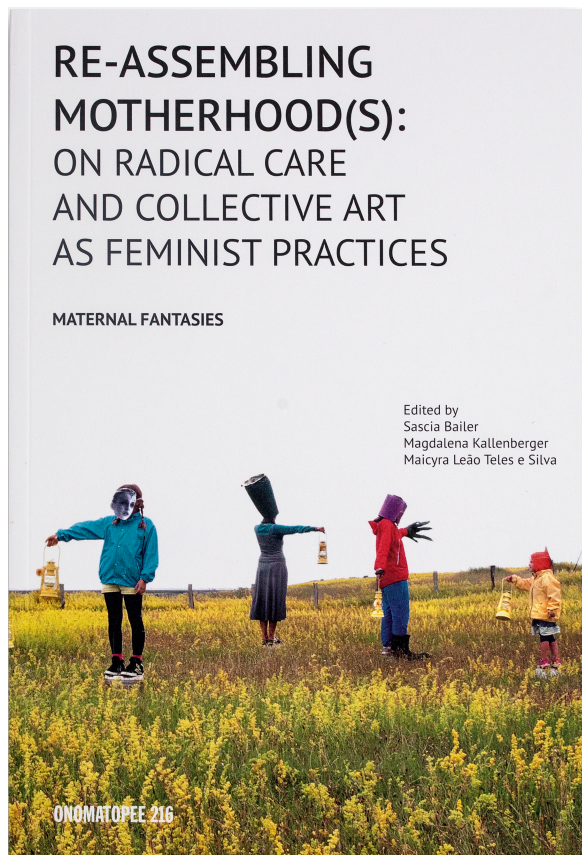
Image 50. Cover of *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)* by MATERNAL FANTASIES, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Image 51. A spread from *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)* by MATERNAL FANTASIES, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

4.3.5.1.2 Malu Blume

The other artist prize recipient during my term at M.1 was the Berlin-based queer-feminist artist, performer, and educator Malu Blume. Blume mostly works as part of artist collectives on issues of care, collective knowledge production, archive politics, friendship, and queer feminism. During their residency, Blume produced the feminist sci-fi video work *The Book of S of I* (2020). Told as a queer-feminist tale, the film celebrates the utopian power of self-love at the social fringes, belonging and friendship as survival strategies, and care as a radical means of anti-capitalist resistance and life.[588] The film appears like a fever dream – a spontaneous vision of that which humanity could have become (Images 52 and 53). Blume also produced an artist monograph, *What We Could Have Become: Reflection on Queer-Feminist Filmmaking* (2021, Onomatopee) (Images 54 and 55),[589] in which they argue that the given world serves as a blueprint to create other worlds, "even if they are just as terrifying as ours, or show us how terrifying our world actually is. But there is something very powerful about imagining that our world could be different."[590] The artist further claims that this attempt at a fictional-world-becoming-reality often fails, but, arguably, it is through these ambivalences that the politics of care can be negotiated – and Blume's work contributes to this urgent renegotiation of collective care.[591]

---

588. Sascia Bailer, "Staging Ground for Action," in *What We Could Have Become: Reflections on Queer Feminist Filmmaking*, by Malu Blume, ed. Sascia Bailer (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2021).
589. In their artist monograph *What We Could Have Become: Reflections on Queer-Feminist Filmmaking*, Blume reflected on the film production process. The publication brings together fragments of writing and visual material from and about *The Book of S of I*, providing the reader with the artist's critical reflections on the process and aspirations of the endeavor. Blume thus not only invites the reader to merely escape into a different world order but to question – to imagine – what forms of collective care we could be living today if we reimagined our past.
590. Malu Blume, *What We Could Have Become: Reflections on Queer Feminist Filmmaking*, ed. Sascia Bailer (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2021), 38.
591. Ibid., 39.

Image 52. Malu Blume, *The Book of S of I*, 2020, film still

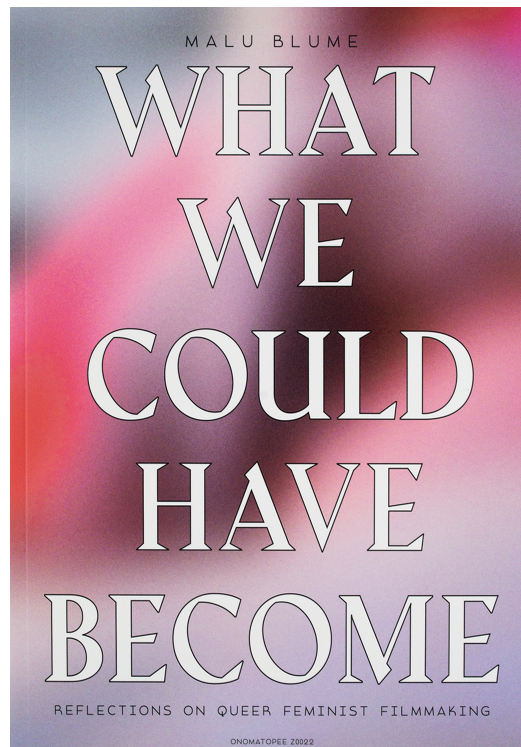Image 53. Malu Blume, *The Book of S of I*, 2020, film still

Image 54. Cover of *What We Could Have Become* by Malu Blume, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Image 55. A spread from *What We Could Have Become* by Malu Blume, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Both Blume and MATERNAL FANTASIES conceptualised and recorded central elements of their respective films during their residencies in Hohenlockstedt. Thus, the region between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea lent itself as a stage upon which their visions of caring futures could extend (Images 46–48; 52 and 53). These artistic positions allowed the fields of tension between care, gender, and community to unfold, oscillating between euphoria and delusion.[592]

A showcase of the video work of MATERNAL FANTASIES and Blume, *FANTASTIC FUTURES – Films on Care and Collectivity*, was intended to take place at M.1 in the spring of 2020. Due to Covid-19, however, the exhibition could not take place in its originally intended format; instead, shortened versions of the films were shown in the street-facing windows of the art foundation.[593]

In the course of the curatorial cycle, several other commissioned performative or participatory artworks and publications also came into being.[594] For the purpose of this account, I focus in on the collaborative art-and-design-based archival project *Archive of Encounters* in the next section.

---

592. However, due to the Covid-19 health measures, the exhibition *FANTASTIC FUTURES – Films on Care and Collectivity* at M.1 with the recipients of the M.1 artist prizes, Malu Blume and MATERNAL FANTASIES, could not open as planned in May 2020. To provide access to art even in times of "social distancing," the trailers of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung's 2019–20 awardees, Malu Blume and MATERNAL FANTASIES, were shown daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the street-level windows of M.1. The works were also shown in full as part of the closing event "Caring Infrastructures."
593. Additionally, their works were presented online as part of the New Alphabet School (NAS) on CARING. The full version of Blume's *The Book of S of I* premiered online as part of the NAS programme in June 2020. The screening was followed by a conversation between Blume, their friends and collaborators, and myself, which is also included in their publication. Due to the second pandemic lockdown, a thirty-minute version of their film *Suspended Time, on Caring* was also shown online during the two-day closing event "Caring Infrastructures" in October 2020. The screening was followed by an artist talk on their methods and the political potential of their work.
594. For an overview of all the works, see appendix, section A.

4.3.5.2   Archive of Encounters

Well aware that all the participatory processes that we would explore in the curatorial programming would not result in any tangible, object-based products, I had reached out to Studio Experimentelles Design at HFBK Hamburg (overseen by Prof. Jesko Fezer) to engage with questions of ephemerality, alternative forms of archiving, and accessibility right from the start.[595] To address matters of participation, accessibility, and documentation, the collaboration departed from these questions: What remains of an encounter, of a conversation – perhaps personal memories, sensations, emotions, and maybe some notes? How can these fleeting moments be captured? And how can the experience be made accessible to people who were not there?[596]

In their search for answers, four HFBK Hamburg students developed *Archive of Encounters*. The project brought together artistic interpretations and documentary elements for each of the events in the curatorial cycle, which were collected in eight wooden case. To produce the cases, one or two of the students of Studio Experimentelles Design provided assistance for each event. The eight archival cases were designed to be mobile and participatory: through cooperation with the community library in Hohenlockstedt, people could borrow and take home the cases, just like other media (Images 59 and 60). The archive invited users to investigate the traces of each event, engaging at their own pace with the themes, impressions, and experiences and developing their own encounters with the cases' contents – thus enabling a continued engagement with the curatorial program long after its formal conclusion (Images 56–58).[597]

This collaborative and participatory series of works fulfilled several roles within the curatorial cycle, as it not only brought together a range of actors from within and outside Hohenlockstedt but also produced accessible archival formats that provided

---

595. The project was designed and carried out by students of the Studio Experimental Design programme at HFBK Hamburg, under Prof. Jesko Fezer: Veronica Andres, Pablo Lapettina, Laura Mahnke, and Skadi Sturm.

596. See Sascia Bailer, "Care for Caregivers: Curating against the Care Crisis," in *Curating with Care*, ed. Elke Krasny and Lara Perry (London: Routledge, 2023), 193.

597. For a self-critical perspective on the dis/continuities of the programming, see section 4.5 – "Dis/continuities."

conditions for future engagement with the themes and artistic methods of the discursive events. In terms of curatorial strategy, it is important to recognise that the students' presence throughout the process formed the precondition for their archival undertaking, and, hence, the archive could not have been created as an afterthought at a later stage of the curatorial cycle.

While most of the curatorial programming was ephemeral and of a relational nature, contributing to the aesthetic-discursive sphere which connects art, care, and feminist practices was nevertheless important. Many of the artistic works and publications we produced also served as a mediator between the local community, situated artistic practices, and a wider audience. The programme stream ART further allowed for the production of contributions to the field that were able to outlive the temporary nature of the programming, while still stemming from situated, relational practices of art and knowledge production.

Image 56. An archival case made by Veronica Andres for the "Workshop on the Value of Care," as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Laura Mahnke.

Image 57. An archival case made by Veronica Andres for the "Workshop on Time," as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Veronica Andres.

Image 58. An archival case made by Skadi Sturm for the "Holo Miteinander" storytelling cafés, as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Skadi Sturm.

Image 59. Archival cases presented at the public library in Hohenlockstedt, as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Laura Mahnke.

Image 60. Pablo Lapettina interacting with the archival cases at the public library in Hohenlockstedt, as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Laura Mahnke.

4.4 Dis/continuities

It's over. I'm officially no longer artistic director at M.1, and my project was completed with the final event "Caring Infrastructures" – even though it had to be moved online as well, last minute. But even though it has formally come to closure – the relationships have not. I am no longer paid to nurture these relationships; I no longer live there; I was unable to meet everyone physically to say goodbye. My leaving feels half-baked. It seems like I was unable to obtain a full closure due to the restrictions around Covid-19, but also due to the fact that relational curatorial practice does not end – not like that.

Relationships were fostered, nurtured, and built over almost two years. Now where do they go? What happens when the budget is gone? When employment ends? Who sustains the social processes and with what resources and intentions? When is a social process over? What does that say about a social process – does it make it less valid, or does it simply continue to exist in the memory of people as what it was? Do the relationships fade out, do they reconfigure (without my presence)? And is it necessary for them to continue for the process to have been meaningful? In which ways would a self-organised continuation add value to the project? Or would it basically become something else anyways – another project in itself?[598]

This excerpt from my notes, made roughly one month after the last event at M.1, brings out the unresolved aspects within the context of my artistic directorship, which are also relevant for other practitioners with a community engaged practice: How to carry social relations in times of social distancing? How to find closure for a relational curatorial practice? How to enable self-organisation from within an institution? How to deal with ending budgets but continued responsibilities?

In the following sections, I aim to critically engage with potential reasons for the curatorial programming terminating without any self-organised continuation,

---

598. Field notes, November 20, 2020; for the full note, see in appendix, section C.

227

despite my curatorial efforts.

4.4.1   Conceptual Contradictions

At M.1, the participatory design of the programming, from the outset, was not without contradictions. The open call for the position of artistic director 2019–20 at M.1, to which I had responded, explicitly asked for participatory curatorial approaches. But it remained unclear how the participatory processes – which were to be initiated throughout the eighteen-month engagement with the town's residents – could be continued after the position ended. I therefore had aimed to develop a self-organised continuation of the program from the outset.[599] This, however, proved particularly difficult due to the social-distancing measures and closing of cultural institutions for large parts of 2020 under the ongoing pandemic. Due to this intensive engagement with the community, the idea of the ending my term without a planned continuation created a sensation of violent abruptness – the "luring in" of residents from the community, to then cut off these myriad relations with the community, felt inadequate. But I also knew that, with my usual place of residence being almost a thousand kilometres south of Hohenlockstedt and with my employment ending, I would not be able to *afford* to continue to care for these previously fostered social relations.

Throughout the course of my programming, it also became clear that the other employees of M.1 with programming responsibilities would not have the capacity to take over parts of my former programming. The institution's priority was to provide complete curatorial and conceptual freedom to the next appointed artistic director, without them being called to continue the programming strands of a previous director. While it was this precise curatorial freedom that had enabled me to create an experimental curatorial undertaking into the realms of care, it was also what limited its continuation. This prioritisation certainly creates unique curatorial freedom

---

599. See section 4.4.1 – "Initial Curatorial Concept."

for each appointee, yet it becomes unfruitful when the fostering of social relations takes such a central role in one's curatorial practice, as it does in mine. I therefore had hoped for, and arranged for, a self-organised continuation among the community members of some of the curatorial formats, in particular the storytelling café series "Holo Miteinander."

4.4.2   Pandemic Deviations

The Covid-19 pandemic hit Central Europe in March 2020, fourteen months into my public programming. Until then, it had been possible to strengthen micro-communities around caring and solidarity practices in the region of Hohenlockstedt through the curatorial programming. However, the essential stage of transitioning into self-organisation mode was originally planned for the last six months of the curatorial residency (January–June 2020).[600] It was exactly this stage that was tremendously interrupted by the first intense lockdown across Germany (and most other countries around the globe). Despite the continuation of the programming via online platforms, it did not allow for the same quality of encounter to emerge, through which the necessary degrees of mutual trust, commitment, and also regularity could be established. It seemed as though the lived practice of sharing required more time to become robust enough to weather the social-distancing measures of a global pandemic. While the digital continuation did work to some degree, the digitalised programme was unable to foster social relations strong enough to form a basis for later self-organisation.

With this in mind, I therefore had pushed very strongly to have a physical gathering after the first major lockdown of the pandemic. For us organisers, it had been difficult to imagine holding the planned closing event "Caring Infrastructures," and with it the final forum for the storytelling cafés, digitally, as the intention for that event was to develop a collective vision for the project as well as a plan for the continued self-organised. An in-person closing moment was needed, on site at M.1,

---

600. Ibid.

with the Hohenlockstedters and community collaborators with whom we had been working for over a year.[601]

In my reflective essay "Curating, Care, and Corona," which I was finalising in the last few days before the final event (October 2020), I formulated the following convictions in the subsection "Care without Bodies":

> After the decision to hold the cooperating event with the HKW digitally, the necessity of an analogue continuation became increasingly clear. For, digital and physical forms of gathering have to be thought out and practiced in mutual engagement, as the media scholar Felix Stalder articulates: "A culture of digital solidarity can be described as one rooted in a lived practice of sharing." Accordingly, a closing moment is needed on site at M.1, with the Hohenlockstedters and the initiatives with whom we have been working since over a year: under the title Caring Infrastructures, we set an event for fall 2020. The local will be situated as the starting point for a series of conversations, workshops, film screenings and community forums in order to focus on everyday encounters based on care and solidarity. Artistic, design-based and activist practices should enter into exchange with local initiatives to reflect on care from different perspectives and to clear the way for future local action in solidarity. And for this we want and need bodily presence, on site.[602]

The goal was to have the reflective booklet, *Curating, Care, and Corona*, printed for the final in-person encounter, "Caring Infrastructures," scheduled for October 24 and 25, 2020, at M.1. Hence, I wrote this passage with the strong belief that this physical encounter would be possible, that the lockdown was over (not anticipating, then, how many more were to follow), and that, with a very careful public health plan, we could meet collectively for a concluding encounter. With the intention to offer the bilingual publication to the participants for the closing event, I had sent it to print. Yet, within those same few days, the pandemic conversation shifted rapidly, and another lockdown was announced, commencing in the week of our planned event. I was utterly frustrated. Again, overnight, we – the M.1 team, the

---

601. Initially, the closing event was scheduled to take place in June 2020, as part of the CARING collaboration with the HKW. However, due to the lockdown it had to take place online. As this format did not allow for a sincere engagement with the local audiences from Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area, I pushed for an extension of my contract for another two months, in order to organise an onsite closing event for October 2020.
602. Sascia Bailer, *Curating, Care, and Corona*, Kuratieren #6 (Hohenlockstedt: Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020), 28–29.

contributors, and myself – had to carefully rethink a public programme that was intended to take place on site, just as we had had to do for the earlier "CARING" event at HKW. It further had to be transformed into a digital event that would be suitable for a generally elderly, non-tech-savvy community. For this process we had only four days. To my pleasant surprise, the audience members and the contributors were very willing, open, and dedicated, despite the new circumstances.

Regardless of my frustration or my initial reluctance, the German-speaking event was able to reach the local audiences, and it engendered fruitful engagements and conversations between the participants, the residency artists, and the HFBK Hamburg art students. For the virtual presentation of artistic works, artist talks, and curatorial lectures, local and nationwide audiences came together for one and a half days.[603]

In the course of the transition from physical to virtual event, my colleagues and I had decided to shift everything online except for one event: a hands-on workshop by the anti-capitalist organisation Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie (Laboratory for New Economic Ideas) from Leipzig. This workshop provided information and tools for communal self-organisation, in the hopes it would empower interested participants to continue the solidarity process via the storytelling cafés on their own. However, because of the large share of elderly people, we deemed it better to postpone the workshop until after the lockdown (not knowing the pandemic would continue for years). In retrospect, I consider this workshop to have been a key element in the path towards self-organisation, which, due to the pandemic, was not able to happen and hence could not contribute to a solid basis of relational trust and skills towards community-based self-organisation.

Other forms of communal engagement during the pandemic also turned out differently than anticipated. In the case of *Archive of Encounters*, the collaboration with the community library of Hohenlockstedt didn't attract as much attention as hoped for. The eight archival cases were accessible in the library, yet our collaborator, the library's director, shared with us that the library users hadn't taken

---

603. For more details, see appendix, section A.

up the offer to borrow the cases and take them home. In retrospect, it might have taken more art educational facilitation to communicate the project to the community and spark more interest in further engagement. However, neither the art foundation nor I had the capacity to perform this necessary work at that particular moment.

For archival case number 8 – which took inspiration from the storytelling cafés and was designed for its users to record their own stories on cassettes (Image 58) – we initiated a collaboration with an ambulant care service, whose workers attended their patients at their homes. The idea was that the individual care worker would take the case to their patients and help them interact with the participatory case, where the patients could record their own stories of solidarity. However, the feedback was that the patients, in many instances, were unable to focus on the case, as they suffered from chronic pain or severe illnesses. Hence, the collaboration was ended.

4.4.3   Continued Quest for Self-organisation

The quest for another on-site encounter, despite the failed attempt in the autumn of 2020, lingered on. When the second lockdown had ended, my colleagues from M.1 and I reached out to the participants of both the workshop series "Care for Caregivers" and the storytelling cafés to invite them to an in-person gathering, where we would reflect on the programming and consider possible next steps. Twenty participants came together for this reflective discussion, moderated by Antje Hachenberg, who had also moderated the earlier storytelling cafés. The visitors were greeted by the same arrangement of tables into a square banquette as in the previous events, they were offered cake and coffee, and they each took a seat at the large table. Each participant was granted the same amount of time to share their reflection on their participation in the curatorial programming on care.

The general sentiment seemed to be that, after the programming ended, they had missed these encounters – the social quality of the events, the exchange, the networking and information-sharing opportunities, the sense of hospitality. Many

expressed a wish for the storytelling café series to continue. However, with my position at M.1 already over and my colleagues unable to continue the programming due to lack of capacity, the participants were confronted with the only path forward: self-organisation.

M.1 offered to continue to share the resource of the café area with the group, if they decided to proceed. One segment of the participants seemed hesitant to commit to a self-organised continuation, due to their enormously high engagement with other social and volunteer activities in the region (such as refugee-welcoming groups, church, choirs, and other local activism groups). The other part of the group was less socially active and had partly joined the events at M.1 with the motivation to feel less isolated and to informally connect with others. This segment had little to no experience in organising social events and seemed as if they were feeling intimidated.[604] Unfortunately, that afternoon we were unable to find a volunteer to host the next session.

The conclusion that I drew from this session was that with my emphasis on "care" had indeed created very comfortable spaces of encounter which had appeared like consumable cultural products for the participants. This seemed to create the impression for the participants that they would have to match the level of professionalism with any self-organised event, leaving them intimidated and rather discouraged – when, in reality, any low-key continuation of the project would have been welcome. The day following the final get-together, one of the dedicated, yet rather timid, participants offered to take responsibility for the first self-organised event. They set a date a few weeks away, but too few people committed to joining, and so it did not take place.

---

604. To replace the missed workshop by Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie, my colleague Claudia Dorfmüller offered to host a workshop on the basics of cultural management, to equip the interested community members with the necessary skills for event and community organising.

4.4.4   Open Endings

The foregoing accounts highlight the fragility and many complexities involved in sustaining relational processes after such projects have come to their official end. Already in my initial curatorial concept I had noted the importance of staying open to the participatory process and its unpredictability:

> Since the process is – and must be – an open one, the outcome cannot be predicted. […] Whether these processes are made visible in a final symposium, a summer festival, an online platform, or a (travelling) exhibition is ultimately dictated by the process that precedes them. In this sense, curating is taken seriously as a relational practice that aims to make care tangible and visible for caregivers.[605]

I therefore do not regard the project and its aim to have *failed* due to its dis/continuity. In my understanding, such an outcome does not devalue the processes, encounters, conversations, and learnings which preceded its official conclusion. While the attempt of a self-organised continuation may have failed, this outcome must be taken serious as a possible, and viable, option for a community-driven project: if the participants do not have the desire nor the capacity to self-organise, then discontinuing the programme is a valid decision.

I want to end this train of thought with a quote from the artist Abraham Cruzvillegas:

> After transforming something, I want it to be ready to be transformed again, by interpretation, by physical decay, by its weight, by time. That's why I don't like the idea of production, because it means arriving at the end, not at the beginning.[606]

Following Cruzvillegas's thought, "production" is the tied to terminal processes, and "reproduction" is framed as a continuous new beginning. If we consider a relational curatorial practice as one of *re*production and care – as a practice that continuously recreates the conditions of its existence – then what does it say about its

---

605. For the full initial concept, see section 4.4.1 – "Initial Curatorial Concept."
606. Abraham Cruzvillegas, quoted in Clara Kim, "Organization of Matter through Sympathy," in *Abraham Cruzvillegas. Autoconstrucción: The Book* (Los Angeles: Roy and Edna Disney/Calarts Theater, 2014), 17.

termination? The social relations of curatorial encounters do not abruptly end; rather, they are transformed again and again, into acquaintanceships, into friendships, into new collaborations. Time turns shared lived experiences into shared memories that withdraw themselves from the sphere of a curator's control or influence. They obtain a life of their own – remotely, diasporically – as participants and contributors part along their various pathways again. They turn into book projects, poems, and anecdotes, from which new encounters may emerge.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

This chapter's purpose was to provide an overview, a sense, of the conceptual framework and the individual formats and outcomes of my curatorial programme at M.1. by way of selected examples. The chapter started with the contextualisation of the curatorial cycle in regard to the "where," "who," and "how" of the project. It then traced the curatorial concept and introduced the three programme streams, beginning with the LOCAL, moving into the FUTURE, with an expansion of the situated support networks, and continuing with ART and the programming's contribution to the arts and discourses on care. The chapter's aim was also to critically reflect on the programme's dis/continued processes, with the intention to gather and reflect upon aspects that may have contributed to the ending of the curatorial cycle without the aspired self-organised continuation.

All formats included in the curatorial cycle were socially engaged in nature and centred on the participation of a wide group of caregivers, many of whom did not regularly visit art institutions. While the events were conceived to be inclusive and easily accessible, they nonetheless engaged with and contributed to wider societal discourses around care work and artistic and curatorial production, worked to challenge existing norms, and opened up alternative pathways for perceiving and practising care – both for the self and for others, in and outside the arts.

Within the framework of the curatorial cycle at M.1, the formats spoke to the relational, affective, and contextual nature of my curatorial approach – in alignment with the concepts of "curatorial activism," "caring activism," and "slow curating" – the

aim of which is to renegotiate practices and ethics of care not only within the representational, visible realm but also in regard to support structures, such as the ones we fostered throughout the M.1 programme. My understanding of relational curating as enacted at M.1 sought to investigate to what extent curating could function as a critical practice of caring for artistic and sociopolitical processes to foster caring alliances – and to thereby counter hegemonic patterns of relating to one another.

In the final section of this chapter, "Dis/continuities," I reflected on the parameters that may also put limits onto a relational curatorial practice, be it pandemics, a lack of fundamental in-person relational encounters, or a lack of institutional and volunteer capacities to continue programmes. The chapter thus highlights the need to reframe common notions of success and the importance of conceiving of sincere participation as an open-ended project, as a successful project may very much entail its discontinuation. If curatorial relations are understood as reproductive relations, they can potentially morph, in unexpected ways, into informal encounters, friendships, and shared memories.

In the upcoming fifth chapter, I expand from this practice-based curatorial undertaking in order to establish a conceptual framework of caring infrastructures, thereby abstracting the knowledge derived from my situated curatorial practice. In a second part, the chapter aims to formulate propositions for curatorial care for other socially engaged curators and artists.

# 5.	Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures

This chapter takes us from the practice-based curatorial case study at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung and its inspirational companion practices to a more theoretical and methodological engagement with the conceptual aspects that this practice has prompted. In particular, I wish to engage further with the notion of "caring infrastructures," which emerged as a term and a thought vehicle in my curatorial programming at M.1, and which was especially central in the curatorial collaboration with my peers Rosario Talevi and Gilly Karjevsky – together known as Soft Agency – with whom I co-curated the "CARING" edition of the New Alphabet School at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) in Berlin, in collaboration with M.1 in Hohenlockstedt, in June 2020.[607]

In an effort to "learn from Hohenlockstedt," I seek to not only critically situate and analyse my curatorial programming but also to make it *useful* for a wider community of practitioners by abstracting it and offering concrete methodological propositions for curating with care. As such, within this first part of the chapter I wish to embark on a search for the conceptual cores, boundaries, agencies, and terminological sisterhoods of caring infrastructures, to then explore its practice-based manifestations in the second part of the chapter.

To do so, I want to recall the definition of "caring" that the political theorists

---

607. The notion of "caring infrastructures" has shifted over the course of my research and might have contained different meanings at different points in time. As it was a central concept within the collaboration with Gilly Karjevsky and Rosario Talevi, I want to explicitly acknowledge the collaborative thought processes that have co-shaped my understanding of the term – a process for which I am deeply grateful. However, the presentation of the term in the context of this dissertation may or may not mirror their own understandings of the term, as for me the notion had continued to develop independently following the end of our collaboration. The evolution of "caring infrastructures" has thus undergone densely collaborative phases, which I herewith explicitly recognise and lay open, and it has undergone rather solitary ones, which were later tested and remarked upon in workshops and Q&As, and which continue to evolve along the way.
For further information on the programming, see: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, and M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "CARING – 4th Edition of the New Alphabet School," New Alphabet School, June 2020, https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/category/caring/.

and ethics of care scholars Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher have put forth.[608] They define "caring" as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible."[609] This understanding of the term has become influential for a range of scholarly positions, ranging from post-humanist philosophy, to political theory and techno science, to feminist art and curatorial studies. As the concept of "caring activism," which I introduced in the previous chapter, is indebted to the work of Tronto, as is my own curatorial and scholarly work and that of my close collaborations, such as Soft Agency, I want to further engage with Tronto's thinking in this portion of my dissertation.

In the case of the collaboration between Soft Agency, HKW, and M.1, the programming took place virtually, as its date fell into the height of the Covid-19 pandemic – a circumstance that worked strongly against our initial curatorial concept, for which we had envisioned group travel from the HKW venue in Berlin to the rural territory of M.1. Due to the programming's newfound digitality, the previously introduced editorial project *Letters to Joan* took on a very central role. For this written exchange, we had invited eight thinkers, artists, and activists to reflect on timely questions of care during these first unsettling months of the newly arisen pandemic.[610] In this chapter, I want to revisit certain elements of this publication as a way to further explore how the discursive effort of curatorial practice, with a commitment to a feminist ethics of care, can participate in constructing "as-well-as-possible-worlds."[611] In an effort at thinking-with, I establish the various layers of the notion of "caring infrastructures" in the ensuing sections, aiming to establish a useful methodology for curators to enact care within their respective practices.

---

608. As I already included this quotation in the introduction, I therefore will repeat it at full length only here in the footnote. Tronto and Fisher define caring "as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web." Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 103.
609. Ibid.
610. Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, eds., *Letters to Joan* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Hohenlockstedt, Germany: M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020).
611. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 103.

5.1 Thinking-with Joan Tronto: In Search of the Notion of Caring Infrastructures

In our introductory letter from March 2020, we – the curatorial collaborators Gilly Karjevsky, Rosario Talevi and myself – had written about our vision to think through our curatorial programming as caring infrastructures, as a thinking tool towards social transformation.[612] To our initial letter, Joan Tronto had responded with a missive of her own.[613] I want to return to a particular passage from her response that my mind keeps returning to. As this chapter repeatedly turns to close readings of several elements of this passage, I quote it in full:

> I want to take a bit of a pause when you arrive at your notion of thinking about care as infrastructure, as you put it: "If we inscribe care into the building stones of our social infrastructures – does that generate a more just society?" Does using the metaphor of "infrastructure" make the task of inserting care too much about "stuff" and not enough about relationship? I realize that institutions shape our lives. But is it enough to want to reform institutions? How can we make infrastructure relational? What does infrastructural "practice" look like? Further, in the process of repair, can we ever reach down deeply enough to change the "building stones"? It seems to me that we first have to address where repair is necessary – responding to violence, hatred, "othering" processes – before we can fix institutions. But perhaps we can, to quote Chairman Mao, "walk on two legs."[614] Institutions affect people who change institutions in turn. So perhaps infrastructural change is necessary, but it might be too much to hope that changing infrastructure is somehow a permanent fix to our uncaring ways.[615]

It has been two years since this exchange of letters, since the public event occurred, since my curatorial collaboration with Rosario Talevi and Gilly Karjevsky has ebbed away, and yet I keep coming back to these questions, these thoughts,

---

612. See appendix, section A, for the full letter from the editors to Joan Tronto.
613. Joan Tronto, "Dear Rosario, Sascia, and Gilly," in Bailer, Karjevsky, and Talevi, *Letters to Joan*, 42–44.
614. As I consider Mao Zedong a very controversial figure due to the violent bloodshed during the Cultural Revolution in China, I do not want to leave this mention of him unremarked upon. Without being able to go into detail, I suggest the following publication for further context: Marissa Bryan, "Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution: In Theory and Impact" (PhD diss., Coastal Carolina University, 2020).
615. Joan Tronto, "Dear Rosario, Sascia, and Gilly," 42–43.

and this desire to think through the notion of caring infrastructures as a way to make care tangible and transformative. I regard this perpetual returning to the *Letters to Joan* as an ongoing process of thinking-with and writing-with Tronto, as articulated by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (who builds on fellow technology scholar Donna Haraway's notion of thinking-with). To reiterate the previously introduced notion,[616] writing-with for Piug de la Bellacasa creates collectivity through the process of thinking and knowing:

> Instead of reinforcing the figure of a lone thinker, the voice in such a text seems to keep saying: I am not the only one. Writing-with is a practical technology that reveals itself as both descriptive (it inscribes) and speculative (it connects). It builds relation and community, that is: possibility.[617]

Following Piug de la Bellacasa's line of thinking, this approach is a way to introduce a thinking-with-care into collective and accountable knowledge creation – a knowledge creation that does not negate dissent and acknowledges the efforts that went into cultivating that very knowledge. This requires one to "explore ways of taking care for the unavoidably thorny relations that foster rich, collective, interdependent, albeit not seamless, thinking-with."[618] In performing a close reading of Tronto's response letter, I aim to connect care to her theoretical legacy, but also to not shy away from dissenting and diverging from it.

Tronto, in her letter to us, does not miss the chance to stress the troubled and burdensome aspects that define the lived realities of caregivers – a reality which surfaced in many of the letters she received, and a reality which I share as a single parent.[619] However, I keep on sensing this urge to turn the ethics of care, which she has advanced significantly through her work, into a lived reality. To make the tensions, the unsettling realities, the frustrations around care productive. To help care become the democratising tool that Tronto, in her writings, envisions it to be.

For me, this thinking around caring infrastructures does exactly this: it

---

616. See chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."
617. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, "'Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care," *Sociological Review* 60 (2012): 203.
618. Ibid., 205.
619. Tronto, "Dear Rosario, Sascia, and Gilly," in Bailer, Karjevsky, and Talevi, *Letters to Joan*, 43.

connects my lived realities, the mechanisms of exclusions around my caring

responsibilities, to a wider ecosystem, and it demands that we address the "building

stones" of our social and physical infrastructures as a form of micro-politics, which

may have ripple effects for other parts of society. As a researcher, as a curator, and

as a single mother, I feel the urge to regain a sense of agency, of transformative

potency, that includes not only my own (un)caring conditions but those of others – as

Tronto proposes in her concept of caring-with.[620]

5.1.1   Infrastructures that Reproduce Otherwise

To better understand what caring infrastructures can be and what they cannot be,

what both their potential and limitations are, I will unpack the above-quoted excerpt

from Tronto's letter, with its many questions, reflections, and doubting thoughts:

> Does using the metaphor of "infrastructure" make the task of inserting
> care too much about "stuff" and not enough about relationship? I
> realize that institutions shape our lives. But is it enough to want to
> reform institutions? How can we make infrastructure relational?

Here, I sense that we are facing a conflation of terms that we did not specify

in our letter, and that may need further definition moving forward. Institutions and

infrastructures share some characteristics, but they are not interchangeable

concepts. Infrastructures are not to be confused with "stuff" or understood as "a thing

stripped of use"; rather, they are characterised "only as a relational property."[621]

Also, care itself is considered relational, as Tronto and other scholars have

convincingly articulated.[622] Within the context of this account, then, it is therefore

important to understand care as a relational practice, as gestures, words, and

thoughts, as well as priorities and commitments.[623] Feminist sociologist Emma

620. Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 23.
621. Susan Leigh Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure," *American Behavioral Scientist* 43, no. 3 (1999): 113.
622. Puig de la Bellacasa, "Nothing Comes without Its World," 198.
623. Emma Dowling, *The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?* (London: Verso, 2020), ebook.

Dowling makes a case to understand care "as a particular configuration of social relationships that are politically and economically – and hence historically – conditioned, with all of the gendered, racialised and classed implications of power relations, as well as considerations of vulnerability, need, ability and disability."[624]

The "burden," the uneasiness, of care fosters the need for support structures, which alludes to the dimension, or potential, of care as not only a social but a *socially engaged* practice with a social justice agenda. In her publication *Support Structures*, the artist and architect Céline Condorelli claims that support structures cannot be reduced to a reactive gesture. Rather, through them a potential can be released that may bring forth "the unspoken, the unsatisfied, the late and the latent, […] the not-yet-manifest […] the invisible, the unseen, the behind-the-seen, the disappeared, the concealed, the unwanted, the dormant."[625] The feminist urbanist Doina Petrescu, in her contribution to Condorelli's book, describes support as what is "behind, below, and underneath, hidden. […] It is the invisible that makes possible the visible, the absent which allows things to be present, the transient which make things lasting, the impossible that carry on the condition of possibility."[626]

Care and reproductive labour share these characteristics with the described notions of support structures. In fact, they can be regarded as support structures themselves, which, despite their life-sustaining role, predominantly go unnoticed. The discursive emphasis on invisibility in regard to care work therefore marks an absence, an obscuring of the ones who are not accounted for, economically or sociopolitically. I argue that invisibility is thus a manifestation of structural absences and mechanisms of exclusion and marginalisation of caregivers in societal narratives and public accounts. The undoing of invisibility lays bare the contradictions of our socioeconomic systems, which foster tensions and vicious cycles of devalorisation. Like care work, infrastructures are directed to a position of *infra* – to the "below, underneath" – while also etymologically implying "later than; smaller than; inferior

---

624. Ibid.
625. Céline Condorelli, and Gavin Wade, *Support Structures* (London: Sternberg, 2009), 13.
626. Doina Petrescu, quoted in ibid., 79–80.

to"[627] – which resonates with the structural devaluation of care work.[628]

I argue it is precisely their relational qualities that enhance the risk of both care and infrastructure being underacknowledged and made systemically invisible. The Covid-19 pandemic has vastly demonstrated how, paradoxically, the *absence* of care is what can render it visible, can bring to the surface its underlying, life-sustaining relevance. This characteristic is shared with the notion of "infrastructure" that sociologist Susan Leigh Star has articulated: "The normally invisible quality of working infrastructure becomes visible when it breaks: the service is down, the bridge washes out, there is a power blackout."[629] Feminist art theorist Marina Vishmidt cites the global financial crisis of 2008 as an example in which the normalised repetition of daily routine stopped functioning and allowed for history and power relations to be seen.[630] As she puts it: "Broken infrastructure is loquacious."[631] Through their brokenness, infrastructures speak to "glitches" that have interrupted reproduction.[632] Thus, infrastructure is fragile and defined by its repetitive character, which means that "it works to enable a set of activities, and it works because the preconditions of its effectivity are neither visible nor relevant; these jut out when the infrastructure breaks down or if an element is isolated from the whole."[633]

Underlying, repetitious, invisibilised, under-acknowledged until breakdown, relational – these are the shared characteristics of care and infrastructure. Yet where do institutions fit in this setup?

In Tronto's response letter, she goes back and forth between the terms "infrastructure" and "institution." To maintain the definitional boundaries between the two terms, I turn to the cultural theorist Lauren Berlant, who distinguishes structures or systems from infrastructures and their respective potential for change. Berlant

---

627. Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. "infra-," accessed March 10, 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/infra-.
628. As previously elaborated on in chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands."
629. Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure," 382.
630. Marina Vishmidt, "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing: Cuts Toward Infrastructural Critique," in *Former West: Art and the Contemporary after 1989*, ed. Maria Hlavajova and Simon Sheikh (Utrecht: BAK –basis voor actuele kunst; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 265.
631. Ibid., 266.
632. Lauren Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 3 (2016): 393.
633. Vishmidt, "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing," 266.

argues that "[i]nfrastructure is not identical to system or structure […] because infrastructure is defined by the movement or patterning of social form. It is the living mediation of what organizes life: the lifeworld of structure."[634] Hence, it is through infrastructure that the world is kept in movement and practically bound to itself;[635] however, this pattern of movement only becomes solid when seen from a distance.[636]

After establishing this conceptual understanding of infrastructures, it is important to look at the relevance of this distinction within the art sector. We must differentiate not only between systems and infrastructures but also between institutions and infrastructures. Building on the trajectory of "institutional critique," which has circulated as a concept within the arts since the late 1960s, Vishmidt differentiates between institutional and infrastructural critique:

> At minimum, the shift from institutional critique to infrastructural critique […] is the move from the institution as a site for "false totalizations" to an engagement with the thoroughly intertwined objective […] and subjective […] conditions necessary for the institution and its critique to exist, reproduce themselves, and posit themselves as an immanent horizon as well as transcendental condition.[637]

Vishmidt provides the labour market, urban development, and corporations as examples of these transcendental conditions.[638] In following her proposition, this shift from the institutional to the infrastructural therefore must include an expansion of scope, wherein institutional concerns cannot be diffracted from larger, infrastructural mechanisms, such as the "structural violence of capitalism, racism, and gender, which is so often mediated by the reckless expansionism of art markets and spaces."[639] From this perspective, the structures of (art) institutions are considered smaller elements in a wider ecosystem – of a more comprehensive, underlying infrastructure. As Star argues, infrastructures are characterised by a spatial or temporal scope with "a reach beyond a single event or on-site practice."[640] In this

---

634. Berlant, "The Commons," 393.
635. Ibid.
636. Ibid., 394.
637. Vishmidt, "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing," 267.
638. Ibid.
639. Ibid.
640. Berlant, "The Commons," 381.

way, the art institution expands the scope of its social action beyond exhibition-making and the discussion of artistic positions.

Interestingly, Andrea Fraser, a prominent thinker and artist within the discourses of institutional critique since the 1980s, in a 2005 essay speaks to the co-option or the "institutionalisation of institutional critique." Here, she reflects on the shifts in discourse and perspective:

> In these discussions, one finds a certain nostalgia for institutional critique as a now-anachronistic artifact of an era before the corporate mega-museum and the 24/7 global art market, a time when artists could still conceivably take up a critical position against or outside the institution. Today, the argument goes, there no longer is an outside. How, then, can we imagine, much less accomplish, a critique of art institutions when museum and market have grown into an all-encompassing apparatus of cultural reification? Now, when we need it most, institutional critique is dead, a victim of its success or failure, swallowed up by the institution it stood against.[641]

Departing from Fraser's claim, cultural critique has been co-opted by the institution – and the extended argument would be that precisely because the institutional concept, in its narrow and possibly outdated version, no longer holds any transformative potential ("is dead"), an *infrastructural* approach is needed to understand and shift the realm of critique from "within the walls of the museum" out into the wider socioeconomic realm. What is needed is a conceptual thinking tool that is rather expansive and malleable and that can be introduced to the wider arts ecosystem as a transformative vehicle. I argue that the infrastructural thinking proposed in this dissertation is such a tool. With this transition from institution to infrastructure, I return to Berlant's suggestion to think of infrastructures as "patterns of movement," which implies a malleability as well as an entry point to think through the transformative potential of these binding elements that maintain worlds. This understanding resonates with Vishmidt's framing of infrastructure as a site of "reproducing otherwise":

---

641. Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique," *Artforum*, September 2005, https://www.artforum.com/features/from-the-critique-of-institutions-to-an-institution-of-critique-172201/.

Infrastructure might be that which repeats, but this repetition is not without difference: it can monotonously produce the same differences (such as infrastructures that reproduce social inequalities), but it can also be a means of ensuring the reproduction of a wholly different form of social life over time. Finally, it is infrastructure's transitive character – between the material and the possible, between machines and working drawings, between cognitive maps and what is pictured on them – that enables it to ask political questions that can no longer be replied to in the abstract, with the false totalizations of rejection or complicity.[642]

This repetitive essence of infrastructure implies that it also reproduces structural violences on both an abstract and a material basis. Vishmidt speaks of "transcendental repetition," including such examples as capitalism, class contempt, anti-Black racism, and the "material conditions of possibility," which encompasses regulations, lead pipes, privatised governance, and so on.[643] Tronto also asserts the dual character of repetition: "Just as vicious circles reproduce themselves, so too do virtuous circles."[644] The power of repetition is further brought forth in gender theorist Judith Butler's understanding of gender as "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*."[645] In the case of Butler, repetition also carries the potential for subversion: "The possibilities of gender transformation are to be found precisely in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition."[646]

While existing societal patterns, habits, and norms might appear to us as rigid at first glance, they in fact act as the invisibilised, yet dynamic and relational, infrastructures that order our shared realities[647] – and, in doing so, their repetitive

---

642. Vishmidt, "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing," 266.
643. Ibid., 265.
644. Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, 168.
645. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179. Emphasis in the original. "Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted social temporality. Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief."
646. Ibid.
647. Berlant, "The Commons"; Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure."

character carries the potential for social transformation. This potential for "reproducing otherwise" is the reason I favour infrastructures as a conceptual framework over an institutional focus. In this line of thought, social transformation goes beyond the walls of the museum (or any other art or academic institution) and finds its way into wider social, economic, and political spheres – via the social relations that sustain not only care and infrastructures but also society as a whole.

5.1.2   Relational: Care, Curating, and Infrastructures

To further shift the relation of curating and infrastructural activities with the potency to reproduce otherwise towards care, I want to return to the notion that care acts as a prism for understanding wider societal injustices. As established previously, for the Wages for Housework movement, unpaid housework constituted such a prism "through which the multiple facets of women's lack of power over their lives in society as a whole could be seen, understood, and reassembled."[648] If we consider care as a prism that sheds light on the intersecting "axes of domination," then we find a point of departure for the (curatorial) address of pending matters of social justice.[649] The notion of care as a prism focuses attention in the direction where transformation is most needed. When set in conjunction with an infrastructural perspective, such a redirection allows for a thinking of transformation that resembles a ripple effect: (micro-)changes within the conditions of care affect other parts of society and can thereby produce a more expansive effect that goes beyond the immediate context of any singular issue.

This line of thinking requires an acknowledgement of, or at least an openness to, the notion that one's individual self is impacted by and implicated in a wider infrastructural web of fellow creators and institutions, which connects us to wider

---

648. Louise Toupin, *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist Movement, 1972–77* (London: Pluto, 2018), 3. Previously mentioned in section 2.1 – "Care as Prism."
649. Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, *This Is a Manifesto for the 99* (London: Verso, 2019), 22.

realms of society and economy.[650] To borrow the words of the urbanist AbdouMaliq Simone, one needs to consider "people as infrastructure," in the sense that they co-produce, in "complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices," the infrastructures and platforms that provide for and reproduce life in the city.[651] Akin to the ways in which cities are co-produced by people via relational infrastructural activities, the art sector produces its platforms and infrastructures through the relational webs that expand between the activities of curators, artists, scholars, audiences, and museum staff, and these webs extend to objects, places, and (art) spaces.[652] While each of the actors that co-constitute the art field is not necessarily directly associated with (art) institutions that they could change from within, we are all parts of interdependent webs of relational infrastructures that can co-shape these configurations: by adding pressure, by refusing, or by actively engaging with them.[653]

This line of thinking is in close alliance with the definition of curator Maria Lind, who describes the curatorial as a social activity that encompasses "a range of relational and infrastructural activities" and as "a way of thinking in terms of

---

650. For his proposition of "people as infrastructure," AbdouMaliq Simone analyses the activities of residents in a range of African urban hubs and how they engage in "complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices," which, ultimately, "become an infrastructure – a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city." AbdouMaliq Simone, "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (2004): 407.

651. Ibid.

652. To contextualise the quote from AbdouMaliq Simone, I want to create a link to the ongoing infrastructural discourse within the architectural field. In their chapter "Infrastructural Love: Caring for Our Architectural Support Systems" the architects Hélène Frichot, Adrià Carbonell, Hannes Frykholm, and Sepideh Karami elaborate: "Housing becomes a site that is more than merely a personal problem. By situating housing as an infrastructure of care that 'patterns' urban social life, the call for access to affordable and good-quality housing becomes part of a process of 'political contest and change.' […] In two influential articles, Simone argues that people, their actions, and relations form an infrastructural support system for the city, what he calls "people as infrastructure." A similar argument is forwarded by [urban studies scholar] Ash Amin, who discusses the "liveliness of sociotechnical systems" and how the life of a city can be narrated through its material infrastructures. There is, Amin insists, "nothing purely technical or mechanical about even the most digitized infrastructures." Infrastructures, he goes on, are implicated in human experience, shaping behavior, arousing anger and frustration, and affecting social disposition and a spectrum of emotions to which we propose to add love and relations of care" (p. 12). For a full reading, see Hélène Frichot, Adrià Carbonell, Hannes Frykholm, and Sepideh Karami, eds. *Infrastructural Love: Caring for Our Architectural Support Systems* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2022).

653. For strategies of how to engage with hegemonic constellations, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1985); Lara García Díaz and Pascal Gielen, "Precarity as an Artistic Laboratory for Counter-Hegemonic Labour Organization," *Frame* 30, no. 2 (2018): 41–59.

interconnections" between objects, people, processes, places, and discourses.[654] Following this trajectory, feminist scholars and practitioners have resisted and challenged the association of curating with independence, hierarchy, and control,[655] rather emphasising its relational and infrastructural character that is rooted in an interconnected thinking.[656] If curating is a socially engaged, relational, infrastructural activity, etymologically bound to situate itself amid questions of care and caught between movements of in/dependences, then it is not bound to "stuff" but to relations and social encounters.[657] Rather than locating the entry point of curatorial care at the nexus of the human-object encounter, I thus situate curatorial care as a radically relational, infrastructural practice.

It is precisely the overlapping notions of curating as a relational practice, infrastructures as potential carriers of reproducing otherwise, and care as a prism to comprehend wider social urgencies that lead us closer to identifying the core characteristics of *caring infrastructures*.

From this coupling of curating and care with infrastructures, the notion of caring infrastructures emerges on the horizon as a curatorial approach that can generate the necessary methodologies to enact transformative processes within the arts. To accomplish such transformation, the building of caring infrastructures within the arts needs to be understood as a situated, micro-political, and relational-infrastructural process, in which curators (or other cultural practitioners) provide the necessary support structures to respond to the multiple caring needs and capacities of the artists, collaborators, audiences, and team members and thereby foster the conditions of their presence. This process must include a close look at the multitude of relations, scales, and elements of any given curatorial undertaking, which should be allocated and revised according to the caring needs and capacities of the specific context. The various elements of caring considerations align themselves to a

---

655. See section 3.1.1 – "Histories of Care and Control: Curating at the Intersection of Gender, Race, Class."
656. Jens Hoffmann and Maria Lind. "Conversation: To Show or Not to Show," *Mousse Magazine*, December 2011; Megan Johnston, "Slow Curating: Re-thinking and Extending Socially Engaged Art in the Context of Northern Ireland," *OnCurating*, no. 24 (December 2014): 24.
657. For a detailed discussion on relational curating, socially engaged art, and care, return to chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."

relational and malleable chain of supporting elements. Together, they form caring infrastructures.

5.1.3   Beyond the Symbolic: The Practice of Building Caring Infrastructures

Having established the conceptual frameworks and productive overlaps between curating, care, and infrastructures, let us now direct our attention to a pending question from Tronto's paragraph, where she rightfully asks: "What does infrastructural 'practice' look like?" To paraphrase and expand on this question for the purpose of this study, I wish to articulate what the *practice of caring infrastructures* looks like.

We can begin to answer Tronto's question by recognising the importance of care-as-a-practice. *Care needs to be done*, in the same way that Maria Puig de la Bellacasa reminds us of philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's call: "it's not enough to shout, 'Vive the multiple!' … the multiple has to be done."[658] Care contains affective and ethical dimensions. However, if these do not ultimately manifest in an *infrastructural practice of care*, then they remain within the symbolic realm. Yet, addressing the urgencies of care can never be a performative, a symbolic gesture; it must stem from an active, counter-hegemonic engagement with the social (infra)structures of the respective field, in this case, the arts.

Returning to Vishmidt, she argues that institutional critique and emancipatory agendas within the arts find their limitation in their defending "disclosure or deixis as the normative one for art."[659] In these schemata, she continues, "art can point, but it can't grab."[660] That is to say: to point to the contradictions and shortcomings of care within capitalism is important – but it is not enough. In light of care-washing, which turns care into an empty signifier for political or economic instrumentalisation and

---

658. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, quoted in Maria Piug de La Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 72.
659. Vishmidt, "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing," 267.
660. Ibid.

manipulation,[661] it is imperative for critical cultural practices to reach beyond the symbolic, the representational, in order to maintain and highlight the essential importance of care as the basis of humankind's existence. A meaningful relational curatorial practice of care needs to arrive at a juncture where it is in a position to place "agency over indexicality,"[662] and thereby to explore its potential "to grab."

While the representational potential of art "to point" forms one important facet within a complex mosaic of necessary (infra)structural changes within the arts, this pointing must be regarded as the method of departure – it must certainly not be the end of the effort. Thus "indexing care" as a way of "unsettling care" matters,[663] as it can shine light on care's contradictions, ambivalences, pitfalls, and structural deficiencies, on the violence of gendered and racialised norms, and on the exclusions that aggregate around care.

5.1.3.1 Transforming Each Building Block

The infrastructural lens situates the curatorial as a relational ecosystem, where the address of certain (infra)structural elements – or building blocks – can allude to change within the wider systemic web. Yet, within this practice of caring infrastructures, what is the role of the individual elements, the building blocks? How are they characterised, how do they relate to one another, and what is their role within the process of transformation? In search for answers to this line of questioning, I turn to another element of Tronto's excerpt:

> Further, in the process of repair, can we ever reach down deeply
> enough to change the "building stones"? It seems to me that we first

---

661. Andreas Chatzidakis, Jamie Hakim, Jo Littler, Catherine Rottenberg, and Lynne Segal. "From Carewashing to Radical Care: The Discursive Explosions of Care during Covid-19." *Feminist Media Studies* 20, no. 6 (2020): 889–95.
662. Vishmidt, "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing," 266. The full quote reads: "A preliminary reading could discern in this shift a pervasive tendency to prioritize the 'real' (the irreducible, the traumatic, the chaotic) over the delimited, instrumental impact over symbolic action, agency over indexicality."
663. Michelle Murphy, "Unsettling Care: Troubling Transnational Itineraries of Care in Feminist Health Practices," *Social Studies of Science* 45 (2015): 717–37

have to address where repair is necessary – responding to violence, hatred, "othering" processes – before we can fix institutions.

I firstly, and briefly, turn to the small word "repair," which, like "care" and "healing," has become a trending term in the arts. It has become common, for example, to invite artists, curators, thinkers, and audiences to consider how "colonial wounds" can be "healed."[664] However, healing and repair seem to imply a sense of wholeness, flawlessness, or a previous state of equality of (art) institutions that needs to, or could be, reinstated.[665] As art institutions' historical emergence is tied to elitism, cultural superiority, colonialism, and gendered hierarchies, there is no "desirable point of return" that repair could lead us towards.[666] Instead, I argue, the notion of "repair" needs to be tied to a counter-hegemonic rearticulation of the infrastructures of the arts in their current and future forms, in the sense of the term provided by the political theorist Chantal Mouffe.[667] The focus of addressing the violence of exclusion and the "othering" processes of the art field lies not so much in reinstating a possible sense of wholeness or flawlessness but in rearticulating, hacking, and subverting the invisible and visible building stones of any given curatorial undertaking. The infrastructures of the art sector thus need to be critically rearticulated, such that they no longer reproduce mechanisms of exclusions but rather – via the notion of "reproducing otherwise" – become fields of agency for counter-hegemonic rearticulation along the lines of feminist care ethics. In this setup, the building blocks constitute the elements out of which infrastructures are built – and, in a micro-political stance, it is the individual building blocks that need to be

---

664. Examples of curatorial engagements with the notions of repair and healing include Gropius Bau, "Exhibition: YOYI! Care, Repair, Heal," 2023, https://www.berlinerfestspiele.de/en/gropius-bau/programm/2022/ausstellungen/yoyi-care-repair-heal; Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, "Symposium: From Restitution to Repair," 2022, https://12.berlinbiennale.de/program/from-restitution-to-repair/; SAVVY Contemporary, "Event: Decolonial Approaches to Health, Social and Cultural Repair," 2022, https://savvy-contemporary.com/en/events/2022/repair/; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, "Event: New Alphabet School on HEALING (Faju)," 2022, https://archiv.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/veranstaltung/p_192883.php.
665. Independent of my position voiced here, I recommend novelist Maggie Nelson's passage on "repair" in *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint* (Dublin: Random House, 2021), 29ff. In this passage, she mainly builds on the work of the queer scholars José Esteban Muñoz and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.
666. For further reference, see section 3.1.1 – "Histories of Care and Control: Curating at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class."

responsive to the urgencies of care in order to facilitate the overall construction of *caring infrastructures*.

However, Tronto, in her letter, puts up for debate the possibility of even reaching down deep enough to grasp the building blocks to substantially alter, hack, subvert, and transform them. Her query hints at the *radicality* that transformation must acquire to be able to address the roots of the problem. In the same way that mine and other feminist scholars' thinking explores the literal meaning of "curating," through its Latin etymology, as a "caretaking" practice,[668] I want to propose an equally productive investigation of the origin of "radical." Stemming from the Late Latin *radicalis* and the Latin *radic-*, *radix*, "radical" means "root."[669] To reach down to the building blocks of the arts' infrastructures, we thus need to undertake a literally "radical" process of understanding and addressing the "root" of the urgencies at stake. As care, curating, and infrastructures are relational constructs, the process of building caring infrastructures must be relational too. I propose to understand this radically relational process as one of micro-politics. Through such a micro-political approach, each element, each building block, of a curatorial process can be critically examined and rearticulated, be it communication, budgeting, documentation, or accessibility, in order for the larger constellation of building blocks – that is, the infrastructure itself – to be radically transformed.

Through such a micro-political approach, the potential resistance to change from involved actors and institutions can be lowered, as they are not burdened with the sheer thought of transforming entire ecosystems at once. They are instead invited to partake in small-scale, incremental changes that focus on each building block separately, slowly transforming the wider infrastructural setup over time.

---

668. For example, see Elke Krasny's elaboration on the use of the literal: "I make use of the literal as a sharp tool for critical feminist analysis and practice. The literal is not bound to any one practice or discipline in particular. Quite on the contrary, the literal can become most useful in its complexly challenging translations into material, political, social, cultural, aesthetic conditions and other languages. One can hold the literal up to what it is, what it can mean, what it could do. The literal enables performative acts. In pursuit of the literal, I weave together feminist care perspectives in political theory, political philosophy on public space and assembly, critical museology, urban sociology, and citizenship studies." Elke Krasny, "Caring Activism. Assembly, Collection, and the Museum," *Collecting in Time* (2017), https://collecting-in-time.gfzk.de/en.
669. "Word History: The Roots of 'Radical'," Merriam-Webster, accessed July 16, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/radical-word-history.

5.1.3.2 Feminist Care Ethics as a Guiding Compass

While I have begun to outline that micro-political infrastructural change is necessary in order to enact infrastructural curatorial care, the *direction* that this transformative rearticulation must take still requires address. The transformation requires a set intentionality regarding not only *whether* but *how* the building blocks can be altered. Accordingly, I want to briefly return to Lauren Berlant's understanding of infrastructure as that which keeps our world "practically bound to itself," which *patterns* social form.[670] I propose that Tronto and Fisher's articulation of a feminist ethics of care defines *how* this world is bound to itself. Feminist care ethics, as elaborated earlier, are rooted in the rejection of the assertion of autonomy, independence, and hierarchical care-as-control. Rather, they emphasise the acknowledgement of mutual vulnerabilities and interdependency, and our life-long need for care and democratic processes.[671] These ethics of care serve as the guiding compass that provides direction as to how the building blocks of a curatorial project should be rearticulated. Their proposed ethics of care may serve to shape the patterning, the intentionality, the moral boundaries, that distinguish a relational curatorial format from any kind of loose sociality. Infrastructures are thus what provide a patterning framework to bring people, sites, and objects together, while a feminist ethics of care defines *how* they are brought together – it is precisely what turns infrastructures into *caring infrastructures*. When the micro-political rearticulations of each building block, according to feminist care ethics, are taken together, they align themselves into a chain of supporting elements, which allows for the construction of caring infrastructures within a curatorial process.

---

670. Berlant, "The Commons," 394.
671. To return to my earlier introduction of Berlant's notion of infrastructure, see section 5.1.1 – "Infrastructures that Reproduce Otherwise."

5.1.3.3   Defining Caring Infrastructures

To return to Tronto's opening question within this section – What does an infrastructural practice look like? – we must conclude that in order to actualise care's democratising potential, the conscious building of caring infrastructures must be regarded as a methodological undertaking, and it must be grounded within a lived practice. To reiterate, caring infrastructures within the arts are the result of a methodological sequence revolving around the building of support structures that respond to the multiple caring needs and capacities of the artists, collaborators, audiences, and team members and that foster the conditions of their presence – thereby producing tangible frameworks for practising in congruence with feminist care ethics.

This curatorial methodology requires the curator, or any other critical artistic or cultural practitioner, to look closely at the multitude of relations, scales, and elements (the building blocks) of a given curatorial undertaking and to rearticulate them in a micro-political and counter-hegemonic fashion and according to the caring needs and capacities of the specific context. To take the example of budgets, one may seek out, in the specific instance, how financial resources are currently allocated, how pay is distributed, and how these processes could be aligned with the feminist care ethics of mutual care, interdependence, and democracy – thereby countering economic hierarchies and capitalist exploitation. Would this shift in perspective allow for the funding of travel for children and partners of artists invited to partake in public programming, if this support was needed? Would the introduction of democratic principles alter who gets paid and how much? Would this lead to an abolition of unpaid internships in the arts? As a consequence of these questions – once acted upon – the wider infrastructural web of the curatorial process may be affected, as budget reconfigurations require, in most cases, related adjustments to programming. The result could be a downscaling of the overall project to retain enough budget to fairly pay everyone engaged. In the set of methodological propositions towards caring infrastructures presented in the upcoming section, I thus suggest considering a curatorial degrowth agenda, whereby less programming results in more financial

care for the contributors.[672]

This example showcases that the process of building caring infrastructures is rooted in thinking through ecologies, as this approach precludes a practice that considers only disjointed fragments, that sees individual building blocks only as an afterthought and that might add (or take away) caring elements in an arbitrary fashion. This methodological approach does not entail *ex-ante* add-ons to already finite projects; rather, it forms the core of a curatorial practice of care and permeates every aspect of the curatorial process. As one curatorial decision affects another, it is imperative to take seriously the ecological-relational character of caring infrastructures.

5.1.3.4 Assuming Curatorial Agency

Practising curatorial care through establishing caring infrastructures means assuming curatorial responsibility for the overall structures, context, and ecologies of one's work environment. Such a practice urges curators to make full use of their agency not only to address matters of care at a representational level but to actively alter affective, social, financial, and physical infrastructures in alignment with a feminist ethics of care. This understanding may serve as a roadmap for cultural practitioners to integrate care as method into their field of work, from contributing to the curatorial-activist pursuit of challenging discriminatory art historical canons and representations to highlighting questions of care as central to society and the overall economy, while building the foundations of caring infrastructures across the cultural sphere. The offer of caring infrastructures as a curatorial strategy is also an offer of a professional toolkit, one that hopes to go beyond gendered notions of care – as these imply that certain social groups should carry out care, because caring comes "naturally" to them or because their values already align to care.[673] The proposal for

---

672. See Proposition #5: "Consider Curatorial Budgeting as Political" in section 5.2.1 – "Practice-led Propositions towards Building Caring Infrastructures."
673. The feminist critique that care work is naturalised as women's work was articulated in chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands."

caring infrastructures is a possible pathway towards *ungendering the practices of care*, as this practice detaches care from scripted gendered norms by offering it as a methodological toolkit that anyone can implement. With this proposition for caring infrastructures, I begin from the previously introduced feminist, activist, caring, and relational approaches to curating, with their counter-hegemonic impetus, but I amend them with an *infrastructural* perspective that translates ethical considerations into practice-led steps towards (infra)structural justice. In a capitalist society, where uncaring conditions for caregivers and care-receivers prevail, the centring of feminist care ethics must be understood as part of a counter-hegemonic formation that challenges not only the patriarchal, white, and elitist modus operandi of the arts but also the wider sociopolitical conditions.

With caring infrastructures, I further want to put forth a practice-led curatorial method to regain a sense of agency over everyday life as well as the place that care holds within in – not as a site of coercion, of burden, but of the actualisation of the self and a democratic society, and how this manifests within the arts. I am aware of the highly idealistic character of this undertaking and that it diverges from Tronto's articulated scepticism in regard to the potential of such an infrastructural approach, when she writes: "So perhaps infrastructural change is necessary, but it might be too much to hope that changing infrastructure is somehow a permanent fix to our uncaring ways."[674]

Conscious of curating's various limitations when it comes to substantially altering the hegemonic configurations that span art, care, curating, and capitalism,[675] for now I nonetheless want to follow the Marxist-feminist thought of Silvia Federici, who frames the sphere of social reproduction as the central terrain for social transformation, which – in a feminist tradition – locates the personal as the site of political struggle and change.[676] I argue that through micro-politics – through micro-changes in the micro-building-blocks of our relational webs – a different present and

---

674. Tronto, "Dear Rosario, Sascia, and Gilly," in Bailer, Karjevsky, and Talevi, *Letters to Joan*, 44.
675. See chapter 6 – "Limits of Curatorial Care" for a (self-)critical reflection of the agency and the limitations of curating with care, and the notion of "caring infrastructures" in particular.
676. Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Brooklyn, NY: PM Press, 2012); Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

future are possible. The micro-political approach of caring infrastructures might find its resemblance in the metaphor of the butterfly effect, wherein small-scale, mundane, everyday acts of care contain the possibility to produce counter-hegemonic ripple effects within the wider infrastructures that we are enmeshed in, prompting sometimes unforeseen, larger changes at the other end. In the dialogic spirit of thinking-with Joan Tronto, I end this section by foregrounding the agency and impetus that cultural professionals possess to enact care in all its facets: Ultimately, if not us, who will fight for a society that centres care? And if not now, when?

5.2 In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures

Whereas the previous section offered a theoretical engagement with the notion of caring infrastructures, moving forward I specifically tend to the articulation of the methodological components necessary to enact caring infrastructures within the arts. I propose eight practice-led propositions for rearticulating the building blocks of caring infrastructures in order to transfer a feminist care ethics into a lived practice of care within the arts.

For this undertaking, the particular, situated experiences of my curatorial practice at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung are taken as inductive, practice-led processes of knowledge creation that can serve as a point of departure for other curators and cultural practitioners to align their practices – whether interdependent or institutional – with democratising principles and methods of, through, and towards care. This approach aligns theoretically with the thought of the artistic research scholar Anke Haarmann, who argues:

> To identify this practice of research as *methodos* – as a way of knowing – in artistic practice can only mean, according to the thesis, to work it out inductively from concrete artistic practices, because the arts, like philosophy, are committed to a consistent form-content relation, that is, they set the systematics and form of their method according to the content they are concerned with.[677]

It is precisely such a nexus that I aim to establish, where the curatorial form (of care) and its content (on care) find their congruency in caring infrastructures. The central challenge is to close the gap – the potential discrepancy – between the often emancipatory public face of an institution and the underlying patriarchal, white, and elitist (infra-)structural frameworks that sustain its public profile. This process requires openness, sensitivity, and self-criticality from the engaged arts practitioner,

---

677. Anke Haarmann, "Künstlerische Praxis als methodische Forschung? Zur kunsthistorischen Ermöglichung einer künstlerischen Forschung," Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ästhetik, September 2011, 8, http://www.dgae.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Haarmann.pdf.

who seeks to build from the approaches proposed in this dissertation. While working at M.1, I did not always arrive with the anticipatory sensitivities needed to provide the necessary care without the participants pointing them out to me, but I brought the necessary openness to respond to them and to consider them in the subsequent sessions. Depending on from which social positions the curators and organisers of an event act, a high level of empathetic thinking – especially in the case of gendered, classed, racial, and bodily privilege – may be required to allow them to *anticipate* the needs of a diverse audience and provide openness and flexibility to respond to the given needs and possibly changing circumstances. Therefore, these curatorial strategies towards care must always be viewed in light of the specific context. Some aspects may turn out to be unfit, or even superfluous, to realise, while others may appear more feasible and urgent than expected at first, and still other aspects may be missing for a given curator's or artist's respective creative practice. The overall focus of the propositions I outline in the next section relates primarily to project-based, temporary, institutional, and freelance curatorial practices within the non-profit art sector. While they do not particularly reflect on the specific modes of operation within the commercial realm, the propositions certainly have useful application in that sector, too.

Instead of formulating a manifesto in a traditional sense, I offer eight micro-essays, each of which consists of a curatorial proposition followed by a discursive engagement with the ambivalences and potentials that aggregate around that particular element, in conversation with the learnings I received from my curatorial practice in Hohenlockstedt. The text thus oscillates between self-critical reflection, a search for counter-hegemonic curatorial pathways, and hands-on curatorial propositions – inspired by feminist democratic care ethics.[678] At the end of this chapter, I recombine the eight propositions into a shortened version, resulting in what I call a "soft manifesto" for a lived practice of care within the arts.[679]

Many manifestos within the arts stem from the point of view of artists, and

---

[678] My approach of feminist care ethics is rooted in Joan Tronto's work, as previously established in the introduction section "Care as Feminist Ethics."
679. See section 5.3 – "Soft Manifesto for Caring Infrastructures."

rarely as self-critical accounts *by* curators *for* curators. A useful example of the former is the collaborative manifesto towards care entitled "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents," which provides specific considerations for art institutions on how to not exclude artists with caring responsibility, from the perspective of artists.[680] Another valuable resource is art critic Katy Deepwell's anthology of fifty feminist manifestos, written primarily by artists, as is the selection of "Propositions for Feminist Collective Practice" gathered by the feminist researcher and artist Alex Martinis Roe in her book *To Become Two*.[681]

Further, crip activist artists have created resources for artists to write their own access forms, used to indicate the support structures that they require from institutions to attend and contribute to their cultural programmes.[682] A prominent example within this field of crip activism is the "disability access rider" by artist and writer Johanna Hedva.[683] These resources are part of a selection of prompts for a more caring otherwise within the arts that stem from the initiative Intersections of Care. This platform collects guidelines, toolkits, and propositions from anti-racist, anti-ableist, feminist, queer, and trans practitioners and collectives on its website.[684] Other resources, such as (feminist) codes of conducts and codes of ethics, stem from art institutions and museum associations themselves; for example, the codes of ethics by the International Council of Museums (ICOM).[685] Therein, it is formulated

680. Artist Parents Network, "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents: Some Guidelines for Institutions and Residencies," Artist Parents, 2021, http://www.artist-parents.com.

681. Katy Deepwell, *50 Feminist Art Manifestos* (London: KT press, 2014), and Alex Martinis Roe, *To Become Two: Propositions for Feminist Collective Practice* (Berlin: Archive Books, 2018).

682. Access Docs for Artists, initiated by Leah Clements, Alice Hattrick and Lizzy Rose, accessed on September 26, 2023, https://www.accessdocsforartists.com.

683. Johanna Hedva, "Hedva's Disability Access Rider," *Sick Woman Theory* (blog), August 22, 2019, https://sickwomantheory.tumblr.com/post/187188672521/hedvas-disability-access-rider.

684. Intersections of Care, "Intersecting Guidelines of Care," accessed September 20, 2023, https://www.intersectionsofcare.net/guidelines/.

685. For examples of feminist and ethical codes of practices within the arts see ICOM – International Council of Museums, "Code of Ethics, " 2004, https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf; Feminist (Art) Institution, "Code of Practice," 2017, http://feministinstitution.org/code-of-practice/; Les Créatives, *Rosa Heft für Gleichstellung in der Kultur* (Pink Booklet for Gender Equity in the Cultural Sector), ed. Dominique Rovini, with Lucrezia Perrig, Sidonie Atgé, and Noemi Grütter (Geneva, Switzerland: Association Les Créatives via Atar Roto Presse Suisse, 2021), https://lescreatives.ch/2023/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ROSAHEFT-DIGITAL-1.pdf; and Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester, "Trans-Inclusive Culture: Guidance on Advancing Trans Inclusion for Museums, Galleries, Archives and

that, for example, "*museums* work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve."[686] ICOM's code of conduct exemplifies a seeming trend within the arts to allocate the agency for change within the cultural sector either to institutions or to artists, who are affected by the lack of support structures. Rarely are such manifestos or codes of conducts formulated by or directed specifically at curators as accountable agents responsible for shifting the art system from their particular position of power. One of these scarce accounts is the prompt formulated by the London-based Black feminist curatorial duo Languid Hands. In their text "On Care and Curating during this 'Moment,'" they make a case for curatorial care to be extended beyond the material scope of an exhibition, reaching into the very conditions – the infrastructures – of the arts, to promote the safety and care of Black people:

> Our experiences of working with white led institutions has inspired within us a new meaning of what it means to curate (from Latin cura "care") the work of black people. As black curators, our care must extend beyond the material production and handling of the work itself, to supporting the conditions in which black people might survive in a world that does not care for them, in a world aggressively indifferent to their safety. [687]

Joining their proposed urgency to rethink the conditions of production and the structural care needed within the arts, I aim to contribute to closing the aforementioned gap of curatorial formulations towards a more just art sector by drawing from feminist democratising care ethics. I deem it particularly important not only to formulate such propositions as "demands from below" (e.g., from the perspective of artists) but also to *assume responsibility as curators* and to formulate propositions regarding how we, as curators, in our respective positions of power, can challenge the given norms. I hereby reconnect with Joan Tronto's formulations of

Heritage Organisations," September 2023, https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/trans-inclusive-culture.

686. ICOM – International Council of Museums, "Code of Ethics," 2004, https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf. My emphasis.

687. Languid Hands, "On Curation & Care during This 'Moment,'" Cubitt, 2020, https://www.cubittartists.org.uk/languid-hands-on-curation-care-during-this-moment.

feminist care ethics as being intricately tied to "affix responsibility."[688] Only by articulating these demands and propositions from and for curators can these arenas of curatorial responsibility be tied to the theories and concepts of curatorial practice – thereby claiming the provision of caring infrastructures as fundamental to the field's professional conduct. The following propositions, in the form of short essays, provide insight, and possibly inspiration, for other practitioners who wish to include critical curatorial care in their own practices while also providing solid ground upon which care-receivers, caretakers, and freelancing practitioners can build up the arguments for their own particular needs. All too often, freelancing artists and curators find themselves in the precarious position of having to constantly point out the lack of support structures, the lack of caring infrastructures – while, in most cases, having to accept the sobering reality that their needs will remain unmet.[689] I therefore argue that it is part of (institutionalised) curatorial responsibility to not let the construction of caring infrastructures fall onto the shoulders of freelancing artists and cultural practitioners, who – due to the prevalent lack of support structures – are forced to become activists for fair pay and equity. In such instances, these practitioners are easily dismissed as "nagging bitches" – a term Federici uses in her early work to reflect on the ways housewives are perceived when advocating for gender justice – or as "feminist killjoys," to borrow queer-feminist theorist Sara Ahmed's formulation.[690]

In this set of tensions between institutions and freelancers, the institution often regards the demanded gestures of care as acts of benevolence, of "being nice,"[691] rather than as substantial acts of structural justice and professional ethical conduct.

---

688. Tronto, Caring Democracy, 30. On previous mentions about care and responsibility, and their relationship to curating, see the introduction section "Care as Feminist Ethics" and chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."
689. For an example of a conversation among freelancing artists who are also caregivers, see Andrea Büttner, Camille Henrot, and Basim Magdy, "Shifting Mindsets: Welcoming Parenthood in the Art World," moderated by Emily Butler, Art Basel Conversations, June 14, 2023, YouTube video, 1:05:06, https://www.artbasel.com/stories/conversations-art-basel-shifting-mindsets-welcoming-parenthood-art-world?lang=en.
690. Sara Ahmed, Living a Feminist Life (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017) and Sara Ahmed, The Feminist Killjoy Handbook: The Radical Potential of Getting in the Way (New York: Seal, 2023).
691. Valeria Graziano, Marcell Mars, and Tomislav Medak (Pirate Care), "Care and Its Discontents," New Alphabet School (blog), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2020, https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/care-and-its-discontents.

Yet taking seriously the lived realities of employees, collaborators, and audiences with caring responsibilities and physical and mental impairments is a form of institutional accountability towards gender, racial, class, and dis*ability justice that requires complex consideration.[692] Some of the curatorial propositions in the upcoming sections might seem obvious or tedious and others "too much," but I argue that it is the interplay of seemingly mundane details that creates the set of caring support structures needed for a shift of consciousness within the arts.

However, the propositions formulated in this chapter are not all-encompassing. The proposed building blocks reflect the most pressing foci which emerged from my own curatorial practice. Following the metaphor of building blocks, I invite practitioners to join the process of proposing an otherwise, by conceiving further building blocks. Such further building blocks could include questions of ecological sustainability, human-non-human relationships within curatorial practice, architectural and spatial considerations towards care (what some have called "care-spacing"), and digitality and archiving, as well as propositions specific to the commercial art gallery sector and further perspectives from embodied Black and brown experiences, from lived crip, queer, and trans experiences, from neurodiverse experiences, and from experience of caregivers who attend to the needs of care-receiving adults.

These few examples highlight the need to see my eight propositions as only a prompt towards a much wider conversation around "curating with care" from a multitude of perspectives. While the propositions might be limited in their range of themes, they do – as a collection – formulate a methodology of analysis and practice that can, and should, be expanded to accommodate other themes, perspectives, and areas. Precisely because this notion of caring infrastructures can never be all-encompassing, this section on the propositions is followed by a concluding chapter, which reflects on the limitations and contradictions of practising curatorial care within capitalism.

The added value of these considerations to the discourses of curating, care,

---

692. Hettie Judah, *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)* (London: Lund Humphries, 2022).

and feminism is that they nevertheless allow rather abstract ethical considerations to be grounded within a lived practice of care that takes seriously the relational webs that span from the personal to the macro-political, routed through the (infra-)structural conditions within (art) institutions. As established previously, the care crisis is not a momentary condition but rather a constant crisis as a result of the structural contradictions of capital and care. Thus, it is imperative to rethink the conditions of care – also mired within the cultural complex – from an infrastructural point of view.[693] Infrastructural issues need to be approached through infrastructural thinking and practices.

---

693. See chapter 2 – "Economy of Invisible Hands."

5.2.1   Practice-led Propositions towards Building Caring Infrastructures

Building Block: Situating

Proposition #1: Gain a Sincere Understanding of the Context

When embarking on a new curatorial project, hold space and time for observation of the context and for deep listening to the community before developing public programming. This allows the project to emerge from the context rather than become an external imposition.

At the start of my curatorial position at M.1, I asked for a three-month research phase, during which time no public programming would be held, so that I could acquaint myself with the institution, the village, its inhabitants, potential artists, and curatorial formats. This research phase, which included observation, meaningful interaction, and engaged listening, preceded the participatory curatorial programme. I used these learnings and experiences from the community as the point of departure for my curatorial undertaking. This allowed me to build *from* and *with* the community rather than impose a public programme that would operate with a logic – or urgency – foreign to the community. This phase was rooted in the sensation of what "feels right to me," in feminist activist Audre Lorde's sense, which also caused a feeling of vulnerability, as I was deviating from the trodden paths of institutional curating, which tends to rest upon more rigid planning and scheduling of programming.[694]

While many larger art institutions operate under the privileged condition of having curatorial teams dedicated to researching and conceptualising larger exhibitions for up to several years, more precarious, underfunded (independent) art

---

694. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Feminist Series (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), 56.

spaces work under the immense pressure of having to produce visible results quickly. In both instances, the funding structures (often a mix of private and public sources) have developed in such a way that art organisations have to justify their activities through high visitor numbers, thereby diminishing the time for the "invisible" processes of active listening and contextual immersion in new settings and topics.[695] Irrespective of the scale of the arts organisation, its public programme, in many instances, relies on the involvement of independent – or to borrow from Elke Krasny, *interdependent* – curators and arts practitioners, who oftentimes do not reside where they work, as they are subject to the neoliberal project logic of the cultural sphere, with its call for hyperflexibility and hypermobility. This, in many instances, makes the appointed curator of a given project a stranger to the community in which they are invited to work. Contrary to this arrangement, the curator Megan Johnston, makes a strong case that a socially engaged curatorial practice requires a meaningful understanding of one's immediate context, which includes engaging with local experts to gain deeper knowledge about "the cultural politics, the poetics of place, and to investigate issues conscious and unconscious that affect everyday lives."[696] This process includes a deeper understanding of the social structure of the place, who is in charge of what; who is included in which communal operations and who isn't; what resources are at hand, and which ones are at stake. As this process takes time and sincere commitment, Johnston considers these elements crucial for her proposed approach of "slow curating":

> The notion of taking time is important, as is working in collaboration
> with a sense of place and alongside working artists and the community.
> It means promoting reciprocal relationships, open-ended proposals,
> and outcomes that can be decided by different people and at different
> times in the process.[697]

Similarly, the artist collective ruangrupa asserts that their projects begin with a

---

695. The pressure for curators and directors to deliver measurable results is high: "In the US, although most museums are private, many still receive government money. Funders in the public sector, mostly on the state and local level, are tuned to measurables, and attendance is a matrix. Corporate and foundation donors often want to know these numbers, as do today's trustees, who care more about headlines and the visuals of big crowds." See Brian Allen, "Exhibitions Are a Numbers Game, Whether We Like It or Not," *Art Newspaper*, March 27, 2019.
696. Johnston, "Slow Curating," 26.
697. Ibid.

"certain type of sensibility […], a very local sensibility that grew from being in Jakarta. We are interested in what is available in a certain context. The question that underlies our processes is always repeating, but the answer becomes always very different."[698]

However, time is not always a given resource, and one must consciously consider the temporalities of ones' curatorial concept – and, on occasion, negotiate these with partnering institutions. I therefore propose to intentionally carve out space, time, and adequate methods and strategies for situating oneself within the given context from the outset of a project, in order to approach the respective community from a place of genuine curiosity and care. Such an approach, in the long run, may increase visitor numbers due to a sensitive and authentic engagement with the questions and concerns of the surrounding communities or, at least, allow for a shift of thinking from quantitative to qualitative relationship-building with the audiences. Despite the tremendous effort that these processes of community engagement may entail, the relations established along the way form the social fabric from which a radically relational curatorial practice – one that is responsive and useful for the community (*Curaduría Útil*) – can unfold. Therefore, the process of deep listening and situating the curatorial concept within a given context forms the basis of a relational approach to curatorial care from which all other public formats and audiences can emerge.

---

698. ruangrupa, "Interview with ruangrupa: Our Exhibitions Are an Alibi," interview by Franz Thalmair, Platform 6 – documenta fifteen, 2020, https://www.documenta-platform6.de/ruangrupa-our-exhibitions-are-an-alibi/. Without being able to shortly encapsulate the extensive discourse and dispute around the curatorial work of ruangrupa at documenta fifteen, I want to add that – despite the group's best intentions to approach Kassel with a sensitivity towards the local – the tensions arose precisely because of differences in cultural, historical, religious, political, and aesthetic understandings and approaches. For further discussion, I suggest *OnCurating*, no. 54, "documenta fifteen – Aspects of Commoning in Curatorial and Artistic Practices" (November 2022).
For a discourse analysis of the controversy, I suggest the forthcoming research on "Antisemitismus und postkoloniale Debatten am Beispiel der documenta fifteen" (Anti-Semitism and postcolonial debates using the example of documenta fifteen), more information on which is available at: Bildungsstätte Anne Frank, documenta Institut, and Frankfurt University of Applied Science, "Nach der documenta fifteen: Forschungsprojekt analysiert Antisemitismus-Kontroverse," press release, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, 2022, https://www.frankfurt-university.de/de/erweiterungen/news/news-liste/news-detail/nach-der-documenta-fifteen-forschungsprojekt-analysiert-antisemitismus-kontroverse/.

Building Block: Visibility & Representation

Proposition #2: Create the Conditions of Visibility for Underrepresented Perspectives

The agency of curators lies in the power to challenge canons and patterns of representation. Curating with care needs to create the conditions that bring underrepresented themes, perspectives, and social groups to the fore of public visibility and discourse, in tandem with structural changes.

Framing curating as a sociopolitical practice with a dedication to an ethics of care can contribute to shifting the power and representational matrix within the arts.[699] The programming at M.1 departed from this curatorial activist take on representation, which is committed to "levelling hierarchies, challenging assumptions, countering erasure, promoting the margins over the center, the minority over the majority, inspiring intelligent debate, disseminating new knowledge, and encouraging strategies of resistance."[700] The central mode through which the curatorial cycle addressed artistic production on care was the artist prizes.[701] The awardees, MATERNAL FANTASIES and Malu Blume, combined film, installation, and performative elements around the thematic focus of care, using an array of artistic methods to challenge a rigid reality that seems to enshrine traditional gender roles and limited ideas of community and care.[702]

As the curator of the open call for artist projects and the co-editor of their respective publications, it was my aim to foreground what commonly remains obscured: the domestic labour of women, the ambivalences of caregiving, the diverse conceptions of motherhood, and the queering of collective care and solidarity

---

699. This line comes from my earlier publication Sascia Bailer, "Care for Caregivers: Curating against the Care Crisis," in *Curating with Care*, ed. Elke Krasny and Lara Perry (London: Routledge, 2023), 193.
700. Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), 22.
701. For details, see section 4.4.4 – "ART: Discourse & Artistic Production on Care."
702. See appendix, section A.

alliances. Art historian and cultural theorist Johanna Schaffer reminds us that the politically charged term "representation" is derived from the Latin *repraesentare*, "to make present": This concept of making the absent present concerns the level of representation as well as that of imagination and that of substitution."[703]

While I propose to practice curatorially with heightened awareness about whom and what topics one grants centre stage and in what light these themes, social groups, or perspectives are represented, it remains to be the case that the demands for political visibility, via aesthetic representation, are contested. Schaffer stresses the importance of considering not merely *that* something becomes visible but *how* it is visiblised, as well as what it displaces via its own presence.[704] She argues that, all too often, positional political debates act as though there is a causal link between visibility and political power.[705] Feminist scholar Peggy Phelan states provocatively: "If representational visibility equals power, then almost-naked young white women should be running Western Culture. The ubiquity of their image, however, has hardly brought them political or economic power."[706]

This relationship further has to be seen through the analysis of feminist art historical positions, which have exposed the gendered hierarchies that structure the visual field: "'Woman' became an object – of the male gaze – and she thus became readily available and her image commodified. The gaze is as a rule associated with the male (subject) and the viewed or displayed with the female (object)."[707] This assertion of Dorothee Richter, who builds on the seminal work of art historians Sigrid Schade and Silke Wenk,[708] is echoed by art theorist Anja Zimmermann when she highlights the "significance of this gaze regime for the definition of gender difference

---

703. Johanna Schaffer, *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit: Über die visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2008), 78. My translation.
704. Ibid., 122. My translation.
705. Ibid., 12.
706. Peggy Phelan, quoted in ibid., 15.
707. Dorothee Richter, "A Brief Outline of the History of Exhibition Making," *OnCurating*, no. 6 (2010): 29.
708. For a detailed discussion and extensive bibliography, see Sigrid Schade and Silke Wenk, "Strategien des 'Zu-Sehen-Gebens': Geschlechterpositionen in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte," in *Genus: Geschlechterforschung/gender studies in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften: ein Handbuch*, ed. Hadumod Bussmann and Renate Hof (Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 2005), 144–85.

itself."[709] Considering the gendered and racialised hierarchies that structure the visual field, these scholars argue that marginalised groups, in order to become "politically" visible, have to identify with "their" representations; they have to inscribe themselves in the images through which they are designated and made intelligible.[710]

The two M.1 prize awardees did not speak for groups to which they do not belong and rather departed from their own situated knowledges as a queer femme (Malu Blume) and dissident mothers (MATERNAL FANTASIES), while also producing visual aesthetics and narratives that they wanted to portray publicly. As such, I argue that their (self-)representations hold emancipatory political value and do not reproduce their societal marginalisation. This understanding seems to be echoed in the work of feminist theorist Teresa de Lauretis, who sees the task of women's cinema not so much in absenting or destroying narrative and visual pleasure but rather in constructing a different referential frame, in which the "measure of desire is no longer just the male subject. For what is finally at stake is not so much how 'to make visible the invisible' as how to produce the conditions of visibility for a different social subject."[711]

Curators – and particularly curators who seek to curate with care – hold the responsibility to produce the *conditions of visibility* of what de Lauretis calls "different social subjects." In this light, curators who seek to foster conditions of visibility and representation quickly arrive at a crossroads where they have to take a political stance in regard to their role in advancing structural transformations (that go beyond the conditions of visibility).

I argue that curators are confronted with three possible ways of renegotiating the relationship between feminist art, curatorial care, the conditions of visibility, and structural changes. Firstly, curators can opt to become active in fostering conditions of representation and visibility as forms of recognition of formerly invisiblised

709. Anja Zimmermann, "*Skandalöse Bilder – Skandalöse Körper: Abject Art vom Surrealismus bis zu den Culture Wars* (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 2001), 119.
710. Kerstin Brandes, quoted in Schaffer, *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit*, 52.
711. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 8-9.

positions and in establishing an altered position towards the depicted images and subjectivities on display. Secondly, curators can become active by instituting according to feminist principles without renegotiating these topics in the symbolic realm – that is, through representational or thematic exhibitions and events that address feminist or sociopolitical urgencies. Finally, curators can, and arguably, should, aim towards both contributing to the visual representation of feminist issues through the arts and putting in place feminist institutional structures.[712]

From a feminist perspective, the latter option is the most appropriate pathway to enact care curatorially. Thus, curators seeking to engage with anti-hegemonic practices cannot stop at using their curatorial agency to challenge existing canons and patterns of representation, nor at critically considering the aesthetic-political questions of power relations implicated within gendered gazes, nor at carefully selecting the themes to which they intend to grant representational space. Rather, a curatorial practice of care must also *produce conditions of visibility* that go beyond hegemonic social subjectivities. To do so, I propose expanding one's curatorial focus beyond the *what* and the *how* of aesthetic representation to include the underlying (often invisible) support structures that enable the visual-representative and political presence of different social subjects. The renegotiation of the fields of the visible must go hand in hand with the renegotiation of the invisible structures that support its public moments. In short, art institutions should not fall into the traps of care-washing, whereby they showcase care without enacting care (infra-)structurally.[713]

---

712. For further reference, see *OnCurating*, no. 52 (2021).
713. I herewith connect to the line of thought from the introductory section "The Caring Turn within Arts and Research," where I made a case to understand the caring turn as a celebratory moment only if it connects representational and structural questions.

Building Block: Accessibility

Proposition #3: Provide "Care for Presence"

As a curator, create "conditions for presence" for a range of audiences, artists, and collaborators by considering which curatorial choices and prerequisites allow for their presences. These prerequisites may include free on-site childcare, shared meals, physical considerations for inclusion and rest, and inclusive temporalities and communication.

Practising a feminist curatorial ethics of care includes thinking along the boundaries of absences and presences. What are the conditions, which are created curatorially, for the absence or presence of certain audiences, team members, artists, and collaborators within a cultural project?

This line of questioning reconnects with the thoughts on a relational curatorial practice, which I have previously established.[714] Here, the curator is seen as an entity enmeshed within a larger relational ecosystem whose agency rests in the power to shift and alter current conditions of visibility/invisibility, presence/absence, low/high hierarchies, and so on. Returning to the metaphor of the "curatorial butterfly effect," micro-political adaptations may lead to changes that go beyond the immediate realm and – aligning with the notion of a *Curaduría Útil* (useful curating) – enact transformative elements useful to the sociopolitical concerns of the audiences and other stakeholders.

This understanding of a relational curatorial practice highlights the interplay between physical, social, cultural, and mental delimiting or enabling factors that characterise the conditions of such presences or absences. The various intersecting infrastructures in place define how audiences consider whether or not this programming is for them. At this juncture is where oppressive structures, such as class, race, caring responsibilities, and bodily abilities, intersect in the cultural field and define whether someone will feel drawn to – and will be physically and

714. As I have outlined in section 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."

logistically able to – participate. Hence, a curatorial politics of presence within a largely urban-centred, elitist, and ableist cultural scene needs to actively deconstruct these barriers and put in place elements that allow for the presences of a variety of participants, contributors, and collaborators. Within political activist discourse, such considerations are often to be found under the keywords "accessibility" and "anti-discrimination." However, within the context of this curatorial account I consider it crucial to frame these approaches as approaches of "care," as *care for presence* should not be understood as an additional task of curators (for example, when framed as "accessibility") but as curating's core essence. In the following section, I highlight possible curatorial choices that could be considered prerequisites or building blocks of a curatorial framework of caring infrastructures.

– Prerequisite: On-site Childcare

Since a central support structure for artists, collaborators, and audience members with caring responsibilities is the provision of childcare, at M.1. we offered free on-site childcare for events. Our provision of childcare demanded physical alterations to the institutional space; therefore. a former gallery space was turned into a playroom, which remained intact for the next curatorial cycle of 2021–22.[715] This institutional decision to make space for the presence of children and allocate budget for on-site childcare during the artists residencies marked an exception within the German-speaking cultural landscape. Not only do institutional leaders need to understand the political necessity of allocating resources to childcare but funding bodies also need to commit to covering such costs. A survey of the Swiss visual arts association Visarte shows that only 7 percent of Swiss arts organisation offer residencies and cultural formats that are inclusive to artists with caring responsibility.[716] Attending to

---

715. The 2021–22 curatorial cycle was under the artistic direction of Agnieszka Roguski. See Agnieska Roguski, for M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "kuratieren 2021/22: IN:VISIBILITIES," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/kuratieren/2021-2022/.
716. Philippe Sablonier on behalf of Visarte Schweiz (Swiss professional association of visual artists), "Bericht zur Studie "Kunstberuf und Familie." Erkenntnisse und Handlungsanleitungen zur Vergabepraxis von Atelierstipendien," Visarte Schweiz, June 2023,

the same precarious situation, the Swiss cultural foundation Pro Helvetia, launched a pilot project that

> supports artists who are parents of underage children by offering additional financial support for childcare and children's travel in order to facilitate these artists' participation in residencies or research trips. This additional funding option applies to research trips and new Pro Helvetia residency calls.[717]

The term "pilot project" highlights the novelty and test character of this child-friendly funding approach, which must be considered part of a growing zeitgeist that demands caring infrastructures. The grassroots international network Cultural ReProducers advocates for incorporating the needs of artist-parents into the cultural sector and provides a list of child-friendly residencies and funding around the world.[718] The pending widespread implementation of caring infrastructures becomes particularly apparent in the case of highly renowned residencies that continue to explicitly exclude on-site family members (let alone offer on-site childcare). For example, the German-government-funded, Los Angeles–based residencies Villa Aurora (for artists) and Thomas Mann House (for writers and researchers) do not allow family members to join the resident; visitors for up to fourteen days are permitted each quarter.[719]

The exclusion of people with caring responsibilities from public programming and residencies – via a lack of support structures – is consequential: if an artist residency does not permit children, it excludes artist-parents not only from that particular opportunity but prevents a chain of potentially successful outcomes from unfolding. Parent unfriendliness prevents artist and curator parents from gaining important visibility and building networks (and so from profiting from the "halo effect" of the institution); this might make it much more difficult for this parent-artist to receive invitations to group exhibitions, get offers for solo shows, or secure

https://visarte.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/0_Visarte_Studie-Kunstberuf-und-Familie_2023-07-04-def-D-mit-Illustration.pdf.

717. Pro Helvetia, "Residencies and Research Trips," accessed October 1, 2022, https://prohelvetia.ch/en/residencies-and-research-trips/.

718. See their manifesto: Cultural ReProducers, "Manifesto," accessed September 22, 2022, https://www.culturalreproducers.org/p/manifesto.html.

719. VATMH e. V., "Thomas Mann Fellowship," accessed July September 22, 2022, https://www.vatmh.org/de/thomas-mann-fellowships.html.

representation from leading galleries.[720] When taking serious the infrastructural dimension of curating, this seemingly small detail clearly becomes an enabling or delimiting factor for mid- and long-term effects. I therefore propose that on-site childcare, support of childcare costs during artistic production, and general caregiver friendliness of arts programming and residencies are a central building block in making arts organisations more diverse and inclusive.

– Prerequisite: Inclusion, Dis*ability, Im*mobility, Rest

I invite curatorial practitioners to approach the questions of inclusion, dis*ability, and im*mobility from a perspective of queer-feminist interdependence, which rejects the notion of humans as autonomous subjects without a need of support structures.[721] Feminist cultural theorist Merri Lisa Johnson and queer and dis*ability studies theorist Robert McRuer reflect, in "Cripistemologies," on women's studies scholar Susan Wendell's thinking that identifies the everyday world as "structured for people who have no weaknesses."[722] Wendell asks the question: "Where does a person sit down to rest, if necessary, at the grocery store?"[723]

It is thus important to question the heteronormative and ableist standards that lead to social and physical infrastructures geared towards audiences and collaborators "with no weaknesses." Alongside the lack of support structures for caregivers, there are a range of overlooked accessibility needs for care-*receivers* that configure who is able to (physically) access art institutions and their programming.

A central condition of presence is that of geographical and spatial accessibility of art institutions, particularly when situated outside urban cultural hubs, such as in the case of M.1. Apart from hosting the events within a wheelchair-accessible space,

---

720. For further reference, see Judah, *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers*.
721. As laid out in chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."
722. Susan Wendell, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability," *Hypatia* 4, no. 2 (1989): 104–24.
723. Susan Wendell, quoted in Merri Lisa Johnson and Robert McRuer, "Cripistemologies," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014): 133.

these concerns required us to coordinate carpooling for regional attendees, which was primarily a support for elderly participants without cars and for whom public transport would have been too exhausting and individual taxis too costly. For guests from further away, we at times offered shuttles from and to the nearest train station and free overnight stays at the institution, if capacity allowed for it.

For the exhibition *Care as Resistance* at StadtPalais Stuttgart (May–July 2023), which I co-curated with Didem Yazıcı, it was our concern, together with the participating artists, to foster conditions of presence that would welcome a range of people with their diverse needs.[724] Apart from on-site childcare and sign-language interpretation on the opening day, for vision-impaired visitors we offered an audio description of the exhibition, its space, and its video works, which was produced by a cultural agency for inclusion (Image 61). Further, the programming was presented in both German and English, the exhibition texts were offered in three languages (German, English, and Turkish), and the website was made screen-reader friendly.

Within the framework of the *Care as Resistance* exhibition, the responsibility for creating these conditions for presence fell not to the institution but to us freelancing curators and artists, who had been invited to exhibit in the space of the institution. While I strongly argue that institutions should take on the conceptual, administrative, and financial responsibility for matters of inclusion, I still want to emphasise that these are central *curatorial* concerns within a framework of care – whether enacted from a position of institutional association or when freelancing.

---

724. Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets was initiated by the artists Marie Lienhard, Renate Liebel, and Anna Gohmert, who invited the artists Julia Wirsching and Anna Schiefer, Didem Yazıcı, and myself as curators to the exhibition *Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance* at StadtPalais Stuttgart (May–July 2023). See https://mothers-warriors-and-poets.net.

Image 61. Haptic board of the exhibition space with a QR code to access audio description of the exhibition for visually impaired visitors, specifically created for the exhibition *Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance*, StadtPalais, Stuttgart. 2023. Photo: Julia Ochs.

Once a diverse audience has entered the institutional space, it is important to continue to provide social and physical infrastructures that allow audience members to exercise their agency – even though, or possibly precisely *because*, they might need to withdraw and pause. In line with these considerations, smaller and larger art institutions and events have begun including resting places in their spatial arrangements. The various exhibition venues at documenta fifteen in Kassel, Germany, for example, included "quiet spaces" with low noise and low light for visitors to take a break. For the 2022 exhibition *Crip Time* at MMK – Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, the benches for resting were artistic contributions by Finnegan Shannon (Image 62).[725] Under the title *Do you want us here or not* (2020), the blue benches with white lettering were integrated into the exhibition space as useable artworks (rather than externalising rest spaces into different areas of the

---

725. Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt, "Crip Time," 2022, https://www.mmk.art/de/whats-on/crip-time.

building).[726]

My proposition for the construction of infrastructures of accessibility and inclusion in remote places and for a range of audiences includes the curatorial labour of attending to seemingly mundane questions of how to reach the venue, where to sit and rest, and how to see, touch, and engage with the works and their content. This curatorial care work is done as an extension of thinking-with care and with queer, feminist, and crip positions on interdependence, contingencies, empathy, and vulnerabilities.[727]

Image 62. Finnegan Shannon, *Do you want us here or not (MMK),* 2021–ongoing, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt. Acquired with generous support from the City of Frankfurt. Photo: Diana Pfammatter.

---

726. Ibid. Finnegan Shannon, "Do You Want Us Here Or Not," artist's website, 2018, https://shannonfinnegan.com/do-you-want-us-here-or-not. Also at documenta fifteen the rest spaces seemed to have been artistically crafted or designed. However, this information (of how, how, when) is not to be found on documenta's website, and nor did the "quiet spaces" in Kassel contain wall texts that disclosed the design credits. See documenta fifteen, "Accessibility," 2022, https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/accessibility/.
727. Puig de la Bellacasa, "Nothing Comes without Its World."

.

– Prerequisite: Inclusive Communication

Within the context of a socially engaged curatorial practice, communication is rarely disengaged from the curatorial concept but rather is co-constituent. I therefore want to stress that the communication methods and linguistic choices applied within a curatorial project can be agents of care that either create or disable processes of shared presence and creation and can diminish barriers of access in regard to class, ethnic background, and dis*abilities.

Within relational curating, strategies of communicative engagement play a central role in connecting with a range of audiences.[728] The crucial task lies in the curator's ability to spark interest for artistic processes within communities that might not be accustomed to regularly attending "art events." The invitation cards for the workshops at M.1 did not focus on promoting the arrival of an international artist to the rural community but rather presented a question central to the theme of the workshop. The workshop on trust, led by the Paris-based dancer and performance artist Myriam Lefkowitz, asked: "What are the conditions for mutual trust?" (Image 63). The visual artist Julieta Aranda asked in her workshop on time: "What kind of future is dormant within us?" (Image 35).

---

728. The propositions of this section focus on communication between the institution or the curator with the respective communities and potential audiences of a given curatorial project. Though not spelled out, communication is also crucial in relation to the team, collaborators, board members, funding bodies, and so forth. The section therefore serves as an example of reconsidering communication strategies in the different parts of a curatorial cycle.

Image 63. Leaflet for Myriam Lefkowitz, "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," from the series "Care for Caregivers" at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt (2019). Photo: Moritz Kuestner, Festival Theaterformen 2017. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

As a result, each invitation card gave space for a critical question(ing) – thereby establishing a connection between the content of the workshop and the lived experience of caregivers who encountered the leaflets across the region's public sphere. Just like the workshops' own critical interrogation of questions of everyday caregiving, *to question* also emerged as a key curatorial strategy for community engagement. Over the course of the series, I came to understand this approach as a curatorial communication method that enables a tender linkage between more abstract academic discourses on the one hand and locally situated care practices on

the other.[729]

Not only communication strategies but also language itself can play a central role in fostering the presence of a diverse audience. Within the globalised art sphere, it is common to organise English-language events and to show films, performances, and other artistic works in English, whereas the main language of the site of display is not English. This turns fluency in English into a prerequisite for cultural participation, which makes it inaccessible for large portions of a potential audience (i.e., it presents a class barrier). For example, documenta fifteen – curated by a non-German collective – was an exhibition located in Germany that oftentimes was accessible only to English speakers, and at times only to those with Indonesian language skills. As someone fluent in English, I didn't notice this bias until an older friend of mine mentioned that she had a hard time understanding most of the works since she speaks only German.

At M.1, I engaged international artists who were not native German speakers, and so I set the intention to translate all events into German to make them inclusive for the local audience of rural Northern Germany. Due to a lack of additional funds and personnel, the translation into German mainly fell to me, yet I deemed this effort a necessary one in order to make the curatorial programming accessible beyond circles of the higher educated with a proficiency in the lingua franca. At times, programming participants translated for their peers, making it more of a collective process of intercultural communication and support. In return, because several of the artists used English as their primary language, the workshops also attracted non-German-speaking participants and, hence, this bilinguality opened the programming up to a richer audience in regard to cultural class and country of origins.

Language and communication measures are a condition for presence because they can break down barriers of access. The curatorial consideration of subtitling artistic works, commissioning audio descriptions of visual works and the exhibition at large, and providing sign-language interpretation for live events or braille for written documents constitutes forms of curatorial care. Online programmes

---

729. This passage comes from my text Bailer, "Care for Caregivers: Curating against the Care Crisis."

may make automated translation into multiple languages easier than on-site events. Helena Reckitt also observes this increased institutional application of live captioning and written image descriptions, which she explains "reflects another attempt to respond to participants' different access needs."[730]

I therefore propose curators should critically examine the communication strategies within a given curatorial project and consider the enabling functions it may serve within the respective context. Further, such measures of communicative access also need to be made transparent, as it is key for potential audiences to obtain the information about support structures in *advance* of the event.[731]

From my own practice-based experience, I argue for an understanding of communication strategies of care as including 1) empathic questions, and an accessible language, as a way to connect with the given community; b) the use of language as a way to translate more abstract, global, or academic discourses into locally situated contexts; c) the consideration of more traditional modes of communication, as a way to stay connected with elder communities; and d) attention to the language and translation of public programming and exhibitions, as a key element of accessibility to cultural participation. While many of these considerations may seem mundane, my experienced reality of both collaborating with institutions and attending their public programming shows a continued lack of communication-related support structures, despite their central social function.

730. Helena Reckitt, "From Coping to Curious: Unlearning and Reimagining Curatorial Habits of Care." in *Curating with Care*, ed. Elke Krasny and Lara Perry (London: Routledge, 2023), 179.
731. Transparency still isn't a given. It occurred to me, regarding a past instance, that my co-curator and I had provided an art institution with accessibility information as part of our exhibition text – later, we realised that this information had not been put on the website, as it had been disregarded as "internal notes."

– Prerequisite: Inclusive Temporalities

Regarding time, or chronopolitics, as an anti-normative structure becomes a political matter for curators concerned with feminist care ethics. Researcher and curator Hana Janečková, in reflecting on her own practice, states:

> [C]urating as care needs a much longer time for preparation, feedback sessions, and communication with publics, including long-term engagement with partner institutions and artists while thinking through the distribution of cultural capital not only with the participating parties but through transversal communities.[732]

This line of thought connects to issues considered in Proposition #1, whereby the time dedicated to understanding the needs of the community is central. For this current proposition, I want to specifically look at the politics of time in regard to scheduling public events.

Art critic Hettie Judah, in an article for the *Guardian*, asks: "How can you attend your own show's launch party if it clashes with children's bath time?" as a way to kickstart a conversation on her research on how motherhood has affected the practices of the fifty artists she interviewed.[733] This question might sound banal, or even cynical, but the struggles and mechanisms of exclusion to which it alludes have great significance. Often the most prominent public speaker events, performances, and screenings occur in the evening, when most caregivers are occupied putting their dependents to sleep. This might make it difficult not only for caregiving artists to contribute to public programming but also for audience members with caring responsibilities to attend. Additionally, a variety of "working-class" jobs, such as in food and service, do not allow for the attendance of evening cultural events and neither do the many other fields that require shiftwork, such as elder care, nursing, and other medical professions. Therefore, temporalities matter not only for people

---

732. Hana Janečkova, "Cripping the Curatorial," in *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, ed. Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Brigit Bosold, and Vera Hofmann (London: Sternberg, 2021), 89.
733. Hettie Judah, "'Motherhood Is Taboo in the Art World – It's as If We've Sold Out': Female Artists on the Impact of Having Kids," *Guardian*, December 2, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/dec/02/motherhood-taboo-art-world-sold-out-bourgeoisie.

with caring responsibilities; it is also a matter of class and accessibility. This result highlights the necessity to think through the thematic and structural dedication to care in tandem.

While there exists no time slot that would allow everyone to join, it is important to be aware of the inclusive and exclusive potential of the timing of events. Judah, at a public event in Zurich, suggested that it might make sense to vary the hours of programming, so that different people can attend at different times.[734] Therefore, if curatorial work is community engaged, it is important to confer with the different audiences about scheduling, to try out different times, and to adjust them when needed.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made it much more common to livestream and record cultural events, which allows audience members to view the material on their own schedules. Yet on "one's own schedule" is a rather political concern, in light of excessive (domestic) care work, widespread chronic burnout within the paid workforce, and marginalised time for leisure or personal recharging, all of which compete with the ability to watch past events on one's "own time."

When time is considered curatorially, not only the start and end times of an event are important but so are the temporalities within the public programming itself – its density, its breaks, and its "unprogrammed" time slots that allow for informal exchange and gathering. For the workshop series at M.1, I proposed four-hour workshop slots with an hour-long shared lunch break. This temporal setup allowed enough travel time for people to arrive from larger surrounding cities with one- to two-hour commutes; it gave enough time for local families to have a relaxed morning; and it provided the artist with sufficient time to work more closely with the participants. After the workshop (usually around 4 p.m.), enough time was available for people to stay a bit longer and engage in informal conversations with the other participants or with the artist. Overall, the long break and the two intensive two-hour workshop blocks were timeframes that could be bridged for those with children by the on-site caregivers. For me, as both the curator and a single parent, it was

---

734. Visarte Zürich, "Workshop with Hettie Judah at Binz39," 2023, https://www.visarte-zuerich.ch/news/book-launch-event-mit-hette-judah.

important to not exhaust the day with excessive programming, as I was awaited by a child who desired my attention and also had to deal with post-workshop cleaning and reorganising of the space and materials.

I therefore propose to consider temporalities as political curatorial concerns, as doing so may lead to a questioning of normative cultural formats and the production of temporal frameworks that allow for diverse audiences and practitioners to be present – whether virtually or physically.

– Prerequisite: Shared Meals

As all of the curatorial formats at M.1 included a shared meal, food served as a key social moment for the participants to come together informally, to exchange experiences and thoughts, and to form networks. Our meals were either prepared together with the artists and participants, by the institutional team, or by a member of the community. In the framework of the "Care for Caregivers" workshop series at M.1, it was Julieta Aranda who situated collective cooking as a political, anti-neoliberal practice of "wasting time together" by incorporating joint cooking and eating into her workshop "Vegetable Resistance."[735] This artistic approach allowed participants to enact alternative forms of sociality, using food as a medium.

The provision of nourishment (whether through communal meals or the offering of coffee and pastries) not only fostered an atmosphere of hospitality but also addressed the physical needs of those involved. Providing shared meals must also be viewed through the lens of theories on social sustainability, wherein caregiving extends beyond mere nourishment to encompass all elements essential for sustaining one's life, such as the nurturing of the body.

While the offering of food, at first glance, may seem mundane to a curatorial position, I argue that food can form a strategic element of community engagement, one that enacts curatorial care and allows for alternative, non-consumerist, collective

---

735. M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "A Workshop on Time with Julieta Aranda: Vegetable Resistance – What are We Seeds for?," 2019, https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/kalender/2019/11/23/ein-workshop-zum-thema-zeit/.

forms of being-with. It further lowers classist barriers of participation, as providing communal meals attracts a range of community members and builds an opportunity to engage them in an artistic process. This process can be further aided when the food is sourced locally, from other collectives, shops, or cooks within the area, as it builds a trusting relationship that might inspire others connected to those communities to join the event.

Building on the long-standing social function of food within the arts, I propose that curators should consider shared meals as an integral part of the politics of presence, as communal nourishment fulfils a multitude of roles within the construction of caring infrastructures.[736]

736. For a historical situating of artistic practices in relation to food, return to chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."

Building Block: Networks

Proposition #4: Foster Networks and Alliances

Curatorial care recognises the relational quality of its practice, actively connects and acknowledges existing social webs, and integrates itself into the social fabric of its site to foster alliances between art and non-art or community practices.

Part of relational curating is recognising the myriad interconnections and alliances within a community, seeking out those relations, and strengthening them further. Megan Johnston, in the context of socially engaged curatorial practices, argues that it is an "intentional process of collaboration, context, and engaging within communities – working with artists who employ social practice methods as well as with artists who have more of a traditional studio practice."[737] This process fosters a web of relations that transcends the traditional boundaries of the art field and its institutions, engaging with extra-institutional and self-organised spaces and forming temporary alliances and collaborations with many non-art actors and communities. This understanding of curating as a radically relational practice grants importance to existing relational webs, which cultural practitioners may connect with, allowing for increased trust in new curatorial undertakings that otherwise might not have organically emerged from the community (e.g., through an appointed curator who may be foreign to the region).[738]

Particularly during the "Holo Miteinander" storytelling cafés, the team at M.1 and I strategically connected with existing local networks, grassroots initiatives, and self-organised clubs. In this context, the invited locals were regarded as experts who could analyse and address the changes needed in regard to housing, food, working, leisure, and other such topics. For example, during the storytelling café on "Mobility,"

---

737. Johnston, "Slow Curating," 24.
738. For the establishment of the notion of curating as a radically relational practice, see chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice" and section 5.1.2 – "Relational: Care, Curating, and Infrastructures."

the grassroots shuttle-bus initiative for rural connectivity Bürgerbus Kellinghusen was present and shared information about the initiative's origins, operations, and volunteer engagement strategies. This created an interesting dialogue between the different parties and provided an informed basis about the realities but also the potentials for solidarity practices within the rural area. During the "Social Muscle Club" exchange event, a range of social initiatives also contributed to the programming, food, and social support of the event, while the programming itself contributed to strengthening the sense of community. While each group received a fee for its role, the collaborations were also meant to initiate prolonged working relations throughout the course of the curatorial programme. In a way, the actors formed part of a relational web of objects, spaces, people, and practices that, in alignment with AbdouMaliq Simone's proposition of "people as infrastructure," turned into a "platform providing for and reproducing life in the city."[739] In the case of Hohenlockstedt, this meant upholding and reproducing the town's sociality. By establishing such spaces of encounter between the bodies of diverse communities creates the conditions for political acts, according to Judith Butler:

> No one body establishes the space of appearance, but this action, this performative exercise happens only "between" bodies, in a space that constitutes the gap between my own body and another's. In this way, my body does not act alone, when it acts politically. Indeed, the action emerged from the "between."[740]

Part of a relational curatorial practice is to intentionally carve out such "spaces of the in-between," which allow collective political action, solidarity, and synergy to emerge. Anti-racist and feminist practices have long recognised the importance of alliances – a practice that relational curators can learn from, thereby emphasising the central linkage between a critical curatorial practice and wider social justice movements. I therefore propose regarding a curatorial practice of care not as isolated from existing social webs but as thinking and practising in alliance with existing social structures and collectively building *with* and *from* them.

---

739. Simone, "People as Infrastructure," 407.
740. Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," transversal, September 2009, https://transversal.at/transversal/0808.

Building Block: Budgets

Proposition #5: Consider Curatorial Budgeting to Be Political

Consider curatorial budgets as a key field of agency to enact caring infrastructures, including fair pay and support structures for caregivers and care-receivers. Acknowledge the capitalist framework under which art and curating are subsumed, and take seriously the need for fair working conditions for all contributors, avoiding the exploitative narrative of "a labour of love." For restrained budgets, consider a "curatorial degrowth agenda," where reducing the scope of a project frees up resources for fair pay and caring infrastructures. Make your decisions to downscale transparent to inspire collective change across cultural organisations.

"[I]t's not us choosing to be economistic about gestation, it's capitalism," writes political theorist and writer Sophie Lewis in defence of the Wages for Housework movement, rejecting the prevalent critique of the movement's effect of "economising" private social relations. I want to transfer this argument to the precarious art sector, which continues to put cultural producers in a position of justification when demanding fair pay for artistic, curatorial, scholarly, or writerly labour. Here, exploitative labour practices dominate under the seemingly innocent disguise of "affective renumeration," or what feminists have called "the labour of love." So, to extend Lewis's argument to the cultural field: *It's not us choosing to be economistic about cultural production, it's capitalism*. As long as cultural practitioners operate within a capitalist framework that requires a financial income to account for housing, food, education, clothing, and other means of survival, their work needs to be remunerated adequately. It is only from a position of class privilege that one can disregard questions of pay as secondary, thereby upholding expectations that people can and should perform certain labour for no or low fees. As long as we, as curators

290

and artists, are implicated in the structural violences of neoliberal capitalism – with largely unaffordable housing, sustenance, childcare, and elder care – we need to regard questions of pay and budgeting and its (re)distribution as of highest political concern. Meanwhile, the lived reality of cultural producers remains highly precarious: unpaid internships, self-exploitation, and low-paid, unstable working conditions very much characterise the cultural sector in Central Europe, and beyond.[741] Therefore, it is important to recognise the powerful and normative role of money within the arts, which defines whose needs are considered "worthy" and whose aren't.[742]

As curators, we have different roles in this set of (economic) power relations: we might be directors of institutions, with a say in budgetary and human resource issues; we might be employed in poor and unstable working conditions ourselves; or we might be freelancers fighting for grants and residencies to be opened up not only to visual artists and writers but also to curators, to have a basis for subsistence. Whatever our role and agency may be, we have to recognise that our curatorial responsibility includes the co-creation of sustainable labour conditions for everyone involved – ourselves included.[743] Thus, practising curating with care requires breaking with the long-standing tradition of curatorial care primarily for (art) objects and (also) a centring of one's curatorial care on the (economic) well-being of the humans involved in and impacted by the programming.[744]

---

741. For discussion that homes in on these topics, see Anja Liersch, Friederike Evers, and Sarah Weißmann, *Spartenbericht Bildende Kunst 2021* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021), 47–48.

742. Charlotte Perka and Saskia Ackermann, "Liebe Sascia," in *KANON. Die Experimentelle Klasse*, ed. Joke Janssen and ANna Tautfest (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 2021), 195.

743. As argued previously with Reckitt, the art world can become sustainable only if the ones participating in it can reproduce their livelihoods and can be provided with a support system that includes childcare and social benefits. For more, see Helena Reckitt, "Support Acts: Curating, Caring and Social Reproduction," *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 5 (2016): 6–30.

744. I want to note that this perspective on equal pay is derived from working within a Central European context with a wide variety of private and public funding bodies – to pay everyone is not only a political question but also one of privilege. In many cultural contexts, (public) funding is extremely sparse or non-existent, and cultural programming heavily relies on collective organising, all of which is unpaid. It seems unlike to bear any fruit to cry for fair pay in a context that contains no realistic basis for such claims. However, in a country such as Germany, where resources are generally available and, instead, are rather distributed unfairly across economic sectors, it does make sense to uphold, or even increase, the pressure on funding bodies, large cultural organisations, and government entities to provide a basis for fair pay within the cultural sector. Apart from financial resources, cultural organizations might have regular access to other kinds of resources that are not monetarily quantifiable but still potentially very powerful in making participatory or artistic projects

Hence, the way in which each curator deals (or does not deal) with questions of budgeting in general, and unpaid labour in particular, are political decisions – *political curatorial* decisions. These include decisions about who gets paid how much, for which labour, and whether anyone goes unpaid. It includes the decision to make or not make transparent the budgetary calculations.[745] Curators further have to consider *how* they channel their funds: Do their purchasing decisions support local businesses or transnational corporations? Are the entrance fees set too high, excluding vulnerable groups? Are parts of the budget invested in sustaining caring infrastructures that may outlive the curatorial project itself?

At M.1, it was important both for myself and my colleagues to ensure that everyone involved was paid fairly from my allocated curatorial budget, including everyone from the caregiver for the on-site childcare, to the curatorial assistant, to the artists and other collaborators. The local actors whom we engaged in the participatory programming of the storytelling cafés all received a fee for their contributions. Additional budget was allocated to artists who brought their children or partners (or both) to Hohenlockstedt, as well as to collaborators with dependents with special needs, who could not always leave them with the on-site caregiver. However, there were still limitations on our ability to compensate fairly, particularly when it came to artist fees for large collectives as well as other contributor fees within the framework of institutional collaborations – which, in retrospect, did not mirror the economic value which I would have liked to attribute to the individual contributors. It is at the intersection of the working conditions of practitioners inside (staff) and outside (freelancers) the institution that the infrastructural perspective unfolds one of its many relevant facets: it is not enough for arts organisations to

happen (either as part of an organisation's programme or in support of a community initiative). These resources range from the capacity to share physical space, having access to a range of networks and well-trained staff, being legally registered as an organisation, which provides access to funding processes that more informal entities oftentimes do not qualify for. Thus let us consider the various forms of capital (or: privileges) that are accessible to us and see how we can form a resourceful basis for our projects despite financial restraints.

745. For example, see the "Art/Museum Salary Transparency 2019" spreadsheet started by the curator Michelle Millar Fisher, for which she crowdsourced the salaries of art and museum workers to identify pay gaps. For more, see "Art Workers Circulate Public Spreadsheet to Promote Salary Transparency, Reveal Pay Gaps," *Artforum*, May 31, 2019, https://www.artforum.com/news/art-workers-circulate-public-spreadsheet-to-promote-salary-transparency-reveal-pay-gaps-80010.

centre their (curatorial) responsibility only on the labour conditions within their institutions – they also have to assume responsibility for the freelancing entities with whom they collaborate. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the precarious status of freelancing art educators, artists, curators, and other related actors in relation to the institution.[746] While all these actors may at first appear to form part of the institution, their contractual details reveal their disposable status, which leaves them unprotected by the institution in times of crisis, illness, pregnancy or parenthood, and so on. Curatorial care therefore needs to establish frameworks of (economic) responsibility that extend to everyone who contributes to the institution, whether formally employed or contracted as a freelancer. The infrastructural perspective therefore highlights the need for curators and cultural leaders to think beyond the "walls of the museum," aligning their actions with wider societal concerns – such as the labour conditions of practitioners who are not formally employed at the institution.

These labour aspects highlight the complexity of curatorial budgeting, which artists and activists Saskia Ackermann and Charlotte Perka take up in their letter exchange that expanded from my curatorial practice at M.1,[747] which served as a case study and to which they added their own open questions:

> I often ask myself what is enough and what is the consequence that is called for: When is it better not to do something instead of doing it and reproducing the existing norms in the process? For example, when do I decide that an event cannot take place because I do not have the resources to remove certain barriers? How can I work against my internalised performance thinking that strives for high visitor numbers?[748]

746. Says art educator Katja Zeidler: "Many actors found it very alarming how in the German, in the international – here especially US-American – context it became visible how important art and cultural education really is. As a first measure, several institutions have cut or even closed their education departments and thus sent their (female) employees, who are often freelancers anyway, into financial uncertainty. Due to the lockdown and the applicable sanitary regulations, the precarious working conditions for art mediators have thus enormously worsened. It has also become clear that there is a lack of safety nets, especially for self-employed art mediators, such as for loss of income, but also an independent interest group that advocates for the interests of the scene vis-à-vis the institutions." Gila Kolb, Konstanze Schütze, Katja Zeidler, and Duygu Örs, "Kunstvermittlung im Ausnahmezustand," KIWit, 2020, https://www.kiwit.org/kultur-oeffnet-welten/positionen/position_16384.html. My translation.
747. Perka and Ackermann, "Liebe Sascia."
748. Both authors participated in and reflected on my curatorial programming in their public letter to me, "Dear Sascia" (ibid., 196). The original quote reads: "Dabei frage ich mich häufig, was genug ist

Freelancing practitioners (with or without a coordinating role in a project) may have to ask themselves further uncomfortable questions about whether they themselves are being properly paid, whether their fee rests primarily on self-exploitation, and whether they are perpetuating a toxic work environment by continuing to engage in underpaid cultural programming. Further, they must critically ask themselves whether they have accepted unpaid "chores" (emotional labour, digital labour) according to internalised neoliberal myths of self-exploitation for the greater good.[749]

These questions are intricately tied to questions of class, as practitioners without family wealth to fall back onto can rarely afford to compete in the neoliberal struggle for fair wages within the arts.[750] The renowned Leipzig Book Fair, in their 2023 edition, hosted an event under the rubric "Making Books: Who Can Afford It? About the Cultural Precariat & Classism."[751] Thinking about the curatorial agency of budgeting can thus address class in a dual manner: by contributing to fair wages that allow practitioners, independent of family wealth, to be active contributors within the arts, and by funnelling resources into the deconstruction of elitist barriers of access (which contribute to the construction of caring infrastructures).

However, the common response that I receive when speaking about the *politics of budgeting as a form of curating with care* is that this would demand enormous budgets, that such figures and demands would not be sustainable, and in fact that they are utopian.

und welche Konsequenz gefragt ist: Wann ist es besser, etwas nicht zu tun, anstatt es zu tun und dabei die bestehenden Normen zu reproduzieren? Wann entscheide ich zum Beispiel, dass eine Veranstaltung nicht stattfinden kann, weil ich nicht die Ressourcen habe, bestimmte Barrieren zu beseitigen? Wie kann ich meinen internalisierten Leistungsdenken, welches nach hohen Besucher*innenzahlen strebt, entgegen arbeiten?"

749. For further reference on digital labour within the arts, see Sophie Lingg, "Caring Curatorial Practice in Digital Times," in *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, ed. Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Brigit Bosold, and Vera Hofmann (London: Sternberg, 2021), 48–57.

750. The Berlin-based initiative Diversity Arts Culture hosted a series of events, videos, blog entries, and conversations about classisms in the arts. For further reference, see Nenad Čupić;, and Diversity Arts Culture, "Klassismus(kritik)," October 13, 2020, https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/magazin/klassismuskritik.

751. Leipziger Buchmesse, "Podiumsdiskussion: Bücher machen: wer kann sich das leisten? Über Kulturprekariat & Klassismus," March 29, 2023, https://www.leipziger-buchmesse.de/pco/de/buchmesse/63ecad8c95eb82a9710e1996.

Before I formulate my proposition, I want to return to a thought that I mentioned earlier: curatorial care – when conceived as a relational-ecological practice – does not exist as a layer added to a curatorial undertaking after the fact; rather every fibre of the curatorial fabric is immersed with the considerations of care.[752] Curatorial care is never an afterthought but the essence of the practice. With this understanding in mind, the common modus operandi, whereby the considerations of curatorial care are applied only at a later stage, if there should be budget enough to address them, becomes a recipe for failure (for example, where childcare is organised only because resources are freed up after a speaker cancels).

While I fully recognise the budgetary constraints that exist within the cultural field, I nonetheless want to argue for a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between a given budget, institutional and peer responsibility, and the desired project outcome: do not adjust the pay of contributors to the limitations of the budget, but instead adjust the scope of the project – downscale it to the size that allows everyone to be paid fairly. I propose to call this a "curatorial degrowth agenda"*:* What can realistically be produced with the given budget while still doing justice to curatorial ethics of care? What scale becomes unsustainable from an ecological, social, financial, and feminist care perspective? What are the limits to one's own capacity to sustain the curatorial process without financial and emotional self-exploitation?

In the case of my curatorial cycle at M.1, this meant producing one large opening event ("Social Muscle Club" in April 2019) and six weekend-long workshops (one per month from May to November 2019) with the given budget for the first year. At first glance, each event might seem high in cost, but this is because the invisible infrastructures of care have now been factored in, such as free on-site childcare, shared meals, travel costs for partners and children, and so on. Under this approach of curatorial degrowth, less (programming) is more (care). Within the neoliberal gig economy of the cultural sector, the silent downscaling of an institution's public programming arguably could lead to a competitive disadvantage in relation to other

---

752. For my previous elaboration on this point, see section 5.1.3 – "Beyond the Symbolic: The Practice of Building Caring Infrastructures."

arts organisations, which might keep up a fast-pace programme. It can thus be of societal benefit to make the decision to downscale transparent for audiences, funding bodies, and fellow arts organisations – for example, to explicitly state that the institution will host two exhibitions less per year in order to be able to pay artists fairer exhibition fees and to conserve the team's time and emotional resources. Such transparency can contribute to wider awareness of the economic issues at stake within the cultural sector. More specifically, it can raise awareness of the practice of conscious curatorial budgeting, forming a pathway towards collective degrowth and fair(er) pay within the arts.

Proposition #6: Seek Out Curatorial Agency and Redistribute Power

In the spirit of curatorial activism, seek out spaces of agency that allow you to "curate otherwise," for example in alignment with feminist care ethics. To avoid misusing curatorial agency as a form of control, intentionally share power and create democratic spaces of agency for your peers, audiences, and collaborators.

While institutional mechanisms often seem rigid, it's common for the trodden paths of cultural production to ignite comfort and ease for the ones in charge, and the working mechanisms of the arts may seem unquestionably familiar and reassuring to some. However, I want to stress the importance of combatting the "monologue of sameness," to speak with activist-curator Maura Reilly, and the dominant modes of operation that uphold a primarily male, white, and elitist art system.[753] It is within these rigid frameworks that one has to actively seek out one's own *curatorial agency* to identify wiggle room – the crack in an otherwise sealed modus operandi in order to *practise otherwise*, to find a space of agency within the given constraints.

Throughout the curatorial programme at M.1, I aimed to practice in a spirit of curatorial activism and thereby enact my curatorial agency to practise a feminist care ethics.[754] As my focus was on caregivers as marginalised voices not only within the arts but also within society, I crafted roles for both artists and local residents who were also caregivers to take on expert roles, in an effort counter the hegemonic construct that care is an invisible, valueless labour due to its being feminised and unpaid within society.

In the context of the workshop on motherhood, two artists who were also mothers were invited as experts. Their experiences navigating the precarious fields

---

753. Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 30.
754. For an introduction to this concept, return to chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice."

of caregiving and art-making granted them credibility and provided a tangible basis of connection to these topics for the other participants. The artists, Liz Rech and Annika Scharm, practise from a situated, or embodied, knowledge, and they expanded the workshop from this position. Within the framework of the workshop on collective self-care led by GRAND BEAUTY, the presence of Hengame Sadeghi as a workshop co-facilitator also followed this methodological approach. As an Afghan migrant woman – an often disregarded demographic in Germany, despite this group's embodied layers of knowledges and experiences – the workshop setting allowed her to take up a position as an expert, from whom others can learn.

I also intentionally integrated caregivers into roles of expertise for the opening event of the "Social Muscle Club." Each of the ten moderators came from Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area and performed care work either in their professional, private, or volunteer life.[755] My curatorial choice to include these social actors from the region meant providing visibility and acknowledgement for these taken-for-granted caring roles that people perform within their communities. Valorising their caring activity as an expertise also equipped them well to moderate a group of strangers from a range of backgrounds.

In alignment with the notion of curatorial activism as a counter-hegemonic practice, I propose to intentionally flip dominant mechanisms of power, representation, inclusion, and systemic (dis)valuation upside down – even though such an act might occur only on a small, seemingly mundane scale. Curatorial care thus must include a proactive challenging of who gets invited, who receives which roles, and who speaks for whom, thereby counteracting dominant paradigms within the respective society, both in regard to care and in terms of racial, classed,

---

755. The moderator Antje Hachenberg is an activist and a mother; one of her children has a mental disability, and she has been very active around inclusive housing projects in the area. Daniela Gervink leads the interest group Bürgerschaftliches Engagement in Steinburg, which is aiming to build a platform to connect volunteers and institutions in need of volunteers, and she also hosts "last aid courses" on how people can accompany their relatives when they are dying. Jörn Gasterstedt is the head of the local school and is known to be a very engaged headmaster; he organised a team of students, who were trained as conflict guides, to settle tensions in the classrooms and schoolyards. A micro-social network was created which transcended the space of the art institution as participants made arrangements for the near future – to take walks together, to mow someone else's lawn, or to practise Spanish together.

religious, and gendered associations and dis*abilities.

In the specific context of working with caregivers, this may mean not prescribing rigid sets of caring infrastructures for the participants or contributors but rather providing increased flexibility. The collaborative manifesto "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents" makes an "introductory request: Be flexible."[756] Hettie Judah's further elaborates on this point, stating that these sought-after support structures do not need to be costly:

> [A] gallery that is flexible, loyal and communicative with artist mothers can make a big difference. Flexibility on the part of art institutions would include the assumption that an artist will need to bring a child with them on a residency, will need childcare while finishing work and installing an exhibition, and while being present at openings and exhibition events. If these requirements continue to be framed as a "choice," the burden of flexibility is placed on the artist herself, together with associated costs.[757]

This flexibility and openness require curators to intentionally carve out spaces for conversation that allow participants to voice their needs and to hold a mindset that prioritises adapting to the needs of others rather than firmly insisting on prescribing default solutions. When I re-encountered Liz Rech years after our collaboration at M.1, she recalled that she had highly appreciated the agency to make her own choice of whether to bring her child to the event or opt for home-based care support.[758]

Redistributing agency and providing flexibility can come in the form of simple, genuine acts, but even these small acts are never without ambivalences. The power that allows one to change dominant narratives and protocols is the same power that provides the basis for domination, abuse of power, and the exercise of control. This line of thought returns us to the previously introduced notion of curator-as-police-commissioner by Joanna Warsza,[759] who during a conversation with fellow curator Nora Sternfeld, found an apt analogy for the ambivalent figure of the curator in the

---

756. Artist Parents Network, "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents."
757. Judah, "Full, Messy and Beautiful," Unit London, 2023, https://unitlondon.com/2023-05-31/full-messy-and-beautiful/.
758. For a detailed account of the workshop, see appendix, section A.
759. See section 3.1.3 – "Independent Curating: The Curator-as-Author."

image of

> someone who is a policeman and an activist at the same time – who is deliberately in a conundrum of representing hegemony and needs to assume it, while often striving to be anti-hegemonic. Someone who creates forms and support structures, while introducing subversion, who embodies the electrifying impossibility of policing and being dissident at the same time.[760]

Caught in this ambivalent position, curatorial agency is never innocent nor uncontested. It is therefore not enough to seek out spaces of agency; rather, it becomes paramount to actively *redistribute power* by establishing spaces of agency for one's peers, colleagues, collaborators, and audience members.

This curatorial proposition thus departs from the ambivalent understanding of curatorial agency as both one of transformation and one of control, which only highlights the necessity of aligning one's curatorial practice with a feminist ethics of care. To contribute to a more just art field from a curatorial position, one must seek out liminal spaces – wiggle room – that depart from the belief that "radical care provides a roadmap for an otherwise."[761] This approach is aligns with the understanding that the mundane, the everyday, and small, micro–political shifts contain the potential for social transformation, such that our personal and professional practices may trigger a ripple effect into other sociopolitical spheres (that is, the curatorial butterfly effect).[762]

---

760. Joanna Warsza, "The Elephant Is Bigger than the Room: Documenta Trouble and Curatorial Responsibility," *Paletten*, July–August 2022, https://paletten.net/artiklar/the-elephant-is-bigger-than-the-room.
761. Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese. "Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times." *Social Text* 38 (2020): 13.
762. See my argument in section 5.1.3 – "Beyond the Symbolic: The Practice of Building Caring Infrastructures."

Proposition #7: Document and Archive with Sensitivity

Because curatorial practices of care are often relational and ephemeral, they need to show heightened sensitivity towards documentation, as it may risk creating vulnerabilities and less intimate encounters. Carefully mediated documentation and interactive archival formats, which allow for retrospective engagement with ephemeral events of the past, must be considered from the outset of a given project. This contributes to the longevity of the curatorial project after it has come to a formal close ("aftercare").

Many (post-representational) feminist curatorial practices, including my own, are characterised by radical relationality, ephemerality, and participatory processes.[763] These temporal processes do not produce tangible, material outcomes that can be easily displayed or reaccessed at a later stage. They are characterised by the experiential, not so much the visual-representational. In these particular curatorial frameworks – which are commonly limited by time-based project funding within the neoliberal gig economy – curators are confronted with the questions of what happens to these social, ephemeral processes when the funding runs out and how the processes can be archived and made accessible to others.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, the visual arts have developed an almost fetish-like relationship with documentation, one that almost renders non-documented performances non-existent. Today, otherwise ephemeral blockbuster performances, such as Anne Imhof's *Sex* at Tate Modern in London in 2019, are often live-streamed on social media and media partners' platforms: "It's about how can we view things beyond the museum and think about digital as well as physical space – that's interesting to think about alongside the record or document. The global reach was extraordinary," says Isabella Maidment, curator of contemporary British art at

---

763. Which I have theoretically outlined in chapter 3 –"Histories of a Contested Terrain: Curatorial Care."

Tate Britain.[764]

These historical and contemporary trajectories cause pressure for curators to document any sort of ephemeral process within the arts, including socially engaged, participatory processes, so as to obtain credit within the art system. However, many participatory processes are very intimate and a video, voice, or image recording (let alone a social media live stream) of the process may alter, and possibly limit, the audience's engagement, out of a fear of vulnerability and privacy infringement. Foregrounding this empathetic sensitivity, which values intimate processes over visibility credits, we decided not to document any of the workshops at M.1 in a traditional sense. Curatorial care in this instance meant building a safe space of encounter among the present participants, not prioritising an enthralling occasion for retrospective viewing. At most, I took snapshots during some of the exercises and informal lunchtime encounters, with consent of the participants.

While the considerations around documentation, archiving, and the creation of public moments around past events might become more pressing towards the end of a project or cycle, these questions need to be considered at its outset with as much intentionality and care as any other aspect of the programming. The way a project is to be documented and archived, along with the structures implemented to potentially lead to its self-organised and community-driven continuation, may change the overall concept of the project. If these questions are afterthoughts, it is often too late to lay the groundwork for such aspects to be properly carried out and to appear as sincere and credible conceptual columns of the project.

The notion of "conceiving the end from the beginning" becomes tangible in the example of the *Archive of Encounters* project with students from HFBK Hamburg, which was initiated at the beginning of my curatorial cycle.[765] The students' presence at each of the events formed the basis for their documentation and artistic interpretation of the shared experiences and, hence, created the conditions of the project's retrospective accessibility in the community library. I therefore propose that

764. Isabella Maidment, quoted in Emily Gosling, "How Do You Present Performance Art Once It's All Over?," *Elephant*, June 13, 2019, https://elephant.art/present-performance-art/.
765. Previously introduced in section 4.4.4.2 – "Archive of Encounters."

practitioners should curate not only the documentation but also "the end" of a given project or cycle with the same level of intentionality and sensitivity given to any other element of a project and from the very beginning, thereby building the conditions for possible future engagement with or self-organised continuation of the initiated processes. I consider this proposition as a form of aftercare that prevents an abrupt ending and disjointing of the public programming and the relation between the artists and community members, instead proving a basis for future engagements with the shared experiences of the past.[766]

Building Block: Self-care

Proposition #8: Care for the Self

Care for the self must be prioritised as much as any other relation of care within a curatorial project. The self-care of art workers is not only crucial amid precarious working conditions but also particularly relevant for curators who understand themselves as carers and tend to drain their personal resources by directing care primarily to others. Setting boundaries and initiating collective actions may lead to less exploitative labour practices as part of an enhanced framework of care for the self.

"[W]orking to the point of burn out was almost a badge of honour amongst myself and other gallery colleagues. As the director of a small US art centre where I had previously worked liked to claim, 'we punch way above our weight'," shares Helena Reckitt.[767] Being "busy" and stressed has become a social status marker, evoking associations of importance and indispensability.[768] Within the cultural field, however, this highly intense level of occupational engagement does not lead to comfortable

---

766. The notion of "aftercare" can unfold in many different ways and can potentially include a paid period after a project is officially done, in order to allow for recovery, wrap up, administrative tasks, feedback conversations, and securing funding for future iterations of the programme. Aftercare has not yet received enough attention in curatorial thought and practice and needs to be expanded further from feminist perspectives.
767. Reckitt, "From Coping to Curious," 169.
768. Teresa Bücker, *Alle_Zeit: Eine Frage von Macht und Freiheit. Wie eine radikal neue, sozial gerechtere Zeitkultur aussehen kann* (Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlag, 2022), 32.

levels of income – rather, to the contrary. The arts pair enormous income insecurity with hyper-availability, impeccable professional performance, infringement of personal relationships, and chronic levels of burnout – which need to be obscured for the sake of upholding the "image of unflappable poise."[769] Reckitt, who shifted from the gallery sector to academia, admits in a retrospective reflection: "Close to exhaustion, battling insomnia, I nonetheless continued to project the persona of the coping curator."[770]

Audre Lorde's much-cited formulation that we should conceive of self-care not as "self-indulgence" but as "self-preservation" highlights the political potential of this practice. Sara Ahmed, who extends Lorde's thinking, argues: "Some have to look after themselves because the[y] are not looked after: their being is not cared for, supported, protected."[771] Curator and writer Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, in his essay "Every Straw Is a Straw Too Much: On the Psychological Burden of Being Racialized While Doing Art," asserts that the discussion of racism within the arts is an invisiblised subject:

> The so-called art world is not a vacuum or an island. It is connected to the world and reflects exactly what happens in the world. But as a space where people expect progressive discourse, avant-garde politics, and liberal institutions, it comes as a surprise to some when racism is mentioned in the context of the art world. For this reason, racism is rarely thematized in the art world.[772]

While Ahmed, Lorde, and Ndikung speak specifically about racism and white supremacy from their situated experiences as writers of colour, a similar structural neglect also holds true for precariously positioned cultural producers, caregivers, and those who are both – and who, additionally, encounter even more institutional violence when set in conjunction with racialised discrimination. As the art world is interested in keeping up its progressive image, such conversations are often swept

---

769. Reckitt, "From Coping to Curious," 169.

770. "Coping curator" is a term coined by curator and writer Jenny Richards, which Reckitt builds upon in: ibid., 171.

771. Sara Ahmed, "Selfcare as Warfare," *Feminist Killjoys* (blog), August 25, 2014. https://feministkilljoys.com/2014/08/25/selfcare-as-warfare/.

772. Soh Bejeng Ndikung, "Every Straw Is a Straw Too Much: On the Psychological Burden of Being Racialized While Doing Art," *e-flux Notes*, June 29, 2023, https://www.e-flux.com/notes/548186/every-straw-is-a-straw-too-much-on-the-psychological-burden-of-being-racialized-while-doing-art.

under the rug, which makes it non-negotiable for marginalised social groups to prioritise their care for themselves. However, in taming and co-opting the mechanisms of profit-driven economies, Lorde claims that self-care can also serve as an obscurant that may lead away from political struggle by focusing on an individualised search for happiness.[773] It is from this angle that the insistence on self-care not as *self-indulgence* but as *self-preservation* is crucial: "Self-care becomes warfare. This kind of self-care is not about one's own happiness. It is about finding ways to exist in a world that is diminishing."[774]

While mindfulness and "slow" movements of all sorts have been on the rise for several years, it is important to not use these methods as strategies to keep up with one's internalised sense of neoliberal hyperproductivity. Self-care, over and over again, must be resituated as a political practice and removed from commercialised contexts.[775] Self-care is not a means to an end (e.g., productivity) but rather an end in itself.[776] It needs to be practised collectively, as demonstrated by GRAND BEAUTY in their contribution to the M.1 programming.[777]

Curators, and cultural practitioners at large, have to address self-care-as-self-preservation on two different levels: once as the ones who are subjected to hostile work environments, and once as the enactors of frameworks of practice for ourselves and others. In the first instance, curators are required to practise self-care within toxic work environments that are diminishing, having negative effects on practitioners' physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as their economic stability or growth. The second instance accounts for curators' production of work environments directed towards curatorial care for themselves and others – and which, seemingly paradoxically, leads curators to bleed out their personal resources, endangering their own capacity for self-preservation.

---

773. Sara Ahmed, "Selfcare as Warfare."
774. Ibid.
775. Ibid.
776. Sascia Bailer and Laura Mahnke, "#5 Care: See U th3re," podcast, 35:02, HFBK Hamburg, January 29, 2021, https://mediathek.hfbk.net/l2go/-/get/v/248.
777. M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, "A Workshop on Self-Care by GRAND BEAUTY," 2019, https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/kalender/2019/10/26/ein-workshop-zum-thema-selbstfuersorge/.

In regard to the first level of address, it is important to recognise the parallels between toxic personal or intimate relationships and toxic work environments, which are equally characterised by uneven power dynamics, affective or structural co-dependency, exploitative (economic) mechanisms, and a lack of truthfulness, security, and reliability. Cultural theorists Lara García Díaz and Pascal Gielen argue that the working conditions of repressive liberalism lead to precarisation on at least four levels: economic, social, mental, and political.[778] I want to expand on these intersecting tensions by quoting the Ghanaian curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim, who, in conversation with the journalist Christine Ajudua, makes tangible the contradictions of working within violent cultural institutional setups, particularly as a Black person:

> And we talked so much [among us] about how we preserve our mental health, our physical well-being, our own selves within this work, which is so taxing – not just in terms of the actual work, but also, you know, when you are going into these institutions, which are majority white and to a large extent still steeped in violence, how do you take care of yourself? How do you protect yourself?[779]

The path forward, at least for García Díaz and Gielen, is to call for forms of commoning, unionising, mutual solidarity, and collective action to organise in a way that is consequential in terms of legislation and politics:

> In order to build an effective counter-hegemony – i.e., one that can really overturn the present neoliberal hegemony of precarization – alternative models must be distributed and, especially, shared. This is what we call the process of "commoning." Alternative economies and forms of self-organization must demonstrate their effectiveness to others if they are to generate structural effects.[780]

They argue that artists and cultural practitioners can form part of this anti-hegemonic resistance to the status quo by proposing "new forms [of ideological principles] capable of inaugurating a new 'common sense.'"[781] In this light, it becomes thrown into sharp relief that the commercialised, neoliberal narrative of self-care (e.g. the sort found under the hashtag #selfcaresunday, featuring spa visits,

---

778. García Díaz and Gielen, "Precarity as an Artistic Laboratory," 45.
779. Nana Oforiatta Ayim, "Ghanaian Curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim on Why the Future of the Museum Must Exist beyond the Art World's Boundaries," interview by Christine Ajudua, Artnet, July 27, 2022, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/nana-oforiatta-ayim-interview-2148667.
780. García Díaz and Gielen, "Precarity as an Artistic Laboratory," 53.
781. Ibid., 52.

face masks, and yoga retreats) can never be a remedy for precarious working environments and much rather acts as an obscurant, as articulated by Lorde.

However, the proposed path forward of collectivised commoning actions is heavily based on unpaid labour, on tiring collective conversations in search of consensus, on emotional labour to enact conflict resolution – on top of the cultural practitioners' paid labour. To follow Ahmed's line of questioning:

> Perhaps we need to ask: who has enough resources not to have to become resourceful? When you have less resources you might have to become more resourceful. Of course: the requirement to become more resourceful is part of the injustice of a system that distributes resources unequally.[782]

This puts curators and cultural practitioners, whether freelancers or institutional employees, in a precarity double-bind. From their vulnerable position they have to formulate and demand structural changes, thereby – at least temporarily – diminishing their means of self-preservation for the sake of commoning towards caring infrastructures.

This complex set of tensions leads us to the second crucial level at which curators must practise self-care. In this instance, curators – possibly with a drive to challenge the status quo of the arts – drain their energy resources and, as a consequence, lose the basis for their own self-preservation. To listen, to engage, to host, to coordinate, to share, to hold space, to empathise, to include, to sustain, to worry, to adapt – all these tasks form a curatorial practice that centres on care. Like other forms of caring labour, the directedness towards others and the normalisation of self-less dedication to the healing, growing, and well-being of others can lead to exhaustion, anxiety, and even burnout. The preservation of others stands in competition with the preservation of the self. Different forms of care need to be recognised as mutually exclusive, including curatorial care for others and the curator's care for the self. One might, therefore, publicly accrue the status of a "caring curator" by being sensitive to the diverse mechanisms of exclusion, by endlessly trying to establish caring infrastructures, by going the extra mile to reach

---

782. Ahmed, "Selfcare as Warfare."

307

alternate communities, by applying for additional funding late at night, by creating an atmosphere of hospitality for the audiences, by making seemingly small but repeated gestures of care towards artists and audience members – all while one's own state of being long ago morphed into that of a "coping curator."[783] In such dynamics, neglecting self-preservation comes under the disguise of curatorial care. Here curators may need to combat external pressures of professionalism, hypervisibility, and hyperproductivity as much as their own internalised notions of gendered care, hospitality, devotion, and people pleasing, through which they self-create conditions that require them to perpetuate the modus operandi of the "coping but oh so caring" curator. This already normalised condition of the coping curator must be set in conjunction not only with the care labour of their (poorly) paid position but also with the unpaid care labour of their personal lives as well as the aforementioned unpaid labour of political action towards anti-hegemonic frameworks of commoning for a more just future. Indigenous scholar Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and media scholar Tamara Kneese aptly articulate the contextual constraints of self-preservation: "care does not happen in a vacuum; rather, care of the self promised to sustain the social and personal costs of caregiving."[784] Self-preservation forms the basis for care for oneself, others, and sociopolitical and ecological transformation, which makes it a highly charged terrain. This field of intersecting tensions and contradictions leads curators to act as a central crux, requiring us to articulate how we can enact a curatorial practice of care while also taking care of ourselves.[785]

By no means do I claim to have mastered these tensions, despite my privileges of being white, university educated, able-bodied, family supported, and scholarship funded. On the contrary, the lived reality of these unreconcilable tensions enables me to point to the tender spots of a curatorial practice within the framework of a feminist care ethics: as a single parent, as an artistic director or a freelancing curator, as a doctoral researcher, and as an educator, the task of self-preservation is a risky balancing act, destined to fail. The question that arises as the most pressing is: How to exist and continue to exist in such unhealthy working

---

783. Reckitt, "From Coping to Curious."
784. Hobart and Kneese, "Radical Care," 6.
785. Bailer and Mahnke, "#5 Care: See U th3re."

conditions? This final proposition thus focuses on recognising that self-care as self-preservation needs to be recognised as just as important as any of the other needs of a curatorial project.

There cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution or proposition, but healthy boundaries, disengagement, and refusal represent possible pathways forward. In the web of structural violences, neoliberal work ethics, and personal limitations and preferences, a shift occurs which Reckitt describes as a process of "cooling": art workers stop accepting the lip service paid to care if the art sector continues to only provide care for a limited, privileged minority.[786] Part of "cooling" includes a critical introspection of neoliberal notions of self-worth, work ethics, productivity, flexibility, mobility, availability, performance, and success. This examination then allows one to challenge these notions – and to spark a moment of emotional disengagement and boundary setting.

While setting boundaries does not fix structural violences at stake, it protects the given resources of a cultural worker. The internalised "fear of missing out" (a.k.a. FOMO) is tied to real consequences within the arts, where absence and invisibility led to fewer invitations and hence less income. I thus make a case that curators should not simply withdraw but rather make the withdrawing, the setting of boundaries, transparent and thereby contribute to the normalisation of limited availability. I once again turn to queer-feminist writer and musician Johanna Hedva's letter to Joan Tronto, in which they share their personal journey of limiting their availability in light of exhaustion:

> I put an auto-response on my email that said, *Sorry, I probably won't ever respond to you*, and I left it there for two years. I said no to invitations to write or speak about illness, which meant I said no to many opportunities. Who knows the price of that refusal. I turned down book contracts with publishers I'd dreamed of working with. *We'd love*

---

786. Reckitt, "From Coping to Curious," 179. The full quote is: "Akin to how I have described my efforts to distance myself from naturalised forms of cultural subjectivity and labour, economist and historian Kate Barclay explores how some contemporary academics are involved in a process of 'cooling off' from the vocational self that academia calls for and the power systems it reproduces. She argues that such a cooling, accompanied by 'learning to sit in discomfort,' can be an important step in efforts to build more ethical institutions. Signs of 'cooling' are also visible in the today's cultural sector. Arts workers are more regularly voicing their discomfort with perpetuating a system in which notions of care are often spoken, but care rarely extends beyond a limited, privileged few."

to know your thoughts, the invitation would say, but in my head, there was a vein of bitterness, of exhaustion.[787]

Hedva is not alone in limiting one's personal availability, especially within the context of chronic illness and dis*ability. Robert McRuer likewise shares how his academic career demands constant mobility and long-distance travel, which as a dis*abled person he began to decline, as less frequent travel translates into less frequent and less intense pains: "when I slow down, redefine 'able,' and turn down the invitation to speak or visit[,] I am not unable to travel; I am frequently *unwilling*."[788]

McRuer's statement represents part of a culture shift in academia whereby its freelancers and employees are no longer willing to uphold the status quo. In their brilliant, collectively written article "Slow Scholarship," ten or so scholars put forth strategies for circumventing, challenging, and resisting the neoliberal pressures within academia. Among their ten strategies, which might be of equal relevance for the cultural field, they include the suggestion to send fewer emails or to turn email off all together during certain times; to learn how to say no; and to begin to work towards the minimum: "good enough is the new perfect."[789] Another group, the arts-based bare minimum collective, produced a manifesto that follows similar lines of thinking:

> The bare minimum collective believes in doing nothing or at the very least, as little as is required of us. We work smart, not hard. We're a bunch of last minuters, a "can I copy your answers?," "let's share notes" and "did you do the reading?" kind of collective.[790]

This tendency to perform the bare minimum at work has also recently received attention on social media under the rubric of "quiet quitting."[791] Quiet

---

787. Johanna Hedva, "Dear Joan," in Bailer, Karjevsky, and Talevi, *Letters to Joan*, 68.
788. Johnson and McRuer, "Cripistemologies," 136. My emphasis.
789. Alison Mountz, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu, Risa Whitson, Roberta Hawkins, Trina Hamilton, and Winifred Curran, "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University," *Acme* 14 (2015): 1,253.
790. The Bare Minimum Collective, "The Bare Minimum Manifesto," Medium, 2020, https://medium.com/@bareminimum/the-bare-minimum-manifesto-bfedbbc9dd71.
791. Alyson Krueger, "Who Is Quiet Quitting For?," *New York Times*, August 23, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/style/quiet-quitting-tiktok.html.

quitting is not quitting one's job as such but rather "quitting the idea of going above and beyond," states the TikTok influencer Zaiad Khan.[792] Khan elaborates, "You are still performing your duties, but you are no longer subscribing to the hustle culture mentally that work has to be our life." The term sparked a global outburst on social media regarding work ethics, internalised employer expectations, and work-life balance, highlighting the absurdity that "simply doing your job" is considered to resemble quitting – once more making clear how necessary it is to set healthy boundaries and continually question internalised neoliberal expectations around labour.

The above examples from scholars, writers, and activists show how, in Western, capitalist societies at least, our sense of self-care and one's self-given permission to slow down and take time off are relationally constructed. To initiate a change in a culture of work relations, we need to become the many – those who choose to act differently, who co-construct caring support structures for one another, and who make their boundaries transparent.[793] The making transparent of boundaries helps to manage internal and external expectations, including of peers, colleagues, collaborators, bosses, clients, family, and friends.

In light of structural violences, setting out-of-office responses and writing cautioning email signatures may seem like a laughable path forward. However, such micro-political acts could be considered in alignment with Ahmed:

> Even if it's system change we need, that we fight for, when the system does not change, when the walls come up, those hardenings of history into physical barriers in the present, you have to manage; to cope. Your choices are compromised when a world is compromised.[794]

I therefore advocate for realistic, incremental, micro-acts of agency that do not

---

792. Ibid.

793. In this search to work and relate differently, art workers are certainly not alone; especially in the movement of "new work" many organisations have put forth alternative economic models. The German "new work" magazine *Neue Narrative* has dedicated an issue to "health in a work context" and has formulated strategies on, for example, how to communicate, incorporate, and encompass chronic diseases and menstruation in a work place. Their issues include case studies and easy tools towards organisational change. See Neue Narrative, accessed July 14, 2023, https://www.neuenarrative.de.

794. Ahmed, "Selfcare as Warfare."

solemnly rely on multi-year collaborative activism for structural transformation (even if utterly desirable). Put another way: until the revolution takes place, we have to get by somehow. At times, curatorial care (with healthy boundaries) might contribute to constructing micro-utopian enclaves of care in an otherwise diminishing structure. Until then, I leave on this hopeful note from Ahmed: "We reassemble ourselves through the ordinary, everyday and often painstaking work of looking after ourselves; looking after each other. This is why when we have to insist, I matter, we matter, we are transforming what matters."[795]

---

795. Ibid.

5.3   Soft Manifesto for Caring Infrastructures

The below gathers together all the propositions under each building block to provide a shortened overview or "soft manifesto" on how to enact caring infrastructures. The softness of the manifesto refers to its approach and tone, eschewing the confrontational or militant language that one might traditionally associate with activist manifestos. As transformative processes already contain the risk of triggering frictions, resistance, and shut-offs, a soft manifesto seeks to persuade through a clarity and calmness in its style, with the potential to allow for a more subtle opening to its transformative content. In sync with relationality and feminist care ethics, the manifesto aims to make transparent the necessary steps towards micro-political transformation in a manner that is compelling, accessible, and comprehensive. The presented propositions build the foundation for an expansion of this methodology, to which further elements, in the form of additional "building blocks," can be added.

Building Block: Situating

Proposition #1: Gain a Sincere Understanding of the Context

When embarking on a new curatorial project, hold space and time for observation of the context and for deep listening to the community before developing public programming. This allows the project to emerge from the context rather than become an external imposition.

Building Block: Visibility & Representation

Proposition #2: Create the Conditions of Visibility for Underrepresented Perspectives

The agency of curators lies in the power to challenge canons and patterns of representation. Curating with care needs to create the conditions that bring underrepresented themes, perspectives, and social groups to the fore of public visibility and discourse, in tandem with structural changes.

Building Block: Accessibility

Proposition #3: Provide "Care for Presence"

As a curator, create "conditions for presence" for a range of audiences, artists, and collaborators by considering which curatorial choices and prerequisites allow for their presences. These prerequisites may include free on-site childcare, shared meals, physical considerations for inclusion and rest, and inclusive temporalities and communication.

Building Block: Networks

Proposition #4: Foster Networks and Alliances

Curatorial care recognises the relational quality of its practice, actively connects and acknowledges existing social webs, and integrates itself into the social fabric of its site to foster alliances between art and non-art or community practices.

Building Block: Budgets

Proposition #5: Consider Curatorial Budgeting to Be Political

Consider curatorial budgets as a key field of agency to enact caring infrastructures, including fair pay and support structures for caregivers and care-receivers. Acknowledge the capitalist framework under which art and curating are subsumed, and take seriously the need for fair working conditions for all contributors, avoiding the exploitative narrative of "a labour of love." For restrained budgets, consider a "curatorial degrowth agenda," where reducing the scope of a project frees up resources for fair pay and caring infrastructures. Make your decisions to downscale transparent to inspire collective change across cultural organisations.

Building Block: Agency, Power, and Control

Proposition #6: Seek Out Curatorial Agency and Redistribute Power

In the spirit of curatorial activism, seek out spaces of agency that allow you to "curate otherwise," for example in alignment with feminist care ethics. To avoid misusing curatorial agency as a form of control, intentionally share power and create democratic spaces of agency for your peers, audiences, and collaborators.

Building Block: Documentation and Archiving

Proposition #7: Document and Archive with Sensitivity

Because curatorial practices of care are often relational and ephemeral, they need to show heightened sensitivity towards documentation, as it may risk creating vulnerabilities and less intimate encounters. Carefully mediated documentation and interactive archival formats, which allow for retrospective engagement with ephemeral events of the past, must be considered from the outset of a given project. This contributes to the longevity of the curatorial project after it has come to a formal close ("aftercare").

Building Block: Self-care

Proposition #8: Care for the Self

Care for the self must be prioritised as much as any other relation of care within a curatorial project. The self-care of art workers is not only crucial amid precarious working conditions but also particularly relevant for curators who understand themselves as carers and tend to drain their personal resources by directing care primarily to others. Setting boundaries and initiating collective actions may lead to less exploitative labour practices as part of an enhanced framework of care for the self.

*

This chapter – substantial in size and dense in its arguments – embarked on a journey of conceptually grasping and renegotiating the potentials of the term "caring infrastructures." In entering a dialogue of thinking-with Joan Tronto, I critically articulated what I aim for caring infrastructures to mean and how they differ from other concepts, such as "institution," "system," and "structure." I fused these considerations with the discourse on relational curating as care and the need to establish support structures. In an effort to make curatorial practice tangible as a lived practice, not only as an ethics, I propose of thinking of not only art but also curating as practices *useful* to the wider community.

After setting up this basis, I presented my eight practice-led propositions towards building caring infrastructures, which seek to expand on the curatorial practice I undertook at M.1 and to make the derived knowledge productive for the wider community of artistic and curatorial practitioners. While these propositions aren't all-encompassing, they formulate a methodology upon which other practitioners can expand. I also presented a shortened "soft manifesto" of the propositions, offering easy access and a succinct overview.

In the upcoming, final chapter of this dissertation, I not only shift the focus to the potentials of caring infrastructures but also scrutinise their limitations, contradictions, and inabilities.

6. Limits of Curatorial Care

The articulated propositions towards building caring infrastructures within the arts, despite the potentials I have identified through the various theoretical and practice-based underpinnings, are certainly not a magic recipe to abolish all social injustices. While I insist that it is imperative for contemporary curators to critically engage with the potentials, agencies, and dangers of coupling curating with care, it is also equally important to be aware of the limitations of this approach. Throughout this dissertation, I have aimed to deconstruct the seemingly rigid romantisation of care – as a maternal, domestic, feminised role, as a curatorial ideal. Now I wish to critically examine the risk that the concept of caring infrastructures could be romanticised as a societal "fix," as a recipe for social harmony, for conflict-free zones of social transformation.

Again taking a prismatic approach, this chapter homes in on the tensions, contradictions, and limitations of a curatorial practice of care – not in an all-encompassing way but rather a fragmentary one, much like a torchlight hovering over obstacles at night, brightly illuminating one, in a flash, then quickly moving on to the next, restless and uncertain about what shapes may surface and what forms and presences might remain forever obscured and unattended to. Yet, in a Harawayan tradition, this final chapter does not shy away from the critical questioning of previously established arguments, thereby bringing new questions to the surface and new perspectives to the fore – all in a search for how to address the urgency of caring infrastructures (or, in the case of Haraway, climate change): a pursuit "that must burn for staying with the trouble."[796]

---

796. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 6.

6.1 The (Non-)Universal Expansion of Curatorial Care

Critical voices – at times including the one in a curator's own head – may enquire: Why didn't you spend more time engaging with the community? Why didn't you do more in-depth research on the invited artists and speakers? Why do I predominantly see white people in the documentation of your events?[797]

Potential critical questions regarding the limits of curatorial care are manifold, as are the possible answers to these questions. On the one hand, the possible answers point to the conundrum that the documentation used in critical arts spaces to judge the caring character of an exhibition or event provide only fragmentary insight into larger social processes. A snapshot of a past event can never be a stand-in for physically participating in the event. Images do convey the colours of participants' skin, but they do not convey their religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, dis*abilities, accents, or their backgrounds, which could include that of displacement and refuge, even if their skin may appear fair to a viewer. On the other hand, there are very real limitations to what curators can do to influence the presence of a multitude of voices at the events and exhibitions they produce. As laid out in detail in Proposition #3: "Provide 'Care For Presence'," practice-based support structures can be built, but curators still do not control the outcomes of these efforts. While my workshop series "Care for Caregivers" was explicitly open to everyone who provides care for others in their private or professional lives – independent of sexual orientation or gender identity – the audience in rural Hohenlockstedt predominantly consisted of white cis women along with some white cis men. In the context of the rural-urban cooperations with HFBK Hamburg and HKW Berlin, both the contributors and the audiences seemed to be more heterogenous.[798] As curators-who-care, we cannot know in advance whether our efforts of accessibility will have hit the right tone, the right mark, or have landed with the right people at the right time in their

797. These are questions I have been asked in Q&A sessions after my lectures and in workshops, as well as directly by artists, such as Johanna Hedva in their letter to Joan Tronto.
798. At no point during the curatorial programme were the participants or contributors asked to disclose details about their ethnic or religious background, gender, classed identity, or sexual orientation. Hence, there is no scientific basis upon which to make any further claims about the identity constitution of the audiences and contributors.

lives for them to take up the *offer* to be present. Hence, curatorial agency is limited by the autonomy of participants to choose for themselves. This reality might also include the takeaway that the key to providing care for the presence of so-called marginalised groups might not lie in a *general openness* but rather a *specificity of address*: in creating safe spaces for specific groups, exclusions can emerge for other perspectives – a conundrum that I want to further expand on in this section.[799]

Oftentimes, care is regarded as a cure-all that can abolish hierarchies, mechanisms of exclusion, and neglect. However, care – as I have explained in previous sections – is always tied to power relations and dynamics of control.[800] Even if we might desire to include everyone, we, as curators with a focus on care, may have personal embodied experiences that might flag certain issues for us, but we might be oblivious to other experiences that are far from our own "view from the body," thus leading to unintentional exclusions. This "view from the body" is situated and immediately connected to the urgencies embedded in everyday lives; however, it is also a limited view, a partial vision, a potentially privileged perspective from which other lived realities go unnoticed.[801] In this dissertation I have argued for dialogue, transparency, and making an effort to think through the positions of other lived experiences and attend to those needs in order to establish caring infrastructures. Yet I argue that there are limits to how many perspectives one curator, or even a group of curators and artists, can in practice attend to, even if with

---

799. As previously cited in chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice," the tension between inclusion and exclusion became visible in the recent museum practice at the public LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern in Dortmund, Germany. They had announced "Safer Spaces" for their 2023 exhibition *Das ist kolonial* [This is colonial], where, once per week, for a few hours, the exhibition space was reserved for BIPOC visitors only. This created a public outcry, predominantly stirred up by ultra-right-wing populists (mainly around the party Alternative for Germany (AfD)). Their narrative was that now white people would be excluded from the museum and that the museum had introduced "apartheid" practices. These discursive defamations of the activist practice of safer spaces were taken up by mainstream media outlets, further fueling the outrage. This example showcases the difficulties that art organisations face when implementing activist practices, such as safer spaces for the marginalised few, and the populist backlash that potentially awaits them. For further information, see LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern, "Das ist kolonial," accessed September 26, 2023, https://zeche-zollern.lwl.org/de/ausstellungen/das-ist-kolonial/safer-space/; and Elke Buhr, "Ein Lehrstück im Anti-Wokeness-Kulturkampf," *Monopol*, September 1, 2023, https://www.monopol-magazin.de/museum-safer-space-kommentar.
800. For more on this topic, see "Complicating Care" in the introduction to this dissertation, as well as section 3.1.1 – "Histories of Care and Control: Curating at the Intersection of Gender, Race, Class."
801. The notion of the "view from the body" stems from Donna Haraway's article "Situated Knowledges" from 1988; I first introduced it in chapter 1 – "Methods as Feminist Practices of Care."

the best of intentions. Inevitably there will be sensitivity gaps, biases, and privileges at play that will both reveal and obscure other lived realities; part of our curatorial responsibility is to be aware of these limitations, to make them transparent, rather than shying away from their existence. Chantal Mouffe argues that this moment of inclusion/exclusion is inevitable within political action (to which I subsume a curatorial practice of care):

> In order to think and act politically, we cannot escape the moment of decision and this requires establishing a frontier and determining a space of inclusion/exclusion. Any perspective that evades this moment renders itself incapable of transforming the structure of power relations and of instituting a new hegemony.[802]

This notion is closely aligned with another dimension of curatorial care, where (the often unspoken) expectation reigns that the curator-as-carer should grant an incredible amount of care, time, and dedication to each participant and each facet of the project. Through my concept of caring infrastructures I, too, argue that it is in such details that the caring character of a project is articulated. Yet there are real-life limitations – defined by the specific context – to how much care a curator is able to grant, and there are also real-life limitations to an artist and curator's shared agreement as to what curatorial care should entail.

I cite a passage from artist and writer Johanna Hedva's letter to theorist Joan Tronto from the *Letters to Joan* project, in which they openly critique us three curators of the M.1 and Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) collaboration *CARING*:

> An astrologer once told me, "Your illness is more dignified than your life," and something inside me simultaneously triumphed and collapsed at this truth. It's true. It sometimes feels like a curse. This letter reminded me of it. When the curators for this project invited me to write you, they knew me only for "Sick Woman Theory." They'd not read my books, my other essays, they'd not even read all three of my essays on illness. They were not aware that I contained anything other than the

---

802. Chantal Mouffe, "Agonistic Democracy and Radical Politics," *Pavilion – Journal for Politics and Culture*, accessed September 25, 2023, https://www.pavilionmagazine.org/chantal-mouffe-agonistic-democracy-and-radical-politics/

sick woman. Over the phone, I had to insist on myself. Put another way: over these years, I've learned to care for myself pretty well.[803]

In the above-mentioned quote from Hedva, they share their perspective of our curatorial capacity to care for them as an artist in their multiple facets.[804] For Hedva, our approach to them was uncaring, or at least limited or unthoughtful. While I agree with the artist that it would have been desirable to read all of the publications of each invited speaker, it exceeded the capacities of our curatorial trio, especially during the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic – two of us as single parents with closed schools and day cares, two of us as freelancing artists with incredible income insecurity, and all three of us who had to reschedule and reconceptualise, from on-site to online, a large, two-institution collaboration in a very short period of time (without receiving extra fees for the additional workload). The above can be read as an excuse, but I place it here with the intention to both make transparent both the dynamics around how curatorial care is attributed or withdrawn within the arts as well as to reveal the invisible background dynamics that define, and limit, the capacities for curatorial care. To speak with Tronto herself: "within human existence and the larger global environment there are more needs for care than can be met." This above-mentioned example also highlights the mutually exclusive dimension of (curatorial) care: something deemed "caring" by an artist may be received as an "uncaring" demands if it stands in conflict with a curator's capacities to be well and the curators-as-carer's own need for care.

From this position I wish to turn to a notion of care as something to be increased, expanded, and in particular *universalised*, which is a common argument within leftist circles. During the pandemic, the political economist Amy Kapczynski and public health scholar Gregg Gonsalves, for example, wrote: "we've argued for a new politics of care, one organized around a commitment to universal provision for

803. Hedva, "Dear Joan," in *Letters to Joan*, ed. Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Hohenlockstedt, Germany: M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020), 69.
804. This passage was voiced in Hedva's letter to Joan Tronto in the *Letters to Joan* publication, which formed part of the collaboration between the HKW and M.1, co-curated by Rosario Talevi, Gilly Karjevsky, and myself. Not without discomfort did we publish this paragraph, but within this dissertation I consider it an important contribution to the misunderstandings and conflicts around curatorial care. See ibid.

human needs; countervailing power for workers, people of color, and the vulnerable; and a rejection of carceral approaches to social problems."[805] A similar call is made by the London-based Care Collective in their "Care Manifesto," where they describe their multi-scalar model of care:

> This vision advances a model of "universal care": the ideal of a society in which care is placed front and centre on every scale of life. Universal care means that care – in all its various manifestations – is our priority not only in the domestic sphere but in all spheres: from our kinship groups and communities to our states and planet. Prioritising and working towards a sense of universal care – and making this common sense – is necessary for the cultivation of a caring politics, fulfilling lives, and a sustainable world.[806]

The arguments of this dissertation align with this proposition to infiltrate all scales of human and non-human relations with a feminist ethics of care. However, we need to be very precise on this occasion: while an ethics of care, as a value set, could, in theory, be spread without limitations – and this is what possibly what the Care Collective refers to when they demand "care to be universalised"[807] – the *universal expansion of the practices of care* have bodily, time-based, financial, and logistical limits. On the back of whose bodies can we limitlessly expand care? With whose hands and minds? At what cost? At *whose* costs?

Along these lines, and with the above-mentioned examples from my curatorial practice, I argue that care as a practice cannot be expanded infinitely, as the conditions of reproductive labour are scarce. Hence, the limit of curatorial care lies in the limits of the caring capacities of a given person, community, or other entity, or else the danger arises of replicating what Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese have called the "demons" of care: exploitation, coercion, inequality.[808] We need to acknowledge the oppressive and draining characteristics of care, which render an uncritical call for unlimited care a form of disrespecting the

---

805. Amy Kapczynski, and Gregg Gonsalves, "The New Politics of Care," *Boston Review*, April 27, 2020, https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/gregg-gonsalves-amy-kapczynski-new-deal-public-health-we-need/.
806. Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto* (London: Verso, 2020), e-book.
807. Ibid.
808. Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Kneese. "Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times." *Social Text* 38 (2020): 13.

necessary boundaries that contain resources of care for the self. Within each given context, the different caring resources are limited in different ways and might be mutual exclusive of one another – further highlighting the ambivalent and contradictory dimensions of care.[809]

As a curator with an emphasis on care, the limits to the number and degree of caring infrastructures one is able to install are defined by one's personal caring resources and those of one's potential collaborators. Here, the curator's care for the self, for their private lives, for their own families and friends, might stand in direct competition with the care for the invited artists, the exhibition process, the funding applications, the building of caring infrastructures.

The internalised neoliberal impulse to excel in each area of our lives is essentially *uncaring*, as it drains our resources and overrides our boundaries, and it furthermore defines self-exploitation in the name of care as a given.[810] I therefore want to make a case to understand (curatorial) care not as a limitless, universal resource that can be expected to emerge at every moment and every corner of our lives but rather as one of limits and boundaries, where the use and application of care itself is to be done with intention and should seek reciprocity.[811]

This resonates with Mouffe, who argues that "[p]roper political questions always involve decisions that require making a choice between conflicting alternatives."[812] The politics of curatorial care therefore become legible at its *boundaries*, at its demarcation lines, which render visible what conflicting option is prioritised over another alternative. It is precisely the demarcation lines, the boundaries, the limitations of care that render a curatorial practice of care as

---

809. As previously elaborated in more depth in Proposition #8: "Care for the Self" in section 5.2.1 – "Practice-led Propositions towards Building Caring Infrastructures."

810. As I have laid out in more detail in Proposition #8: "Care for the Self" and in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures."

811. For further reading on reciprocity in curatorial care, consider the following text by Helena Reckitt, which includes this passage: "Of particular concern to Christine [Shaw] was the question of how might care with others, rather than imagining care in one-dimensional terms as something either given or received. This prompted discussions on how we might develop more reciprocal forms of care, based in friendship and shared resources, between curators and the artists, institutions, communities and publics with whom they work." Helena Reckitt, "Taking (Back) Care," in *On Care*, eds. Sharon Kivland and Rebecca Jagoe (London: ma bibliotheque, 2020), 196–202.

812. Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking The World Politically* (London: Verso, 2013), 3.

political.

I therefore want to return to the notion of a curatorial degrowth agenda as a (socially) sustainable path forward within curatorial practice. Curatorial care has limits; we need to downscale in size and speed in order to not exhaust our caring resources. This curatorial degrowth agenda needs to be a collective process, whereby not only a few curators and cultural organisations dedicate themselves to downscaling and deaccelerating the neoliberal gig economy, but many.[813] The power and potential of care lies in its limitations and its set *intentionality* – not in its romanticised universal expansion. Possibly, instead of the universal expansion of care (work), we should demand the *universalisation of the accountabilities and responsibilities towards care* – in order to alleviate the few who are socially conditioned and expected to care under the very real burden of its utopian omnipresence.

6.2   Zones of Care as Zones of Conflict

The limit of curatorial care is contained in the romantic idea that zones of care are zones without conflict. Yet initiatives of curatorial care are not conflict-free zones; instead they can foster conflicts and agonistic encounters – which Mouffe identifies as central principles of democratic politics – on various levels.[814] Conflicts therefore inevitably emerge during relational, discursive, socially engaged formats that involve a multitude of perspectives and positions, as they testify the democratic character of such formats.[815] To reflect on the relationships between curatorial practices of care and the engagement with audience members and the community, I return, in the spirit of anecdotal theory, to a situation from the curatorial cycle at M.1.

---

813. The curatorial degrowth agenda was previously established in Proposition #5: "Consider Curatorial Budgets as Political" in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures.
814. Ibid., 7ff.
815. For more on the inevitability of conflict, see Sarah Schulman, *Conflict Is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2016).

Over the course of the different workshops, the oldest registered participant was eighty-four and the youngest active participant (i.e., excluding participants' children) was fifteen years old. This range in age also meant a range of generations with contrasting conceptions of life, care, autonomy, and interdependence. One dispute during the workshop on isolation stood out for me. The eighty-four-year-old woman with a walking dis*ability – who lived by herself, seemingly without much support from her children – was appalled by the choices of another woman, who might have been around twenty-five years younger than her. This woman had chosen to become the main caregiver to her sick father, moved in with him, and was suffering from isolation due to her role as a primary carer. The elder women thought the younger woman's father's choice to allow her presence was utterly selfish, and that he should have let her "live her life." The younger woman feels a nursing home would have been an unethical choice for her father and defended her approach. In another instance, a workshop-facilitating artist shared her personal choice of becoming a solo mother – a term that describes mothers who conceive via a sperm donor – and she was confronted with harsh critique from some of the participants, for "intentionally depriving her child of a relationship with a father," and so on. Similar frictions occurred during the storytelling cafés, where contrasting – and, to some, offensive – positions were voiced.

Making these tensions and conflicts transparent is, for me, necessary, as they showcase how an encounter of curatorial care does not equate to a harmonious encounter without conflict. On the contrary, these open, arts-based frameworks on care allow for conversations that otherwise might not take place: cross-generational contacts can be rare, as can the urban-rural encounter between artists, who often reside in large cultural hubs, and local inhabitants, who do not have frequent access to certain societal discourses and artistic practices. Curatorial care might therefore intentionally enable conflictual situations, instead of seeking only harmonious, consensual encounters. In accordance with Mouffe, the political aspect of these

encounters lies in their potential for agonism.[816]

In these instances, it is important to reconsider the role, and the limitations, of the curator-as-carer. While there are, as discussed, etymological associations between "curating" and the Latin "-*cura-*" (the linguistic root of not only "caring" but also "curing"), I argue that a literal understanding of curator-as-curer is problematic in socially engaged curatorial settings.[817] Trained curatorial professional will not necessarily have acquired the adequate tools to hold the emotions that may arise in the face of conflictual or emotional topics, as may happen when addressing motherhood, care work, and gender inequality – particularly when such discursive encounters encourage vulnerability and openness. While one can identify a trend in contemporary art of engaging with healing and spiritual practices and Indigenous epistemologies, the position of the curator therein should not be conflated with the role of a curer, a healer, in a shamanistic sense.[818] Rather, the curator-as-carer's role should be to equip the conversational context with trained moderators, and possibly coaches or other skilled assistants, who can professionally guide the conversations and affective revelations. This line of thought is reflected in artist Tania Bruguera's claim that a socially engaged artist is "not a shaman, a magician, a healer, a saint, a mother; the role of the socially engaged artist is closer to that of teacher, negotiator, builder of conduct and social structures."[819] The role of a socially engaged practitioner, whether from the position of a curator or an artist, must engage with the construction of frameworks of encounter, where conflictual situations may arise but not escalate to the extent that they cause harm to the participants.

---

816. Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 7ff. For an account on curating within conflictual entanglements see Maayan Sheleff, "Echoing with a Difference: Curating Voices and the Politics of Participation" (PhD diss., University of Reading and Zurich University of the Arts, June 2023).
817. For a detailed analysis of the notion of healing associated with the curatorial figure Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in the context of her curatorship of dOCUMENTA (13), see Nanne Buurman, "From Prison Guard to Healer: Curatorial Authorships in the Context of Gendered Economies," *OnCurating*, no. 51 (September 2021).
818. The group exhibition *Remedios* features many Indigenous artistic positions on (shamanistic) healing, Indigenous knowledge production, and collective care. For more, see Centro de Creación Contemporánea de Andalucía and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, "Remedios: Where New Land Might Grow," TBA21, 2023, https://tba21.org/RemediosEN.
819. Tania Bruguera, "Reflexiones sobre el Arte Útil," in *ARTE ACTUAL: Lecturas para un espectador inquieto*, ed. Yayo Aznar and Pablo Martinez (Madrid: CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, 2012), 194–97. My translation.

Conflicts can emerge not only in regard to the participants but also in regard to the staff and artistic and curatorial collaborators. Feminist collaborations around care are often highly charged setups where (marginalised) people come together in an activist spirit, to collectivise towards social transformation – and, with their high aspirations around care, the participants can clash due to their conflicting understandings of what care entails, their different roles, their search for (individual) visibility, which often concretises in the form of (singular) authorship and credentials for projects and publications. As I wrote in my field notes:

As we are in constant fight mode against injustices, we then begin to fight our equals with the same harshness that we aim to eradicate other structures. And we fight from our respective positions, as freelancers against employees of institutions, as institutions against funding bodies, as collectives against individuals – we begin to forget that even the conceived enemy, the institution, consists of people, who carry their own stories of precarity, hidden underneath the seemingly sleek surface of institutional walls.[820]

Collaborations do not exist in a vacuum devoid of personal agendas, neoliberal project logics, funding frameworks, institutional mechanisms, or internalised perceptions of roles that may (unintentionally) reproduce the precise hierarchical system which one had hoped to counteract. Possible conflicts around ownership, authorship, and credits within feminist collaborations reflect this tension: each contributor enters the project from a place of precarity and (economic, political, social, etc.) vulnerability, which is often opaque to others; simultaneously, some participants interact without fully understanding the place of privilege from which they act. Many who came together for the collaborations of the M.1 curatorial cycle were single parents, queer, freelancers, unemployed, or migrants who needed to not only feed themselves but also their dependents. In order to meet in this way, visibility was our only currency.

The above web of tensions might serve as an explanation as to why contention around credits is so common within artistic, curatorial, editorial, and other

---

820. Field notes, March 9, 2023; also see appendix, section C.

creative collaborations: credits are the currency in which the visibility operates, though often in disconnection with or in lieu of financial reward. Credits are the manifestation of public recognition of one's un- or underpaid labour; they are insurance against drowning in a field of invisibles – the dark matter of the arts.[821] If credits are dissociated from the curator- or artist-as-entrepreneur, then the work loses its value within the attention economy. Yet, claiming authorship within feminist discourses can be read in rather contrasting ways: either as a way to acknowledge the efforts and struggles and important work of others, or as a way to adhere to neoliberal conceptions of subjecthood that prioritise the individual over collective efforts (by subsuming the individuals' names under a shared authorship that "erases" the separate voices). Whichever position one follows – perceiving credits and citation either as a feminist method or as a hyper-individualisation of collective struggles – it is easy to frame the other side as "anti-feminist" (which is arguably the most offensive slur a self-identifying feminist could be confronted with).

In reflecting on a conversation I had post-conflict with a previous collaborator, I had written in my notes: *Despite our feminist efforts, our theoretical knowledge, and our engagement with counter-practices, we are also individuals who operate under the pressure "to make it" within a hostile, competitive, neoliberal framework.*[822] This notion highlights the ambivalent position of cultural producers as *reproducers* of cultural hegemony while attempting to *rearticulate* these relationships in a counter-hegemonic manner. This is formulated poignantly by the feminist art historians Angela Dimitrakaki and Nizan Shaked:

> This is the logic that presently informs all art institutions that are committed to equality and diversity but are forced to also honour the competition principle. It is the culture that strives for inclusivity, while it revels when a figure signifying difference scoops an award.[823]

---

821. "Greg Sholette's 'dark matter' analogy should suffice: an undifferentiated invisible mass is necessary for the few art-world 'stars' to shine. Sure, some of these stars can be women, or non-white people. And yet, looking deeper we see that recognition is anchored on the culture of meritocracy, which is immensely useful to liberalism, which sustains neoliberalism." Angela Dimitrakaki, "From Space to Time: 'Situated Knowledges,' Critical Curating, and Social Truth," *OnCurating*, no. 53 (June 2022): 12.
822. Field notes, March 2023; also see appendix, section C.
823. Angela Dimitrakaki and Nizan Shaked, "Feminism, Instituting, and the Politics of Recognition in Global Capitalism," *OnCurating*, no. 52 (November 2021): 15.

This culture that rhetorically seeks equality and inclusivity but structurally promotes competition is a recipe for conflict, particularly within spheres of feminist care-related projects, as it brings out the systemic contradictions in a manner that is hard to ignore.[824]

To summarise, relational curatorial formats of care need to be recognised as zones of agonism and conflict, as manifestations of the political quality of the encounter. Collaborations within feminist care contexts contain highly complex dynamics, as they are imbued the intention of caring interactions. Coercive external frameworks produce a system of operation that is incredibly precarious and fuels competition for financial care, visibility, and credits. I read these conflicts as manifestations of the contradictions of an oppressive system that ripple down into participants' personal lives, where they lead the practitioner to attempt to "solve" and counteract these tensions on an individual level, while failing to do so in many cases. Therefore, undertaking curatorial care evokes conflicts on at least three levels: firstly, as shown in this section, relational, curatorial projects around care enhance conflictual, agonistic encounters as democratic spheres of engagement; secondly, diverging understandings around care might spark conflict, as the direction of care towards the artist may result in a lack of care towards the curator, and vice versa; and, thirdly, the cultural field's implication within neoliberal logics demands competition – a fight for credits and visibility – while rhetorically adhering to equality and inclusivity. It is this last contradiction that I seek to delve further into in the next section.

6.3   Contradictions of Curating, Capital, and Care

To address the systemic frictions and contradictions between curating, capital, and care, I return to a line of thought of curator Joanna Warsza, in which she muses

---

824. Ibid., 12.

about the analogy between the role of a curator and that of a police officer:

> Fellow thinker and friend Nora Sternfeld and I amused ourselves some years ago with defining a curator as someone who is a policeman and an activist at the same time – who is deliberately in a conundrum of representing hegemony and needs to assume it, while often striving to be anti-hegemonic. Someone who creates forms and support structures, while introducing subversion, who embodies the electrifying impossibility of policing and being dissident at the same time.[825]

As cultural producers, we are thus caught in a double bind, a dual role, acting both as the (feminist) anti-hegemonic agent of rearticulating the common sense and as the perpetuator of the common sense by upholding it through one's engagement in the creative field.

Dimitrakaki and Shaked further stress the complexity of practitioners' relationship to the arts and the art market, which affects not only curators but also the positioning of artists and is further complicated especially within the realm of feminism(s):

> You can enact whatever critique as a feminist artist, but you also need to make your critique available through obtaining an income in the art labour market, of which the market for selling artworks is just a part, and where one can possibly make a living through teaching art, through competing for a grant, through securing a residency, and generally, through making some "cultural capital" transfer into income.[826]

This arrangement puts feminist curators in the uncomfortable position of seeking to critique while simultaneously complying with the speculations and mechanisms of the free market.[827] Not only do they need to translate their feminist forms of critique into self-sustaining income but they also run the danger of (needing to) profit as *individuals* from these collective struggles, in order to self-sustain. This may in turn create a situation where feminist curators provide a discursive platform for critique

825. Joanna Warsza, "The Elephant Is Bigger than the Room: Documenta Trouble and Curatorial Responsibility," *Paletten*, July–August 2022, https://paletten.net/artiklar/the-elephant-is-bigger-than-the-room.
826. Dimitrakaki and Shaked, "Feminism, Instituting, and the Politics of Recognition in Global Capitalism," 11.
827. Dorothee Richter, *Curating: Politics of Display, Politics of Site, Politics of Transfer and Translation, Politics of Knowledge Production. A Fragmented and Situated Theory of Curating* (Zurich: OnCurating, 2023), 396.

that includes the effect of increasing visibility for themselves as professionals within the attention economy, while the voiced critique becomes co-opted by the institutional realm, where its loses its anti-hegemonic potential. This process also occurs within collective artistic practices, as Dorothee Richter argues: "In the arts, of course, the art market is in place and will also buy and sell some of the communal outcomes of mega-exhibitions like documenta."[828] The art market has a tendency to render works that stem from collective processes into supposed autonomous artworks-as-commodities, thereby conferring career-enhancing fame to singular artistic or curatorial figures while invisiblising the collective social movements out of which such works emerged.[829]

Dimitrakaki and Shaked come to the conclusion that this contradiction cannot be resolved within the given parameters of institutional critique as artistic practice – and, I may add, as curatorial practice: "for the conflict between artistic autonomy and the artist's dependency on the art labour market […] never leads to a synthesis that moves us forward."[830] The two authors definitively locate the irresolvable dimension of this conundrum in the "overwhelming problem of capitalism."[831]

Capitalism has the built-in tendency to integrate the contradictions that it produces. According to the sociologist Emma Dowling, capitalism encounters itself in a constant search for a "fix," displacing "a crisis through the restructuring of the

---

828. Ibid., 396, 433.
829. In the case of the curatorial approach of ruangrupa during documenta fifteen in Kassel in 2022, the collective intended to challenge the dominant art market mechanisms by launching a cooperative gallery, the Lumbung Gallery. The online presence of the platform states the following mechanism of operation: "The pricing of the artworks is going to be based on the collective's basic needs and artists' basic income in addition to production costs and other material condition variables rather than speculative market prices. There will also be non-monetary exchange, as well as affordable artworks. The artists and collectives will receive 70% of the return, they will then divide this amongst themselves and the extended needs of their ecosystems and communities. 30% will go to the running cost of the gallery and the common pot of all members of the lumbung." For further information, see their mission statement: Lumbung Gallery, accessed September 25, 2023, https://www.lumbunggallery.theartists.net/mission. However, little information can be found about the actual successes, or failures, of the Lumbung Gallery. The website makes no mention of how long and in which ways this cooperative gallery operated. It currently has no works listed. It only speaks in future voice about a past project. Due to the lack of information, I do not cite this as a best-practice example; however, I nonetheless wish to showcase that alternative models of art dealing have been tested.
830. Dimitrakaki and Shaked, "Feminism, Instituting, and the Politics of Recognition in Global Capitalism," 11.
831. Ibid., 15.

relations of production – spatially, technologically or organizationally, financially, digitally or in terms of production."[832] Capitalism's attempt at a "care fix" becomes legible in various finance and business models through its adherence to rhetorics of care, social responsibility, and compassion.[833] Dowling points to the contradiction wherein capitalism aims to "address an ongoing care crisis using private capital and market mechanisms while relying on unpaid reproductive and caring labour to do so."[834]

The cultural sector, with its increased dedication to matters of care, can also run the danger of being *instrumentalised* and co-opted by neoliberal policies as a "fix": the arts – and socially engaged practices in particular – are sought to fill the gaps of neoliberalism's market-oriented (and not people-oriented) operations. Wherever neoliberal economies fail to build the foundation for neighbourhood-level dialogue because investors' interests reign, community artists are welcomed to ignite an apparent process of dialogue and mutual understanding.[835] Wherever politics, due to neoliberal disinvestment from the public sector, fail to provide support structures for disenfranchised communities, socially engaged art projects – such as, potentially, the storytelling cafés – are encouraged to fill the void through producing dialogic encounters. Curatorial care is thus in the contradictory position of orienting itself towards the needs of its context (*Curaduría Útil*) while remaining independent from governmental instrumentalisation to close gaps in sociopolitical support networks, and thereby seeming to alleviate the government's social responsibility towards the common good.[836]

---

832. Emma Dowling, "Confronting Capital's Care Fix: Care Through the Lens of Democracy," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* 37 (2018): 334.
833. Ibid.
834. Ibid., 333.
835. The 2017 Dietenbach Festspiele serves as an example. This initiative by the City Theater of Freiburg was intended to foster dialogue with the local communities, as a way to negotiate the tensions that arose between investors wanting to rebuild parts of what is currently a park, and the desire to have non-commercial green spaces throughout the city, and the pressures to build housing, as rents have become unaffordable for many inhabitants. I was invited to work on the project, responsible for the communication and publications. For more, see Theater Freiburg, "Dietenbach Festspiele," 2017, https://dietenbachfestspiele.wordpress.com/.
836. While the platform *Arte Útil* has been conceived "to deal with issues that were once the domain of the state" (as is written on the online platform), I would caution *Curaduría Útil* against the seamless provision of support structures that fall within the realms of political and economic entities. The provision of support structures thus needs to be coupled with an activist mission of reminding – and

While I argue that we have to address systemic issues with a systemic approach, and I defend the method of caring infrastructures as one such approach, we also have to take seriously the limits of such an understanding. The agency that individual or small-scale collective practices can derive will not be in a position to substantially alter the systemic inequalities and contradictions inherent to the capitalist economy or how care is organised. Furthermore, the contradictions between the capitalist framework and the arts, in conjunction with the dominant conceptions around care, are amplified within the arts. Curatorial care can thus never be a societal fix.

At most, we can think of curating with care as producing micro-utopian spaces, as a *pre-enactments* of an otherwise, that sketch out alternative futures and build the relational foundation for it – but, paradoxically, only within the hegemonic parameters of the art field.[837] Artist Tania Bruguera's proposition of *Arte Útil* (useful art) can be seen as such a preliminary enactment of an otherwise that must yet find its permanent form:

> Although Useful Art may be like a pilot or beta program, where participants may experience how it feels to live in the world that is being proposed, it must be launched as something real. It should be shown/shared with those who may make it work in a long-term format, that is, the people who derive benefits from the proposal and who may take it to a more permanent state or existence.[838]

In light of the contradictions of curating, care, and the capitalist framework, curating with care as a feminist and queer vision may have to be regarded as a *project*, to speak in Sara Ahmed's words, who argues that feminism, and the negotiation of the relationship between women is, indeed, a project – "because we

holding accountable – public entities to fulfil their beneficial roles for the common good. For further reference, see Arte Ùtil (platform), accessed March 10, 2023, https://www.arte-util.org/about/colophon/.

837. As a performative practice, "pre-enactment" is about negotiating hypothetical future scenarios and possible realities in the context of performances. For further reading, see Adam Czirak, Sophie Nikoleit, Friederike Oberkrome, Verena Straub, Robert Walter-Jochum, and Michael Wetzels, eds., *Performance zwischen den Zeiten: Reenactments und Preenactments in Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Bielefeld. Germany: transcript, 2019).

838. Tania Bruguera, "Reflexiones sobre el Arte Útil," in *ARTE ACTUAL: Lecturas para un espectador inquieto*, edited by Yayo Aznar and Pablo Martinez (Madrid: CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, 2012), 194–97. My translation.

are not there yet."[839] This notion of not-there-yet is also found in the writings of queer cultural theorist José Esteban Muñoz, who articulates that "queerness is always in the horizon" as a way to inspire imaginations towards queer futurity.[840] A curatorial practice that truly enacts care in all its facets remains visible on the horizon, but we have not yet arrived. The glimpses of its vision are the driving motor of the quest for an art sector that not only speaks about care but that actualises it through its infrastructures.

6.4 Caring in Concert

Striving towards the horizons of curating with care as a lived practice, constructing caring infrastructures within the arts, must be a collective process. I therefore argue that one of the limits of building caring infrastructures is rooted in the solitary form it often takes. A solitary practice of curating with care is very likely to be confronted with resistance to change from institutions, funding bodies, museum boards, and decision-makers, as it entails challenging their positions of power and often their leadership teams' class privilege.[841] As an essentially relational approach, implementing caring infrastructures thus needs to be a collective process, one that is carried out in solidarity and alliance with other engaged practitioners, social networks, and movements in order to generate a truly transformative force. With this consideration in mind, I return to Mouffe's proposition of "acting in concert," whereby marginalised and disadvantaged groups will have to assemble their political strategies in order to undo the current hegemony. Through "chains of equivalence," Mouffe argues, allied democratic initiatives can collectively struggle against different forms of subordination and seek broader transformations of existing power

839. Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 14.
840. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 11.
841. Dimitrakaki and Shaked, "Feminism, Instituting, and the Politics of Recognition in Global Capitalism," 11.

relations.[842] This metaphor of chains resembles the infrastructural proposition of my dissertation, as the assembly of small elements forms part of a larger process of transformation. Thereby, each individual element is of importance, but it is only in their alliance towards the goals of wider social struggles that the potential for radical political transformation can come to fruition.[843] Thinking along the lines of infrastructures and chains allows for a reframing of curatorial practice as one element of a larger mosaic which is dedicated to a counter-hegemonic rearticulation of the social sphere – and so one individual, one group, or one project alone can never be a sufficient force to do so. The success of this process therefore rests upon the ability to generate the necessary "peer pressure" within the artistic field to render institutional resistance to change unacceptable.

During my artistic directorship at M.1, I was already dedicated to practising in alliance with my colleagues, my curatorial and artistic collaborators, central figures from the community, and other institutions open to these kinds of dialogue, such as HKW in Berlin and HFBK Hamburg, yet I wasn't able to steadily position the project with a dense web of allied struggles. A possible reason for the programme's discontinuation in a strict sense may have stemmed from insufficient ties to other local and transregional allied initiatives, which could not be fostered in such a short period of time, particularly during a pandemic with social-distancing measures. The wide range of possibilities for alliance – which has now reappeared – wasn't available to me when I began my curatorial initiative on care at M.1.

Since I began this research-creation project, central publications within the German-language realm have come to the fore, such as the anthology *Wirtschaft neu ausrichten. Care-Initiativen in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz* (Reorienting the Economy: Care Initiatives in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), released in the spring of 2023, which maps the various established and new initiatives founded around care in German-speaking countries.[844] Together, the

842. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1985), xviii.
843. Ibid., xiii.
844. Uta Meier-Gräwe, Ina Praetorius, and Feline Tecklenburg, eds. *Wirtschaft neu ausrichten: Care-Initiativen in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz* (Leverkusen-Opladen, Germany: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2023).

explored initiatives manifest what could easily be understood as "action in concert." While an anthology mapping such caring initiatives within the arts specifically is yet to be produced, publications and initiatives sitting at the intersection of art and care have upsurged in the recent years – in parallel to my academic research and curatorial practice. Of these, I wish to name a few central ones, as they point towards future directions of the field.

In 2021, the collective manifesto "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents" was published online in fifteen languages, articulating for a wide audience the needs of artists who are also caregivers.[845] The "Instituting Feminism" issue of *OnCurating*, from 2021, edited by Helena Reckitt and Dorothee Richter, brought special attention to feminists' demands for arts institution. This line of thinking is echoed in *Curating as Feminist Organising* from 2022, edited by Lara Perry and Elke Krasny.[846] The publication complements the anthology *Curating with Care* from 2023 (by the same editors), to which I was honoured to contribute one of twenty essays that shine light on the complex relationships among curating and care while situating it as a prominent discourse of contemporary art and curating.[847] Another central publication, released in late 2022, is Hettie Judah's book *How to Not Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)*.[848] Despite being available only in an English edition so far, it created a moment of coming together for a range of care-interested cultural practitioners and existing initiatives as well as aided in forming new initiatives within Germany and Switzerland. During Judah's European book tour, representatives from several such initiatives met, learned about each other's existence, and networked. In the course of one of these events, I also learned about structural adjustments happening within arts funding in Switzerland, where Pro Helvetia (the Swiss arts council) has recently launched a research and funding scheme for art institutions interested in becoming

845. Artist Parents Network, "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents: Some Guidelines for Institutions and Residencies," Artist Parents, 2021, http://www.artist-parents.com.
846. Elke Krasny and Lara Perry, eds. *Curating as Feminist Organizing* (London: Routledge, 2022).
847. Elke Krasny and Lara Perry, eds. *Curating with Care* (London: Routledge, 2023).
848. Hettie Judah, *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)* (London: Lund Humphries, 2022). Another relevant book, which was published in September 2023, is Bojana Kunst, *Das Leben der Kunst. Transversale Linien der Sorge* (Linz, Austria: Transversal Texts, 2023).

more accessible to artists with caring responsibilities.[849] It was in this same period that I learned about the newly emerging platform kuk! (short for "kind und kunst," which translates to "kids and art") within the German-speaking realm.[850] Graphic designer and visual communicator Lucia Schmuck, as part of her MFA degree show, built this digital platform, which brings together fifteen art- and care-related initiatives from the visual artists, creative writing, theatre and the performing arts, among them kind+kunst Berlin, k&k – Bündnis Kind und Kunst München, MATERNAL FANTASIES (Berlin), Other Writers Need to Concentrate e.V. (Leipzig), Bühnenmütter e.V. (Stage Moms, Berlin), Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets (Stuttgart), and Maternal Artistic Research Studio (Freiburg).[851] As part of the process of gaining attention for the issues around art and care, and tightened exchange and networking among care- and art-related initiatives and actors, I was invited to partake in curatorial and mentor positions for the Stuttgart- and Freiburg-based groups, where we respectively birthed the (almost parallel) exhibitions *Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Fürsorge als Widerstand* (Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance, StadtPalais Stuttgart, May 18–July, 2023) and *Mythen von Müttern und anderen Monstern* (Myths of Mothers and Other Monsters, Kunstraum L6 Freiburg, May 6– July 2, 2023).[852] As an invited speaker to a variety of conferences and encounters – such as the symposia *Curating through Conflict with Care*, held at Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin, and *Art + Care. Care as Opportunity and Risk in the Contemporary Art Sector*," organised by Landesverband Bildende Kunst of North Rhine-Westphalia, Dusseldorf, as well as the networking event "Art with Care," run by the Performing Arts Programme Berlin – I have been in the privileged position to witness firsthand the art field's current push towards feminist and care-centred

---

849. Pro Helvetia, "Residencies and Research Trips," accessed October 1, 2022, https://prohelvetia.ch/en/residencies-and-research-trips/.

850. kuk! Kind und Kunst, initiated by Lucia Schmuck, accessed July 26, 2023, https://www.kindundkunst.org.

851. For a selection of art- and care-related networks, see appendix, section B.

852. *Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance* featured artistic works by Anna Gohmert, Renate Liebel, Marie Lienhard, Anna Schiefer, and Julia Wirsching. See the art collective's website, accessed July 14, 2023, https://mothers-warriors-and-poets.net. *Myths of Mothers and Other Monsters* featured works by Hannah Kindler, Milena Naef, Sara-Lena Möllenkamp, and Sylvia Gaßner and was organised in curatorial collaboration by the artists Maternal Artistic Research Studio and the curator Hannah E. Weber and myself. See the art initiative's website, accessed July 14, 2023, http://mars-space.net.

approaches.[853]

The aforementioned kuk! platform also includes a collaborative initiative that I launched together with actors from existing art and care networks across Germany: the CARING CULTURE LAB. With this platform, we hope to contribute to the embracing and enacting of feminist care ethics and practices within the arts. Through it, we aim to bring together various cultural practitioners to consult, mentor, and accompany cultural institutions in their process of building caring infrastructures.[854] A mid-term goal for this initiative is to create a CARING CULTURE certificate (after a model established by the US-based organisation W.A.G.E., which seeks fair pay in the arts), which seeks to establish a new standard of caring accessibility for cultural institutions, particularly their residency programmes.[855] Thereby, we hope to contribute to the creation of peer pressure among cultural institutions to join this movement and assume their caring responsibilities, including rendering their resistance to change unacceptable.

The path forward for a feminist curatorial practice towards care must continue the formation of coalitions that network art, care, and social justice. This can be achieved through, for example, regular networked exchanges and assemblies of feminist curators; closely knit exchanges between care- and art-related groups

853. Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, "Research Project and Symposium: Curating through Conflict with Care," curated by Maithu Bùi, Sophya Frohberg, Ayasha Guerin, Moshtari Hilal, and Duygu Örs, August 4–6, 2023, https://ngbk.de/en/program/research#:~:text=Curating%20through%20Conflict%20with%20Care%20(CCC)%20addresses%20conflicts%20around%20representation,led%20change%20that%20center%20care; Performing Arts Programme Berlin, "Art with Care: A discussion and Networking Format," at Alte Feuerwache, Berlin, on October 9, 2023, https://pap-berlin.de/en/event/art-with-care; Landesverband Bildende Kunst of North Rhine-Westphalia, "Symposium: Kunst + Care. Fürsorge als Chance und Risiko im aktuellen Kunstbetrieb" (Art + Care. Care as Opportunity and Risk in the Contemporary Art Sector), June 6, 2023, https://www.labk.nrw/symposium-kunst-care-fuersorge-als-chance-und-risiko-im-aktuellen-kunstbetrieb/. Another relevant conference and networking event for independent initiatives around gender justice and care work within the (performing) arts was M2ACT × BURNING ISSUES, "Conference and Networking: Performing Arts & Action," September 15–17, 2023, https://m2act-x-burningissues-2023.events.migros-kulturprozent.ch/?lang=de.
854. See CARING CULTURE LAB, project website, accessed February 24, 2024, https://caringculturelab.org.
855. W.A.G.E., accessed July 10, 2023, https://wageforwork.com/wagency. Lucia Schmuck, as part of kuk! Kind und Kunst, designed a logo for the "caring culture certificate." Even though the certificate is not yet officially launched, its *pre-enactment* through its mere existence aids the political momentum to move the conversation towards care. See the kuk! Kind und Kunst website for further information, accessed July 20, 2023, https://www.kindundkunst.org.

across regions and countries and language borders; and the further collaborative development of codes of conducts or manifestos – in line with the propositions for caring infrastructures.[856] This process could contribute to a more widespread acceptance of feminist curatorial methodologies for instituting otherwise – so that uncaring codes of conduct become widely unacceptable. While it is important to acknowledge regional differences when it comes to the cultural and legal frameworks that enable or hinder the creation of a more just art sector, it is of equal importance to connect with international initiatives so that we can learn from another and establish international standards for caring infrastructures within the arts.[857]

Such forms of exchange and networking can occur informally, too. Since many practitioners involved in care-based initiatives are caregivers and precariously positioned arts workers, it is important to acknowledge the limited capacity for unpaid activism and advocacy labour. The beginning of these networks might then be something as simple as informal group chats on messenger providers.[858] At first glance, these small gestures might lend themselves to the critique that they are "too soft," "not militant enough," and possibly "not radical enough" – critiques that I have also received in the past about my own curatorial programming as well as the artistic practices I have worked with (Image 64). It is true that many contemporary artistic and curatorial practices around care do not always aesthetically align with the mediated images of the marching feminists of the 1970s who were taking domestic concerns to the streets, their fists raised to power. In contrast, contemporary art and care practices may appear colourful, joyful, welcoming, at times even humorous or maybe stubborn and defiant in their aesthetics. However, I argue that there is power in being subtly subversive, that there is power within informality and softness, with

856. See section 5.3 for the "Soft Manifesto for Caring Infrastructures."
857. An example of a regional network of caregivers in the arts is the UK-based network Art Working Parents Alliance. The national network formed to lobby in relation the legal frameworks under which they specifically operate, but they are open and connected with other regional groups, such as the CARING CULTURE LAB. For further information, see Art Working Parents Alliance, accessed July 26, 2023, https://artworkingparents.wordpress.com.
858. The Art Working Parents Alliance hosts an informal WhatsApp group chat; the Swiss network Kunst und Care hosts a Signal group chat; and the CARING CULTURE LAB launched a Telegram group chat for the German cultural landscape to connect cultural producers with and without caring responsibility in a space of solidarity towards collective action. For more information, see the websites of kuk! Kind und Kunst and Art Working Parents Alliance.

their possibility to touch and connect with others. Being consistent in demanding and building caring infrastructures and insistent regarding the ways in which we hold one another and our collaborating institutions accountable can be seen as a rhizomatic alliance that expands underground and tightens and surges up in unforeseen moments, with the aim to instil collective care.

Image 64. Collective exercise, "Workshop on Time," facilitated by Myriam Lefkowitz, from the series "Care for Caregivers" at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt (2019). Photo: Sascia Bailer.

I argue that it is these defiant practices around care in all their variations – the soft, the unapologetic, the loud, the angry, the formal, and the informal – that can join in a transformative political alliance. The critical philosopher Nancy Fraser, in a very similar manner to Mouffe, makes the plea that "the dominated must construct a new, more persuasive common sense, or *counterhegemony*, a new more powerful political alliance."[859] For although a ubiquitous aim of activism is improving the

---

859. Nancy Fraser, *The Old Is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born: From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump and Beyond* (London: Verso, 2019), 10.

conditions for caregiving, and therefore for social reproduction, the daily solutions, or workarounds, usually stay at the level of scattered individual concerns that do not attain "the level of a counter-hegemonic project to change the organisation of social reproduction."[860] Fraser analyses how some people speak out in favour of a shorter workweek while others advocate for universal basic income, for public childcare, for employees' rights in the profit-driven health sector. Some align in struggles around clean water, housing, and the environment. Ultimately, according to Fraser, all these concerns are wrestling to maintain and improve the foundations for care, for social reproduction. However, she critiques that these struggles are not yet aligned: "If it came to pass that these struggles did understand themselves in this way, there would be a powerful basis for linking them together in a broad movement for social transformation."[861]

Through the lens of this quotation, it again becomes evident how paramount care is as a vehicle for social transformation – not as a singular, diffracted activity but as a democratising, solidarity-driven "caring-with." This dissertation has shown the manifold theoretical and practice-based strands within the arts, social science and arts and humanities research, and civil society that are struggling for the recognition of care in their respective fields, that advocate for structural justice for caregivers and care-receivers, that seek to de-romanticise and humanise care, as well as to de-capitalise and commonise it. I therefore want to describe our allied activities within the arts, research, and civil society as not only acting in concert but also *caring in concert*. This process of caring in concert encompasses the manifold collective efforts that centre care – making a chorus of the voices who not only advocate for care for themselves but also, in joining forces, enter into a relationship of care and solidarity towards one another. In this way, they collectively carry the responsibilities, burdens, and joys of caring for the movement. Here, care is simultaneously the point of departure, the path, and the goal of the transformative struggle.

---

860. Nancy Fraser, "Capitalism's Crisis of Care," *Dissent*, 2016, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/nancy-fraser-interview-capitalism-crisis-of-care.
861. Ibid.

Conclusion

This practice-based dissertation *Caring Infrastructures: Transforming the Arts through Feminist Curating with Care* departed from the aim to complicate the relationship between curating and care, by investigating the potential, the agency, and also the dangers and limitations of coupling these two notions. It centres care from the situated view of a caregiver, from the practice-based experience of a curator-as-carer, and from the anti-hegemonic perspective of a researcher who critically engages with the histories and ambivalences of care and social reproduction within the political economy as well as within the arts specifically, as a precarious field of labour.

The contribution to knowledge lies in the fusion and expansion of established discourses on feminist epistemologies, curating, gender, care, and social transformation in order to develop new theoretical prospects and hands-on feminist curatorial methodologies. This dissertation lends itself as an example of feminist research methodologies by inscribing the self into the research account and by establishing the feminist citation policy of "foregrounding," which favours feminist, queer, Black, and brown positions over white masculine ones. This research account further provides a practice-based example of how a curatorial practice towards care can be perceived, what its challenges are, and what potentials it holds when engaging not only thematically but also infrastructurally with care. It additionally advances the curatorial discourse on feminist approaches to care by establishing the notion of *Curaduría Útil* (useful curating) as a radically relational, situated, meaningful curatorial practice that establishes frameworks of encounter, collaboration, and co-production for community members and artists alike. The core contribution of knowledge made through this dissertation thus lies in the proposition to understand care as a curatorial method to construct caring infrastructures within the arts.[862]

Through the identification of eight central nodes within curatorial practice, I

---

862 As articulated in section 5.2 – "In Search of a Practice: Towards a Curatorial Methodology of Caring Infrastructures."

formulated counter-hegemonic propositions towards caring infrastructures. These propositions do not attempt to be all-encompassing but rather offer the curatorial community a set of tools for a practice that not only thematically engages with care as a subject but aims to practice care infrastructurally. The underlying argument is that care – with its non-innocent histories, including its entanglements with sexism, racism, and classism – can be practised as a professional tool and is explicitly not dependent on those who are socially conditioned or naturalised to act as carers. This alleviates women, queer people, people of colour, migrants of the roles of default caregiver and maintenance worker. If care is a central concern for everyone – since we all give and receive care (feminist care ethics) – then everyone also should be able to practice care within the arts, as a method.

The formulated propositions respond to the glaring gap within the arts, a field in which care continues to trend as a theme but where uncaring conditions prevail. These conditions manifest as, for example, un- or underpaid staff, no or precarious honorariums for freelancing artists and curators, and a lack of support structures for creatives with caring responsibilities or caring needs or both. This dissertation is both a sharp analysis of the status quo of the arts – with a focus on Germany – and also fills an important gap within contemporary curatorial practices. The offered tools can be adapted, expanded, and applied within an international context, where different contexts, different legal systems, and different funding structures exist.

The practice-led propositions towards building caring infrastructures are built upon an extensive historical and theoretical engagement with the relationship of care and gender, the capitalist economy, and the curatorial and artistic field. In the second chapter, "Economy of Invisible Hands," I embarked on an – albeit brief – historical Marxist-feminist investigation into the origins of the sexual division of labour during the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The chapter critically analyses the ways in which capitalism as an oppressive system profits from exploitation, particularly based on race, gender, and class, and how care work serves as an unpaid basis for the accumulation of capital. This unpaid condition of care work is perpetuated in the cemented ideal of the nuclear family, which, up until today, primarily puts women into the role of caregivers. This gendered idealisation of care work has lifelong effects on

the lives of women, who sit on the disadvantaged side of not only the gender pay gap but also the gender care gap (including in regard to transnational care chains) and the gender pension gap. I therefore have argued that care should be regarded as a prism for understanding the wider issues and dynamics of social injustices. The chapter also investigates the ways in which gendered norms affect how questions of care are addressed within the arts; how feminist artists and activists have positioned their work to counter dominant narratives about domestic work, motherhood, and maintenance; and how caring responsibilities shape, or prevent, artistic careers.

This understanding of social reproduction as a prism or pivotal point of reference is crucial to the framework of this dissertation, as it allows me to consider a feminist, socially engaged curatorial practice as one that, by addressing urgent questions of care, holds a transformative potential to shift the perception, representation, and structural conditions of care within the arts. (Curatorial) care politics in this regard becomes a vehicle to challenge social norms and to initiate curatorial formats and platforms towards social transformation.

In the third chapter, "Histories of a Contested Terrain: Curatorial Care," I not only articulated the ambivalent relationship between curating, care, and gender but also offered a brief genealogy of the concepts and their historical relations to one another. The chapter thereby unsettles these relationships by drawing from the colonial, patriarchal, and bourgeois histories of museums and the curatorial professional. I discuss how the concept of the curator shifted over the course of the twentieth century from curator-as-carer to curator-as-author in the twenty-first. In this respect, I point to the relationship between curating and control, which Nanne Buurman and Dorothee Richter have described as the process of masculinising curating. With Katy Deepwell, I turn to examples of artists who, from the 1970s and onwards, challenged curators' exclusionary practices by becoming curators themselves. Their methods were later adopted by independent curators.

In the first part of chapter 4 – "Curating with Care: From Theory to Practice," I provided the contextual framework for my curatorial case study, carried out under my artistic directorship in 2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, by shifting attention to inspirational theoretical and practice-based examples from the artistic and

curatorial fields. In it, I argue that this process of making transparent one's sources of inspiration can be regarded as a form of practising in companionship with others, as a mode of *practicing-with*. The first sections of the chapter, revolve around four thematic clusters of relevant companion practices spanning the topics of: (1) Situating, Radical Relations, and Useful Curating, (2) In Lieu of Art Objects: On Process, Ephemerality, and Improvisation, and (3) On Hospitality, Inclusion, and *Affidamento*. In these sections, proposed the notion of *Curaduría Útil* (useful curating) as an extension of *Arte Útil* (useful art) as a pathway for fostering radically relational, meaningful, and situated curatorial frameworks of care. All of these approaches played a central role in the development of my own curatorial practice and my propositions towards caring infrastructures.

In chapter 4's second part, 4.2 – "Care for Caregivers: A Case Study of Participatory Curatorial Programming on Care," I turn to my participatory curatorial practice on care by presenting, describing, analysing, and critically reflecting upon the twenty-month programme. First, I provide an overview of the concepts and formats of my participatory programming on care during my position as artistic director 2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt, in rural Northern Germany. By inviting the participation of women artists, most of them with caring responsibilities, and by engaging with local and regional caregivers

The discussion of my socially engaged curatorial practice builds on the premises of the previous contextualising sections. By introducing the curatorial concept, the lines of programming, and exemplary curatorial formats, a general overview was offered on the participatory curatorial programme on care at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt, Germany. The programming followed three main programming streams – LOCAL, ART, and FUTURE – and aimed at enacting practices of care and solidarity at a variety of scales. The chapter, in its closing remarks, does not shy away from a self-critical reflection as to why the programming did not continue in a self-organised manner. I cite the pandemic and conceptual contradictions as possible reasons and make a case to not consider the project as failed due to its dis/continuity; rather, I argue that a sincere participatory project has to remain open to deviations, including the collective decision to not carry

it on.

In the fifth chapter, "Thinking Through and Building Towards Caring Infrastructures," I turned to Joan Tronto in a practice of writing-with. The chapter reflects on the central dynamics of curating, care, and instituting feminist practices, and thereby establishes a theoretical framework for caring infrastructures. I propose the concept of "relational curating" as essential to building infrastructures that are otherwise invisiblised, just like care work itself, and attribute to this concept a sense of agency, as it has the capacity to reproduce oppressive mechanisms but also to reproduce *otherwise*. Here, I posit that curatorial care, as an infrastructural activity, holds the power to initiate social transformation.

In the last chapter, after having articulated my eight propositions towards caring infrastructures – and thereby learning from my experiences at M.1 – I critically reflected on the limitations of a curatorial practice of care. While the method of caring infrastructures is to be considered both a critical and yet generative methodology for the arts, it is not capable of eradicating all the contradictions and structural injustices within the field. In the sixth chapter, "Limits of Curatorial Care," I therefore sketch out a range of limitations for the proposed concept of "curatorial care," such as, for example, the limited agency that emerges from constructing caring infrastructures in a solitary manner; the inherent contradictions between curating, capital, and care; and the dangers of a notion of the universal expansion of care – which runs the risk of humans infinitely scaling care upwards without considering care for the self. The chapter makes a case to practice in alliance, to seek synergies, and to engage in collective struggles. With Chantal Mouffe, I argue for a shift from "acting in concert" to "caring in concert." As this practice-based PhD emerged "in concert" with other social, artistic, curatorial, academic, and activist initiatives around care, it is produced from a position of heightened awareness and sensitivity towards the ongoing discourses and emergent practices as well as the needs of the community. This process recognises the need to create enough "peer pressure" within the artistic field to render institutions' resistance to change unacceptable.

Over its six chapters, this dissertation has engaged with a multitude of disciplines (or in "polydisciplinamory," after Natalie Loveless) in an unorthodox

manner, thereby using the "erotic," as formulated by Audre Lorde, to navigate the complex attachments, histories, practices, and theoretical strands involved in this field. This research project challenges not only curatorial but also academic norms by proposing auto-theory and anecdotal theory (per Jane Gallop) as a way to actively disengage from the supposed split between the personal and the "objective" academic voice (per Donna Haraway). Just as the curatorial focus of this dissertation is highly relational, I also consider the research methods engaged in this dissertation, and particularly the methods of citation, to constitute a feminist relational practice, in the sense of Sara Ahmed and Lauren Fournier. These thoughts were introduced in the first chapter to lay the ground for the subsequent parts of the dissertation – thereby making transparent my own feminist citation politics, which, in following Sara Ahmed, aims to counter the common assumption that the history of ideas is derived from white, male bodies. To establish a counterbalance, I prioritised citing those who hold commonly marginalised positions within academia, foregrounding the voices of women, (single) mothers, queer people, and people of colour. With this effort, I aim to not only write *about* feminist theory but to exercise it as an academic and curatorial practice.

This dissertation has taken the form of a (self-)critical account that is unafraid to address difficult topics and that also generates tangible propositions and methodologies. Through a thought-provoking engagement with and practice-led expansion of feminist curatorial practice and thought, this account seeks to make a meaningful contribution and advancement to the field of (feminist) curatorial studies and socially engaged artistic and curatorial practices through the notion of *caring infrastructures*.

Acknowledgements

This work could not have come into the world without the numerous people who have supported, challenged, and inspired me along the way in a multitude of capacities.

List of Figures

© Bettye Lane. Courtesy of Gary O'Neil.

Image 11. Patti Maciesz, *Bill the Patriarchy*, 2017, performance.

Image 12. *Mutter!* exhibition, 2021, Kunsthalle Mannheim, installation view. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 13. A visitor looks at Cristina Llanos's *"El pacto secreto," Series of Exercises in Preparation to Childbirth*, 2014–21, in the exhibition *Maternar*, 2021, MUAC – University Museum of Contemporary Art, Mexico City. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 14. Leaflet for "Workshop on the Value of Care," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Artwork: Shira Richter, *Push*, 2005. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Image 15. Betye Saar, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972, multimedia installation. Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, California. Photo: Benjamin Blackwell.

Image 16. Customers about to enter HOMEBAKED's communal bakery in Liverpool. Photo: Arte Util Platform.

Image 17. Margit Czenki and Christoph Schäfer using the lockdown moment to restore the otherwise heavily used tulip-patterned tartan field Tulpenfeld by Nesrin Bigün in Park Fiction. © Park Fiction Archiv 2020.

Image 18. Casa Gallina's community garden in Mexico City, with its name-giving chicken coop at the far end, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 19. Casa Gallina's interior provides space for informal encounter, reading, workshops, and shared meals, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 20. *Fridskul* assembly with visitors and members of different art and activist collectives, Kassel, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 21. Britto Arts Trust invited food lovers to join their artistic food cooking and sharing project at PAKGHOR – the social kitchen during the one hundred days of documenta fifteen in Kassel, 2022. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 22. Andrea Francke's workshop area during the exhibition *(in)visible*, at the Showroom, London, 2012.

Image 23. Participants share lunch during the "Workshop on Trust" with Myriam Lefkowitz, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 24. Sascia Bailer, "Artistic Direction 2019/20: CARE," overview of curatorial concept for M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt (screenshot from M.1's website).

Image 25. A local resident passes by M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, featuring large banners that ask: "Who cares for caregivers?," 2019. Drawing: Katharina Bruderhofer. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Image 26. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Bettina Winkler-Marxen.

Image 27. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 28. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 29. "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 30. Offers that were left untaken at "Social Muscle Club," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Soyka Fotodesign.

Image 31. Workshop participants sharing lunch in the garden at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 32. Leaflet for Liz Rech and Annika Scharm's "Workshop on Motherhood," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Image 33. Exercises with voice and body, facilitated by Liz Rech and Annika Scharm as part of the "Workshop on Motherhood," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 34. Facilitated role-play to collectively reflect on practices of motherhood, facilitated by Liz Rech and Annika Scharm as part of the "Workshop on Motherhood," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 35. Leaflet for Julieta Aranda's "Workshop on Time," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Image 36. Collective cooking session, facilitated by Julieta Aranda as part of the "Workshop on Time," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 37. Leaflet for GRAND BEAUTY's "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Image 38. Collective writing exercise, "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," facilitated by GRAND BEAUTY, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 39. Example of an outcome of the collective writing exercise "Workshop on Collective Self-Care" with GRAND BEAUTY from the series "Care for Caregivers" at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 40. Workshop-facilitator Hengame Sadeghi (GRAND BEAUTY) in conversation with another participant, while preparing a natural mask, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 41. A participant puts a self-made natural mask onto another participant's face as part of the "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," facilitated by GRAND BEAUTY, from the series "Care for Caregivers," M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 42. "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café on mobility, at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 43. Antje Hachenberg moderates the conversation during a "Holo

Miteinander" storytelling café at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 44. *Gedankenkekse* (Thought Cookies), an artistic intervention by Polyphrenic Creatures during a "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

Image 45. *Gedankenstränge* (Train of Thought), an artistic intervention by Polyphrenic Creatures during a "Holo Miteinander" storytelling café at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2020. Photo: Polyphrenic Creatures.

Image 46. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Blumenwiese*, 2020, film still from *Suspended Time, on Caring.*

Image 47. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Wattenmeer*, 2020, film still from *Suspended Time, on Caring.*

Image 48. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Wattenmeer*, 2020, film still from *Suspended Time, on Caring.*

Image 49. MATERNAL FANTASIES, *Love and Labor. Intimacy and Isolation. Care and Survival*, 2020, screenshot from online performance.

Image 50. Cover of *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)* by MATERNAL FANTASIES, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Image 51. A spread from *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)* by MATERNAL FANTASIES, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Image 52. Malu Blume, *The Book of S of I*, 2020, film still.

Image 53. Malu Blume, *The Book of S of I*, 2020, film still.

Image 54. Cover of *What We Could Have Become* by Malu Blume, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Image 55. A spread from *What We Could Have Become* by Malu Blume, 2021. Courtesy of Onomatopee.

Image 56. An archival case made by Veronica Andres for the "Workshop on the

Value of Care," as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Laura Mahnke.

Image 57. An archival case made by Veronica Andres for the "Workshop on Time," as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Veronica Andres.

Image 58. An archival case made by Skadi Sturm for the "Holo Miteinander" storytelling cafés, as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Skadi Sturm.

Image 59. Archival cases presented at the public library in Hohenlockstedt, as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Laura Mahnke.

Image 60. Pablo Lapettina interacting with the archival cases at the public library in Hohenlockstedt, as part of the *Archive of Encounters* project, 2020. Photo: Laura Mahnke.

Image 61. Haptic board of the exhibition space with a QR code to access audio description of the exhibition for visually impaired visitors, specifically created for the exhibition *Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance*, StadtPalais, Stuttgart. 2023. Photo: Julia Ochs.

Image 62. Finnegan Shannon, *Do you want us here or not (MMK),* 2021–ongoing, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt. Acquired with generous support from the City of Frankfurt. Photo: Diana Pfammatter.

Image 63. Leaflet for Myriam Lefkowitz, "Workshop on Collective Self-Care," from the series "Care for Caregivers" at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Moritz Kuestner, Festival Theaterformen 2017. Graphic design: Michael Pfisterer.

Image 64. Collective exercise, "Workshop on Trust," facilitated by Myriam Lefkowitz, from the series "Care for Caregivers" at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt, 2019. Photo: Sascia Bailer.

The use of images occurs under the Fair Use agreement and with the courtesy of the artists within the framework of this academic research. However, due to copyrighted artist images, the version for the university repository does not display all images. The individuals depicted participating in the public events during the curatorial cycle

2019–20 at M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung have given their permission to the art foundation for their images to be used within the context of the dissertation. If any errors in regard to copyright holders are found, please email sascia.bailer@newschool.edu.

References

Access Docs for Artists. Initiated by Leah Clements, Alice Hattrick, and Lizzy Rose. Accessed September 26, 2023. https://www.accessdocsforartists.com.

Adams, Renée, Roman Kräussl, Marco Navone, and Patrick Verwijmeren. "Is Gender in the Eye of the Beholder? Identifying Cultural Attitudes with Art Auction Prices." *Center for Financial Studies (CFS) Working Paper Series*, no. 595 (2018): https://publikationen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/frontdoor/index/index/year/2018/docId/46927.

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.

———. "Selfcare as Warfare." *Feminist Killjoys* (blog), August 25, 2014. https://feministkilljoys.com/2014/08/25/selfcare-as-warfare/.

———. *The Feminist Killjoy Handbook: The Radical Potential of Getting in the Way*. New York: Seal, 2023.

Akaltin, Anna. "(what it means to both) Care & Create." Kunsthochschule Halle Burg Giebichenstein, 2021. https://www.burg-halle.de/hochschule/einrichtungen/fempower/projekte/project/what-it-means-to-both-care-create-1/.

Akbulut, Bengi. "Carework as Commons: Towards a Feminist Degrowth Agenda." Degrowth, July 20, 2017. https://www.degrowth.info/en/2017/02/carework-as-commons-towards-a-feminist-degrowth-agenda/.

Alam, Rumaan, Kim Brooks, Jessica Friedmann, Sheila Heti, and Meaghan O'Connell. "What It Means to Write about Motherhood, Part One." Literary Hub, October 24, 2018. https://lithub.com/what-it-means-to-write-about-motherhood-part-one/.

Allen, Brian. "Exhibitions Are a Numbers Game, Whether We Like It or Not." *Art Newspaper*, March 27, 2019.

Apitzsch, Ursula, and Marianne Schmidbaur. "Care, Migration und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit." Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung,

September 7, 2011. http://www.bpb.de/apuz/33149/care-migration-und-geschlechtergerechtigkeit.

Arnold, Emily A., and Marlon M. Bailey. "Constructing Home and Family: How the Ballroom Community Supports African American GLBTQ Youth in the Face of HIV/AIDS." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 21, nos. 2–3 (2009): 171–88.

"Art Workers Circulate Public Spreadsheet to Promote Salary Transparency, Reveal Pay Gaps." *Artforum*, May 31, 2019. https://www.artforum.com/news/art-workers-circulate-public-spreadsheet-to-promote-salary-transparency-reveal-pay-gaps-80010.

Art Working Parents Alliance. Initiated by Hettie Judah and Jo Harrison. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://artworkingparents.wordpress.com.

Artist Parents Network. "How Not to Exclude Artist Parents: Some Guidelines for Institutions and Residencies." Artist Parents, 2021. http://www.artist-parents.com.

Arruzza, Cinzia, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser. *This Is a Manifesto for the 99*. London: Verso, 2019.

Arte Ùtil (platform). Accessed March 10, 2023. https://www.arte-util.org/about/colophon/.

Bailer, Sascia. "Care for Caregivers: Curating against the Care Crisis." In *Curating With Care*, edited by Elke Krasny and Lara Perry, 183–96. London: Routledge, 2023.

———. *Curating, Care, and Corona*. Kuratieren, no. 6. Hohenlockstedt: Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020.

———. "Sozialer (T)raum? Über das politische Potenzial der Kunst von Joseph Beuys und Rirkrit Tiravanija. Ein kunsttheoretischer Vergleich" [Social Space, Social Dreams? On the Political Potential of the Art of Joseph Beuys and Rirkrit Tiravanija. A Comparison of Art Theory"]. Bachelor thesis, Zeppelin University, 2012.

———. "Staging Ground for Action." In *What We Could Have Become: Reflections on Queer Feminist Filmmaking*, by Malu Blume, edited by Sascia Bailer, 6–7. Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2021.

———. "Wie es um Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in der Kunst steht." *Monopol*, March 8, 2023. https://www.monopol-magazin.de/gender-gap-kunst-zahlen-bitte.

Bailer, Sascia, for M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. "Artistic Direction 2019/20: Care." M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2019. http://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/2019-2020/.

Bailer, Sascia, Gilly Karjevsky, and Rosario Talevi, eds. *Letters to Joan*. Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Hohenlockstedt: M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, 2020.

Bailer, Sascia, and Laura Mahnke. "#5 Care: See U th3re." Podcast, 35:02. HFBK Hamburg, January 29, 2021. https://mediathek.hfbk.net/l2go/-/get/v/248.

Baraitser, Lisa. *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Barbagallo, Camille, Nicholas Beuret, and David Harvie, eds. *Commoning: With George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici*. London: Pluto, 2019.

Bare Minimum Collective. "The Bare Minimum Manifesto." Medium, 2020. https://medium.com/@bareminimum/the-bare-minimum-manifesto-bfedbbc9dd71.

BBK Berlin – Berufsverband Bildender Künstler*innen Berlin. "Gender Pay Gap / Gender Show Gap in der Bildenden Kunst." *3. Fördersummit des BBK Berlin* (2018). https://www.bbk-berlin.de/sites/default/files/2020-01/bbk%20berlin%20Fact-Sheet%20Gender%20Gap.pdf.

———. "Neustart Kultur Programme: Aktueller Diskurs." 2023. https://www.bbk-berlin.de/kulturpolitik/neustart-kultur-aktueller-diskurs.

Bertelsmann Stiftung. "Frauen auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt: Aufholen, ohne einzuholen." March 18, 2019. https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2019/maerz/frauen-auf-dem-deutschen-arbeitsmarkt-aufholen-ohne-einzuholen.

———. "Women in the German labor market: The cost of being a mother." July 2021.

https://www.bertelsmannstiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GraueP
ublikationen/210713_BST-21-
016_Brief_expertise_Women_in_the_German_labor_market.pdf.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage Classics, 2015. First
published 1949.

Berlant, Lauren. "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times." *Environment
and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 3 (2016): 393–419.

Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art. "Symposium: From Restitution to Repair."
2022. https://12.berlinbiennale.de/program/from-restitution-to-repair/.

BEYOND RE:PRODUCTION. Initiated and carried out by Liz Rech, Annika Scharm,
Nora Elberfeld, Angela Kecinski, Hannah Kowalski, Sylvi Kretschmar,
Teresa Monfared, and Regina Rossi. Accessed September 25, 2023.
https://motheringintheperformingarts.wordpress.com

BfH – Bürger für Hohenlockstedt. "Dafür steht die BfH." 2023. https://bfh-
holo.de/ueber-uns/dafuer-steht-die-bfh/.

Bhattacharya, Tithi. *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering
Oppression*. London: Pluto, 2017.

Bildungsstätte Anne Frank, Documenta Institut, and Frankfurt University of Applied
Science. "Nach der documenta fifteen: Forschungsprojekt analysiert
Antisemitismus-Kontroverse." Press release. Frankfurt University of Applied
Sciences, 2022. https://www.frankfurt-
university.de/de/erweiterungen/news/news-liste/news-detail/nach-der-
documenta-fifteen-forschungsprojekt-analysiert-antisemitismus-kontroverse/.

Birenbaum-Carmeli, Daphna, and Martha Dirnfeld. "In Vitro Fertilisation Policy in
Israel and Women's Perspectives: The More the Better." *Reproductive
Health Matters* 16, no. 31 (2008): 182–91.

Bishop, Claire. "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents." *Artforum*,
February 2006, 178–83.

———. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London:
Verso, 2012.

Bismarck, Beatrice von, and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, eds. *Hospitality: Hosting Relations in Exhibitions*. London: Sternberg, 2016.

Bismarck, Beatrice von, Jörn Schafaff, and Thomas Weski. *Cultures of the Curatorial*. London: Sternberg, 2012.

Bjelicic, Vladimir. "Inside Womanhouse, a Beacon of Feminist Art." *Widewalls*, June 2019. https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/judy-chicago-womanhouse.

Blume, Malu. *What We Could Have Become: Reflections on Queer Feminist Filmmaking*. Edited by Sascia Bailer. Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2021.

Bock, Gisela, and Barbara Duden. "Arbeit aus Liebe – Liebe als Arbeit. Zur Entstehung der Hausarbeit im Kapitalismus." *Frauen und Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Berliner Sommeruniversität 1976* (1977): 119–35.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthuman Feminism*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2022.

Breuer, Marcia. "Mehr Mütter für die Kunst." 2019. http://mehrmütterfürdiekunst.net.

Bruch, Katerina. "11th Berlin Biennale: On the Human Condition." *OnCurating*, no. 46, "Contemporary Art Biennales – Our Hegemonic Machines in Times of Emergency" (June 2020).

Bruguera, Tania. "Reflexiones sobre el Arte Útil." In *ARTE ACTUAL: Lecturas para un espectador inquieto*, edited by Yayo Aznar and Pablo Martinez, 194–97. Madrid: CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, 2012.

Bryan, Marissa. "Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution: In Theory and Impact." PhD diss., Coastal Carolina University, 2020.

Bücker, Teresa. *Alle_Zeit: Eine Frage von Macht und Freiheit. Wie eine radikal neue, sozial gerechtere Zeitkultur aussehen kann*. Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlag, 2022.

———. "Ist es radikal, das Elterngeld für Reiche zu streichen?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2023. https://sz-magazin.sueddeutsche.de/freie-radikale/teresa-buecker-elterngeld-kuerzung-kindergrundsicherung-92907.

Buhr, Elke. "Das Letzte Tabu: Kind und Kunst." *Monopol*, February 2019, 42–55.

———. "Ein Lehrstück im Anti-Wokeness-Kulturkampf." *Monopol*, September 1, 2023. https://www.monopol-magazin.de/museum-safer-space-kommentar.

Bündnis Kunst & Kind München. "Offener Brief an den Vorstand der Stiftung Kunstfonds." 2020. http://www.kundk.xyz/images/K&K_Kunstfonds_Web.pdf.

Burrows, Dani, and Aaron Cezar, eds. *Politics of Food*. London: Sternberg, 2019.

Butler, Judith. "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street." transversal, September 2009. https://transversal.at/transversal/0808.

———. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Büttner, Andrea, Camille Henrot, and Basim Magdy. "Shifting Mindsets: Welcoming Parenthood in the Art World." Moderated by Emily Butler. Art Basel Conversations, June 14, 2023. YouTube video, 1:05:06. https://www.artbasel.com/stories/conversations-art-basel-shifting-mindsets-welcoming-parenthood-art-world.

Buurman, Nanne. "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at dOCUMENTA (13)." *OnCurating*, no. 29, "Curating in Feminist Thought" (May 2016): 146–60.

———. "CCB With. Displaying Curatorial Relationality in dOCUMENTA (13)'s The Logbook." *OnCurating*, no. 33, "Curating the History of the Present" (June 2017): 61–65.

———. "From Prison Guard to Healer: Curatorial Authorships in the Context of Gendered Economies." *OnCurating*, no. 51, "Instituting Feminism" (September 2021).

Care Collective. *The Care Manifesto*. London: Verso, 2020. E-book.

Care.Macht.Mehr. Accessed July 7, 2023. https://care-macht-mehr.com.

Care Revolution Network. Accessed July 7, 2023. https://care-revolution.org.

CARING CULTURE LAB. Project website. Accessed February 24, 2024. https://caringculturelab.org.

Casa Gallina. Initiated by Osvaldo Sanchez and Josefa Ortega. Accessed September 6, 2023. https://casagallina.org.mx.

Cascone, Sarah. "Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's Epoch-Making Feminist Installation 'Womanhouse' Gets a Tribute in Washington, DC." Artnet, March

13, 2018. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/women-house-judy-chicago-national-museum-women-arts-1234649.

Centro de Creación Contemporánea de Andalucía and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary. "Remedios: Where New Land Might Grow." TBA21, 2023. https://tba21.org/RemediosEN.

Chatzidakis, Andreas, Jamie Hakim, Jo Littler, Catherine Rottenberg, and Lynne Segal. "From Carewashing to Radical Care: The Discursive Explosions of Care during Covid-19." *Feminist Media Studies* 20, no. 6 (2020): 889–95.

Chen, Meng-Shi. "Ethics of Curating." *Curatography*, no. 5 (2021): https://curatography.org/ethics-of-curating/.

Cité des Arts Paris. "Appointment: Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez Appointed Cultural Programmes Manager." 2021. https://www.citedesartsparis.net/en/news-appointment-natasa-petresin-bachelez-cultural-programmes-manager.

Clayton, Lenka. Artist website. Accessed February 24, 2024. https://www.lenkaclayton.com.

Collective Disaster. "About." Accessed July 12, 2023. https://www.collectivedisaster.org/about/.

Condorelli, Céline, and Avery F. Gordon. "The Company We Keep: A Conversation with Céline Condorelli and Avery F. Gordon. Part One." how to work together, 2013. https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/celine-condorelli-the-company-we-keep-a-conversation-with-avery-f-gordon-part-one/.

Condorelli, Céline, and Gavin Wade. *Support Structures*. London: Sternberg, 2009.

Conflict Kitchen. Initiated by Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski. Artist website. Accessed September 25, 2023. http://www.conflictkitchen.org/about/.

Cooke, Hannah. "Ada vs. Abramovic." Artist's website, 2018. https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/18/ada-vs-abramovic/.

———. "Ada vs. Emin." Artist's website, 2018. https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/17/ada-vs-emin/.

———. "Mind the Gap." 2021. Artist's website, 2021. https://hannahcooke.de/2021/10/04/mind-the-gap/.

Cooking Sections. Accessed July 23, 2023. https://cooking-sections.com.

Costa, Mariarosa Dalla. "Women and the Subversion of the Community." *Commoner* 15 (1971): 23–69.

Cox, Nicole, and Silvia Federici. *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen*. New York: New York Wages for Housework Committee and Falling Wall Press, 1975.

Create London. *Survey: Create London*. 2015. http://www.createlondon.org/panic/survey/.

Creating Collective Access. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://creatingcollectiveaccess.wordpress.com.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, iss. 1, article 8 (1989): 139–67.

Cultural ReProducers. "Manifesto." Accessed September 22, 2022. https://www.culturalreproducers.org/p/manifesto.html.

CUNTemporary. "About." Accessed July 13, 2023. https://cuntemporary.org/about/.

Čupić, Nenad, and Diversity Arts Culture. "Klassismus(kritik)." October 13, 2020. https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/magazin/klassismuskritik.

Czirak, Adam, Sophie Nikoleit, Friederike Oberkrome, Verena Straub, Robert Walter-Jochum, and Michael Wetzels, eds. *Performance zwischen den Zeiten: Reenactments und Preenactments in Kunst und Wissenschaft*. Bielefeld. Germany: transcript, 2019.

Darrieussecq, Marie, and David Riedel. *Katharina Bosse: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Mother*. Paris: Filigranes Èdition, 2011.

Davis, Angela. "Feminism & Abolition: Theories & Practices for the 21st Century." Lecture, University of Chicago, May 2013.

Deepwell, Katy. *50 Feminist Art Manifestos*. London: KT press, 2014.

———. "Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s." In *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, edited by Janet Marstine, 64–84. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

Dimitrakaki, Angela. "From Space to Time: 'Situated Knowledges,' Critical Curating, and Social Truth." *OnCurating*, no. 53, "Situated Knowledges in Art and Curating" (June 2022): 8–19.

Dimitrakaki, Angela, and Kirsten Lloyd. "Social Reproduction Struggles and Art History." *Third Text* 31, no. 1 (2017): 1–14.

Dimitrakaki, Angela, and Nizan Shaked. "Feminism, Instituting, and the Politics of Recognition in Global Capitalism." *OnCurating*, no. 52, "Instituting Feminism" (November 2021): 11–20.

documenta fifteen. "Accessibility." 2022. https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/accessibility/.

———. "Fridskul – Fridericianum as School." Accessed February 24, 2024. https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/fridskul/.

———. "PAKGHOR – the social kitchen by Britto Arts Trust." Accessed February 24, 2024. https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/calendar/pakghor-the-social-kitchen/.

Donath, Orna. *Regretting Motherhood: A Study*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2017.

Dowling, Emma. "Confronting Capital's Care Fix: Care Through the Lens of Democracy." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* 37 (2018): 332–46.

———. *The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?* London: Verso, 2020.

———. "Valorised but Not Valued? Affective Remuneration, Social Reproduction and Feminist Politics beyond the Crisis." *British Politics* 11 (2016): 452–68.

Dragona, Daphne. "Editorial: Affective Infrastructures." *Transmediale*, no. 3, "Affective Infrastructures" (October 2019). https://archive.transmediale.de/content/affective-infrastructures-0.

Duffy, Mignon. "Doing the Dirty Work: Gender, Race, and Reproductive Labor in Historical Perspective." *Gender & Society* 21, no. 3 (2007): 313–36.

———. *Making Care Count: A Century of Gender, Race, and Paid Care Work*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.

Each One Teach One e.V. and Citizens for Europe. *Afrozensus 2020*. 2021. https://afrozensus.de/reports/2020/.

Elkin, Lauren. *Art Monsters: Unruly Bodies in Feminist Art*. Dublin: Penguin Books, 2023.

Elliott, Karla. "Caring Masculinities: Theorizing an Emerging Concept." *Men and Masculinities* 19, no. 3 (2015): 240–59.

Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Historical Social Research* 36 (2015): 273–90.

Elternschaft & Kunst. Arbeitsrealitäten von Eltern in den Freien Künsten. Dresden: Landesverband Soziokultur Sachsen e.V., 2022.

Elwes, Catherine. "A Parallel Universe: The 'Women's' Exhibitions at the ICA, 1980, and the UK/Canadian Film and Video Exchange, 1998–2004." In *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, edited by Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick, 101–12. Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2007.

Equal Care Day Initiative. Accessed July 7, 2023. https://equalcareday.de.

fair share! Mehr Sichtbarkeit für Künstlerinnen (Fair Share for Women Artists). Accessed July 12, 2023. https://www.fairshareforwomenartists.de/.

FABRIC for Schöpflin Stiftung. "Event: Talk with Osvaldo Sanchez about Casa Gallina in Mexico City." February 10, 2018. https://fabric.place/fabric-talks-february-8-to-10-park-fiction-exrotaprint-casa-gallina-sak-loerrach/.

Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Autonomedia, 2014. Originally published 2004.

———. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Brooklyn, NY: PM Press, 2012.

———. *Wages against Housework*. New York: Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press, 1975.

Fitz, Angelika, Elke Krasny, and Architekturzentrum Wien, eds. *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2019.

Fokianaki, iLiana. "The Bureau of Care: Introductory Notes on the Care-less and Care-full." *e-flux Journal*, no. 133 (November 2020): https://www.e-flux.com/journal/113/359463/the-bureau-of-care-introductory-notes-on-the-care-less-and-care-full/.

Fournier, Lauren. *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2021.

———. "Sick Women, Sad Girls, and Selfie Theory: Autotheory as Contemporary Feminist Practice." *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 33 (2018): 641–60.

Fowle, Kate. "Who Cares? Understanding the Role of the Curator Today." In *Cautionary Tales: Critical Curating*, edited by Steven Rand and Heather Kouris, 10–19. New York: apexart, 2007.

Francke, Andrea. *Invisible Spaces of Parenthood: A Collection of Pragmatic Propositions for a Better Future.* London: The Showroom, 2012.

Fraser, Andrea. "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique." *Artforum*, September 2005. https://www.artforum.com/features/from-the-critique-of-institutions-to-an-institution-of-critique-172201/.

Fraser, Nancy. "Capitalism's Crisis of Care." *Dissent*, 2016. https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/nancy-fraser-interview-capitalism-crisis-of-care.

———. "Contradictions of Capital and Care." *New Left Review*, no. 100 (2016): 99–117.

———. "Crisis of Care? On the Social-Reproductive Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism." In *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentring Oppression*, edited by Tithi Bhattacharya, 21–36. London: Pluto, 2017.

———. *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis.* London: Verso, 2013.

———. *The Old Is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born: From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump and Beyond*. London: Verso, 2019.

Frichot, Hélène, Adrià Carbonell, Hannes Frykholm, and Sepideh Karami, eds. *Infrastructural Love: Caring for Our Architectural Support Systems.* Basel: Birkhäuser, 2022.

Fuckermothers. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://fuckermothers.wordpress.com.

Gallop, Jane. *Anecdotal Theory*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

García Díaz, Lara, and Pascal Gielen. "Precarity as an Artistic Laboratory for
       Counter-Hegemonic Labour Organization." *Frame* 30, no. 2 (2018): 41–59.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's
       Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Gleeson, Jules Joanne, and Elle O'Rourke, eds. *Transgender Marxism*. London:
       Pluto, 2021.

Gosling, Emily. "How Do You Present Performance Art Once It's All Over?"
       Elephant, June 13, 2019. https://elephant.art/present-performance-art/.

Gotthardt, Alexxa. "How Betye Saar Transformed Aunt Jemima into a Symbol of
       Black Power." Artsy, October 26, 2017. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-
       editorial-betye-saar-transformed-aunt-jemima-symbol-black-power.

Gouges, Olympe de. "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, 1789." In
       Tolerance: The Beacon of the Enlightenment, edited by Caroline Warman,
       11–13. Cambridge: JSTOR Open Book Classics, 2016.

Graf, Stefanie. "Mierle Laderman Ukeles' Maintenance Art in 4 Works." TheCollector,
       April 12, 2023. https://www.thecollector.com/mierle-laderman-ukeles-
       maintenance-art/.

GRAND BEAUTY. "Our Care Offer for This Society." Accessed May 10, 2023.
       https://www.grandbeautyontour.org/was-wir-wollen.

Grant, Susan. *Soviet Nightingales: Care under Communism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell
       University Press, 2022.

Gravina, Dyana. Artist's website. Accessed July 12, 2023. https://dyanagravina.com.

Gravina, Dyana, and Procreate Project. "Oxytocin Conference: Collective Care."
       2023. https://www.oxytocinbirthingtheworld.co.uk/.

Graw, Isabelle. "Value on Shaky Grounds." Unpublished manuscript, 2021.

Graziano, Valeria, Marcell Mars, and Tomislav Medak (Pirate Care). "Care and Its
       Discontents." *New Alphabet School* (blog). Haus der Kulturen der Welt,
       2020. https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/care-and-its-discontents/.

Gropius Bau. "Exhibition: YOYI! Care, Repair, Heal." 2023.
https://www.berlinerfestspiele.de/en/gropius-
bau/programm/2022/ausstellungen/yoyi-care-repair-heal.

Gunda-Werner-Institut. "Geschichte des Ehegattensplitting: Von der Nicht-
Diskriminierung von Paaren zur Diskriminierung von Individuen." Heinrich-
Böll-Stiftung, 2010. https://www.gwi-boell.de/de/2010/02/12/geschichte-des-
ehegattensplitting-von-der-nicht-diskriminierung-von-paaren-zur.

———. "Weder fair noch sachgerecht: Das Ehegattensplitting steht contra
Gleichstellung, Teilhabe und soziale Gerechtigkeit." Heinrich Böll Stiftung,
2010. https://www.gwi-boell.de/de/2010/02/12/weder-fair-noch-sachgerecht-
das-ehegattensplitting-steht-contra-gleichstellung-teilhabe.

Haarmann, Anke. "Künstlerische Praxis als methodische Forschung? Zur
kunsthistorischen Ermöglichung einer künstlerischen Forschung." Deutsche
Gesellschaft für Ästhetik, September 2011. http://www.dgae.de/wp-
content/uploads/2011/09/Haarmann.pdf.

Hammer Museum. "Digital Archive: Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985:
Lea Lublin, Artist, *Mon fils (My son)*,1968." Accessed January 30, 2024.
https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/art/art/mon-fils-my-son.

Hands, Languid. "On Curation & Care during This 'Moment.'" Cubitt, 2020.
https://www.cubittartists.org.uk/languid-hands-on-curation-care-during-this-
moment.

Hanley, Ryan Patrick, ed. *Adam Smith: His Life, Thought, and Legacy*. Princeton, IL:
Princeton University Press, 2016.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the
Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988): 575–99.

———. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke
University Press, 2016.

Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black
Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2013.

Harris, Gareth. "Wave of Museum Educator Redundancies Worldwide Sparks Open
Letter." *Art Newspaper*, April 23, 2020.

https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/04/23/wave-of-museum-educator-redundancies-worldwide-sparks-open-letter.

Harris, Jane Ursula. "After the Master: The Copy as Origin and Renewal." *Flash Art*, February 17, 2020. https://flash---art.com/article/after-the-master-the-copy-as-origin-and-renewal/.

Härtel, Isa, and Sigrid Schade. "Body and Representation." *Schriftenreihe der Internationalen Frauenuniversitat* 6 (2002).

Haus der Kulturen der Welt. "Event: New Alphabet School on #HEALING (Faju)." 2022. https://archiv.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/veranstaltung/p_192883.php.

Haus der Kulturen der Welt and M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. "CARING – 4th Edition of the New Alphabet School." New Alphabet School, June 2020. https://newalphabetschool.hkw.de/category/caring/.

———. "Programme: CARING." Haus der Kulturen der Welt, June 2020. https://archiv.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/veranstaltung/p_163699.php.

Hedva, Johanna. Artist's website. Accessed July 12, 2023. https://johannahedva.com.

———. "Hedva's Disability Access Rider." *Sick Woman Theory* (blog). August 22, 2019. https://sickwomantheory.tumblr.com/post/187188672521/hedvas-disability-access-rider.

Held, Virginia. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Hering, Sabine. *Social Care under State Socialism (1945–1989): Ambitions, Ambiguities, and Mismanagement*. Leverkusen, Germany: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009.

Hernández-Navarro, Miguel A. "The Curator's Demands: Towards an Ethics of Commitment." *Manifesta*, no. 12 (2012): 5–12.

Hessel, Katy. *The Story of Art without Men*. Portsmouth, NH: Hutchinson Heinemann, 2022.

Higgins, Hannah. "Food: The Raw and the Fluxed." In *Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life*, edited by Jacquelynn Baas, 13–21. Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, 2011.

Himmelweit, Susan. "Can We Afford (Not) to Care: Prospects and Policy." In *New Working Paper Series (London School of Economics, Gender Institute)*. London: London School of Economics, 2005.

Hobart, Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani, and Tamara Kneese. "Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times." *Social Text* 38 (2020): 1–16.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value." In *Justice, Politics, and the Family*, edited by Daniel Engster and Tamara Metz, 249–61. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell, and Anne Machung. *The Second Shift*. London: Penguin, 2012.

Hoffmann, Jens, and Maria Lind. "Conversation: To Show or Not to Show." *Mousse Magazine*, December 2011.

Homebaked – Community Land Trust. "Story." Accessed February 24, 2024. https://homebaked.org.uk/about-us/story/.

hooks, bell. *Ain't I a Woman*. London: Pluto, 1982.

———. "Homeplace (A Site of Resistance)." In *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, 41–49. Boston: South End, 1990.

Ilić, Nataša, and Solvej Helweg Ovesen. "Soft Solidarity." Galerie Wedding, 2019. http://galeriewedding.de/sos/.

Infrastructures of Caring Citizenship. Initiated by Isabel Gutiérrez Sánchez. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucqbiig/index.html.

International Council of Museums. "Code of Ethics." 2004. https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf.

Intersections of Care. "Intersecting Guidelines of Care." Accessed September 20, 2023. https://www.intersectionsofcare.net/guidelines/.

James, Selma. *Our Time Is Now: Sex, Race, Class, and Caring for People and Planet*. Binghamton, NY: PM Press, 2021.

Janečkova, Hana. "Cripping the Curatorial." In *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, edited by Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Brigit Bosold, and Vera Hofmann, 80–91. London: Sternberg, 2021.

Johnson, Merri Lisa, and Robert McRuer. "Cripistemologies." *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014): 127–47.

Johnston, Megan. "Slow Curating: Re-thinking and Extending Socially Engaged Art in the Context of Northern Ireland." *OnCurating*, no. 24, "After the Turn: Art Education beyond the Museum" (December 2014): 23–33.

Judah, Hettie. "Full, Messy and Beautiful." Unit London, 2023. https://unitlondon.com/2023-05-31/full-messy-and-beautiful/.

———. *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)*. London: Lund Humphries, 2022.

———. "'Motherhood Is Taboo in the Art World – It's as If We've Sold Out': Female Artists on the Impact of Having Kids." *Guardian*, December 2, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/dec/02/motherhood-taboo-art-world-sold-out-bourgeoisie.

Kapczynski, Amy, and Gregg Gonsalves. "The New Politics of Care*." Boston Review*, April 27, 2020. https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/gregg-gonsalves-amy-kapczynski-new-deal-public-health-we-need/.

Karjevsky, Gilly. "Collective Autotheory: Contextualize, Embody, Resist." *Lerchenfeld* 66 (May 2023): 4–9.

Karjevsky, Gilly, and Rosario Talevi. "Climate Care: Theory and Practice on a Natureculture Learning." Climate Care, 2021. https://floating-berlin.org/programmes/climate-care/.

Karolinski, Alexa, and Ingo Niermann. "Army of Love: Film." The Army of Love, 2020. http://thearmyoflove.net/film.

Kelly, Natasha A. *Rassismus. Strukturelle Probleme brauchen strukturelle Lösungen! (ePUB)*. Hamburg: Atrium Verlag, 2021.

Kelly, Mary. "Postpartum Documents 1973–79." Artist's website, accessed February 24, 2024. https://www.marykellyartist.com/post-partum-document-1973-79.

Kim, Clara. "Organization of Matter through Sympathy." In *Abraham Cruzvillegas. Autoconstrucción: The Book*. Los Angeles: Roy and Edna Disney/Calarts Theater, 2014.

Kittay, Eva Feder. *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Kleven, Henrik, Camille Landais, Johanna Posch, Andreas Steinhauer, and Josef Zweimüller. "Child Penalties across Countries: Evidence and Explanations." National Bureau of Economic Research, working paper no. 25524, February 2019. http://www.nber.org/papers/w25524.

Kofman, Eleonore. "Rethinking Care through Social Reproduction: Articulating Circuits of Migration." *Social Politics* 19, no. 1 (2012): 142–62.

Kolb, Gila, Konstanze Schütze, Katja Zeidler, and Duygu Örs. "Kunstvermittlung im Ausnahmezustand." KIWit, 2020. https://www.kiwit.org/kultur-oeffnet-welten/positionen/position_16384.html.

Konsthall C. "Exhibition: Home Works." Curated by Jenny Richards and Jens Strandberg. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://www.konsthallc.se/en/info/home-works.

Krasny, Elke. "Caring Activism. Assembly, Collection, and the Museum." *Collecting in Time* (2017), https://collecting-in-time.gfzk.de/en. Published in conjunction with the symposium of the same title, GfZK – Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig, March 30–31, 2017.

———. "Curatorial Materialism. On Independent and Co-Dependent Curating." *OnCurating*, no. 29, "Curating in Feminist Thought" (May 2016): 96–106.

———. "Feminist Thought and Curating: On Method." *OnCurating*, no. 26, "Curating Degree Zero Archive: Curatorial Research" (October 2015): 51–69.

———. "Reunindo feministas resistentes: curadoria de salôes e de jantares." In *Histōrias das Mulheres, Histōrias Feministas*, edited by Adriano Pedrosa, Amanda Carneiro, and André Mesquita, 422–32. São Paulo: MASP, 2019.

———. "Urban Curators at Work – A Real-Imagined Historiography." In *Planning Unplanned – Towards a New Positioning of Art in the Context of Urban*

Development, edited by Barbara Holub and Christine Hohenbüchler, 119–32. Vienna: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2015.

Krasny, Elke, and Lara Perry, eds. *Curating as Feminist Organizing*. London: Routledge, 2022.

———, eds. *Curating with Care*. London: Routledge, 2023.

Krasny, Elke, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Brigit Bosold, and Vera Hofmann. *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*. London: Sternberg, 2022.

Krueger, Alyson. "Who Is Quiet Quitting For?" *New York Times*, August 23, 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/23/style/quiet-quitting-tiktok.html.

kuk! Kind und Kunst. Initiated by Lucia Schmuck. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://www.kindundkunst.org.

Kunst, Bojana. *Das Leben der Kunst. Transversale Linien der Sorge*. Linz, Austria: Transversal Texts, 2023.

Kunst und Care. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://www.kunstundcare.org.

Kunstgeschichtliches Institut der Ruhr- Universität Bochum. "Exhibition: Zwischen Fließband und Küche. Fotografien von (Care-)Arbeit in DDR und BRD 1960 bis 1990" [Between Assembly Line and Kitchen. Photographs of (Care) Work in the GDR and FRG 1960 to 1990]. Berlin Museum für Fotografie, November 2022. https://kgi.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/portfolio-item/zwischen-fliessband-und-kueche-fotografien-von-care-arbeit-in-ddr-und-brd-1960-bis-1990/.

Kunsthalle Mannheim. "Exhibition: Mutter!" 2021. https://www.kuma.art/de/mutter.

Kunstraum Elsa. "Exhibition: Das Queere Familienzimmer." Curated by Katharina Bosse. 2023. https://elsa-art.de/2023/08/30/das-queere-familienzimmer/.

Kunstraum Niederösterreich. "Care Matters." Event series, Vienna, 2019. https://www.kunstraum.net/de/ausstellungen/95-care-matters-lecture-performance-main-tenant-hand-holding201d-les-maintenants-marlies-poeschl-und-podiumsdiskussion-ueber-care-kuration-und-communities.

La Becque Residency. Accessed July 12, 2023. https://labecque.ch/.

Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 1985.

Laderman Ukeles, Mierle. "Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition 'CARE.'" *Journal of Contemporary Painting* 4 (2018): 233–37.

Lafuente, Pablo, ed. *Experiences of the Common Good: InSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood*. Mexico City: InSite/Casa Gallina, 2018.

Lafuente, Pablo, in conversation with Josefa Ortega and Osvaldo Sánchez. "Network Imaginaries: Neighborhood, Affects and the Politics of Locality." In *Experiences of the Common Good: InSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood*, ed. Pablo Lafuente, 153–58. Mexico City: InSite/Casa Gallina, 2018.

Landes, Joan B. *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Landesverband Bildende Kunst of North Rhine-Westphalia. "Symposium: Kunst + Care. Fürsorge als Chance und Risiko im aktuellen Kunstbetrieb" [Art + Care. Care as Opportunity and Risk in the Contemporary Art Sector]. June 6, 2023. https://www.labk.nrw/symposium-kunst-care-fuersorge-als-chance-und-risiko-im-aktuellen-kunstbetrieb/.

Landeswahlleiter des Landes Schleswig-Holstein. "Amtliches Endergebnis: Gemeinde Hohenlockstedt." Wahlen SH, May 2023. https://www.wahlen-sh.de/grw/gemeindewahlen_gemeinde_010615189042.html.

Lauretis, Teresa de. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Lee, Shimrit. *Decolonize Museums*. New York: OR books, 2022.

Leipziger Buchmesse. "Podiumsdiskussion: Bücher machen: wer kann sich das leisten? Über Kulturprekariat & Klassismus." March 29, 2023. https://www.leipziger-buchmesse.de/pco/de/buchmesse/63ecad8c95eb82a9710e1996.

Lentos Museum Linz. "Exhibition: Rabenmütter. Zwischen Kraft und Krise: Mütterbilder von 1900 bis heute." 2015. https://www.lentos.at/ausstellungen/rabenmuetter.

Les Créatives. *Rosa Heft für Gleichstellung in der Kultur* [Pink Booklet for Gender
      Equity in the Cultural Sector]. Edited by Dominique Rovini, with Lucrezia
      Perrig, Sidonie Atgé, and Noemi Grütter. Geneva, Switzerland: Association
      Les Créatives via Atar Roto Presse Suisse, 2021.
      https://lescreatives.ch/2023/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ROSAHEFT-
      DIGITAL-1.pdf.

Lewis, Holly. *The Politics of Everybody: Feminism, Queer Theory, and Marxism at
      the Intersection: A Revised Edition*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022.

Lewis, Sophie. *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism against Family*. London: Verso, 2021.

Liersch, Anja, Friederike Evers, and Sarah Weißmann. *Spartenbericht Bildende
      Kunst 2021*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021.

Lind, Maria. "Situating the Curatorial." *e-flux Journal*, no. 116 (March 2021):
      https://www.e-flux.com/journal/116/378689/situating-the-curatorial/.

Lindner, Ines, Sigrid Schade, and Sille Wenk. *Blick-Wechsel. Konstruktionen von
      Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte*. Berlin: Dietrich
      Reimer Verlag, 1989.

Lingg, Sophie. "Caring Curatorial Practice in Digital Times." In *Radicalizing Care:
      Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, edited by Elke Krasny, Sophie
      Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Brigit Bosold, and Vera Hofmann, 48–57. London:
      Sternberg, 2021.

Liss, Andrea. *Feminist Art and the Maternal*. Minnesota University Press:
      Minneapolis, 2008.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Feminist Series. Freedom,
      CA: Crossing Press, 1984.

Loveless, Natalie. *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for
      Research-Creation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.

———. "Practice in the Flesh of Theory: Art, Research, and the Fine Arts PhD."
      Canadian Journal of Communication 37 (2012): 93–108.

———. "Reading with Knots: On Jane Gallop's Anecdotal Theory." *Journal of the
      Jan van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique* 4 (2011): 24–36.

LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern. "Safer Space." Published in conjunction with the
exhibition *Das ist kolonial* [This Is Colonial]. Accessed September 26, 2023.
https://zeche-zollern.lwl.org/de/ausstellungen/das-ist-kolonial/safer-space/.

M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. "A Workshop on Self-Care by GRAND BEAUTY." M.1
Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, October 2019. https://www.m1-
hohenlockstedt.de/en/kalender/2019/10/26/ein-workshop-zum-thema-
selbstfuersorge/.

———. "A Workshop on Time by Julieta Aranda: Vegetable Resistance – What Are
We Seeds For?" November 23, 2019. https://www.m1-
hohenlockstedt.de/en/kalender/2019/11/23/ein-workshop-zum-thema-zeit/.

M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung and Haus der Kulturen der Welt. "Symposium: Caring
Infrastructures." M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, October 2020.
https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/2019-2020/future/infrastrukturen-des-
zwischenmenschlichen/.

M2ACT × BURNING ISSUES. "Conference and Networking: Performing Arts &
Action." 2023. https://m2act-x-burningissues-2023.events.migros-
kulturprozent.ch/?lang=de.

Maciesz, Patti. "Bill the Patriarchy." Accessed November 10, 2021.
https://www.billthepatriarchy.com.

———. "Fax the Patriarchy." Artist's website, 2017. https://www.artpatti.com/bill-the-
patriarchy-1.

Maiz. Accessed July 13, 2023. http://www.maiz.at.

Martinis Roe, Alex. *To Become Two: Propositions for Feminist Collective Practice*.
Berlin: Archive Books, 2018.

Maternal Artistic Research Studio. "Exhibition: Myths of Mothers and Other
Monsters." Initiated by Hannah Kindler, Milena Naef, Sara-Lena
Möllenkamp, and Sylvia Gaßner. Kunstraum L6 Freiburg. 2023. http://mars-
space.net/#UpcomingExhibits.

MATERNAL FANTASIES. *Re-Assembling Motherhood(s): On Radical Care and
Collective Art as Feminist Practices.* Edited by Sascia Bailer, Magdalena

Kallenberger, and Maicyra Teles Leão e Silva. Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2021.

Mattern, Shannon. "Maintenance and Care." *Places Journal* (November 2018).

McArthur, Park, and Daniel S. Palmer. "Against Accommodation: Park McArthur. Park McArthur in Conversation with Daniel S. Palmer." *Mousse Magazine*, 2015. https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/park-mcarthur-daniel-s-palmer-2015/.

Meck, Georg. "Debatte ums Betreuungsgeld: Herdprämie." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.* Accessed July 13, 2023. https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/wirtschaftspolitik/debatte-ums-betreuungsgeld-herdpraemie-11725961.html.

Meier-Gräwe, Uta, Ina Praetorius, and Feline Tecklenburg, eds. *Wirtschaft neu ausrichten: Care-Initiativen in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz.* Leverkusen-Opladen, Germany: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2023.

Mies, Maria. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour.* London: Zed Books, 1986.

———. "The Subsistence Perspective." transversal texts, August 2005. https://transversal.at/transversal/0805/mies/en.

Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Mohr, Sören, Johanna Nicodemus, Evelyn Stoll, Ulrich Weuthen, and David Juncke. *Diskriminierungserfahrungen von fürsorgenden Erwerbstätigen im Kontext von Schwangerschaft, Elternzeit und Pflege von Angehörigen.* Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2022. https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Rechtsgutachten/schwanger_eltern_pflege.html?nn=305458.

Möntmann, Nina. *Kunst als sozialer Raum: Andrea Fraser, Martha Rosler, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Renée Green.* Cologne: Walther König, 2002.

———. "Withdrawal into the Public Sphere: InSite/Casa Gallina as a Model of Hospitality and Alternative Infrastructures." In *Experiences of the Common Good: InSite/Casa Gallina, a Project Immersed in a Neighborhood*, ed. Pablo Lafuente, 233–49. Mexico City: InSite/Casa Gallina, 2018.

Moser, Gabrielle. "*Affidamento* as Curatorial Methodology: Feminist Approaches to Pedagogy and Curating in the work of EMILIA-AMALIA."*Journal of Curatorial Studies* 12, no. 2 (2023): 258–88.

M/other Voices. 2013–14. https://www.mothervoices.org/about/.

Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets. Initiated by Marie Lienhard, Renate Liebel, and Anna Gohmert. Accessed July 14, 2023. https://mothers-warriors-and-poets.net.

———. "Exhibition: Mothers*, Warriors, and Poets: Care as Resistance." StadtPalais – Museum für Stuttgart. Curated by Sascia Bailer and Didem Yazıcı. 2023. https://www.stadtpalais-stuttgart.de/ausstellungen/mothers-warriors-and-poets-fuersorge-als-widerstand.

Mothersuckers. Accessed July 13, 2023. http://mothersuckersproject.blogspot.com.

MOTHRA (residency). Accessed July 12, 2023. https://mothra.ca/.

Mouffe, Chantal. *Agonistics: Thinking The World Politically*. London: Verso, 2013.

———. "Agonistic Democracy and Radical Politics." *Pavilion – Journal for Politics and Culture*. Accessed September 25, 2023. https://www.pavilionmagazine.org/chantal-mouffe-agonistic-democracy-and-radical-politics/.

———. "Critique as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention." transversal, August 2008. https://transversal.at/transversal/0808.

Mountz, Alison, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu, Risa Whitson, Roberta Hawkins, Trina Hamilton, and Winifred Curran. "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University." *Acme* 14 (2015): 1,235–59.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: NYU Press, 2009.

Murphy, Michelle. "Unsettling Care: Troubling Transnational Itineraries of Care in Feminist Health Practices." *Social Studies of Science* 45 (2015): 717–37.

Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo. "Exhibition: Maternar / Mothering. Between Stockholm Syndrome and Acts of Production." Curated by Helena Chávez Mac Gregor. 2021. https://muac.unam.mx/exposicion/maternar.

Museum für Fotografie, Berlin. "Zwischen Fließband und Küche. Fotografien von (Care-)Arbeit in DDR und BRD 1960 bis 1990." 2022. https://kgi.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/portfolio-item/zwischen-fliessband-und-kueche-fotografien-von-care-arbeit-in-ddr-und-brd-1960-bis-1990/.

Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt. "Crip Time." 2022. https://www.mmk.art/de/whats-on/crip-time.

Museums Moving Forward. "Report 2023: Workplace Equity and Organizational Culture in US Art Museums." Accessed February 24, 2024. https://museumsmovingforward.com.

Naimon, David. "Maggie Nelson: The Argonauts." *Between the Covers*. Podcast. Podcast Republic, July 29, 2015. https://www.podcastrepublic.net/podcast/583648001.

National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford. "Maternal Mortality 2019–2021." May 2023. https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/data-brief/maternal-mortality-2019-2021.

Ndikung, Soh Bejeng. "Every Straw Is a Straw Too Much: On the Psychological Burden of Being Racialized While Doing Art." *e-flux Notes*, June 29, 2023. https://www.e-flux.com/notes/548186/every-straw-is-a-straw-too-much-on-the-psychological-burden-of-being-racialized-while-doing-art.

Nelson, Maggie. *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint*. Dublin: Random House, 2021.

———. *The Argonauts*. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf, 2015.

Netzwerk Mutterschaft und Wissenschaft. Accessed July 21, 2023. https://www.mutterschaft-wissenschaft.de.

Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst. "Research Project and Symposium: Curating through Conflict with Care." Curated by Maithu Bùi, Sophya Frohberg, Ayasha Guerin, Moshtari Hilal, and Duygu Örs. 2023. https://ngbk.de/en/program/research.

Neue Narrative. Accessed July 14, 2023. https://www.neuenarrative.de.

Neuendorf, Henri. "Tracey Emin Says Female Artists Can't Have Kids." Artnet, October 9, 2014. https://news.artnet.com/market/tracey-emin-says-female-artists-cant-have-kids-126940.

Nochlin, Linda. *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Noddings, Nel. *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2013.

Obrist, Hans Ulrich. "Hans Ulrich Obrist: The Art of Curation." Interview by Stuart Jeffries and Nancy Groves. *Guardian*, March 23, 2014. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/23/hans-ulrich-obrist-art-curator.

Oforiatta Ayim, Nana. "Ghanaian Curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim on Why the Future of the Museum Must Exist beyond the Art World's Boundaries." Interview by Christine Ajudua. Artnet, July 27, 2022. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/nana-oforiatta-ayim-interview-2148667.

OnCurating, no. 52, "Instituting Feminism." Edited by Dorothee Richter and Helena Reckitt (November 2021).

OnCurating, no. 54, "documenta fifteen – Aspects of Commoning in Curatorial and Artistic Practices." Edited by Ronald Kolb and Dorothee Richter (November 2022).

Other Writers Need to Concentrate. Accessed July 14, 2023. https://other-writers.de.

Palladini, Giulia, and Nora Sternfeld. *Taking Time Together. A Posthumous Reflection on a Collaborative Project, and Polyprgasmic Disobedience. A Dialogue between Giulia Palladini and Nora Sternfeld*. CuMMA PAPERS #6. Helsinki: CuMMA – Studies in Curating, Managing and Mediating Art, 2014.

Papa, Elisa Giardina. "Labor of Sleep, Have you been able to change your habits??" Artist's website, 2017. http://www.elisagiardinapapa.org.

Park Fiction. "Kollektive Wunschproduktion." Accessed February 24, 2024. https://park-fiction.net/kollektive-wunschproduktion/.

———. "Park Fiction: An Introduction in English." Accessed February 24, 2024. https://park-fiction.net/park-fiction-introduction-in-english/.

Performing Arts Programme Berlin. "Art with Care: A Discussion and Networking Format." October 9, 2023. https://pap-berlin.de/en/event/art-with-care.

Perka, Charlotte, and Saskia Ackermann. "Liebe Sascia." In *KANON. Die Experimentelle Klasse*, edited by Joke Janssen and ANna Tautfest, 190–201. Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 2021.

Piug de La Bellacasa, Maria. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Plan International. "Spannungsfeld Männlichkeit." 2023. https://www.plan.de/fileadmin/website/04._Aktuelles/Umfragen_und_Bericht e/Spannungsfeld_Maennlichkeit/Plan-3_Pager_Maennlichkeit-A4-2023-NEU-V1.pdf.

Platz Da! Accessed July 13, 2023. https://platzda2017.wordpress.com/uns/.

Pollock, Della. "The Performative 'I.'" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies* 7 (2007): 239–55.

Praetorius, Ina. "Wirtschaft ist Care: oder die Wiederentdeckung des Selbstverständlichen." *Heinrich Böll Stiftung Series on Social and Economic Issues*, no. 16 (2015).

Praetorius, Ina, and Regula Grünenfelder. "Wirtschaft ist Care." Schweizerische Frauen*synode, 2020, 1–24.

Prigge, Heiko. "Sagen Sie jetzt nichts, Hans Ulrich Obrist." *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. February 2, 2017. https://sz-magazin.sueddeutsche.de/ein-interview-ohne-worte/sagen-sie-jetzt-nichts-hans-ulrich-obrist-83346.

Procreate Project. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://www.procreateproject.com/.

Pro Helvetia. "Residencies and Research Trips." Accessed October 1, 2022. https://prohelvetia.ch/en/residencies-and-research-trips/.

Puig de la Bellacasa, María. "'Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care." *Sociological Review* 60 (2012): 197–216.

Purwoaji, Ayos. "Uncharted Territory: The Roots of Curatorial Practices in Eastern Indonesia." *Curatography: The Study of Curatorial Culture*, no. 7, "The Heterogeneous South."

Queens Museum. "Mierle Laderman Ukeles: Maintenance Art." 2016. https://queensmuseum.org/2016/04/mierle-laderman-ukeles-maintenance-art.

Radical Collective of Care. "About / Contact." Accessed July 13, 2023. http://radicalcollectivecare.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html.

———. "Building Power in a Crisis of Social Reproduction." 2016. http://radicalcollectivecare.blogspot.de.

Rakowitz, Michael. "Enemy Kitchen." Artist's website. Accessed July 13, 2023. www.michaelrakowitz.com/enemy-kitchen.

Reckitt, Helena. "From Coping to Curious: Unlearning and Reimagining Curatorial Habits of Care." In *Curating with Care*, edited by Elke Krasny and Lara Perry, 169–82. London: Routledge, 2023.

———. "Support Acts: Curating, Caring and Social Reproduction." *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 5 (2016): 6–30.

———, 2020. "Taking (Back) Care." In *On Care*, ed. Sharon Kivland and Rebecca Jagoe, 196–202. London: ma bibliotheque.

———. "The Feminist Practice of Affidamento (Entrustment)." Lecture. *Affidamento – Creating Feminist Solidarity in Art and Curating*, Migros Museum, Zurich, 2015. Video, 38:35. https://migrosmuseum.ch/en/videos/symposium-affidamento-creating-feminist-solidarity-in-art-and-curating-helena-reckitt-the-feminist-practice-of-affidamento.

Reifler, Thea, and Phila Bergmann. "Shedhalle Contaminated." Interview by Arianna Guidi, Jose Cáceres Mardones, and Myriam Boutry. *OnCurating*, no. 48, "Zurich Issue: Dark Matter, Grey Zones, Red Light and Bling Bling" (September 2020).

Reilly, Maura. *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2018.

———. "What Is Curatorial Activism?" ARTnews, November 7, 2017. https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/what-is-curatorial-activism-9271/.

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester. "Trans-Inclusive Culture: Guidance on Advancing Trans Inclusion for Museums, Galleries, Archives and Heritage Organisations." September 2023. https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/trans-inclusive-culture.

Richter, Dorothee. "A Brief Outline of the History of Exhibition Making." *OnCurating*, no. 6, "1,2,3, – Thinking about Exhibitions" (2010): 28–37.

———. "Artists and Curators as Authors – Competitors, Collaborators, or Team-workers?" *OnCurating*, no. 19, "On Artistic and Curatorial Authorship" (June 2013): 43–57.

———. *Curating: Politics of Display, Politics of Site, Politics of Transfer and Translation, Politics of Knowledge Production. A Fragmented and Situated Theory of Curating*. Zurich: OnCurating, 2023.

———. "Feministische Perspektiven des Kuratorischen/auf das Kuratieren." In *Zeichen/Momente. Vergegenwärtigungen in Kunst und Kulturanalyse*, edited by Sigrid Adorf and Kathrin Heinz, 183–202. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2019.

———. *Fluxus: Kunst gleich Leben? Mythen um Autorschaft, Produktion, Geschlecht und Gemeinschaft*. Zurich: OnCurating, 2012.

Rogoff, Irit. "The Expanded Field." In *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, edited by Jean-Paul Martinon, 41–48. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

Roguski, Agnieska, for M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. "kuratieren 2021/22: IN:VISIBILITIES." M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/kuratieren/2021-2022/.

Rohr-Bongard, Linde. "Kunstkompass 2023: Die Top 100 der wichtigsten Gegenwartskünstler." *Capital*, October 22, 2023. https://www.capital.de/leben/kunstkompass-2023--die-top-100-der-wichtigsten-gegenwartskuenstler-33923746.html.

Roig, Emilia. *Das Ende der Ehe: Für eine Revolution der Liebe. Feministische Impulse für die Abschaffung einer patriarchalen Institution*. Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlag, 2023.

ruangrupa. "Interview with ruangrupa: Our Exhibitions Are an Alibi." Interview by Franz Thalmair. Platform 6 –documenta fifteen, 2020. https://www.documenta-platform6.de/ruangrupa-our-exhibitions-are-an-alibi/.

ruangrupa."'Risks Come with the Concept': Documenta 15's Curators Reflect on a Controversial, History-Making Show." Interview by Kate Brown. Artnet, 2022. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/documenta-15-ruangrupa-2179250.

Rubin, Gayle S. *Deviations*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

Saar, Betye. "Influences: Betye Saar. The US Artist Reflects on the Art and Events That Have Shaped a Career Spanning Almost Seven Decades." *Frieze*, September 2016. https://www.frieze.com/article/influences-betye-saar.

Sablonier, Philippe, on behalf of Visarte Schweiz (association of visual artists in Switzerland). "Bericht zur Studie 'Kunstberuf und Familie.' Erkenntnisse und Handlungsanleitungen zur Vergabepraxis von Atelierstipendien." Visarte Schweiz, June 2023. https://visarte.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/0_Visarte_Studie-Kunstberuf-und-Familie_2023-07-04-def-D-mit-Illustration.pdf.

Sander-Staudt, Maureen. "Care Ethics." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (peer-reviewed). Accessed May 11, 2023. https://iep.utm.edu/care-ethics/.

SAVVY Contemporary. "Event: Decolonial Approaches to Health, Social and Cultural Repair." 2022. https://savvy-contemporary.com/en/events/2022/repair/.

Schade, Sigrid. *Schadenzauber und die Magie des Körpers: Hexenbilder der frühen Neuzeit*. Worms, Germany: Werner'sche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983.

Schade, Sigrid, and Silke Wenk. "Strategien des 'Zu-Sehen-Gebens': Geschlechterpositionen in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte." In *Genus: Geschlechterforschung/gender studies in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften: ein Handbuch*, edited by Hadumod Bussmann and Renate Hof, 144–85. Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 2005.

Schaffer, Johanna. *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit: Über die visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung*. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2008.

Schulman, Sarah. *Conflict Is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2016.

Sears, Alan. "Body Politics: The Social Reproduction of Sexualities." In *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, edited by Tithi Bhattacharya, 171–91 London: Pluto, 2017.

Seeck, Francis. *Care trans_formieren*. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2021.

Shannon, Finnegan. "Do You Want Us Here Or Not." Artist's website, 2018. https://shannonfinnegan.com/do-you-want-us-here-or-not.

Sheleff, Maayan. "Echoing with a Difference: Curating Voices and the Politics of Participation." PhD diss., University of Reading and Zurich University of the Arts, June 2023.

Shiva, Vandana. "Manifesto on Economies of Care and Earth Democracy." Navdanya International. Accessed July 11, 2023. https://navdanyainternational.org/publications/manifesto-on-economies-of-care-and-earth-democracy/.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg." *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (2004): 407–29.

Sins Invalid. Accessed July 12, 2023. http://www.sinsinvalid.org/vision.html.

Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations*. New York: Bantam Classics, 2003.

Social Muscle Club. Accessed July 13, 2023. http://socialmuscleclub.de/about/.

Söll, Änne. "Putzen, Kochen, Sorgen. Care-Arbeit in der Kunst in West- und Osteuropa, den USA und Lateinamerika seit 1960." Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) research project. 2021. https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/490754077?context=projekt&task=showDetail&id=490754077&.

Sollée, Kristen J. *Witches, Sluts, Feminists: Conjuring the Sex Positive*. Los Angeles: ThreeL Media, 2017.

Solly, Meilan. "Jeff Koons' 'Rabbit' Breaks the Auction Record for Most Expensive Work by Living Artist." *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 17, 2029. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/jeff-koons-rabbit-breaks-auction-record-most-expensive-work-living-artist-180972219/.

Spilt Milk Gallery. Accessed July 13, 2023. https://www.spiltmilkgallery.com.

Star, Susan Leigh. "The Ethnography of Infrastructure." *American Behavioral Scientist* 43, no. 3 (1999): 377–91.

State of Israel. Ministry of Health. "IVF – In Vitro Fertilization." 2021. https://www.health.gov.il/English/Topics/fertility/Pages/ivf.aspx.

Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland. "4,1 Millionen Pflegebedürftige zum Jahresende 2019." Press release. 2020. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2020/12/PD20_507_224.html.

———. "Alleinerziehende in Deutschland 2017." Press conference proceedings. 2018. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2018/Alleinerziehende/pressebroschuere-alleinerziehende.pdf.

———. "Gender Pay Gap nach Wirtschaftszweig." January 30, 2023. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Arbeit/Verdienste/Verdienste-GenderPayGap/Tabellen/ugpg-03-wirtschaftszweige-ab-2014.html.

———. "Gender Pension Gap: Alterseinkünfte von Frauen 2021 fast ein Drittel niedriger als die von Männern." Press release no. N 015, March 7, 2023. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/03/PD23_N015_12_63.html.

———, ed. "Wie die Zeit vergeht. Analysen zur Zeitverwendung in Deutschland. Beiträge zur Ergebniskonferenz der Zeitverwendungserhebung 2012/2013." Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, 2017.

———. "Wie wird mit den Daten von Personen mit den Geschlechtsausprägungen 'unbekannt' oder 'divers' verfahren?" Accessed July 11, 2023. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-

Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Bevoelkerungsstand/Methoden/Erlauterungen/geschl
echtsauspraegungen.html.

Stein, Anette, and Antje Funcke. "Viele Familien ärmer als bislang gedacht."
Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018. https://www.bertelsmann-
stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2018/februar/viele-familien-
aermer-als-bislang-gedacht.

Steinbach, Susie L. *Understanding the Victorians*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Sternfeld, Nora. "Um die Spielregeln spielen! Partizipation im post-
repräsentativen Museum." In *Das partizipative Museum: Zwischen Teilhabe
und User Generated Content. Neue Anforderungen an kulturhistorische
Ausstellungen*, ed. Susanne Gesser, Martin Handschin, Angela Jannelli, and
Sibylle Lichtensteiger, 119-126. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2012.

Steyerl, Hito. "Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-
Democracy." *e-flux Journal*, no. 21 (December 2010): https://www.e-
flux.com/journal/21/67696/politics-of-art-contemporary-art-and-the-transition-
to-post-democracy/.

Stretton, Tim, and Krista J. Kesselring. *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in
England and the Common Law World*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University
Press, 2013.

STRG_F. "Warum sind Kunstwerke von Frauen weniger wert?" YouTube video,
18:30. Posted June 16, 2020 by STRG_F.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwNY7YwWDqA.

Sula, Marina. "Exhibition: Soft Power." Gabriele Senn Galerie, 2016.
https://galeriesenn.at/marina-sula-2/.

Tate. "Art Term: Useful Art Association." Accessed September 26, 2023.
https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/u/useful-art-association.

TAXISPALAIS Kunsthalle Tirol. "Exhibition: WITCHES." Curated by Nina Tabassomi.
2021. https://www.taxispalais.art/en/programm/ausstellungen/hexen/.

TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Contemporary Art and OnCurating. "Symposium:
Commoning Collective Care." OnCurating, 2023. https://www.on-
curating.org/Commoning-Collective-Care.html.

The Showroom. "Communal Knowledge." Accessed February 24, 2024.

  https://www.theshowroom.org/programmes/communal-knowledge.

Theater Freiburg. "Dietenbach Festspiele." 2017.

  https://dietenbachfestspiele.wordpress.com/.

Tompkins, Jane. "Me and My Shadow." *New Literary History* 19 (1987): 169–78.

Toupin, Louise. *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist*

  Movement, 1972–77. London: Pluto, 2018.

Tronto, Joan. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*. New York: NYU
Press, 2013.

———. *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. New York:

  Routledge, 1993.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. "From the Margins." *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3

  (August 1994): 279–97.

Ultra-Red. Accessed July 12, 2023. http://www.ultrared.org/mission.html.

Umolu, Yesomi. "On the Limits of Care and Knowledge: 15 Points Museums Must

  Understand to Dismantle Structural Injustice." Artnet, June 25, 2020.

  https://news.artnet.com/opinion/limits-of-care-and-knowledge-yesomi-umolu-

  op-ed-1889739.

Unit London. "Exhibition: Re-Naissance." Curated by Hettie Judah. Accessed July

  21, 2023. https://unitlondon.com.

Van Heeswijk, Jeanne. "Projects: Homebaked Bakery, Liverpool, Jan 2012."

  Accessed February 24, 2024.

  https://www.jeanneworks.net/projects/homebaked_bakery/.

Voien, Guelda. "Marina Abramovic: I Had Three Abortions Because Children Hold

  Female Artists Back." *Observer*, July 26, 2016.

  https://observer.com/2016/07/marina-abramovic-i-had-three-abortions-

  because-children-hold-female-artists-back/.

VATMH e. V. "Thomas Mann Fellowship. " Accessed July September 22, 2022.

  https://www.vatmh.org/de/thomas-mann-fellowships.html.

Visarte Zürich. "Workshop with Hettie Judah at Binz39." 2023. https://www.visarte-

  zuerich.ch/news/book-launch-event-mit-hette-judah.

Vishmidt, Marina. "Between Not Everything and Not Nothing: Cuts Toward Infrastructural Critique." In *Former West: Art and the Contemporary after 1989*, edited by Maria Hlavajova and Simon Sheikh, 265–70. Utrecht, Netherlands: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

———. "The Aesthetic Subject and the Politics of Speculative Labor." *OnCurating*, no. 48, "Zurich Issue: Dark Matter, Grey Zones, Red Light, and Bling Bling" (September 2020): 66–80.

W.A.G.E. – Working Artists in the Greater Economy. Accessed July 10, 2023. https://wageforwork.com/wagency.

Wade, Jeremy. "The Future Clinic for Critical Care – Trailer." Vimeo video, 2:30. Posted by Jeremy Wade, August 1, 2019. https://vimeo.com/351354126.

Warsza, Joanna. "The Elephant Is Bigger than the Room: Documenta Trouble and Curatorial Responsibility." *Paletten*, July–August 2022. https://paletten.net/artiklar/the-elephant-is-bigger-than-the-room.

Wendell, Susan. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability." *Hypatia* 4, no. 2 (1989): 104–24.

Wezerek, Gus, and Kristen Ghodsee. "Women's Unpaid Labor Is Worth $10,900,000,000,000." *New York Times*, March 5, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/04/opinion/women-unpaid-labor.html.

Winker, Gabriele. *Care Revolution. Schritte in eine solidarische Gesellschaft*. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2017.

Wonisch, Roswitha, and Regina Muttenthaler. *Gesten des Zeigens. Zur Repräsentation von Gender und Race in Ausstellungen*. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2015.

"Word History: The Roots of 'Radical'." Merriam-Webster. Accessed July 16, 2023. https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/radical-word-history.

Yalom, Marilyn. *A History of the Wife*. London: Rivers Oram, Pandora List, 2001.

Yohannes, Neyat. "Revisiting the Famed Feminist Exhibition 'Womanhouse' with an Intersectional Lens." Artsy, March 24, 2022.

https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-revisiting-famed-feminist-
exhibition-womanhouse-intersectional-lens.

Young, Stacy. *Changing the Wor(l)d. Discourse, Politics and the Feminist Movement*.
London: Routledge, 1997.

Zavitsanos, Constantina. Artist's website. Accessed July 12, 2023.
https://constantinazavitsanos.com/news.html.

Zechner, Manuela. *Commoning Care & Collective Power: Childcare Commons and
the Micropolitics of Municipalism in Barcelona*. Linz, Austria: Transversal
Texts, 2021.

Zensus Datenbank. "Zensus 2011: Hohenlockstedt." Accessed July 14, 2023.
https://ergebnisse2011.zensus2022.de/datenbank/online?operation=find&su
chanweisung_language=de&query=Hohenlockstedt#abreadcrumb.

Zimmermann, Anja. *Skandalöse Bilder – Skandalöse Körper: Abject Art vom
Surrealismus bis zu den Culture Wars*. Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 2001.

APPENDIX

Section A

Artistic Direction 2019/20: Care

Sascia Bailer

January 2019–October 2020

Call for Applications: Advancement Awards 2019/20

The Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung grants two Advancement Awards for the upcoming cycle 2019/20. The prize is directed to artists with a relationship to Northern Germany (birthplace, current place of work/life, studies).

This call stands in direct relationship with the curatorial focus of the upcoming 1.5 years which is centered on the tensions around *Care*. Despite its central social function *Care* work remains mostly invisible, underrepresented and undervalued in our society -- independent of whether it is performed within institutions or in the domestic realm. This leads to economic and social precarity: young parents and senior citizens suffer from isolation; single parents and large families are at risk of poverty; toddlers to elderly lack adequate care; *Care* work operates on the basis of a strong gender imbalance; and effective counter-measurements to this *Care Crisis* have not yet been realized. Considering the alarming state of these social conditions, relatively little action can be noticed within public and political debate. One has to ask: *Who cares?*

Within the realm of artistic freedom, new strategies can be developed to address these complex issues around *Care*. We are looking for critical artistic positions at the intersection of social reproduction and social justice -- in short, art that cares for care.

Applying artists may define *Care* widely, ranging from an understanding of care for social, ecological, spatial and technological processes, to care as an artistic investigation of intercultural, intergender, intergenerational forms of co-habitation within rural and urban territories. Of interest are also: artistic practices that explicitly address the complexities around the ongoing *Care Crisis*; that develop new strategies on the tensions around invisibility/visibility, private/public; that challenge the contemporary imbalances around *Gender* and *Race* within *Care* work and propose alternative future visions; that critically examine isolation and social exclusion; that connect disparate social groups and allow for the emergence of alliances or possibly even new social infrastructures of care…

This call sets no limitations in terms of media-usage or genre; it is explicitly open for interdisciplinary artistic practices at the intersection of Visual Arts and Performance, Architecture and Design (keyword: *Socially Engaged Art*). Yet projects that are solemnly of design or architectural nature cannot be considered. The artistic indepence of the awardees

is guaranteed.

The Advancement Award includes

- **Prize:** The Advancement Award is endowed with 3.000 € (The recipient artists will receive 2.000 € in 2019 and 1.000 € in 2020). Groups/collectives will receive an additional 1.000 €.

- **Publication:** The Advancement Award comes with the option of a publication, to be published in collaboration with the Artistic Director. For this, an additional budget is provided.

- **Exhibition/Events:** The Advancement Award includes a final presentation and entitles the awardee to engage in public programming, accompanying events, or other formats. For this, an additional budget is provided.

- **Family-friendly Residency:** The M.1, the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung's large building in Hohenlockstedt, provides the awardees with a total of 800 sqm of exhibition and production space for focused artistic work. The awardees have the option to use the large, family-friendly, and fully furnished apartment in the M.1, which is located on the same floor as the bright and spacious studio. During the residency the children and partner of the awardees are welcome. We offer to support the awardees in finding childcare solutions. A residency is not a mandatory element of the Advancement Award.

Prerequisites

- **Relationship to Northern Germany:** Applicants must have a strong relationship to Northern Germany (Schleswig Holstein, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Bremen and Niedersachsen). Therefore the applicant must either be born, or currently reside in, or have completed their studies in this region, or the artistic work must demonstrate a strong focus on Northern Germany.

- **Higher Education:** The applicant must have graduated from an art school or university not longer than 8 years ago. Applicants without a higher education degree should consult the Artistic Director of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung prior to applying. Applicants who are currently still enrolled cannot be considered.

- **Applications** by groups or collectives are welcome.

Application Material

- **Completed Cover Form** (see attachment below or download from https://www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de)

- **Project Proposal:** a short description of a project that you want to realize within the time frame of 2019/20, possibly also explaining why you believe that the M.1 is a suitable place to undertake this work. You can also use this space to share your conceptual ideas for a possible publication (in total max. 1 page A4).

- **Visualisation**: an image, sketch, collage or other visual material that accompanies/elaborates your project proposal (in total max. 1 page A4)

- **Portfolio/ Work Samples:** up to **five** publications in a smaller format (e.g., brochure/DIN A4), or **two** samples in a larger format (e.g., book/ DIN A4) or **one** portfolio (in DIN A4) with up to five realized artistic projects.

- **CV** including a list of past and current projects/exhibitions and grants/awards. For collectives/group applications: Include a list of past and current projects/exhibitions as a collective; add short bios for each member of the collective.

All materials can be submitted in German or English language.

The call closes on January 25th, 2019 (date on postage stamp). The jury will make its decision in February. The jury consists of **Sascia Bailer** (Artistic Director 2019/2020, Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung), **Ulrike Boskamp** (board, Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung), **Valentina Karga** (artist/architect, Professor at Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg) and **Elke Krasny** (curator/cultural theorist/urban researcher, Professor at Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien).

Please submit your application to

M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung
Künstlerische Leitung
Breite Str. 18
25551 Hohenlockstedt
Tel: +49 (0)4826 850110
Fax: +49 (0)4826 850111

We are not liable for any loss or damage of submitted materials. Your materials will be returned only if your submission is accompanied with a return envelope and sufficient postage stamps. Materials that were not requested for return will be stored up to a maximum of three months at the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung.

Questions in regards to your application can be directed to Sascia Bailer, Artistic Director of M.1 2019/20: sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de

I. LOCAL: Care for Caregivers

Care-work is diverse, but the problems are often the same: chronic overload, lack of self-care, increased isolation. The same issuesare also present in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. In a series of workshops led by (inter-)national artists, these themes are in the foreground. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local caregivers will be made possible -- and care will be provided for those people who mostly care for others.

Social Muscle Club

27. April 2019 at M.1 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung
Program: 3:00-6:00 pm
Finale with music & buffet: 6:00-8:00 pm

Admission and all offers are for free

What exactly is this about?

Our life is full of helping gestures and small attentions that we receive or offer to others. This daily giving and taking is what community and cohesion are all about. And yet these gestures often go unnoticed. We want to change that and show our "social muscles" together in one afternoon. A fulfilling day awaits you on which your social biceps will really come into their own. But be careful: there is a danger of sore muscles!

How can I imagine that in concrete terms?

After an introduction and the first acquaintance everyone writes down what they would like to give and what they could need. No matter whether it's the desire for a homemade cake or a walk together. Wishes & offers are distributed within the table rounds and the exchange can begin. Soon a colourful web of new friendships, shared passions, hidden talents and fulfilled wishes will emerge – accompanied by laughter, music and coffee & cake.

Here you will find an explanatory comic by the artist Annina Burkhard and shows how easy it is to be part of a Social Muscle Club.

Who is it for? What´s the program like?

Everyone is warmly invited, there is a varied programme for young and old: between the swapping rounds, the *Kekeli* drum group and the *Frank & the Michaels* country band will play; the Foundation's 2019/20 Art Prizes will also be officially awarded to Malu Blume and Maternal Fantasies. They present their artistic works in performances and a small exhibition. For the kids there's a playroom, a crafts programme by Daniela Mandel, table tennis, popcorn and a goal wall for soccer…

Program

2:30 pm – Arrival & reception with music by *Frank and the Michaels*
3:00 pm – Greetings & introduction to the *Social Muscle Club* with Sascia Bailer and Jill Emerson
3:30 pm – 1st exchange round of the *Social Muscle Club*
4:00 pm – Music by drum group *Kekeli*

4:15 pm – 2nd exchange round of the *Social Muscle Club*
4:45 pm – Prize Ceremony of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung Artist Advancement Awards 2019/20
5:00 pm – 3rd exchange round of the *Social Muscle Club*
5:30 pm – Interactive performance by artist collective *Maternal Fantasies*
5:45 pm – Closing words by Sascia Bailer & Jill Emerson, Music by *Frank and the Michaels*
6-8 pm – Closing with music & evening buffet. The exhibition of the prize awardees will continue to be open.

Who is involved?

You will surely see many familiar faces: At each table, a dedicated person from the village will take over the moderation in a small circle. Cake will be conjured up by the LandFrauenverein; the evening buffet by the artist Lily Wittenburg. Jill Emerson, artist and co-founder of the *Social Muscle Club*, will moderate the program with Sascia Bailer, artistic director M.1. The entire team of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung will also be there and is looking forward to seeing you.

Great! How do I get there?

M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung
Breite Straße 18
25551 Hohenlockstedt

Entrance from Finnische Allee

You can find detailed directions on our website.

About the Social Muscle Club

The project *Social Muscle Club* was founded by the artists Jill Emerson and Till Rothmund in Berlin "for all those who want to support each other in the global village, in the midst of a society in which individuals often feel overwhelmed." The model was a documentary film about a workers' club in Sheffield; the club was not only entertainment for all members but also a self-governing social safety net. The Berlin artists were inspired and first met in a small group in the living room and developed ideas together to support each other. Since 2012, the *Social Muscle Club* has grown exponentially, reaching thousands of people in over ten international cities. There are also regular clubs in Berlin, Basel, Bristol and Vienna.

More at www.socialmuscleclub.de and www.socialmuscleclub.ch

Workshop Series "Care for Caregivers"

Care-work is diverse, but the problems are often the same: chronic burnout, lack of self-care, increased isolation. These issues are also present in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. In a series of workshops led by artists, these themes are crucial. The participants will be equipped with tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives and caring responsibilities. Recognition, exchange and networking of local care-workers will be made possible – and care for caregivers will be provided.

Overview "Care for Caregivers" Workshops

2019		
24. November	11–16 h	Vegetable Resistance – What are we seeds for? A Workshop on Time
23. November	11–16 h	Vegetable Resistance – What are we seeds for? A Workshop on Time
26. October	11–16 h	Grand Beauty on Tour A Workshop on Self-Care
29. September	11–16 h	Inside / Outside A Workshop on Trust & Boundaries
28. September	11–16 h	Inside / outside Workshop on Trust & Boundaries
14. July	11–16 h	Everyday Strategies against Isolation A Workshop on Solitude & Support
23. June	11–16 h	Care Counts On Value and Visibility of Caregiving
22. June	11–16 h	Care Counts On Value and Visibility of Caregiving
19. May	11–16 h	The Mother of all Questions: Between Mother Breasts and Kissing Muses A Workshop on Motherhood

19 May 2019
11–16 h

A Workshop on Motherhood

The Mother of all Questions: Between Mother Breasts and Kissing Muses

Which role expectations do we live as mothers and which ones would we like to pursue?

Artists:

Liz Rech and Annika Scharm

Through artistic strategies and methods we explore our everyday life with voice and body performatively. With the help of playful question and answer games, we will navigate through our reality marked by all sorts of absurdities and invite with a wink to a different, playful way of dealing with motherhood in our self-image. Thus we also understand our "Mother's Day" on May 19th as a joint review of current upheavals concerning the organisation of social reproduction. We are also interested in the connecting lines from (stubborn) historical images to (our) lived maternity in the present. Which role expectations do we live and which would we like to propagate? In this way, structural inequalities in society that are relevant for all women are uncovered and made visible. Laughter (and lies!) are expressly desired – between tragedy and comedy, longings and anger, desires and/or despair we will zoom in with the participants on their own needs and hurdles: what recognition and gestures would they actually want between social, social and personal expectations on Mother's Day?

The workshop leaders **Liz Rech & Annika Scharm** are two mothers and performance artists from Hamburg who are currently working on their joint performative research project BEYOND RE/PRODUKTION, which deals thematically with the image of motherhood in the present.

This workshop is part of the series *Care for Caregivers*

Care work is varied, but the problems are often the same: chronic overload, lack of self-care, increased isolation. These are also present in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. In a series of workshops led by artists*, these themes are in the foreground. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local care workers will be made possible -- and care will be provided for those people who mostly care.

Questions & registrations

Until 17 May at Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de

This workshop is open for all mothers and for those people who want to deal with motherhood. No other previous knowledge or experience is required. The workshop is limited to 20 participants*. A registration is therefore necessary.

Free childcare on site

For those who need care for their children for the duration of the workshop, please also contact Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de. In M.1 there is a playroom where the children of the participants* can be looked after free of charge. When registering, we need the name and age of the child (and any allergies/incompatibilities).

With childcare & shared lunch

Free of charge, registration required

*

22 and 23 June 2019

A Workshop on Value and Visibility of Caregiving

Care Counts

What is the value of my work if it is invisible and unpaid?

Artists:

Shira Richter

What often invisible, unpaid, mental or physical care work do we do every day? What would appropriate recognition for this look like?

This workshop allows us to explore the wider political and economic context that keeps care work invisible and undervalued. Our everyday life serves as a starting point for a joint investigation: Which small, everyday actions are actually heroic acts due to the strength, coordination, patience, perseverance and social competence they require? How can we make this daily care more visible by recognizing the value of this work to our community? What would a *Curriculum Vitae* of our social achievements look like? And shouldn't there be an award for that?

This two-day workshop is very open to the perspectives and input of the participants. For Shira Richter's artistic and playful methods, we will work with music, stories and images from our everyday lives. The aim is to strengthen our self-esteem as caregivers and to enhance the perspective of ourselves and others on the work we do every day – and above all, to create a space of solidarity among caregivers.

Shira Richter is an Israeli-American filmmaker, artist, peace-activist and mother of twins. Her multidisciplinary work focuses on the value of motherhood and caregiving within a sociopolitical-economic and artistic context. She is the director of the internationally award-winning woman-adventure documentary Two States of Mind (2002) about women's voices regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the UN resolution 1325. She is the creator of two large-scale multimedia exhibitions about motherhood: The Mother Daughter and Holy Spirit (2006) about the secrets of the transition into motherhood, and INVISIBLE INVALUABLES (2011) about the value of care-work in the economy. This work was further developed into the co-authored book chapter If Mothers Counted – Status Symbols for the Invisible Art of Mothering published in the feminist economics book Counting on Marilyn Waring – New Advances in Feminist Economics (2014) by Demeter Press.

Registration

The workshop is open to all who care for other people privately, professionally or voluntarily or who receive care from others themselves – be it at home, in schools, hospitals, day care centres, social projects, etc. With a joint lunch and child care on site (on request). The workshop is free, please register at Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de or call 04826 850 110.

Part of the workshop series "Care for Caregivers"

Care work is varied, but the challenges are often the same: chronic overload, lack of support, increased isolation. In a series of workshops led by artists, topics such as trust, communal support, self-esteem and recognition are therefore at the forefront. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local care workers will be made possible – and care will be provided for those people who mostly care. The workshop series is part of Sascia Bailer's curatorial programme at the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. As Artistic Director

2019/2020, she focuses on care work, community and solidarity.

Further Dates

23. June	11–16 h	Care Counts On Value and Visibility of Caregiving

*

14 July 2019
11–16 h

A Workshop on Solitude & Support

Everyday Strategies against Isolation

What kind of support and relationships do I want in my everyday life?

Artists:

Manuela Zechner

In this workshop we will explore care and trust together. We will follow our daily relationships and rituals to better understand how to deal with loneliness and isolation. How and when do we have trust? When and from whom do we expect help and support? What do our relationships and networks lack in order to take better care of ourselves and others?

The workshop facilitator Manuela Zechner will propose various methods from art and pedagogy with which we can visualize our situations and playfully address some difficult questions. The aim is to convey that we are not alone with these questions. We will therefore collectively explore strategies with which we can build a network of support for our everyday life, so that we can take better care of ourselves and others.

Manuela Zechner is an artist, researcher and mediator. She organises workshops on topics such as care, group processes, mobility/migration and motherhood using playful research methods. She is currently working on self-organized kindergartens in Poble Sec, Barcelona. She completed her doctorate on precarity and care networks at *Queen Mary University* London in 2013 and is now part of an EU research project on *Commons in Southern Europe*. Since 2005 she has led the *Future Archive* project, is involved in the radio project *Sounds of Movement*, is part of the *Nanopolitics Group* and the *Radical Practices of Collective Care* research project. Since 2016 everything has been somewhat different and more interesting because she has a little daughter in tow.

Registration

The workshop is open to all who care for other people privately, professionally or voluntarily or who receive care from others themselves – be it at home, in schools, hospitals, day care centres, social projects, etc. With a joint lunch and child care on site (on request). The workshop is free of charge, please register at Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de, or call 04826 850 110.

Part of the workshop series "Care for Care-Workers"

Who takes care of those who take care? This question is the focus of the workshop series "Care for Care-Workers," in which topics such as trust, support, self-esteem and recognition are dealt with using playful artistic methods. This program is curated and organized by Sascia Bailer, Artistic Director 2019/20 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. Further information can be found at www.m1-hohenlockstedt.de/kuratieren/2019-2020/

*

28 and 29. September 2019
11–16 h

A Workshop on Trust & Boundaries

Inside / Outside

What are the conditions for mutual trust?

Artists:

Myriam Lefkowitz

The two-day workshop is dedicated to the themes of trust and boundaries both in interpersonal relationships and in relation to the public space in which we move daily. Especially when we take care of other people, mutual trust plays an indispensable role. However, we also quickly lose ourselves in the process of caring for others, and in doing so also lose the fine perception for ourselves and our environment. How can these conditions for mutual trust be explored, and how can we sensitize our perception of our environment and our personal boundaries?

The first part of the workshop will take place in M.1, for the second part we will explore Hohenlockstedt with an experimental walk: One workshop participant will silently guide another participant through town. The guided person is asked to close his/her eyes and only open them on instruction. Walking together enhances the sensory experience and transfers the familiar perception of the place to the entire body. Through the touch of being led, the conditions for mutual trust and the feeling of one's own limits are explored and negotiated non-verbally.

For more than ten years, Myriam Lefkowitz has shared the format of the performance exercise WALK, HANDS, EYES (HOHENLOCKSTEDT) with its inhabitants in various places – in Paris, Medellin, Venice, New York, Dhaka; and now also in Hohenlockstedt.

About the workshop leader

The French-American performance artist Myriam Lefkowitz (*1980), who lives in Paris, investigates the close connections between perception and imagination in order to create conditions for extended sensory experiences. These concerns also shape her ongoing project WALK, HANDS, EYES (HOHENLOCKSTEDT). Her works have been presented at the Venice Biennale, the Kadist Foundation (San Francisco), the MOT (Tokyo), De Apple (Amsterdam), the Le Nouveau Festival (Centre Pompidou), the Bergen Triennale, and at the Ferme du Buisson (Paris). She teaches regularly at Science Po (Paris), Open School East (London), the Royal Institute of Art (Stockholm), DasArt (Amsterdam) and others. In 2017/18 it was awarded by IF I CAN´T DANCE I DON´T WANT TO BE PART OF YOUR REVOLUTION (Amsterdam) and is currently an associated artist at Ferme du Buisson, while working on a film in collaboration with artist Simon Ripoll-Hurier.

Registration

The workshop is open to all who care for other people privately, professionally or voluntarily or who receive care from others themselves – be it at home, in schools, hospitals, day care centres, social projects, etc. With a joint lunch and child care on site (on request). The workshop will be held partly in English, partly in German; on-site translation assistance will be offered. Therefore, nobody should feel excluded from the offer due to language skills. Free registration with Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de or under 04826 850 110.

Part of the workshop series *Care for Caregivers*

Care work is varied, but the challenges are often the same: chronic overload, lack of support, increased isolation. In a series of workshops led by artists, topics such as trust, communal support, self-esteem and recognition are therefore at the forefront. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local care workers will be made possible – and care will be provided for those people who mostly care. The workshop series is part of Sascia Bailer's curatorial programme at the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. As Artistic Director 2019/2020, she focuses on care work, community and solidarity.

Further Dates

29. September	11–16 h	Inside / OutsideA Workshop on Trust & Boundaries

*

26 October 2019
11–16 h

A Workshop on Self-Care

GRAND BEAUTY

What kind of relationship do you have with yourself?

Artists:

Frauke Frech and Hengame Sadeghi

What kind of relationship do you have with yourself and what kind of relationship does this allow you to foster with your peers? Especially as a caregiver it is essential to treat oneself well and to take time for one's needs. This is not always possible in everyday life, but it is within the framework of this workshop in M.1. We at "Grand Beauty" understand beauty as a gesture of solidarity. In our intercultural salon, the languages of beauty connect beyond the boundaries of language and cultural differences.

We would like to invite you to practice together in silence, to perceive our bodies more clearly and to observe our thoughts in order to better recognize our own needs. We want to be joyful together and learn about your favourite beauty and care recipes. We would like to prepare a selection of recipes from our repertoire for skin and hair with you and treat each other with them. The ingredients can be found in most households from Hohenlockstedt to Karatschi. In addition, essential oils are available for head, neck and hand massages as well as steam baths. Which approaches and practices can be found internationally and with which impulses can we inspire and support you in your self-care?

About the workshop leaders

"Grand Beauty" is an intercultural beauty salon and studio for the beautiful, in which care experts with and without migration background, autodidacts and professionals work together. Share your favourite self-care recipes with us and make the world a bit more beautiful. The workshop will be led by artist Frauke Frech and self-care expert Hengame Sadeghi.

Frauke Frech is an artist, activist and initiator of the "Grand Beauty" project, which she founded as part of her collaboration 2014-17 at the "Grandhotel Cosmopolis." Through interventions she explores social contexts, social boundaries and experiments with encounter formats. She studied performance art at the Haute Ecole d'Art et Design Genève as well as at the Muthesius Kunsthochschule Kiel. Her work has been shown at the Hygiene-Museum Dresden, the Goethe-Institut Bangalore and the Münchner Kammerspiele. She has taught and lectured at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, Venice International University and the German Society for Foreign Policy in Berlin. She was born in Leipzig in 1982, lives there and realizes her works worldwide.

More infos at www.fraukefrech.com & www.grandbeautyontour.org

Registration

We are fully booked and cannot offer any spots for this event anymore

The workshop is open to all who care for other people privately, professionally or voluntarily or who receive care from others themselves – be it at home, in schools, hospitals, day care centres, social projects, etc. With a joint lunch and child care on site (on request). The workshop is free, please register at Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de or call 04826 850 110.

Part of the workshop series *Care for Caregivers*

Care work is varied, but the challenges are often the same: chronic overload, lack of support, increased isolation. In a series of workshops led by artists, topics such as trust, communal support, self-esteem and recognition are therefore at the forefront. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local care workers will be made possible – and care will be provided for those people who mostly care. The workshop series is part of Sascia Bailer's curatorial programme at the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. As Artistic Director 2019/2020, she focuses on care work, community and solidarity.

*

November 23, 2019

A Workshop on Time

Vegetable Resistance – What are we seeds for?

What kind of future is dormant in us?

Artists:

Julieta Aranda

Sometimes it feels as if we were constantly chasing after time. We therefore seem to lack the foresight, the imagination for another future. This workshop with the conceptual artist Julieta Aranda directs our focus to the rich topic of time. Time is more than just the ticking of the clock; time is one of the most important elements, especially in interpersonal relationships, in caring for ourselves and others.

On the first day we will be looking at the personal perception of time through conversations and theoretical inputs. What is my own relationship with time, what quality does it have, how do I fill my minutes? On the second day we will cook together with our children. We will take a closer look at our ingredients in order to make abstract concepts of time more accessible: What potential lies dormant in a seed (*immanence*), which later becomes apparent, for

example, in form of a carrot (*latency*)? How can we take this as a starting point to think anew about our hidden potentials and aim for a future that lets us grow? And how do we ourselves become time, a time that is our own?

About the artist

The conceptual artist Julieta Aranda (*1975 in Mexico City) explores the perception of time, space and the distribution of information in her multimedia works. She studied Film at the School of Visual Arts and at Columbia University in New York, and is the co-founder of the internetplatform e-flux. Since 2010, Aranda, together with the artist Anton Vidokle, has been realizing the project TIME / BANK, in which time is traded as an alternative currency to money. For INTERVALLS (2009) at the Guggenheim Museum in New York Aranda examined the individual notion of time by aligning a clock to her own heartbeat. She has exhibited internationally, e.g. at the Guggenheim and the New Museum in New York, the dOCUMENTA (13), the 54th Venice Biennale, 6th Liverpool Biennial and many more. She lives in Berlin and New York.

Registration

Open to all who take care of other people privately, professionally or on a voluntary basis. With shared lunch and on-site childcare. The workshop will be held partly in English, partly in German; assistance with translation will be offered. Therefore, nobody should feel excluded due to language skills. The workshop is free of charge, registration at Sascia Bailer sb@arthurboskamp-stiftung.de and under 04826 850 110.

Part of the workshop series *Care for Caregivers*

Care work is varied, but the challenges are often the same: chronic overload, lack of support, increased isolation. In a series of workshops led by artists, topics such as trust, communal support, self-esteem and recognition are therefore at the forefront. The participants are given tools and knowledge that they can integrate into their everyday lives. Recognition, exchange and networking of local care workers will be made possible – and care will be provided for those people who mostly care. The workshop series is part of Sascia Bailer's curatorial programme at the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. As Artistic Director 2019/2020, she focuses on care work, community and solidarity.

***

II. ART: Discourse & Artistic Production on Care

Within the realm of artistic freedom, new strategies can be developed to address these complex issues around Care. Artistic practice that is located at the interface of social reproduction and social justice is our main focus. Through theme-specific prizes, artistic interventions, publications and collaborations with regional art academies we support curatorial and artistic practice on Care.

Advancement Awards 2019/20

2019–2020

Award Winners:

Malu Blume and Maternal Fantasies

Jury: Sascia Bailer, Ulrike Boskamp and Jeanne van Heeswijk

The artist group **Maternal Fantasies** and the artist **Malu Blume** are winners of the 2019/20 advancement awards of the Arthur Boskamp Stiftung. They were looking for artistic positions and projects that address different aspects of care work.

The award ceremony will take place on April 27, 2019 in the M.1 of the Arthur Boskamp Stiftung.

Two artistic positions were selected that critically deal with care work, community and gender, developing their visions of a caring future in very different ways:

The interdisciplinary **group of female artists Maternal Fantasies** deals with the intersection between art, children and motherhood, which is little considered both socially and in art theory. The eight women of the international collective live and work in Berlin. In regular meetings, artistic research, collective works of art and living together explore the tension between artistic production and motherhood. Family stories, memories, ideas, desires, but also horror scenarios about being a mother can be found in Maternal Fantasies. "The collective does important work that challenges the art world's fear of contact with mothers who create art – something that is still far too seldom seen, especially in the German context. It is therefore urgently necessary to use artistic means to stir up the debate and explore new relationships between art and social reproduction," Sascia Bailer explained the jury's decision. As Artistic Director 2019/2020 of the M.1 of the Arthur Boskamp Stiftung, Sascia Bailer was part of this year's expert jury alongside Ulrike Boskamp (Director of the Arthur Boskamp Stiftung) and Jeanne van Heeswijk (artist, visiting professor at the Hamburg University of the Arts).

The artist Malu Blume, who was born in Hildesheim and now lives and works between Berlin and Vienna, also received a sponsorship award. Her work is located at the interfaces of art, performance, education and activism. Blume mostly works in artists' collectives on issues of care, collective knowledge production, archive politics, friendship and queer feminism. The video project proposed by Malu Blume offers an alternative and hopeful look into the future of care work: three versions of possible communities are portrayed, exploring new forms of care and living together. "This kind of inspiration, which stimulates the collective imagination, makes Blume's work extremely relevant," says Sascia Bailer about the jury's decision. "Blume's work also convinces through its stubborn aesthetic and critical theoretical references." More Information about: https://malublume.de/about

The award is endowed with 3,000 euros (4,000 euros for groups) and is presented every two years. It is aimed at younger artists with a connection to Northern Germany (e.g. through their place of birth, study or current place of residence). The prizewinners will be provided with an artist's apartment and studio in Hohenlockstedt for three months. They also have the opportunity to realise an exhibition or final presentation as well as a publication.

The theme of the call for entries was set by Sascia Bailer as Artistic Director 20191/20 of the M.1, because care-work is also the focus of her time at the M.1. With her curatorial programme, Sascia Bailer will counteract the invisibility of care, whether it be for single parents, relatives or care-workers. Through a series of events and artistic-social practices, her curatorial work seeks to create care for caregivers – by creating relationships, exchanges, alliances and visibility.

The **award ceremony** will take place on 27 April from 15.00 in the M.1 of the Arthur Boskamp Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt. The evening's supporting programme is a "Social Muscle Club" – this special kind of exchange market was developed by artists and focuses on mutual give and take. The advancement award winners will be present and showcase their work.

*

FANTASTIC FUTURES: Films on Care and Collectivity

by Malu Blume und Maternal Fantasies

Due to the measures taken for Covid-19, the advancement award exhibition FANTASTIC FUTURES – Films on Care and Collectivity at M.1 could not open as planned on May 2. In order to provide access to art even in times of "social distancing," the trailers of the 2019/20 Arthur Boskamp Stiftung's 2019/20 awardees, Malu Blume and Maternal Fantasies, will be shown daily from 9 am to 7 pm in the window fronts of M.1.

Visions of the future enable us to mentally escape from an everyday life that constricts us, in which we feel misunderstood -- and at the same time, these visions offer a platform to our urge for change. In the exhibition, **Fantastic Futures** at M.1, the awardees **Malu Blume** and **Maternal Fantasies** use an array of artistic methods in order to challenge a rigid reality in which traditional gender roles and limited ideas of community and care seem to be enshrined. The awardees combine film, installation and performative elements around the thematic focus of the call, which was set on *Care*.

In her video work Hildesheim-born performance and video artist **Malu Blume** takes the viewer back to the future: **The Book of S of I. Chapter One: Three Visions** appears like a feverish dream of an artistic concept, like a spontaneous vision of what we could have become. Told as a queer-feminist fairy tale, **The Book of S of I** celebrates the utopian power of self-love on the social fringes, belonging and friendship as a survival strategy and care as a radical means of anti-capitalist resistance and life.

A recording of the artist talk with **Malu Blume** is available on Vimeo.

The interdisciplinary collective of artists **Maternal Fantasies** deals with the intersection of art, children and motherhood, which receives little attention both in society and art discourse. Family stories, memories, desires, but also horror scenarios about being a mother can be found in the work of Maternal Fantasies. Through performances, video works and

installations, they challenge rigid images of mothers, and develop a unique aesthetic that sketches possible future visions of motherhood. Their film Suspended Time, on Caring, developed in the context of the award, invites viewers to question their own role models.

A recording of the artist talk with **Maternal Fantasies** is available on Vimeo.

The two central video works by the recipients of the Advancement Awards 2019/20 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung were specifically developed for **Fantastic Futures** and were filmed in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. In a sense, the region between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea becomes a kind of stage on which fantastic visions of the future take place. This allows the fields of tension to unfold between care, gender and community, oscillating between euphoria and delusion. As fragile as these concepts may seem, maybe they are the ones that can let a different future become reality.

Curated by Sascia Bailer, artistic director 2019/20 of the M.1.

The exhibition is part of *Caring Infrastructures*, a cooperation with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt and Soft Agency. The event is supported by the Förderstiftung Kreis Steinburg and the Cultural Foundation of the State of Schleswig-Holstein.

*

Umrisse – In den Rissen. Sound installation von Polyphrenic Creatures

The artist duo Polyphrenic Creatures collected voices from the storytelling-cafés of Holo Miteinander, which act as experiences and resistances in relation to togetherness in rural areas. The sound installation uses layered collages from the individual stories to transform them into a polyphonic space of resonance for the ideas and needs of differently lived realities.

You can listen to the sound piece on our Vimeo channel.

Polyphrenic Creatures is an interdisciplinary collective founded by the artists Ulrike Bernard and Amelie Marei Loellmann. Since 2014 they have been devoting themselves to the utopian and fantastic under the guise of reality in dialogic exchange formats, live audio dramas and audio walks. Their live audio drama Creatures in the Mind Nets was presented at steirischer herbst in Graz in 2016. Their work Softsonic GG, which explores digital communication structures and tests listening as an active form of action, was shown at district Berlin in 2017. Currently, a collaboration with the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt is taking place for the storytelling-café series Holo Miteinander.

More information: http://www.polyphreniccreatures.de

Within the framework of the Holo Miteinander project, we would like to actively pave the way for a future of solidarity in Hohenlockstedt (Holo for short), which promotes and values the village community, care work and inclusion. Local actors from these areas are networked through a platform for exchange and action. Our goal: to work together to care for the community and to counteract the acute crisis in the social sphere with a community based on solidarity. We do this by establishing the café room in M.1 as an easily accessible and barrier-free platform for getting to know each other, learning from each other and exchanging ideas. Together with decision-makers from various care sectors, we organised six storytelling-cafés on the topics of mobility, living, working, eating, and leisure. Invited were both those affected and interested from the surrounding area as well as people who are already working on these topics. We dedicate ourselves to listening to each other and create awareness for the needs of different life situations. The task of the process is to transfer this "new" knowledge together and in the long term into stable solidarity structures in

Hohenlockstedt.

Sound installation can be played via vimeo:

https://vimeo.com/658556547

*

Atmospheric Escape: Fabulating Care. Audio piece by Johanna Bruckner

As part of the CARING edition of the New Alphabet School we had initially invited Johanna Bruckner to develop a performance piece. Due to the pandemic, the concept shifted and was adapted in a way that the audience members could arrange to meet with friends, and engage in active collective listening of the sound piece, which the artist developed for the virtual opening event. These instructions were communicated along with the streaming of the audio piece:

> The listening of Atmospheric Escape takes place in pairs, groups, family or friends or alone. Together watch the clouds during the day or stars at night while lying on the floor on mats or grass, being in touch with each other. This form of deep care listening intensifies your imagination.

The audio piece "Atmospheric Escape: Fabulating Care" (30 min., 2020) is based on Johanna Bruckner's engagement with intimacy, the digital and atmospheric realm. The artists work departs from the idea that gaseous substances of the Earth escape into space and form extracorporeal bodies. These structures come into being as their molecular particles mutually support, align with and ripple against each other and the electromagnetic field. Johanna Bruckner calls this state polymorphous care or desire. How can these non-human bodies and their poetics of care be imagined?, How can these crystallisations be aesthetically narrated, accessed and diffracted? How can they help us fabulate and perform possible future worlds, languages and practices of care beyond the tangible? The audio offers scores for the listener to approach these questions in aesthetic, sonic and collective ways.

Publications

Letters to Joan

The following letters bring together views on the current state of care in times of pandemic from artists, writers and academics. The invitation to write these letters to Joan Tronto, a key proponent of different concepts and theories on care, provide a loose framework inside of which these practitioners could position in relation to from their own practice and identity, addressing their words to a person who is also a node, with the idea of informal correspondence. These letters then span approaches that vary from the genealogical, to the political, to the planetary, if those distinctions even matter anymore. These letters and their recipient make up a constellation of care, offered here for you to find patterns or images that might emerge out of them – they are stars in the sky, a relational map you can only read from your own personal position, as we begin our long march towards a world imbued with care as norm, as a democratic paradigm.

Edited by Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, Rosario Talevi with further contributions by Edna Bonhomme, Johanna Bruckner, Teresa Dillon, João Florêncio, Johanna Hedva, Elke Krasny, Patricia Reed, Yayra Sumah and Joan Tronto

The publication can be downloaded here. It is part of the #Caring edition of the New Alphabet School, which took place digitally in June 2020 in cooperation with the House of World Cultures. More about the project can be found here.

Below find the full letter of the editors to Joan Tronto:

Dear Joan,

We begin our long march through the institutions.

In a way, for us, the long march began when we encountered ethics of care and other iterations of this aspect of political thought. For each of us this moment came through a different conversation, practice, friendship, process or personal experience. During the last few decades ethics of care (as a fundamentally feminist concept) have grown to create an alternative paradigm to financialinised capitalism in unparalleled ways. It's critique of the neo-liebral market logic dominating our societies is the most articulated, most practically applicable of concepts - as so much of the knowledge and techniques we need already exist. We just need to reach towards them, stretching from behind our modernist desks, and tap into them on a societal and infrastructural level. You've said before that "Care is not utopian, markets are utopian". What a radical thing to say! Here in a nutshell lies the daring shift we would all have to learn. How do we dare not to dream in grand ways, but to maintain? Dare not to innovate, but repair? Dare not to discover but recuperate? Dare to put a limit to growth, and start to care?

You've also said that it is time to think about care institutionalised. We wish to think of care infrastructuralised. The point of departure for this four-day program is to look at care through the prism of infrastructure. The conditions of social, racial and gender injustices are products of systematic and infrastructural forms that constantly reproduce the same mechanisms of exclusion and marginalisation. If we inscribe care into the building stones of our social infrastructures – does that generate a more just society? This requires a joint process of un-learning our everyday social relations, of establishing new social codes, new social patterns that allow us to restructure the ways in which we relate to one another, the ways in which social groups become public, visible, and recognized. By inserting a notion of "care" (and by learning from care-work) we aim to establish pathways for support, trust, and conviviality.
So we write to ask your permission to write to you, in all these many voices, to advise us on what to pack with us and what to unpack amongst us, as we embark on a joint segment of this long march, this current leg of our mutual journey.

We will begin in Berlin, and travel together to the rural town of Hohenlockstedt, this upcoming June 11th-14th, 2020 as part of an event on caring infrastructures as part of the fifth edition of the New Alphabet School on #*Caring*. As preparation for this hike, we need to stock up on concepts and fellow travelers. We wish to multiply and reverberate #*Caring* messages and ideas in this public setting at the Haus Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, and the M.1 Arthur Boskomp Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt - as well as with the group that will convene to make this journey together.

This is why we wish to open up a privately-written, publicly-published conversation with you, to engage with your ideas about ethics of care, as set forth by you and your collaborators early in the 70's, and the ways they have evolved since. This written correspondence will include practitioners of different attitudes and generations promoting ethics of care, looking backwards at their genealogies, and moving to their applications today. We imagine packing these letters in a neatly folded pile to take and read on our journey, as sustenance together with other provisions and necessities, next to the lunch box, together with a change of clothes and hiking shoes.

Is it OK that we continue to write?

Yours warmly,
Rosario, Sascia and Gilly

kuratieren #6 "Curating, Care, and Corona"

The kuratieren-booklet #6 Curating, Care, and Corona by Sascia Bailer is many things: a critical questioning, a doubting, a reflecting, sometimes also a plea. But above all it should also enable insight into the 2019/20 curatorial programme on Care at M.1, and invite readers to continue with their own related lines of thought. The text unites five fragments that engage with artistic works and curatorial formats from Sascia Bailer ́s programme, each in the context of societal discourses surrounding care, curating, digitality, alternative economies and the necessity of new social infrastructures.

The bilingual publication can be downloaded here. The publication is part of the kuratieren-series of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. More about it here.

Text by Sascia Bailer
Published by Verlag der Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung
Edited by Ulrike Boskamp
Design by Michael Pfisterer
Translated by William Wheeler

Documentation

Archive of Encounters

What remains of an encounter, of a conversation? Personal memories, sensations, emotions and maybe some notes? How can these fleeting moments be captured -- and how can the experience be made accessible to people who were not there?

A group of students from the **Studio Experimentelles Design of the HFBK Hamburg** dealt with these questions in order to develop an **Archive of Encounter**: For one year, four students have been accompanying the curatorial program at M.1 on the topic of Care by Sascia Bailer (Artistic Director 2019/20 of M.1). Each of these events was documented by a student and afterwards artistically interpreted. This resulted in eight interpretations of the events in the form of suitcases that allow outsiders to access what happened. The **Archive of Encounter** is mobile and participatory: Through the cooperation with the public library in Hohenlockstedt, it can be borrowed like any other media. In this way, these topics can be made accessible to people who could not participate in the programme but who want to deal with these issues. In this sense, the archive invites people to search for traces and to engage with the topics, impressions and experiences in peace and quiet, and in turn to create their own encounters with the contents.

Lending of the archive is possible from Friday, 12 June 2020 to Friday, 23 October 2020 in the Hohenlockstedt public library during regular opening hours (Monday to Friday from 3-6pm and Tuesday and Friday from 9-11.30am). Borrowing is free of charge for members of the library; those who are not yet members can take out a trial membership for three months for 3 euros.

The project is carried out by students of the **Studio Experimental Design at the HFBK Hamburg** (Klasse Prof. Jesko Fezer), **Veronica Andres, Pablo Lapettina, Laura Mahnke & Skadi Sturm.**

Partners:

Community library Hohenlockstedt

The municipal library Hohenlockstedt was founded in 1950 as a public library for all citizens* of Hohenlockstedt. In 1996 the municipal library was given its own building in the Helgolandstraße, where it is still housed today. The construction and furnishing of the municipal library was made possible by the generous donation of the Pohl-Boskamp family. www.buecherei-hohenlockstedt.de

Studio Experimental Design at HFBK Hamburg
The Studio Experimental Design at HFBK Hamburg under the direction of Prof. Jesko Fezer represents a problem-oriented design approach. In collaborations and projects oriented towards a concrete critical practice, socially and politically committed design is carried out. The studio's superordinate project format is the **Öffentliche Gestaltungsberatung**, a public design consultancy. This offers free support for the creative solving of everyday problems. It works with and for people who cannot otherwise afford professional design. Since 2011 students of the Studio Experimental Design of the HFBK Hamburg have been running a weekly design consultation in Hamburg St. Pauli. Here, as well as in other places, other people, problems and spaces than usual become clients, actors and objects of design processes. The public design consultation is a partisan design practice. www.design.hfbk-hamburg.de www.gestaltungsberatung.org

III. FUTURE: Collectively Building Future Support Structures

Considering the alarming state of contemporary social conditions, relatively little action is taken by public organizations and political actors. One has to ask: Who cares?

Various positions from art, activism, academia and society are to be brought together in order to think about a future of solidarity in our society across all sectors. What support structures are needed in art and society to make inclusion and equality a reality? Which approaches already exist, which deficits are hardly questioned?

Storytelling Cafes: Holo Miteinander

Within the framework of the Holo Miteinander project, we would like to actively pave the way for a future of solidarity in Hohenlockstedt (Holo for short), which promotes and values the village community, care work and inclusion. Local actors from these areas are networked through a platform for exchange and action. Our goal: to work together to care for the community and to counteract the acute crisis in the social sphere with a community based on solidarity. We do this by establishing the café room in M.1 as an easily accessible and barrier-free platform for getting to know each other, learning from each other and exchanging ideas. Together with decision-makers from various care sectors, we are organising six storytelling-cafés on the topics of mobility, living, working, eating, and leisure. Invited are both those affected and interested from the surrounding area as well as people who are already working on these topics. We dedicate ourselves to listening to each other and create awareness for the needs of different life situations. The task of the process will be to transfer this "new" knowledge together and in the long term into stable solidarity structures in Hohenlockstedt.

The storytelling-cafés will be accompanied by the artist duo Polyphrenic Creatures, consisting of Ulrike Bernard and Amelie Marei Loellmann. For their artistic work they initiate performative situations in which listening plays a central role. They (over)write stories and in dialogical encounters they enter into an exchange of ideas with the participants. As part of the storytelling-café series Holo Miteinander, they themselves become listeners and will not only help shape this process with various artistic interventions, but also actively observe it. Statements, moods, ideas, connections – everything that happens visibly and invisibly in conversations will be observed – not in the sense of "fixing," but as an opportunity to develop new perspectives, to create points of contact for interaction and to sense impulses for getting involved.

Holo Miteinander is organized by Sascia Bailer, artistic director of M.1 2019/20 and Claudia Dorfmüller, director of the program M.1 Lokal. The project is funded by the Federal Agency for Civic Education within the framework of "MITEINANDER REDEN." This is a nationwide pilot project for actors in rural areas, in which a total of 100 projects are funded between 2019 and 2021.

The new federal political programme "MITEINANDER REDEN" has been initiated and is financed by the Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten (AdB), the Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund (DStGb), the Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume (DVS) and the Deutscher Volkshochschulverband and is implemented by the educational agency labconcepts as programme office.

*

Collaboration with Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin: New Alphabet School edition on CARING

PLEASE NOTE: Originally planned as an on-site event – due to the increasing number of Corona cases the event will partly take place online; some program elements will be postponed

With (digital) contributions by Malu Blume, Frauke Frech (Grand Beauty on Tour), Antje Hachenberg, Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie, Maternal Fantasies, Polyphrenic Creatures, Nora Sternfeld, Studio Experimentelles Design (Klasse Prof. Jesko Fezer, HFBK Hamburg) and engaged participants from the region

Curated by Sascia Bailer

Social norms and often unquestioned values act as invisible infrastructures that determine how we shape interpersonal relationships: In what way do we care for ourselves, for each other and for our communities? As rigid as these norms and values may seem, they have the potential to be carriers of social change: Can we unlearn traditional mechanisms of exclusion and design new social protocols that focus on collective care and solidarity? Can our society become more inclusive by incorporating ethics of care into our social infrastructures?

The event Caring Infrastructures sets the local as a starting point for a series of talks, workshops, film screenings and community forums, in order to focus on encounters based on care and solidarity. Artistic, design-based, activist and local initiatives invites the audience to reflect on care practices from different perspectives and to design long-term caring infrastructures.

The curatorial cycle 2019/20 in which Sascia Bailer as Artistic Director of M.1 focused on care through participatory formats and socially engaged art, ends with the event Caring Infrastructures. The event is a continuation of the New Alphabet School's edition on the topic of Caring from June 11-14th 2020 (co-curated by Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky and Rosario Talevi) in cooperation with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. It is generously supported by **Förderstiftung des Kreises Steinburg** and **Kulturstiftung des Landes Schleswig-Holstein.**

Documentation

Part of the online program is available on Vimeo for later viewing.

HKW Programming Overview:

The New Alphabet
New Alphabet School
#4 Caring
June 12–14, 2020

Friday, June 12
6 pm–9pm
Welcome, Audios, and Conversation

Sascia Bailer, Johanna Bruckner, Gilly Karjevsky, Elke Krasny, Olga Schubert, Rosario Talevi, Polyphrenic Creatures, Helena Reckitt

Saturday, June 13
10am–9.30pm
Workshops and Film

Edna Bonhomme, Malu Blume, Loren Britton, Andreas Doepke, Romi Morrison, Henry Lyonga N, Helen Pritchard, Eric Snodgrass

Sunday, June 14
11am–8pm
Performance and Workshops
Júlia Ayerbe, Maternal Fantasies, Teresa Dillon

Caring Infrastructures
October 24–25, 2020
At M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt

Film Screenings, Exhibition, Talks and Workshops
Malu Blume, Antje Hachenberg, Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie, Maternal Fantasies, Polyphrenic Creatures, Studio Experimentelles Design (Class Prof. Jesko Fezer, HFBK Hamburg)

All Live-Streaming via www.hkw.de and after the streaming on the New Alphabet Blog.

We recommend to use headphones.

Times are indicated in CET.

[Kopfhörersymbol] All events in English at HKW (unless indicated otherwise), at M.1 in German.

Alle Live-Streaming-Veranstaltungen über www.hkw.de und nach dem Streaming auf dem New Alphabet Blog.

Wir empfehlen die Verwendung von Kopfhörern.

Die Zeiten sind in MEZ angegeben.

[Kopfhörersymbol] Alle Veranstaltungen im HKW auf Englisch (falls nicht anders gekennzeichnet), im M.1 auf Deutsch.

 #newalphabetschool #4 Caring

Friday, June 12

6pm–9pm

Welcome, Audios and Conversation

Sascia Bailer, Johanna Bruckner, Gilly Karjevsky, Elke Krasny, Helena Reckitt, Polyphrenic Creatures, Olga von Schubert, Rosario Talevi

The opening day explores, maps, complicates and challenges notions of caring, considered as both, a range of practices and an ethics of being together otherwise. The first day introduces the audience to the history of the concept of care but also to the contemporary discourse around caring and thereby sets the ground for the upcoming contributions of the following days.

6pm

Welcome

Sascia Bailer, Gilly Karjevsky, Olga von Schubert, Rosario Talevi

via www.hkw.de

6pm

Audio

N E P O <

Polyphrenic Creatures

10min

via www.hkw.de

EN and DE

In Hohenlockstedt, a small community in Schleswig-Holstein, neighbors have been coming together since the beginning of 2020 in the storytelling-café series *Holo Miteinander* at M.1 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. The central question is how do we want to live together? At

the moment when vulnerability is admitted to everyone, a sense of social power of trust is created. The artist duo Polyphrenic Creatures accompanies these talks. In the performative gesture N E P O < they transform, in the way of a carpet of language, the respective subjective experience in a rhythmic reconnection to a collective narrative. *N E P O <* invites us to engage in new directions of reading in order to release internalized ways of thinking and acting from their rigidity and to learn from each other and to (re-)learn forms of interaction. With *N E P O <*, Polyphrenic Creatures create a performative gesture of opening through their bodies and voices – and thus initiate the program of *#4 Caring* with local-situated questions and communal knowledge production.

Notation clapping / technical support: Bastian Hagedorn, Vocal Recordings: Diana Tsantekidou.

6.30pm

Conversation

On Caring

Helena Reckitt and Elke Krasny

90min with Q&A

via www.hkw.de

EN

Caring has recently received increased attention in critical cultural discourses, allowing for new research projects, exhibitions, and publications to emerge. Yet, why now? Why does society seem to be more receptive than ever to a subject as old as humanity? This opening conversation between the two curators and authors Elke Krasny and Helena Reckitt traces the history of care and social reproduction from a feminist and critical cultural perspective and situates it in today's discourse on caring. By highlighting relevant practices on caring they will question, complicate, and reflect on caring as a radical practice towards social transformation. This conversation will be followed by a moderated Q&A session via live chat.

8pm

Audio

Atmospheric Escape: Fabulating Care

Johanna Bruckner

via www.hkw.de

Gaseous substances of the Earth escape into space and form extracorporeal bodies. These structures come into being as their molecular particles mutually support, align with and ripple against each other and the electromagnetic field. Johanna Bruckner calls this state polymorphous care or desire. How can these non-human bodies and their poetics of care be imagined?, How can these crystallizations be aesthetically narrated, accessed and diffracted? How can they help us fabulate and perform possible future worlds, languages and practices of care beyond the tangible? The audio offers scores for the listener to

approach these questions in aesthetic, sonic and collective ways.

Saturday, June 13

10am–9.30pm

Workshops and Film

Edna Bonhomme, Malu Blume, Loren Britton, Andreas Doepke, Romi Morrison, Henry Lyonga N., Helen Pritchard, Eric Snodgrass

Workshops and films open up conversations around the terminologies, potentials and tensions embedded in the field of care – from the rural-urban conundrum to queer-feminist, Black feminist and postcolonial propositions.

Workshop

Ill Will and the Biopolitics of Care Convened by Edna Bonhomme

10am–12pm

Online-Program, registration needed

EN

When does a person consider themselves sick and how do (post)colonial and (post)migration residues shape the way people archive, narrate and navigate care? The racialization of epidemics continues to result in very disparate outcomes, leaving some to fall ill and others not.

This workshop will consider how bioprivilege operates and how it functions in opposition to the politics of care. In an attempt to overcome reductive and universal claims about care, the workshop troubles ill will and care through the novel coronavirus and other epidemics and tries to see how the most marginalized in Europe encounter ailments. Care is at the core of queer and feminist traditions; it is ubiquitous and cultivated in how people move through the world and determines whether they survive or thrive. This workshop explores how the intimate relationship between toxicity, health and care can help to enliven how people heal.

1pm–3pm

Workshop

Agro-centric thinking – a pathway to a collective biographical imagination? Convened by Andreas Doepke and hn. Lyonga

Planned for HKW Online-Program, registration needed

EN, DE available

In this dialog-centric workshop, participants will explore how agriculture is related to caring. Can agriculture maintain its presence across personal biographies, even after its practices have been abandoned during one's own life or in previous generations? The participants will discuss how the "fixity" of land as an infrastructure leaves tangible and intangible traces within us. How could these vestiges be activated as a resource that reinvigorates the ties between the rural and the urban? In a "round table" conversation, potentials of this knowledge of caring for self, a rural community, for land, plants, and animals will be scrutinized. Whether in the form of nostalgia or the cardinal principle of providing shelter, food, access to education and a strong sense of accountability, the inheritance of caring for land translates to many other contexts and may help to enhance a collective future.

4pm–7pm

Workshop

Future(s) Otherwise: Dreaming with Oracle Practices Convened by Loren Britton, Romi Morrison, Helen Pritchard, Eric Snodgrass

Online-Program, registration needed

Language: caption language online

EN, DE available

The workshop engages methods from Black Feminist Poet(h)ics, and asks questions about our computational environments. Through a guided process of welcoming, writing, choosing, reading and intuiting, the participants will pose questions to an oracle that allow for thinking the world otherwise. The oracle is a source to work with, not to extract from. In the workshop the oracle will be the text: *M Archive: After the End of the World*, the 2018 book of poetry from Alexis Pauline Gumbs. Rethinking what ethics for computational practices are, the workshop conveners propose oracle(s) as a critical-technical practice for opening up possibilities and imaginations for accountability that arise within automation and digitalisation. Oracle(s) demands that we think the world differently and practices what it might mean for all of us to be free.

8pm–9.30pm

Film

The Book of S of I. Chapter One: Creatures Born from Hopelessness Malu Blume

Q&A moderated by Sascia Bailer

30min

Via www.hkw.de

EN

Another world, post-apocalypse. In their video work Malu Blume takes the viewer back to the future: The first part of their trilogy appears like a feverish nightmare turning into utopian dreams. Bodies aligned in pleasure, summoning the ghosts of the past and the future. *The Book of S of I* is a queer feminist sci-fi saga about the desire to belong, about the power of

mutual care, bodily pleasures and the yearning for tenderness. Video realized in collaboration with İpek Hamzaoğlu and Laura Nitsch from HEKATE – Film & Video Collective, Marwa Abou Hatab, Roya Asaadian, Magdalena Fischer, Camila Rhodi, Sofi Utikal and Rosa Wiesauer.

Sunday, June 14

11am–8pm

Performance and Workshops

Júlia Ayerbe, Maternal Fantasies, Teresa Dillon

The third, and last day of the program invites participants to join artist-led workshops, performances and meditative rituals of care. These acts of care challenge normative concepts, regulations and myths around motherhood, autonomy and infrastructures from diverse perspectives.

11am–1pm

Workshop

Who Depends on Whom? Deconstructing Ableist Perspectives of Autonomy and Dependence Convened by Júlia Ayerbe

Online-Program, registration needed

EN

Dis*abled people have always designed mechanisms and structures to support and respect their own special needs and bodies to face ableism. At the present moment, the global population is trying to understand and develop new forms of life due to the limitations imposed by Covid-19, and much can be learned from the functional diverse community and disability studies. In the workshop participants are invited to interrogate their experiences and perspectives about "autonomy" and "dependence." Together, they will investigate how invisible are the entangles of caring and the chains of production that sustain the ableist system, unmasking the neoliberal illusion of the "independent man" that stigmatizes vulnerable bodies as dependent, unproductive and worthless.

3pm–3.30pm

Performance

Love and Labor. Intimacy and Isolation. Care and Survival. A performance between mothers and children in a state of lockdown Maternal Fantasies

Via www.hkw.de

EN

Who cares for whom and what are the consequences? The feminist art collective Maternal Fantasies lets viewers peak into their homes, where artistic production exists alongside domestic tasks and childcare. Household items become toys. Kitchens become backdrops. Care work and parenting have historically been marked by gender-based inequalities, yet the current conditions of social distancing have acutely magnified these injustices. Against this backdrop, the performance seeks to understand "mothering" not as a physical and fixed category or identity, but instead as dedicated time, attention, nurturance, protection and an interrupted state of mind.

6pm–8pm

Workshop

Cleansing the Pipes

Convened by Teresa Dillon

EN

Tubes, lines, pipes, connectors of fibre, submarine communications chains and forked paths, colonial plumbing circumnavigating the globe. Infrastructures support us to exchange and communicate. What stories do they hold? Casting telecom-spells, the workshop participants activate their collective imaginaries, traveling through the superhighways of the digital. Teresa Dillon will guide this mediation and visioning, which will be followed by a group conversation on the histories of the Internet, its environmental and colonial footprint and what it takes to keep it going. Why should we care about the environmental costs of the Internet? How is this balanced by its multiple uses, particularly in supporting expressions of care during times of hyper regulation, isolation and physical distancing?

Further program

Text

Letters to Joan

Letters to Joan brings together views on the current state of care in times of pandemic from artists, writers and academics. The invitation to write these letters to Joan Tronto, a key proponent of different concepts and theories on care, provide a loose framework inside of which these practitioners could position in relation to from their own practice and identity, addressing their words to a person who is also a node, with the idea of informal correspondence.

Audio

#shareyourquiet

Pallavi Paul

Instagram #shareyourquiet and NAS Blog

Time: Online with pdf on Blog

At a time when noise has become an index of public spirit; when authoritarian regimes are engaged in a feverish amplification of propaganda via partisan statistics and faux science; when the pandemic has also unleashed a despotic drive towards homogenizing populations and policing speech – can quietude harness something outside overdetermined and hyper-regulated imaginations of contemporary life? Can the sharing and listening of "quietude" can be a space of care and resistance?

On March 26th, 2020 Pallavi Paul launched in collaboration with Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts the participatory archive titled #shareyourquiet. Participants are invited to share 10-20 second recordings of their "quiet." Here quiet is not a tranquil break from the world, rather a marker of the tempestuous churning we find ourselves in. Liberated from the syntax of productivity, an attentive listening and sharing is activated. For the New Alphabet School edition on Caring Pallavi Paul extends the invitation to the participants of the school to send their 'quiet' to +91 98333 03760 or info@sgcfa.org. The contributions will be broadcasted on instagram #shareyourquiet from June 12 on.

Participant Biographies

Júlia Souza Ayerbe is an editor, curator and researcher. Her production is focused on feminism, disability studies, translation and editing. She holds a Master's degree in Contemporary Art History and Visual Culture by Universidad Autónoma and Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid, 2019). She has worked for museums, cultural centers and independent art spaces.

Sascia Bailer's research and practice is located at the intersection of care, curating and social transformation. She is the Artistic Director 2019/20 of M.1 by the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung and is working on her practice-based curatorial PhD at Zurich University of the Arts and the University of Reading. She has worked internationally within the arts, including MoMA PS1, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. She holds an MA from Parsons School of Design and a BA from Zeppelin University.

Malu Blume lives and works between Vienna and Berlin. Their practice crosses the fields of art, performance, education and activism. They graduated in 2016 with a Master in Critical Studies, an artistic-scientific study program at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and before that with a Bachelor in Art Education and Pedagogy at the University of Osnabrück. Blume works mostly in collectives (ff. Feministisches Fundbüro 2015, Heulsuse 2017, Feige – Verein für queer-feministische Bildung und Bildproduktion 2018), which they founded with friends to advance their projects on queer feminism, archive politics, friendship, collective knowledge production and care. Blume is the recipient of the Artist Advancement Award 2019/20 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung.

Edna Bonhomme is an art worker, historian, lecturer, writer and former biologist whose work interrogates the archaeology of (post)colonial science, embodiment and surveillance. A central question of her work asks: what makes people sick? Her practices troubles how people perceive modern plagues and how they try to escape from them. She earned her PhD at Princeton University. Her dissertation *Plagued Bodies and Spaces: Medicine, Trade, and Death in Egypt and Tunisia, 1500–1804 CE* (2017), explored the history of epidemics,

trade and funeral rites in North Africa and the Middle East.

Loren Britton is an interdisciplinary artist working across radical pedagogy, play and unthinking oppression. They make objects that re-position and collaborations that unlearn. Britton is concerned with questions of technoscience, anti-racism, trans*feminism and making accessibilities (considering class and dis/ability). Britton researches within Gender/Diversity in Informatics Systems at the University of Kassel. More info at lorenbritton.com.

Johanna Bruckner is an artist based in Zurich. Bruckner's work relates to ideas of networks and ecologies of trust and care. She is interested in the conditions of labor that have been emerging in response to the technologies of communicative capitalism. She mainly works in the media of video, installation and performance. Her work was shown internationally, most recently at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich; Kunsthaus Hamburg; and transmediale 2020. Bruckner has taught at various universities and is currently Artist-in-Residence at the Swiss Institute in Rome.

Teresa Dillon is an artist and researcher, whose work focuses on the situated, lived entanglements of techno-civic systems within urban spaces. Recent works include *In Your Aerial* (2019), a project in which the inheritance and heritage of a community Internet network is established, and the text *Liquid Loss: Learning to Mourn Our Companion Species and Landscapes* (2019). Since 2013 Dillon has organized and hosted *Urban Knights*, a program of talks and workshops that promotes and provokes alternatives to city living. In 2018 she established the Repair Acts network which focuses on practice and scholarship relating to repair, care and maintenance cultures. She currently holds the post of Professor of City Futures at the School of Art and Design, UWE Bristol, where she leads on projects relating to restorative and healing futures, surveillance histories, data as matter and urban commoning.

Andreas Doepke is a researcher and cultural producer with degrees in Political Science and Geography. Linking ecology and social justice is central for his work in civic education and the arts. With a longstanding interest in emancipatory and poetic potentials of peripheral cultural landscapes, he applies place-based research methods and currently focuses on coloniality in rural spaces in Germany.

João Florêncio is a Senior Lecturer in History of Modern and Contemporary Art and Visual Culture at the University of Exeter, working at the intersection of visual culture, queer theory and contemporary philosophy. His monograph *Bareback Porn, Porous Masculinities, Queer Futures: The Ethics of Becoming-Pig* (2020) analyses contemporary gay "pig" masculinities, which developed alongside antiretroviral therapies, online porn and new sexualized patterns of recreational drug use, examining how they trouble modern European understandings of the male body, as well as their ethics and political underpinnings.

Johanna Hedva is a Korean-American writer, artist, musician and astrologer, who was raised in Los Angeles by a family of witches and now lives in LA and Berlin. They are the author of the novel *On Hell* (2018). Their next book, a collection of poems, essays and performances

that documents a decade of work, entitled *Minerva the Miscarriage of the Brain*, will be published in September 2020. Their essay "Sick Woman Theory" (2016) has been translated into six languages. In March 2019 their album *The Sun and the Moon* was released. Since 2018, they've been touring *Black Moon Lilith in Pisces in the 4th House*, a doom metal guitar and voice performance influenced by Korean shamanist ritual.

Gilly Karjevsky is a Berlin-based curator of critical spatial practice. She is visiting curator of Unidee at the Cittadellarte in Biella 2020/21. Her most recent projects include *Climate Care: A Curriculum for Urban Practice* (Floating University Berlin, 2019), *Formats of Care* (Vienna / Berlin, 2019), a convening of feminist spatial practitioners, and *Silent Conversation*, a public collaborative lexicon writing process at the Floating University Berlin, 2018. Karjevsky is founder of the City Artists Residency program – a platform for artistic intervention in local politics. Since 2010 she has been co-director of *72 Hour Urban Action*, the world's only real-time architecture competition with past editions in Germany, Israel, Denmark, Italy, Turkey and Malta.

The Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie is an independent, non-profit association founded in 2011, which is committed to a social, ecological and democratic economy and society and offers events for a social-ecological transformation. The central concern of the association is an economy that puts the needs of people back in the center of attention while respecting the ecological limits of the planet. The Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie primarily provides educational and networking work on growth-critical topics and degrowth. In detail, this means developing educational methods, training multipliers, working in alliances and participating in social movements for a "good life for all."

Elke Krasny is professor for art and education at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She is a feminist scholar and curator focusing on critical practices in art, architecture, and urbanism connected to activism, uneven development, and remembrance. She aims to contribute to innovation and debate in these fields through forging experimental post-disciplinary alignments between research, teaching, curating, and writing. Her exhibition *Hands-On Urbanism: The Right to Green* was shown at the 2012 Venice Biennale. Krasny and Angelika Fitz are curators of the exhibition at Architekturzentrum Wien, *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*.

hn. lyonga is a creative-writer. Currently, he is a Master's student of American Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He graduated with a Bachelor's in American Culture and Sociology from the University of Kassel. He writes about immigration, life in the diaspora and the loss of identity with a special focus on People of Color.

Maternal Fantasies is an interdisciplinary group of international artists and cultural producers based in Berlin. They shape the discourse on motherhood through collective artistic processes while enhancing the visibility of contemporary feminist positions addressing motherhood(s) in the arts. From writing autobiographical responses to classic feminist texts to devising performances using children's games, their art practice favors inclusive community-oriented experiments as alternatives to traditional structures of art production. Bridging theory and practice, their strategy transforms research on motherhood(s), care work and representation in the arts into frameworks for immersive modes of critique. They

are the recipient of the Artist Advancement Award 2019/20 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung. Current members of Maternal Fantasies are Aino El Solh, Hanne Klaas, Isabell Spengler, Lena Chen, Magdalena Kallenberger, Maicyra Leao, Mikala Hyldig Dal, Olga Sonja Thorarensen, Sandra Moskova.

Romi Morrison is an artist working across critical data studies, Black feminist praxis and geography. Focusing on boundaries, social infrastructure and community technology, they engage informal practices of knowing and representing space beyond modes of enclosure that capture land into property, people into subjects and knowledge into data. They are currently a PhD candidate in the School of Cinematic Arts at USC, Los Angeles. More info at elegantcollisions.com

Pallavi Paul works with video, performance and installation. Her practice speaks to poetic exploration of cultural histories, questioning the limits of speculation, facticity and evidence. Paul is also engaged in thinking about ideas of the archive, tensions between document and documentary and the implication of trace. She is currently a PhD candidate at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Paul's work has been exhibited in venues including Tate Modern, London (2013); AV Festival, New Castle (2018, 2016), Beirut Art Centre(2018); and Contour Biennale, Mechelen (2017). She currently lives and works in New Delhi.

Polyphrenic Creatures is an interdisciplinary collective founded by the artists Ulrike Bernard and Amelie Marei Loellmann. Since 2014 they have been devoting themselves to the utopian and fantastic under the guise of reality in dialogic exchange formats, live audio dramas and audio walks. Their live audio drama *Creatures in the Mind Nets* was presented at steirischer herbst in Graz in 2016. Their work *Softsonic GG*, which explores digital communication structures and tests listening as an active form of action, was shown at district Berlin in 2017. Currently, a collaboration with the Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt is taking place for the storytelling-café series *Holo Miteinander*.

Helen Pritchard is the head of Digital Arts Computing and a lecturer in Computational Art at Goldsmiths, University of London. Pritchard's work brings together the fields of Computational Aesthetics, more-than-human geographies and Trans*FeministTechnoScience to consider the impact of computational practices on environmental justice. She is the co-editor of Data Browser 06: *Executing Practices* (2018), published in *Data Browser.* More info at helenpritchard.info

Helena Reckitt is a curator and researcher with a longstanding interest in feminist and queer art, theory and activism. Formerly Senior Curator of Programs at The Power Plant in Toronto (2006–2010), she is currently Senior Lecturer in Curating in the Art Department at Goldsmiths, University of London. Reckitt has curated exhibitions in the UK, US and Canada, including *What Business Are You In?* (The Contemporary, 2004), *Not Quite How I Remember It* (The Power Plant, 2008) and *Getting Rid of Ourselves* (OCAD University, 2014). She is editor of the books *Art and Feminism* (2001), *Sanja Iveković: Unknown Heroine* (2013) and, with Joshua Oppenheimer*, Acting on AIDS* (1998).

Patricia Reed is an artist, writer and designer based in Berlin. Recent writings have been published in journals and books including *Glass Bead Journal, e-flux Journal, Para-Platforms*, *Post Memes: Seizing the Memes of Production* and *Distributed*. Writings in *Pages Magazine*, *The New Normal*, *Construction Site for Possible Worlds* are forthcoming. Reed is also part of the Laboria Cuboniks (techno-material feminist) working group whose *Xenofeminist Manifesto* was reissued in 2018 by Verso Books.

Yayra Sumah is a PhD candidate at Columbia University. She researches Congolese (DRC) history, the politics of decolonization, and the ontology and epistemology of Central African healing. Her interests include poetry, art, activism and cultural criticism. She has written for *Borderlines (Journal for the Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East)*, *SUNU*: *Journal of African Affairs*, *Critical Thought + Aesthetics and Paletten Art Journal.*

Soft Agency is a diasporic group of female architects, artists, scholars, writers and curators working with spatial practices. The agency's work is rooted in feminist methodologies practices and formats, in the intersection of critical spatial practice, radical pedagogies, collectivities of becoming otherwise and alternative modes of participation. Through the creation of workshops, events, exhibitions, publications and public programs, Soft Agency seeks to disrupt and re-imagine the lively entanglements through which civic life is organized, rethinking economy, political relationships and social bonds.

Rosario Talevi is a Berlin-based architect interested in critical spatial practice, transformative pedagogies and feminist futures, which she explores through various spatial, editorial and curatorial formats. Currently, she is acting as research curator at the Berlin University of the Arts for the practice-based research project Making Futures Bauhaus+. She is executive board of the Floating University Berlin, curatorial board for Make City Festival and a founding member of s-o-f-t.agency.

Joan Tronto is professor of political science at the University of Minnesota and was previously professor of women's studies and political science at Hunter College and the Graduate School at the City University of New York. Tronto works in feminist political theory, women in politics and issues of diversity. Her most important writings concern ethics of care. She is the author of *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (1993) and *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (2013). She is also initiator of the Care Ethics Research Consortium www.care-ethics.org.

The New Alphabet School

Curatorial Project-Supervision: Bernd Scherer, Director HKW

Curatorial Advisory Board: Gigi Argyropoulou, Mahmoud Al-Shaer, Rahul Gudipudi and Ibrahim Hannoon

Head of Project: Olga von Schubert, HKW

Project Coordination: Jessica Páez, Caroline Adler (until March 2020), HKW

The New Alphabet School #4 Caring

Co-Curated by: Sascia Bailer (artistic director 2019/20 of M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung), Gilly Karjevsky and Rosario Talevi (Soft Agency)

Publication Design: Sebastian Garbrecht

Editing Program: Anna Etteldorf, Kirsten Thietz

Editing Letters to Joan: Gilly Karjevsky

Translation English – German: Elisa Barth

Production Management: Claudia Peters

Video, Sound and Live Streaming: Simon Franzkowiak, Matthias Hartenberger, Tassos Papiomytoglou

Production Management Recording: Nadja Schütt

M.1 kuratieren ist Teil des Programms der Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung

Artistic director (M.1 kuratieren 2019/20): Sascia Bailer

Project Assistance: Maria Nydahl

Project Team: Ulrike Boskamp, Claudia Dorfmüller, Jörg Hischke, Bettina Kruse

→ newalphabetschool.hkw.de

→ hkw.de/newalphabetschool

→ m1-hohenlockstedt.de/en/2019-2020/

Caring Infrastructures

Saturday, October 24 & Sunday, October 25

At M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung

With Malu Blume, Antje Hachenberg, Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie, Maternal Fantasies, Polyphrenic Creatures, Studio Experimentelles Design, Klasse Prof. Jesko Fezer, HFBK Hamburg

Curated by Sascia Bailer

The multi-sited, multi-voiced, interdisciplinary event on *#4 Caring* hosted online at HKW will continue at M.1 in Hohenlockstedt on October 24th and 25th, 2020 with the physical event *Caring Infrastructures*. Discursive, artistic, design-based and activist practices will interact with local initiatives to think through caring practices on different scales and from different perspectives. Social norms, often unquestioned values, and gendered and racialized protocols often act as invisible infrastructures that prescribe the mechanisms of how we relate to one another; of how we care for each other, for ourselves, our communities and beyond. As rigid as these norms and values might seem, they also contain the potential to be the carriers of social transformations: If we inserted a notion of care into our social infrastructures, could this lead towards a more inclusive society? And if so, how can we unlearn our inherited and collectivized mechanisms of exclusion and develop new social protocols, new counter-practices against the uneven distribution of care?

Caring Infrastructures will situate the local as the point of departure for a series of discussions, workshops, film screenings, and community forums – in order to push care and solidarity-based communal encounters from the margins to the center. In order to continue the conversations that emerge from the event in June (curated together with Gilly Karjesvky, Rosario Talevi and Haus der Kulturen der Welt**)**, various contributions, such as the Letters to Joan, the instructions and scores, will be made accessible and possibly mediated and staged at M.1 in October. This event will also mark the closing of Sascia Bailer's curatorial turnus of 2019/20 at M.1, in which she focused on care through participatory formats and socially engaged artistic practices.

Disclaimer: All formats and dates are subject to change in accordance to the measurements in regards to covid-19. All updates, including specific times for the individual contributions will be communicated 4–6 weeks prior to the event.

Movies and Talk: Fantastic Futures

Films on Care and Collectivity by Malu Blume & Maternal Fantasies

(Artist Advancement Awardees 2019/20 of Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung)

Followed by an artist conversation

moderated by Sascia Bailer (Artistic Director 2019/20 of M.1)

Visions of the future enable us to mentally escape from an everyday life that constricts us, in which we feel misunderstood – and at the same time, these visions offer a platform to our urge for change. In the film screening *Fantastic Futures* at M.1, the awardees Malu Blume and Maternal Fantasies use an array of artistic methods in order to overcome a rigid reality in which normative gender roles and rigid ideas of community and care seem to be enshrined. The two video works by the recipients of the Advancement Awards 2019/20 of the Arthur Boskamp-Stfitung were specifically developed for *Fantastic Futures* and were filmed in Hohenlockstedt and the surrounding area. The region between the North and the Baltic Sea turns into a stage on which fantastic visions of the future take place. This allows the fields of tension to unfold between care, gender and community, oscillating between euphoria and delusion. As fragile as these concepts may seem, maybe such are the ones that can let a different future become reality.

Conversation: Community Forum Holo Miteinander

Moderated by Antje Hachenberg

As part of the project *Holo Miteinander* (Holo Together), people and care actors from Hohenlockstedt (for short: Holo) and the surrounding area exchange ideas on the topics of mobility, housing, food, work and leisure at five storytelling cafés taking place in M.1. At the heart of these talks are the wishes, ideas, needs, experiences and questions that each participant brings to these topics. Active and careful listening is an important part of this series of events, which aims to establish and make visible existing connections with each other through exchange and listening. These lived connections have the potential to pave the way for more solidarity in Hohenlockstedt, and to promote and value the village community, care work and inclusion. The topics and contributions from the five storytelling cafés will be linked together in a community forum in which the participants will discuss how the platform *Holo Miteinander* can be continued beyond the funding framework of the Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (Federal Agency for Civic Education), and how solidarity structures can be developed in a collective and self-organised way.

Sound Collage: Polyphrenic Creatures

The storytelling-cafés are accompanied by the artist duo Polyphrenic Creatures, consisting of Ulrike Bernard and Amelie Marei Löllmann. For their artistic work they initiate performative situations in which listening plays a central role. They (over)write stories and enter into an exchange of ideas with the participants in dialogical encounters. As part of the storytelling-café series *Holo Miteinander,* they become listeners themselves and will not only help shape this process through various artistic interventions, but also actively observe it. Statements, moods, ideas, connections – everything that happens visibly and invisibly in conversations will be observed – not in the sense of "fixing," but as an opportunity to develop new perspectives, to create points of contact for interaction, and to sense impulses for getting involved. In the context of *Caring Infrastructures*, the artist duo will present a sound collage that sketches and makes accessible the conversations and experiences of this collective process.

Display: Archive of Encounter by Studio Experimentelles Design

Klasse Prof. Jesko Fezer, HFBK Hamburg: Veronica Andres, Pablo Lapettina, Laura Mahnke, Skadi Sturm

For over a year, four students of the Hamburg University of Fine Arts have been accompanying the events of Sascia Bailer's curatorial program artistic director of M.1 2019/20, which addresses care, community and solidarity. How can these social processes be made visible? What traces remain of these interactions and experiences? Can one create an archive of these encounters that is accessible to the public – and that will allow an outside person to participate?

The mobile archive that emerged out of these questions consists of eight suitcases. Each of them documents and artistically interprets one of the past events on topics such as trust, self-esteem, isolation and motherhood. These suitcases invite the viewer to participate, to touch, and to continue the conversation. They can be borrowed from the community library in Hohenlockstedt just like any other media of their collection. The archive invites the viewer to spend time with the topics, impressions and experiences in peace and quiet, and in turn to create their own encounters with the contents.

In cooperation with Gemeindebücherei Hohenlockstedt.

Workshop: Better, together – Approaches to Self-Organisation by Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie

Whether at home, in a club, at work, among friends or in the village community – things always have to be agreed upon, discussed and organised. The workshop participants will explore strategies of self-organisation together; how can responsibility be taken over collectively so that the burden is shared on many shoulders, not just on individuals?

The workshop leader will report on their work as a self-organized collective, the Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie. There is no boss there; all important decisions are made together by consensus and the money is distributed according to needs, not according to working hours. In this workshop the participants will try out how this can work together and learn about approaches to self-organisation.

Section B

Kunstkompass 2023 by Capital:

Die Top 100

Die Bestplatzierten im Gesamtranking des Kunstkompasses

Platzierung			Name	Jahr-gang	Land	Kunstform (u.a.)	Punkte-zuwachs	Gesamt-punkte
2023	2022	+/-						
1	1	–	Gerhard Richter	1932	GER	Malerei	5 200	177 300
2	2	–	Bruce Nauman	1941	USA	Mixed Media	4 050	137 400
3	3	–	Georg Baselitz	1938	GER	Malerei, Skulptur	3 450	116 800
4	4	–	Rosemarie Trockel	1952	GER	Mixed Media	3 900	111 950
5	5	–	Cindy Sherman	1954	USA	Fotokunst	5 300	100 700
6	6	–	Tony Cragg	1949	GBR	Skulptur	5 000	97 650
7	7	–	Olafur Eliasson	1967	DEN	Skulptur, Installation	4 400	96 050
8	8	–	Anselm Kiefer	1945	GER	Malerei, Installation	2 400	89 200
9	9	–	William Kentridge	1955	RSA	Zeichnung, Filmkunst	2 900	86 600
10	10	–	Imi Knoebel	1940	GER	Malerei, Installation	3 700	79 500
11	11	–	Pipilotti Rist	1962	SUI	Video-Art	1 500	74 700
12	14	+2	Jenny Holzer	1950	USA	Mediale Kunst, Malerei	4 100	72 950
13	17	+4	Mona Hatoum	1952	GBR	Installation, Performance	5 300	72 250
14	12	-2	Jeff Koons	1955	USA	Skulptur, Malerei	1 450	72 100
15	13	-2	Richard Serra	1938	USA	Skulptur	1 950	71 400
16	15	-1	Andreas Gursky	1955	GER	Fotokunst	150	68 450
17	16	-1	Thomas Schütte	1954	GER	Skulptur, Zeichnung	300	67 800
18	20	+2	Günther Uecker	1930	GER	Zero	5 200	67 400
19	19	–	Isa Genzken	1948	GER	Objektkunst	2 050	64 700
20	18	-2	Jasper Johns	1930	USA	Pop-Art	1 100	64 000

21	24	+3	Thomas Ruff	1958	GER	Fotokunst	2 800	63 350
22	21	-1	Maurizio Cattelan	1960	ITA	Skulptur, Kritische Kunst	1 150	63 200
23	22	-1	Damien Hirst	1965	GBR	Skulptur, Malerei	1 800	62 550
24	29	+5	Wolfgang Tillmans	1968	GER	Fotokunst	3 950	62 350
25	28	+3	Marina Abramović	1946	SRB	Performance	3 450	62 150
26	27	+1	Monica Bonvicini	1965	ITA	Installation, Kritische Kunst	2 650	61 450
27	23	-4	Francis Alÿs	1959	BEL	Mixed Media, Kritische Kunst	300	60 950
28	25	-3	Bill Viola	1951	USA	Video Art	1 050	60 550
29	30	+1	David Hockney	1937	GBR	Pop-Art	2 550	59 950
30	26	-4	Fischli/Weiss	1952/46	SUI	Video-Art, Installation	800	59 900
31	41	+10	Anish Kapoor	1954	GBR	Skulptur, Installation	4 450	58 150
32	32	–	Pierre Huyghe	1962	FRA	Mixed Media	700	57 800
33	35	+2	Ai Weiwei	1957	CHN	Installation, Kritische Kunst	1 350	57 800
34	31	-3	Gilbert & George	1943/42	GBR	Malerei, Performance	0	57 450
35	33	-2	Jeff Wall	1946	CAN	Fotokunst	700	57 350
36	34	-2	Daniel Buren	1938	FRA	Installation	600	57 100
37	42	+5	Thomas Demand	1964	GER	Fotokunst	2 600	56 100
38	37	-1	Paul McCarthy	1945	USA	Skulptur, Installation	400	56 000
39	47	+8	Erwin Wurm	1954	AUT	Skulptur, Performative Kunst	4 700	55 550
40	38	-2	Douglas Gordon	1966	GBR	Mediale Kunst	600	55 400
41	40	-1	Thomas Struth	1954	GER	Fotokunst	1 250	55 000
42	44	+2	Shirin Neshat	1957	IRI	Mediale Kunst, Filmkunst	2 400	54 250
43	43	–	Tacita Dean	1965	GBR	Mixed Media	1 200	54 200

44	39	-5	Thomas Hirschhorn	1957	SUI	Installation	0	53 950
45	45	–	Ed Ruscha	1937	USA	Mixed Media	750	52 450
46	46	–	Matthew Barney	1967	USA	Mediale Kunst	800	52 350
47	48	+1	Yoko Ono	1933	JPN	Performance, Sound-Art	750	51 250
48	51	+3	Marlene Dumas	1953	NED	Malerei	1 400	50 800
49	49	–	Carsten Höller	1961	GER	Installation	850	50 500
50	50	–	Tobias Rehberger	1966	GER	Installation	0	49 500
51	55	+4	Anri Sala	1974	ALB	Mediale Kunst	1 350	49 150
52	58	+6	Ugo Rondinone	1964	SUI	Mixed Media	2 200	48 800
53	52	-1	Neo Rauch	1960	GER	Malerei	0	48 800
54	53	-1	Luc Tuymans	1958	BEL	Malerei	0	48 750
55	54	-1	Raymond Pettibon	1957	USA	Zeichnung	400	48 400
56	57	+1	Rirkrit Tiravanija	1961	THA	Performance, Installation	1 550	48 300
57	56	-1	Markus Lüpertz	1941	GER	Malerei, Skulptur	150	47 800
58	59	+1	Arnulf Rainer	1929	AUT	Malerei	1 400	47 200
59	61	+2	Barbara Kruger	1945	USA	Installation, Kritische Kunst	1 950	46 700
60	60	–	Roni Horn	1955	USA	Skulptur, Fotokunst	1 000	46 350
61	62	+1	Rebecca Horn	1944	GER	Performance, Installation	1 100	45 700
62	63	+1	Kara Walker	1969	USA	Installation, Kritische Kunst	1 450	45 450
63	68	+5	Robert Gober	1954	USA	Objektkunst	1 850	43 950
64	64	–	Rineke Dijkstra	1959	NED	Fotokunst	300	43 450
65	67	+2	Gabriel Orozco	1962	MEX	Objektkunst	400	42 600
66	74	+8	Katharina Grosse	1961	GER	Malerei, Installation	1 750	42 550
67	70	+3	Albert Oehlen	1954	GER	Malerei	850	42 400
68	66	-2	Sophie Calle	1953	FRA	Installation, Kritische Kunst	0	42 300
69	86	+17	Nan Goldin	1953	USA	Fotokunst, Kritische Kunst	4 250	42 150

70	71	+1	Hans Haacke	1936	GER	Mixed Media, Kritischen K.	700	42 100
71	88	+17	Hito Steyerl	1966	GER	Mediale Kunst, Kritische K.	4 800	41 600
72	69	-3	John Bock	1965	GER	Installation, Performance	0	41 550
73	72	-1	Carl Andre	1935	USA	Minimal Art	150	41 450
74	75	+1	Liam Gillick	1964	GBR	Installation	950	41 450
75	77	+2	Richard Prince	1949	USA	Malerei, Fotokunst	900	41 250
76	78	+2	Kiki Smith	1954	USA	Skulptur	1 750	41 100
77	76	-1	Katharina Fritsch	1956	GER	Skulptur	550	40 900
78	73	-5	Jonathan Meese	1970	GER	Malerei, Installation	0	40 800
79	81	+2	Frank Stella	1936	USA	Malerei	1 300	40 150
80	91	+11	Valie Export	1940	AUT	Video-Art, Kritische Kunst	4 100	39 800
81	83	+2	Philippe Parreno	1964	FRA	Mixed Media, Filmkunst	1 000	39 550
82	79	-3	Rachel Whiteread	1963	GBR	Skulptur	200	39 400
83	80	-3	Heimo Zobernig	1958	AUT	Malerei, Installation	500	39 400
84	82	-2	Gregor Schneider	1969	GER	Installation	650	39 250
85	85	–	Michelangelo Pistoletto	1933	ITA	Arte Povera	700	38 950
86	84	-2	Christian Marclay	1955	USA	Sound-Art, Installation	0	38 450
87	89	+2	Martha Rosler	1943	USA	Video-Art, Kritische Kunst	1 250	37 300
88	90	+2	Tino Sehgal	1976	GER	Performance	0	36 050
89	92	+3	Hiroshi Sugimoto	1948	JPN	Fotokunst	300	35 750
90	94	+4	James Turrell	1943	USA	Lichtkunst	1 300	35 700
91	97	+6	Sarah Morris	1967	GBR	Malerei, Filmkunst	1 350	35 550
92	100	+8	Stan Douglas	1960	CAN	Video-Art	1 700	35 550
93	93	–	Haegue Yang	1971	KOR	Installation	400	35 450

94	96	+2	Sarah Lucas	1962	GBR	Objektkunst, Kritische Kunst	850	35 100
95	95	–	Christian Jankowski	1968	GER	Performance, Mixed Media	650	34 950
96	98	+2	Doug Aitken	1968	USA	Mediale Kunst	400	34 450
97	99	+2	Ernesto Neto	1964	BRA	Installation, Soft-Art	350	34 350
98	111	+13	Giuseppe Penone	1947	ITA	Arte Povera	2 050	34 100
99	105	+6	Tony Oursler	1957	USA	Video-Art	1 100	34 000
100	104	+4	Pawel Althamer	1967	POL	Mixed Media, Kritische Kunst	550	33 500

Source: "Kunstkompass 2023," *Capital*, accessed February 24, 2024. https://www.capital.de/leben/kunstkompass-2023--die-top-100-der-wichtigsten-gegenwartskuenstler-33923746.html?cc_bust=5136879.

Kunstkompass 2023 – Parental Status Analysis

From the Kunstkompass 2023 list I have specifically looked at the top 10 male and female artists and their respective parental statuses. I used the figures provided by STRG_F "Warum sind Kunstwerke von Frauen weniger wert?" (Why are the art works of women less valuable?), 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwNY7YwWDqA.

Since their research was concluded in 2021, I researched the missing artists individually (who had climbed up the rank into the top 10 since 2021), using public available data from artist's biographies listed on their gallery or the artist's own websites, and the artist's social media accounts.

TOP 10 - MEN + WOMEN ARTISTS, ACCORDING TO KUNSTKOMPASS 2023						
Ranking	Name	Gender	Children	Artist born in	Country	Media
1	Gerhard Richter	M	4	1932	GER	Painting
2	Bruce Nauman	M	2	1941	USA	Mixed Media
3	Georg Baselitz	M	2	1938	GER	Painting, Sculpture
4	Rosemarie Trockel	F	0	1952	GER	Mixed Media
5	Cindy Sherman	F	0	1954	USA	photographic art
6	Tony Cragg	M	4	1949	GBR	Sculpture
7	Olafur Eliasson	M	2	1967	DEN	Sculpture, Installation
8	Anselm Kiefer	M	5	1945	GER	Painting, Installation
9	William Kentridge	M	3	1955	RSA	Drawing, film art
10	Imi Knoebel	M	2	1940	GER	Painting, Installation
		Total of Fathers:	8			
		Total of Children:	24			
		Total of Mothers:	0			

TOP 10 - WOMEN ARTISTS, ACCORDING TO KUNSTKOMPASS 2023

Ranking	Name	Children	Artist born in	Country	Media
4	Rosemarie Trockel	0	1952	GER	Mixed Media
5	Cindy Sherman	0	1954	USA	photo art
11	Pipilotti Rist	1	1962	SUI	Video Art
12	Jenny Holzer	1	1950	USA	Media Art, Painting
13	Mona Hatoum	0	1952	GBR	Installation, Performance
19	Isa Genzken	1	1948	GER	Object art
25	Marina Abramović	0	1946	SRB	Performance Art
26	Monica Bonvicini	0	1965	ITA	Installation, Critical Art
42	Shirin Neshat	1	1957	IRI	Media art, film art
43	Tacita Dean	1	1965	GBR	Mixed media
	Total of Children:	**5**			

TOP 10 - MEN ARTISTS, ACCORDING TO KUNSTKOMPASS 2023

Ranking	Name	Children	Artist born in	Country	Media
1	Gerhard Richter	4	1932	GER	Painting
2	Bruce Nauman	2	1941	USA	Mixed Media
3	Georg Baselitz	2	1938	GER	Painting, Sculpture
6	Tony Cragg	4	1949	GBR	Sculpture
7	Olafur Eliasson	2	1967	DEN	Sculpture, Installation
8	Anselm Kiefer	5	1945	GER	Painting, Installation
9	William Kentridge	3	1955	RSA	Drawing, film art
10	Imi Knoebel	2	1940	GER	Painting, installation
14	Jeff Koons	8	1955	USA	Sculpture, Painting
15	Richard Serra	0	1938	USA	Sculpture
	Total of Children:	**32**			

List of independent / grass-roots art and care networks
(No guarantee of completeness)

Germany and Switzerland

Maternal Fantasies
https://www.maternalfantasies.net/

"Mehr Mütter für die Kunst" (Hamburg)
http://www.mehrmütterfürdiekunst.net

kunst + kind berlin (Berlin)
www.kunstundkind.berlin

K&K – Bündnis Kunst & Kind (München)
www.kundk.xyz

other writers need to concentrate (across Germany
www.other-writers.de

Kollektiv CARE RAGE (across Germany)
https://care-rage.de/ueber-das-kollektiv/

CARING CULTURE LAB
www.caringculturelab.org

Bühnenmütter (Berlin)
https://www.buehnenmuetter.com

fair share! Sichtbarkeit für Künstlerinnen (across Germany)
https://www.fairshareforwomenartists.de

Elternschaft und Kunstbetrieb
https://www.werkst.art/elternschaft

"Mothers, Warriors and Poets" (Stuttgart)
https://mothers-warriors-and-poets.net

M.A.R.S. – Maternal Artistic Research Studio (Freiburg)
http://mars-space.net/

DAS BÜNDNIS (Stuttgart)
https://dasbuendnis.net

Netzwerk Mutterschaft und Wissenschaft
https://www.mutterschaft-wissenschaft.de

Kunst und Care Network (across Switzerland)
https://www.kunstundcare.org/

Kollektiv Fluegelmuetere
@kollektiv_fluegelmuetere (Zurich, Switzerland)

Family-friendly residency programme in Switzerland
https://labecque.ch/

United Kingdom

Mothers Who Make
https://motherswhomake.org/

Mother House Studios
https://www.motherhousestudios.com/

Procreate Project
https://www.procreateproject.com/

Mother Art Prize
https://www.procreateproject.com/portfolio/mother-art-prize/

Spiltmilk Gallery
https://www.spiltmilkgallery.com/

Maternal Art Journal
https://maternalart.com/magazine-old/

Art Working Parents Alliance
https://artworkingparents.wordpress.com/

Artist Parent Index
http://artistparentindex.com/about

International
A.M.M.A.A. – The Archive for Mapping Mother Artists in Asia
https://ammaathearchive.wordpress.com/about/

The Artist/Mother
https://artistmotherpodcast.com/about/

Both Artist and Mother
https://bothartistandmother.com/

Cultural ReProducers
https://www.culturalreproducers.org/

Center for Parenting Artists
https://centerforparentingartists.wordpress.com/resources-partners/

Literary Mama Journal
https://literarymama.com/issues/may-june-2023

The Mothership Project
https://themothershipproject.wordpress.com/2013/05/28/the-mothership-project-a-network-of-irish-parenting-visual-artists-and-arts-workers/

Pen Parentis

https://www.penparentis.org/about-us/

MOMTRA

https://hellomomtra.wordpress.com/interviews/

The Mother Load

https://www.themotherload.org/

Mother Makers

https://mothermakersblog.wordpress.com/writing/

M/other voices

https://www.mothervoices.org/

MOTHRA Residency

https://mothra-artist-parents.tumblr.com/raisondetre

MUTHA Magazine

https://www.muthamagazine.com/

Raising Films

https://www.raisingfilms.com/

ARIM – Artist Residency in Motherhood

https://www.artistresidencyinmotherhood.com/

Studies in the Maternal

https://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/

Section C

Cited Field Notes in Full Length

The cited excerpts only show a small fragment of a large collection of field notes. Those can be obtained upon request to the author.

*

Field notes, January 25, 2019

As a curator in Hohenlockstedt, I want to provide a platform which consists of a physical site of encounter but also to provide a social framework that allows different groups to gather, exchange ideas, and negotiate the current problematics around care work and to envision more just futures! My role is not to predetermine the content, the learning outcomes, or the event outcomes; I want to provide a social and in part physical architecture – a framework – that allows for these conversations to happen. In the literal sense, as a curator I also see myself as a caretaker of public and intimate discussions on care work and I want to find ways to foster, enhance, connect, and share these conversation and practices. In this, I draw a connection to the traditional role of a curator who sought to gather, (re)compose, and share objects/artworks; but I specifically focus on social processes. Objects, and therefore exhibitions with objects, are not my focus – they only become relevant when they speak to a social process out of which they emerged or to which they speak. In this setup, the social and political focus of an artwork or initiative is key, using artistic outlets as ways to communicate, engage, and politicise diverse audiences or to envision more just futures. This approach has an activist notion to it: it seeks to provoke, shine light on, and alter the current circumstances. The alliances between everyday practices of local residents, regional politics, and cultural institutions and cultural workers are what makes it a relevant vehicle for social transformation.

My curatorial approach is also highly research focused. It is embedded in a dense web of scholarly, artistic, and curatorial work, which makes my work reflective and responsive to historical and current discourses. It also means that I take time to listen to the local population, to test ideas, to make propositions, to gain trust, and to collectively build upon this. This also comes with the challenge to not only come up with a rather low-key programme in order to welcome everyone but also to develop a sensitivity for what works and what doesn't within a local context, and to choose the right moment of when to challenge the community with alternative concepts, aesthetics, and interventions.

In this whole process, I am absolutely dependent on others, on existing networks, on existing social groups and community, and on the goodwill of engaged individuals "to take me into their community." Without these "informants," I wouldn't be able to make the propositions that I aim to make. This dependence is very important, as it makes my practice humble and a genuine community practice. It is nothing I can do by myself – I can listen, converse, propose – but the community defines the process and eventually the outcomes, too. This requires quite a bit of flexibility in the programme, one has to stay flexible and

open-minded enough to change the programme along the way if the community doesn't seem to catch on to it. If the workshops are never fully booked, the responses are mediocre, then we have to find other solutions … it is an open-ended, radically relational process.

*

Field notes, January 30, 2019

Jury Session
Hohenlockstedt

Present: Jeanne van Heeswijk, Ulrike Boskamp, Sascia Bailer
Elke Krasny fell sick and Nanne Buurman, too

We received 45 applications for the call for applications, searching for artistic positions that critically dealt with the tensions around care. We had received lots of positive feedback from people about how they were really excited to see this call – something they had never seen before. Also, the call seemed to be a good way to put my curatorial undertaking on the map – international professors and interesting collectives became aware of it, even if they themselves weren't eligible. Eligibility was a big problem because it was very narrow, preventing many interesting practices from applying. For example, not all of them had a relationship to Northern Germany, others didn't fit the eight years after graduation rule. This, in combination with the quite specific thematic focus, brought a much lesser number in applications than the years before. They generally said that they received between 80-120 applications.

The curation of the jury itself was a quite long and at times nerve-wracking experience: I had reached out to several people who were all willing to participate in the jury but for various reasons were unable to do so. First, I had asked Marjetica Potrc, Professor at HFBK, who said she would be involved in projects abroad during that time and that she was retiring from her job. I then reached out to Valentina Karga, also at HFBK, who was really excited (and I still believe she would be a great person to work with in the process), but it wasn't possible to synchronize her schedule with Elke Krasny, who was my first go-to person in addition to Marjetica. Elke was really willing to make a big effort but in the end she had to cancel two days before Jury session. In substitution to Valentina – who left the jury because she couldn't make herself available – I had asked Jeanne van Heeswijk, who took Marjetica's position at HFBK. Panickily we tried to find a substitution for Elke on a very lastminute basis, Nanne Buurman – who also does really interesting work in the field – arranged everything so she could make it to Hohenlockstedt for the jury. But on the day of the jury she also woke up sick. So, in the end, it was Ulrike Boskamp, Jeanne van Heeswijk and me. Which worked well, but it was frustrating to have this "result" after months of organizing. The good thing was that this jury search also really put our work on the radar of really interesting scholars and practitioners, whom might be available for a future event.

The jury day went well but for me it was a quite stressful time because I sensed a lot of pressure to find someone whom I'd be working with for such a long time, and who'd be "worthy" of a prize. We did one "knock-out"-round where we each made marks on a sheet, indicating whether we found this position relevant. This took a few hours. Then we shared our thoughts on each position and "kicked" the ones out whom we thought were not interesting or off-topic (which there were a few). We then looked at the "maybe's" and the "yes" options and tried to eliminate more and more. The last stretch was the most stressful

one for me. I felt we were only saying "no" to applications instead of articulating a strong "yes" to anything, and I feared that we would only be left with the "least worse" option instead of the best option. We ended up making "thematic couples" between which we would make decisions and between collective and singular positions.

We had long discussions about maybe six positions. What really made a proposal strong was when it was really clear what they wanted to produce and what the outcomes would be. Many of them were too loosely defined, even though the spoke to interesting phenomena. It bascially seemed to big of a risk to choose them. What also occurred several times is that there was a discrepancy between the project proposal and the portfolio, either the proposal was really strong and the work was weak, or the portfolio was really strong and the proposal was weak. Which eventually, after long discussions, led to elimination. Another crucial "problem" was that many projects were really centered on a specific social group and failed to look outside. Some spoke about the artist precariat but failed to address other precarious forms of living. In the end, we eliminated those applications too. We therefore decided on two positions: one singular, feminist-queer approach who proposed a sci-fi video production for a post-patriarchical future – and one collective feminist approach critically addressing issues around motherhood, art production and society. This way we would have two different approaches who still have a futuristic, visionary stance, proposing different future realities of care.

Speaking of care – the paradox that happened in parallel is that my almost three-year-old son was sick with fever on the day of the jury session. He was very attached to his mom, crying a lot and generally very much unhappy with life. It was very difficult for my grandfather to take care of him for so many hours. Occasionally, my son was in the jury room, or I would spend some time in the apartment with them. It added an extra layer of stress – and made the stretch quite visible between a professional practice and the responsibilities of motherhood – even though the content of my profession is care work, it doesn't eliminate or smoothen the stretch. At around 11 p.m. I went to our apartment, expecting a sleeping child. And there he was, still awake. Both my grandfather and my son looked very exhausted from a very long day together. He luckily fell right asleep next to me once I was in bed too. We took the next morning together to recover from the day before, especially because I could barely sleep that night. All the applications went through my head, unsure whether we had made the right choice, feeling bad about eliminating all those other positions.

———————

Field Notes, July 9, 2019

Reflection of Workshop with Shira Richter

The last few days before the workshop with Shira Richter [the second workshop in the programme] were quite nerve-wracking: for a long time, we only had four registrations. And, of course, I had done quite some financial stretching to get an international artist from Israel to Hohenlockstedt. I felt like I had done everything I could to get more registrations: I posted it in many different Facebook groups, had gone to intercultural women's meetings, had personally reached out to the attendants of the last workshop, had sent out 1,000 flyers to regional organisations, had specifically researched and contacted academic institutes with a gender focus, had distributed the flyers to strangers on playgrounds. It was only last-

minute that a few more registrations came in. In the end, we were around ten participants with a very wide background in age, culture, and experiences. One elderly couple from Holo had joined who weren't always easy in their approach and their specific needs, but throughout the course of the workshop I really began to value their presence. They were really open about their dis*abilities, which created a safe space where people would be allowed to make themselves vulnerable; one of them was also the only man who attended the entire workshop. About an hour into the workshop, another Jewish male from Israel joined; he was the main caregivers of his two children. He then actually had to leave quite early – because of his care duties at home. One other female attendant had already been there for the motherhood workshop, and it was great to see her again in this workshop. Two other women were students from the Hamburg-based art school [HFBK University of Fine Arts Hamburg] and came for our joint archival project.[863] One woman had travelled eight hours by train to join our workshop – she is a single mother and brought her five-year-old daughter. Their vacation had been cancelled, so they used their vacation time and budget to join this workshop.

Even though I was a bit nervous of how things would go, things went really well. To my surprise everyone came with a decent level of English, which allowed us to have a monolingual workshop. Shira introduced us to her artistic work; she has focused on the in/visibility of caregiving for two decades. She showed us how she had used everyday material and situations to create luxury symbols that convey a different sense of value. It was really great to see how these artistic translations of her struggles around care work really resonated with the audience. There is such a misconception that a non-arts audience won't be able to "deal/understand" with abstract artistic works – but this group has been immensely open and really interested in the artistic approaches.

Afterwards we all introduced ourselves, our backgrounds, interests, and struggles. We then went into a joint lunch. The conversations continued… After lunch Shira gave a lecture/presentation of how society treats mothers. She used examples from media and especially Disney film productions of how mothers were usually killed first… as a strategy of "emotionally catching the audience's interest." This strategy of conflict, loss, struggle is commonly used in media to attract attention. Therefore, also competition always wins cooperation, peace and mutual support.

The day ended in the cafe area where she asked everyone to provide her with some feedback and aspects that they would like to focus on tomorrow. This, I thought, was interesting because only with a two-day workshop this sort of reflexivity and flexibility to adjust to the audience's needs are possible. The conversation went really broad, people stayed much longer than the time of the workshop to further engage in discussions, to share personal stories… some of us then went to the local lake for a swim, and to relax and soak in the sunshine…

The next day, two participants from the previous day couldn't join anymore, but three new participants showed up. The three women were from Hohenlockstedt and engaged in different volunteer/care work in the region. None of them had any English skills so I translated the entire workshop day. While it was great to have them join, it of course changed the dynamic of the workshop. Not in a bad way, but of course the intimacy from the day before had to first be established again. But even though they were kind of "thrown into cold water" they were able to get on track really easily.

Shira continued to speak about competition as a problem in our society and especially within

---

863. This project was called *Archive of Encounters*, upon which I elaborate in section 4.4.4 – "ART: Discourse & Artistic Production on Care."

our financial system. It is argued to be part of human and animals' nature (#survivalofthefittest). She then went on to use examples from animals that are usually portrayed as competitive but when you look closer, or try to see the larger picture, there is a lot of cooperation, and solidarity going on amongst different species and within species themselves.

After lunch, we then began a really nice exercise: We each were given a large piece of paper and were asked to write down a "Menu of desired support" and on the other side of the menu we were supposed to write things that really didn't help us at all / things we don't want to be offered. I took the idea of a menu literally and created a section with starters, main courses, deserts… and on the right-hand side a set of allergies. We then shared our menus and found many joint approaches … nice conversations came up… it was really nice. This filled most of the afternoon. In the end we each received "transparent money" as a certificate of our course. We each posed for a group picture, which gave a nice sense of pride and community.

After the workshop, some participants stayed longer and had more in-depth conversations with Shira and with other group members, some already signed up for the next workshop … all in all, it all went really well and it was a great, emotionally engaging, and intellectually stimulating workshop.

*

Field note, August 28, 2019

Reflection on Workshop "Strategies Against Isolation," June 14, 2019, from 11–4 pm, with Manuela Zechner

This workshop was conceived as a response to the central issue of isolation that often occurs when one cares for another human being – one cannot go after one's everyday tasks, hobbies are let go off, the former social circle has different interests / rhythms, one's personal energy resources might be too low to also timewise / emotionally invest in other activities and people. The result is a life that is centered on a care receiver without much support from the outside – also, often after that person passes away or grows up, the old social networks will have withered and won't be accessible anymore. Isolation remains. The question of how we can establish care networks in our lives is therefore really crucial for different age groups and people with different backgrounds.

I invited Manuela Zechner because I had come across her work in different contexts. Especially her work collaborative/research around "Radical Collectives of Care" had already been examined by Elke Krasny and seemed really interesting. Also, her work with the nanopolitics group provides an interesting approach to everyday lives, agency and public space. When we started to announce the workshop, we immediately received lots of interest and the workshop filled up to 18 registrations (20 being the maximum), which was the highest registration rate so far; and we didn't even have to announce it in the press anymore.

Once the workshop began, we were a very large and diverse group of people, ranging from mid-twenties to 84! The majority were women, but 2-3 men were present too. Many had not been to the M.1; some had already attended previous workshops. The moment when people first arrive is always a tricky one, because some seem to feel a bit

uncomfortable but then I am always impressed how open they are in the introduction round. Manuela suggested an introductory game where everyone was supposed to say a few words that reflected their expectations, mood, and background. Manuela would write down some of the keywords and put them at the center of the circle. In a next step, she picked one note from the center and explained a performative exercise, taken from the Theater of the Oppressed:

She would read out the word as everyone stood in a circle. She then asked everyone to turn around and make a gesture that responds to the term. After a short while everyone would be asked to turn around. Then everyone with similar gestures should group up. Manuela would choose one group and ask the others to describe what they see. Each group then was "analysed" with everyone else.

After this "warm up" exercise, we all sat down around a large set of tables and were given a large paper and an assortment of different coloured pens. Manuela started the exercise by asking the group what kind of social relations in a care-context they could think of. E.g., physical care, care receiving, emotional care, financial support, etc. Each of these categories received a designated colour. We then were asked to write down the names of people whom we consider to be part of our care-network and to put ourselves in the center. We then used the different colours to draw the type of connections we have to these different people. Arrows indicated whether we "gave" this type of care or whether we received it from others. Oftentimes the arrows also went both ways. Throughout the course of the exercise Manuela asked us to add different groups of friends, and even institutions that might provide us with care-information or money (e.g. Unterhaltsvorschuss, Kindergeld etc).

All the charts of course looked very different, but always very colourful and dense. Whereas we didn't share the maps in detail, Manuela opened a space for everyone to share what they noticed in the exercise. Some people spoke a lot and others were really quiet. The conversation soon got much broader than just speaking about the maps – especially the 84-year-old woman had a lot to share. Which was respected by everyone, as it was clear that she felt left alone from her children but didn't want to be a burden to anyone. Other participants shared their views, some were controversial and included comments on how she had raised her children and the perspective of what one's position is within this family. The old woman also raised concerns about another woman who had quit her job to take care of her father – she suggested to put him in an old folk's home; that he couldn't make his daughter take care of him and put her own life on hold.

Many different aspects of solitude surfaced: some had gone through a separation and were suffering from the loss of the former social network, some were looking for ways to connect better within the community, others were caring for elderly parents and felt isolation, others were isolated because of their own age or disabilities, others were looking for buddies to go on excursions or to craft things together. Manuela let the conversation happen and interfered only very vaguely. At the end, one of the participants raised the desire to stay connected beyond this workshop – that we should found a WhatsApp group or an email group. I collected everyone's emails and did send an email to everyone, making this an open platform for everyone to engage, connect, and share thoughts. I personally didn't receive a response from the group, but maybe individuals connected separately. Also, I already received some registrations from some of them for the upcoming workshop. One woman registered for ALL upcoming workshops. I take that as a compliment ;).

In an afterthought, I felt that maybe the title focused a lot on isolation which Manuela didn't mention once. She always spoke of care networks… which of course is the other side of the same coin. But I felt that people had maybe wished for a more explicit address of the

subject. And it made me wonder whether I had pushed too much for the subject – because I knew it was a key issue amongst caregivers – but maybe it wasn't the right wording to speak about Manuela's work. This was on the back of my head when I conceptualized the next flyer – but just like Manuela, also Myriam was not super involved in the preparations of the workshop. So, I just hope that I hit the right tone and the right words about the upcoming workshop.

Generally, I think it's really beautiful to see that after half a year of my job there, I actually managed to establish a sense of community, a sense of belonging and a platform for exchange, learning and community organising. This is a really rewarding experience

*

Field Notes, November 20th, 2020

It's over. I'm officially no longer artistic director at M.1, and my project was completed with the final event "Caring Infrastructures" – even though it had to be moved online as well, last minute. But even though it has formally come to closure – the relationships have not. I am no longer paid to nurture these relationships; I no longer live there; I was unable to meet everyone physically to say goodbye. My leaving feels half-baked. It seems like I was unable to obtain a full closure due to the restrictions around Covid-19, but also due to the fact that relational curatorial practice does not end – not like that.

Relationships were fostered, nurtured, and built over almost two years. Now where do they go? What happens when the budget is gone? When employment ends? Who sustains the social processes and with what resources and intentions? When is a social process over? What does that say about a social process – does it make it less valid, or does it simply continue to exist in the memory of people as what it was? Do the relationships fade out, do they reconfigure (without my presence)? And is it necessary for them to continue for the process to have been meaningful? In which ways would a self-organised continuation add value to the project? Or would it basically become something else anyways – another project in itself?

Either way I had to find closure for myself. One step towards that was to really drastically stop working on M.1 related topics, to not read or respond to my M.1 emails regularly anymore. And to find predefined spots in my new working schedule where I would hold some time to continue the work that is left to do. I also realize that I have some unresolved feelings towards M.1, but I can't fully name them. Maybe it stems from the fact that I have around 80 extra hours and many tasks that still need to be done and where I won't be seeing any money for. So, I reached a point, like many of the people that we involved in the participation process, who are not willing to do this work without pay. They, like me, simply can't afford to. And when we talk about community projects and their continuation we need to talk about the logistics, the pay, the frameworks in which this continuation of the work can happen. As we know, volunteering is based on the privilege of time and money – and that shouldn't be the defining parameters when we want to practice care for caregivers.

Another way for me to find closure of the project is the academic work that I am doing on M.1. The programming might have ended but as I am writing my thesis and other papers on it, the work is still very much alive for me and I'm curious to see what layers emerge from that.

*

March 9, 2023 – Conflict

In order to protect the privacy of the people involved in a conflict that arose out of my curatorial programming at M.1, I am only sharing excerpts from my field notes of that day:

(…) Sharing her continued appreciation for my work, also for the work I had done for the collective, and also her discomfort in how it all ended, asking whether I would be open to talk. So we spoke yesterday, for 1.5 hours. It wasn't an easy conversation. We both still held a lot of hurt feelings. We both still disagreed on key points. But I think we both understood a bit better each of our contexts and pressures that made us act the way we did. The point that I find crucial to reflect on is that they saw me as "the institution." (…) Whenever I would ask for something to be changed, they felt that they had to give in because otherwise the project wouldn't get finished. She shared that they did see me as this institutional "Feindbild" that was taking decisions based on an institutional logic. This image was really absurd to me. (…) I am sharing this because this (over-)identification of myself with the institution might have been perceived from the outside, but I didn't feel this way. My efforts for the artists and the publications, which I understood as a passionate care for the cause, was perceived as a power-play – my care was perceived as control. Not free of perfectionism, I read my insistence on fixing details and delivering a publication with a high degree of quality and professionalism, as a personal trait. To them, it was perceived as an institutional imposition of will – against, my own intention and to my own discomfort. I am sharing this, despite making myself vulnerable in doing so, because I want to shed light on the complex dynamics of collaborations that focus on care and come with the intentions of caring interactions, but do not always succeed. These collaborations do not exist in a void of personal agendas, neoliberal project logics, funding frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and internalised perceptions of roles that may (unintentionally) reproduce a hierarchical system, which we had hoped to counter-act. These coercive outside frameworks produce a system of operation that is incredibly precarious. I read these conflicts as manifestations of the contradictions of an oppressive system that ripples down into our personal lives and makes us intent to "solve" and counter-act these tensions on an individual level – yet we fail to do so many times. These conflicts around ownerships, authorships, credits within these collaborative editorial encounters seem to be a reflection of this: each one of the contributors entered the project from a place of precarity and (economic/political/social) vulnerability (which is often opaque to others, or others interact without fully understanding the place of under/privilege from which one acts).

Despite our feminist efforts, our theoretical knowledge, and our engagement with counter-practices, we are also individuals who operate under the pressure "to make it" within a hostile, competitive, neoliberal framework. Many of the ones who came together in these book collaborations are single-parents, queer, freelancers, unemployed, migrants, who need to not only feed themselves but also their dependents. In order to do so, visibility is our only currency. And credits – though often in disconnection with financial reward – are the shape in which the visibility currency operates. It is what adds to the brand to which our names have degenerated into. If there is nothing less to fight for (no financial security nor reward) credits becomes the field upon which the struggles unfold. It is the manifestation of public recognition of ones unpaid labour. If the name doesn't make it to the cover, the work loses its value within the attention economy, as it becomes dissociated from your "branded self."

Yet, the claiming of authorship within feminist discourses can be read in different ways: either as a way to acknowledge the efforts and struggles and important work of others, or as a way to stick to neoliberal conceptions of subjecthood that prioritise the individual over collective efforts (by subsuming the individual name to shared authorship that "erases" the individual voices. Depending on which position one follows, the routes of a practitioner – to either opt for credits and citation as a feminist method or to actively opt out of the hyper-individualisation of collective struggles – it is easy to frame the other spectrum as "anti-feminist"; which, is the worst slur a self-identifying feminist could be confronted with.

We fight in all aspects of our lives to eradicate "anti-feminist" behaviour, so that the calling out, the fighting mode also gets carried into our self-constructed "safe spaces" and put them at risk. This is not to say that there should be no layer of accountability or self-criticality within such relational encounters, but rather that the harshness with which we confront the world with its wrongs, is replicated within tender and intimate collaborations, where irreparable damage is done much more quickly. The artist with whom I was in conflict as a result of a publication on feminist, collective, artistic practices of care, shared with me that I, "as the institution," had become their enemy. Me, the unemployed PhD student with a kid, during the pandemic (…).

As we are in constant fight mode against injustices, we then begin to fight our equals with the same harshness that we aim to eradicate other structures. And we fight from our respective positions, as freelancers against employees of institutions, as institutions against funding bodies, as collectives against individuals – we begin to forget that even the conceived enemy, the institution, consists of people, who carry their own stories of precarity, hidden underneath the seemingly sleek surface of institutional walls.