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cover piece:
Antoin Artaud
Surcouf, King of the Privateers, 1924.

In his new work "Shelter" Dušan Rodić (1975, Belgrade), a young artist who is about to graduate at the Ceramics Department of Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, is remaining truthful to a niche he has carved for himself during his study. He is using "simple" materials to achieve his artistic goal: mud, wood, fire, and eatable plants. The architectonic sustainability of this artwork is guaranteed by such a choice of materials and by skilful design of the construction, which resembles a tent or a mud house. A vegetable garden grown by the artist himself is surrounding the edge of the structure, while three openings lead to the centre where a fireplace is set.

With "Shelter" Dušan Rodić creates a possibility for the artists and visitors to meet each other, to engage in subjective rituals while growing their own radices, tomato and salad, to talk and cook their own food using a "primitive" fireplace. In doing so the artist points out to basic human needs, as well as to our need to socialize, share experiences and hopes. "Shelter" is intentionally sited in the middle of the public courtyard of the Gerrit Rietveld Art academy, and in front of a steel-and-glass building, therefore proclaiming these needs to the artistic community in a bold fashion. Dušan Rodić creates a temporary, muddy platform where the actual and the ideal community meet. The "ideal" here inclines unconformity, informality and, above all, primitive, raw condition. Some artists who searched for the unconventional and fulfilling life, for example Paul Gauguin, left Europe and embarked on a long-time understanding of culture and lifestyle of indigenous communities. While echoing Gauguin's longing for meaning of life, Dušan Rodić is not travelling far away in order to find a "community spirit" and uncontaminated way of life - he creates it in the midst of our consumerist society, challenging thereby our perception of progress in the Hegelian sense.

In creating the condition for socialisation and participating in it actively, Dušan Rodić is situating himself in the tradition of contemporary artists who often research the ambiguity of contact and interaction, such as Rikrit Tiravanija. Yet, since he principally chooses not to place his own artwork in the context of the white cube and to challenge its premise, Dušan Rodić also sets himself apart from that tradition. The young artist tackles many issues - such as western notion of democracy, the symbolic power of a "primitive" community and monumental sculpture versus contemporary architecture. He does that in a playful and child-like way, building a welcoming outdoor environment in order to investigate underlying architectural and social conventions.

Other related works of Dušan Rodić are the installation with bricks "Lui" (2005), NDSM Amsterdam, an installation and performance "Genocide" (2008), and sculptural work "Self-portrait as a fireplace" (2006), Amsterdam.

Tatjana Mačić

It was a night in April 1999, in Belgrade capital of former Yugoslavia. I was sitting on the roof of the building where I lived with my friends. At the time my country was under attack of NATO Alliance forces. We were having a few beers, chilling and looking at the sky full of rockets, airplanes, anti-rocket missiles etc. It was quite spectacular to see all the activity in the sky.

The city was in total darkness, three main power plants had been bombed for the first time that night. No one knew if it would be possible to repair them and how long it would take till we got the electricity back on. No electricity meant no water, because the water-pumps wouldn't work, all the fridges were off so the food was going bad. The shops had been empty for some time already. Different kinds of poisonous chemicals had gotten into the water and the soil after all the explosions and so even store bought food was not so safe. It was a war that I didn't feel a part of. I am a peaceful guy, I believe there is always a way to find a peaceful solution for conflict. But my fellow Serbians didn't feel that way and neither did my parents and friends, nor the Kosovo Albanians, nor the rest of the world.

I felt like a hostage. I couldn't work, everything stopped, I couldn't make money to survive. I didn't feel like stealing or robbing someone for food or money. I felt helpless and I was not alone, there were two million people in my city who felt the same way. The city looked like a big concrete desert without food and water and lots of hungry people, not so nice. I promised myself, if I survive this war I will try to detach myself from Serbian or any other national identity, I will never allow myself to be dragged into some kind of conflict because of my nationality, or my religious or any other kind of identity that could put me in trouble.

I will try to connect with peaceful people and try to get to the point where I can live a self-sustainable life without the need for money or dependence on a job.





After the war finished I started looking for my way to achieve these goals. I worked for a few environmental organizations, but that didn't make me feel independent and self-sustainable. Somehow I ended up in Amsterdam at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy trying to find my way and to put my life goals into an Art context. Studying there opened up new directions of thought for me, new ways of envisioning what I felt close to. Along the way I found a lot of interesting, free, creative people with similar ideas and I found my identity.

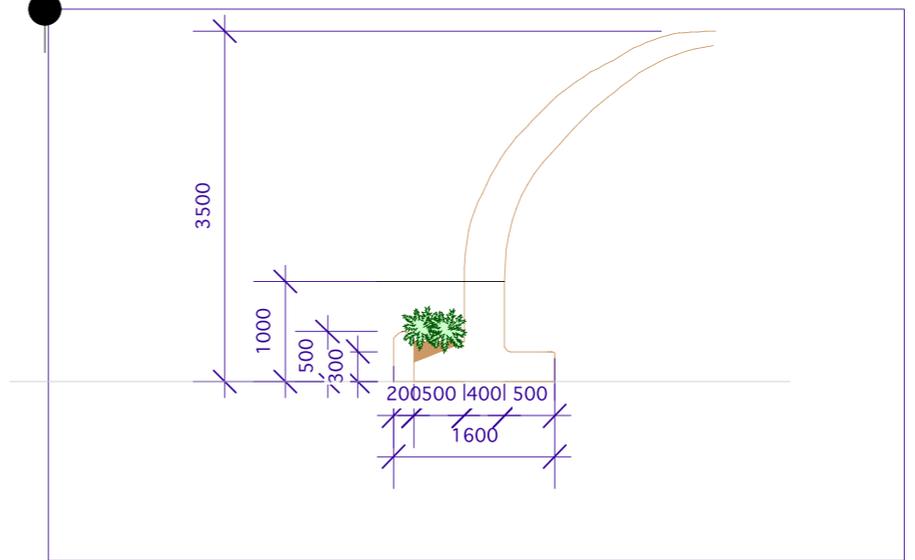
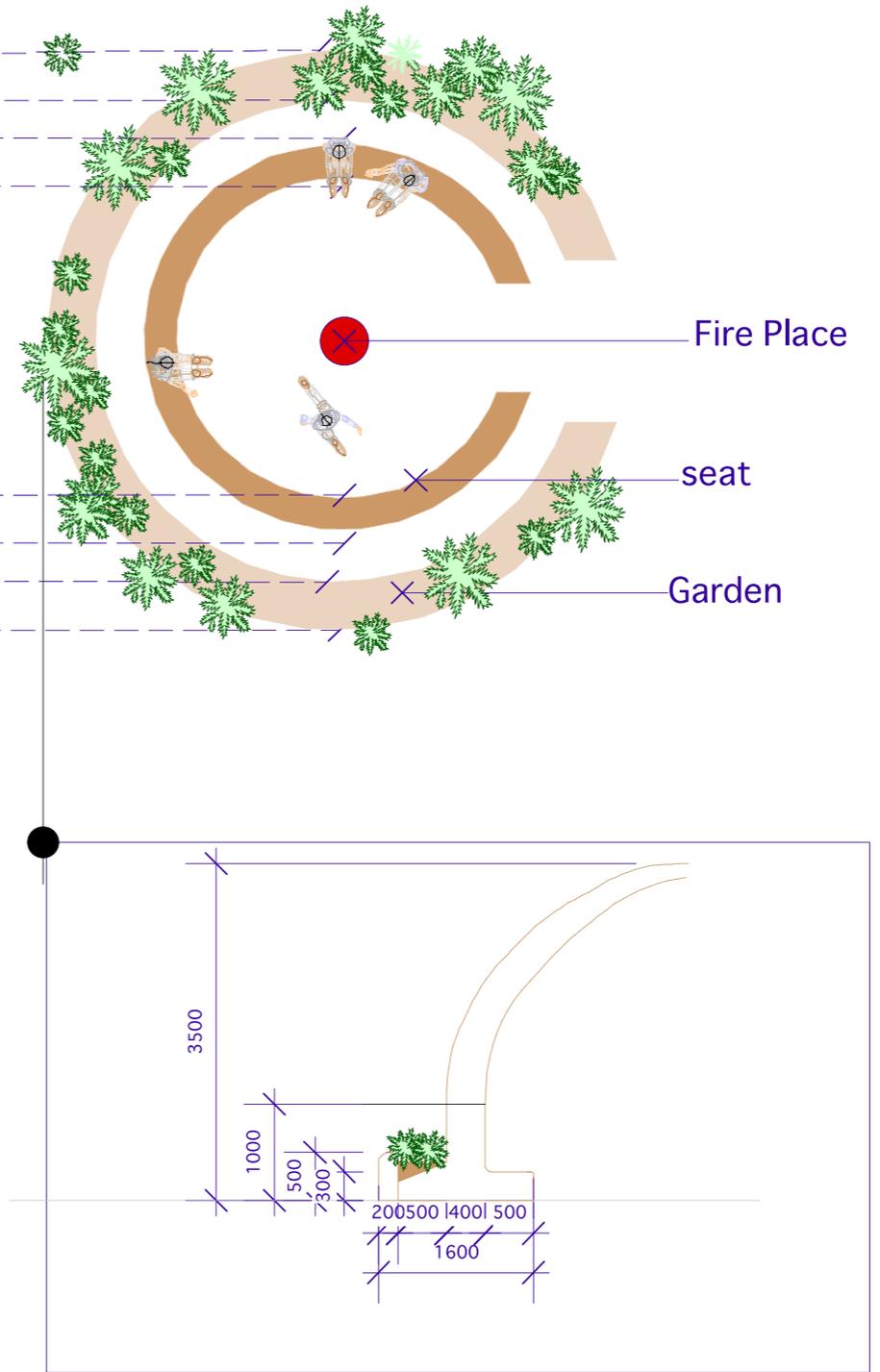
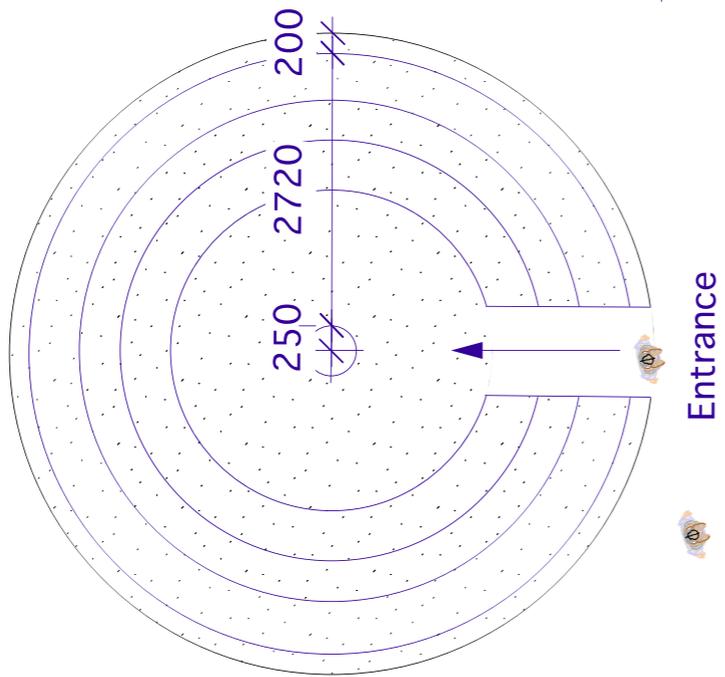
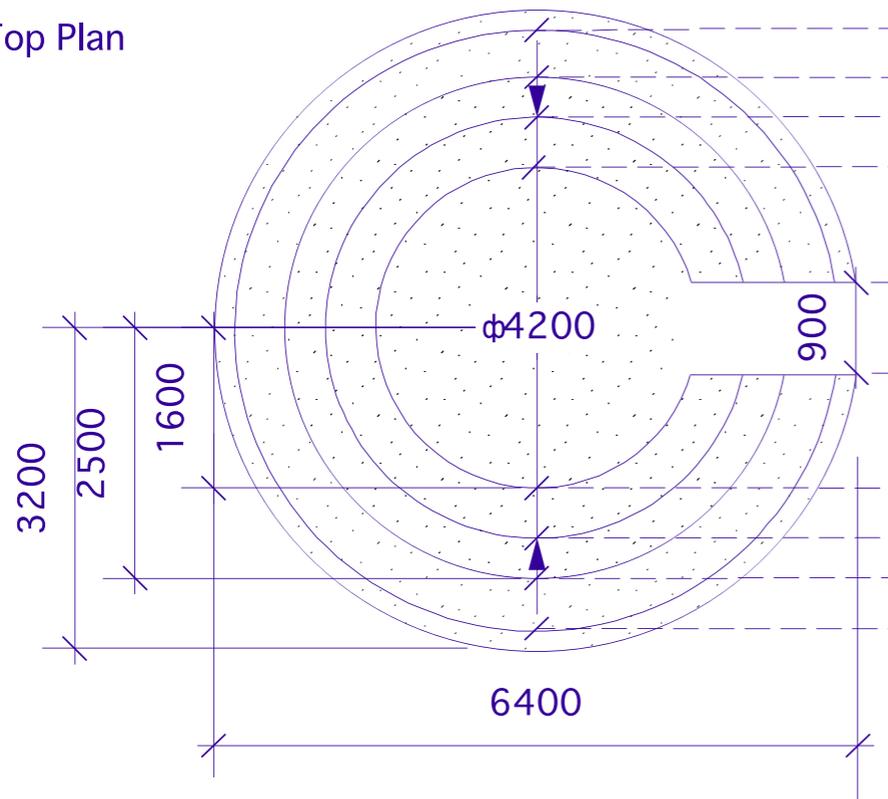
I am an Artist!

... and soon I am going to have an official diploma that says so. Art gives me the freedom to create my world, the way I want it to be. This earth dome is the end result of my studies at the Academy and it is the first in the series of Shelters, self-sufficient spaces for artists to use as a retreat.

Cheers,
Dušan Rodić

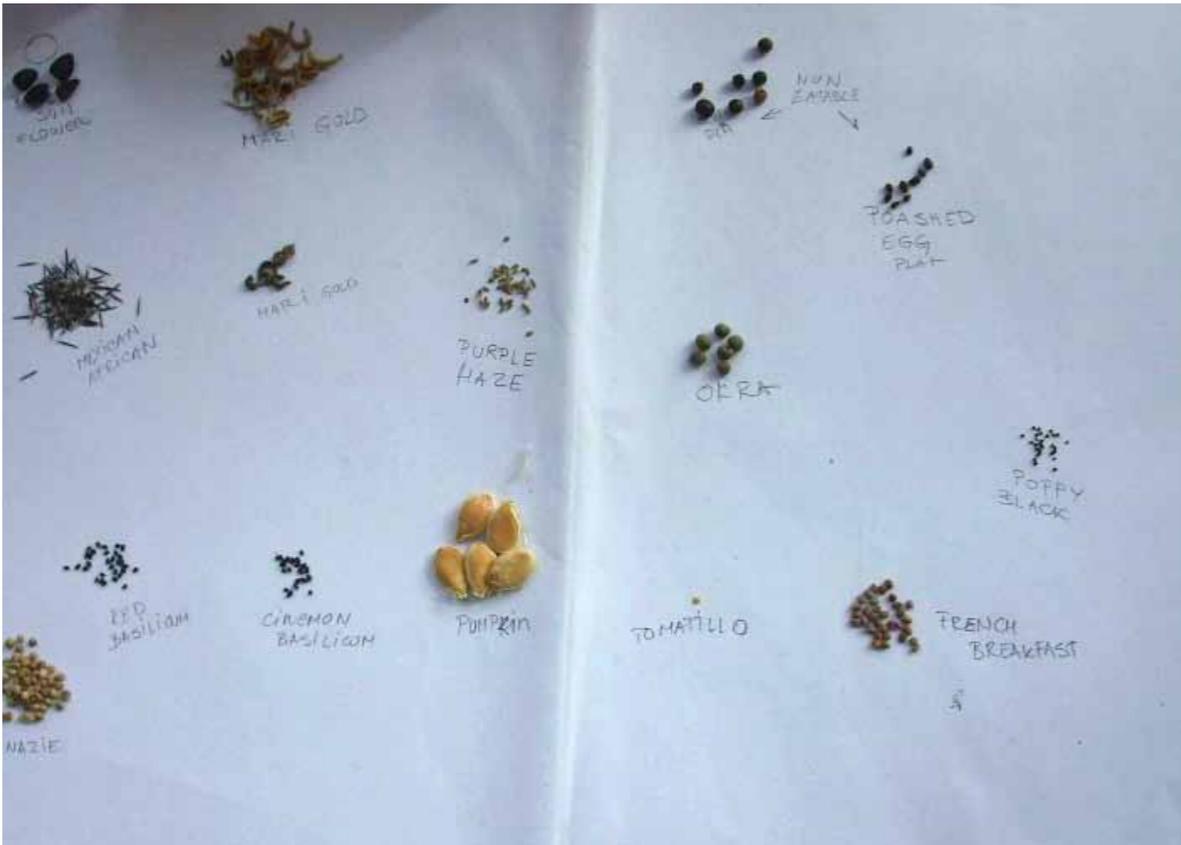


Top Plan









Dirty hands

I was asked to give a written contribution, as well as practical, to carry out the Dušan's project, and my reply, again, could only be positive. As an environmental engineer, on a cob building, I should write about the technical characteristics of clay or the thermal properties of cob*, rather than its sustainable use in buildings, but I will describe, in a few words, my unforgettable experience.

Dirty hands...my hands. This is the image that comes to my mind when I think of the cob. Faced with clay, straw and sand, no one knows what to do, but after a few tips you are ready to leave for an adventure. The beauty of the cob is in form and design that we can get done in person, after having imagined it. Indeed, the ability to indelibly impress our taste and our passion in building a house, for example, is a pleasure that is often denied, since we are only spectators. When I started to build with the cob, the idea of ecological design came to my mind, its responsiveness to the specific characteristics of the place as soil type, topography, vegetation and culture of the people. This type of design engages in processes that regenerate rather than deplete, recognizing that waste is actually resource. Everyone is a designer! Community participation is at the root of sustainability. We should all be involved in the development of our surroundings. By working to heal their surroundings, people grow attached to place.

By educating the community on the value of design you help them understand the importance of investing in alternative design strategies. Let's make nature visible: in today's society, many people are unaware of how things are built, where their food comes from, how the water they drink travels to their tap, or what their impacts are on the environment. By combining these theories for environmentally responsible design with key criteria for children's learning and play environments, we can help children develop a connection to place and a basic understanding of ecological systems. Natural learning environments offer opportunities for communicating these principles. The need to provide access to elements of nature to help kids learn to enjoy and appreciate their environment can clash with the need to protect natural systems. Cob building should be able to achieve both; it should allow kids to enjoy interacting with elements of nature while also learning to respect them. Opportunities for the application of cob exist throughout our cities and towns. We need to think about revitalizing public spaces, incorporating natural play areas into new developments, redesigning our schoolyards, and creating backyard habitats. Involving kids in cob buildings, we can help them to develop a relationship with their surroundings and an appreciation for their environment. This is important to the health of our children and the health of the planet for they are interdependent.

My dirty hands brought me back to my childhood when I was building sand castles with joy, and finally I found again my connection with the earth and I don't want to forget it again.

Marchello Colao



"Passion does not arrive on videotape or on a CD; passion is personal. Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass stained sleeves to the heart. If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered indicator species; the child in nature."

— Richard Louv



* Cob or cobb is a building material consisting of clay, sand, straw, water, and earth, similar to adobe. Cob is fireproof, resistant to seismic activity, and inexpensive. It can be used to create artistic, sculptural forms and has been revived in recent years by the natural building and sustainability movements.







“PUBLIC





VS.



PRIVATE”







*"It's almost impossible for one man to build a house,
ten people can easily build twenty houses."*

— *Nubian proverb*



Friendship, fire, food, fun! The only f'n words I like!!!

Crossing paths with Dušan has been a fiery, creative and fun adventure. Sharing food, touches, and the warmth of a fire sparked the beginnings of friendship and cooperation. The desire to take action and create fueled our fires to come together. Sharing ideas, skills, laughter, food and music we found beauty in tactile supporting one another endeavors.

The need for shelter and food is huge! Eliminating violence from our concept of beauty could be a big step towards a sustainable and non-violent society. Dušan's thesis project is a community project full of hope and beauty not only in the material installation, but in the many hands and hearts involved in it! Celebrating the moment, enjoying being passionate about our work and the pleasure to be doing it. It has been a flux of meeting new friends, inviting all to participate and inciting a new dialogue about the functionalist of art in public space or any space! Creating together, giving my time and knowledge has been a gift of freedom.

Work is Art, Let's work Together!

Christo Markham

*"To love life through labor is to be intimate
With life's inmost secret
All work is empty save when there is love,
For work is love made visible"*

— *Kahlil Gibran*

“FOOD



AND



SHELTER



Words – FOOD for thought – on Contemporary Environmentalism

Gratitude

Gift
Vision
Place
Ritual
Celebration
Creation
Life

Instruction
Peace
Rest
Animal, plant, soil
Dormancy

The kindness of friends

Water
Food
Earthworms
Sunlight
Interdependent existence
Mutual belonging
Conviviality

Restoration
Healing
Alignment

Natural
Social
Spiritual

Reflection

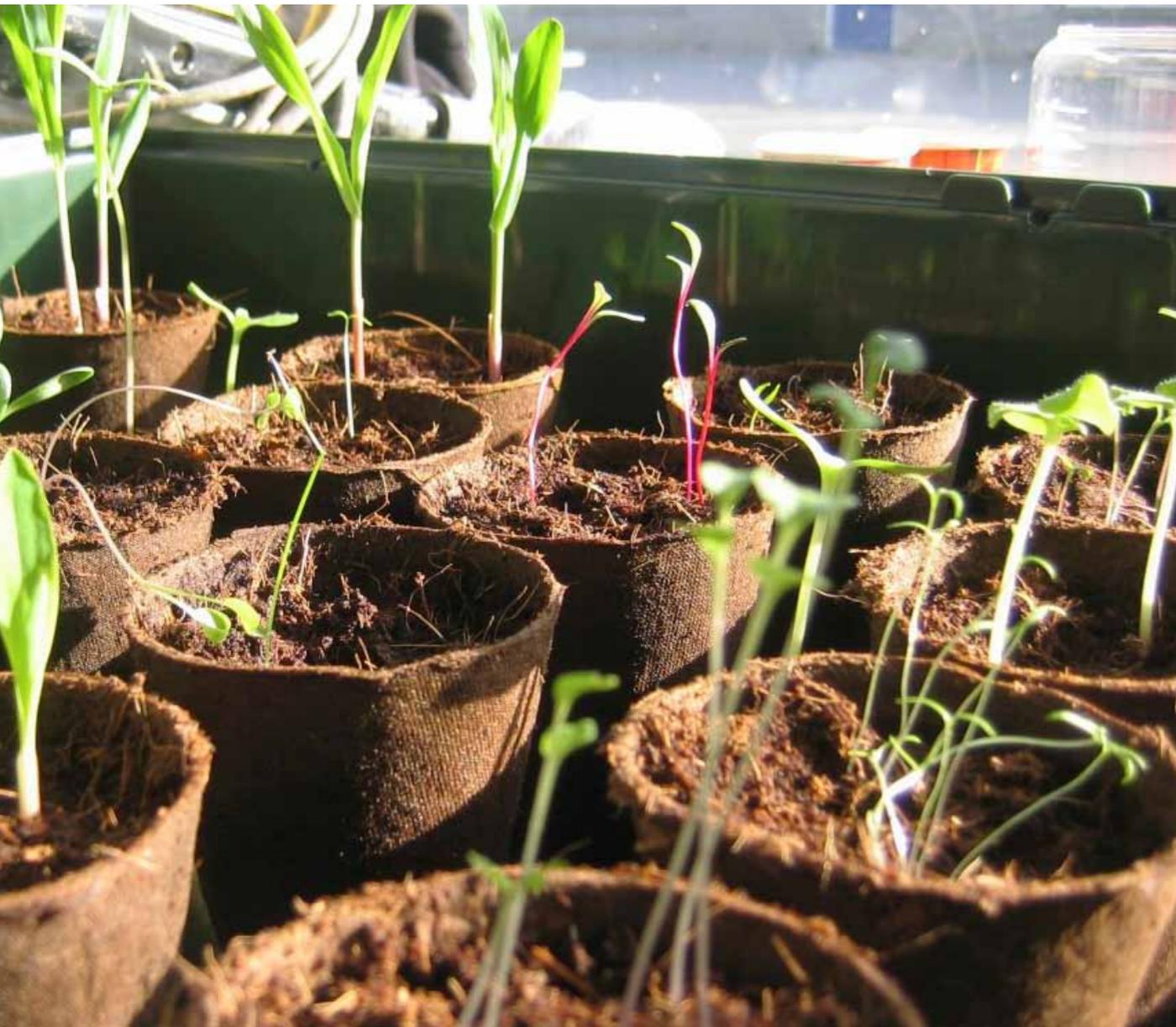
Urgency
Refocus
Transformation
Renewal

Control
Ecological degradation
Social anxiety
Obsession
Consumption
Extraction

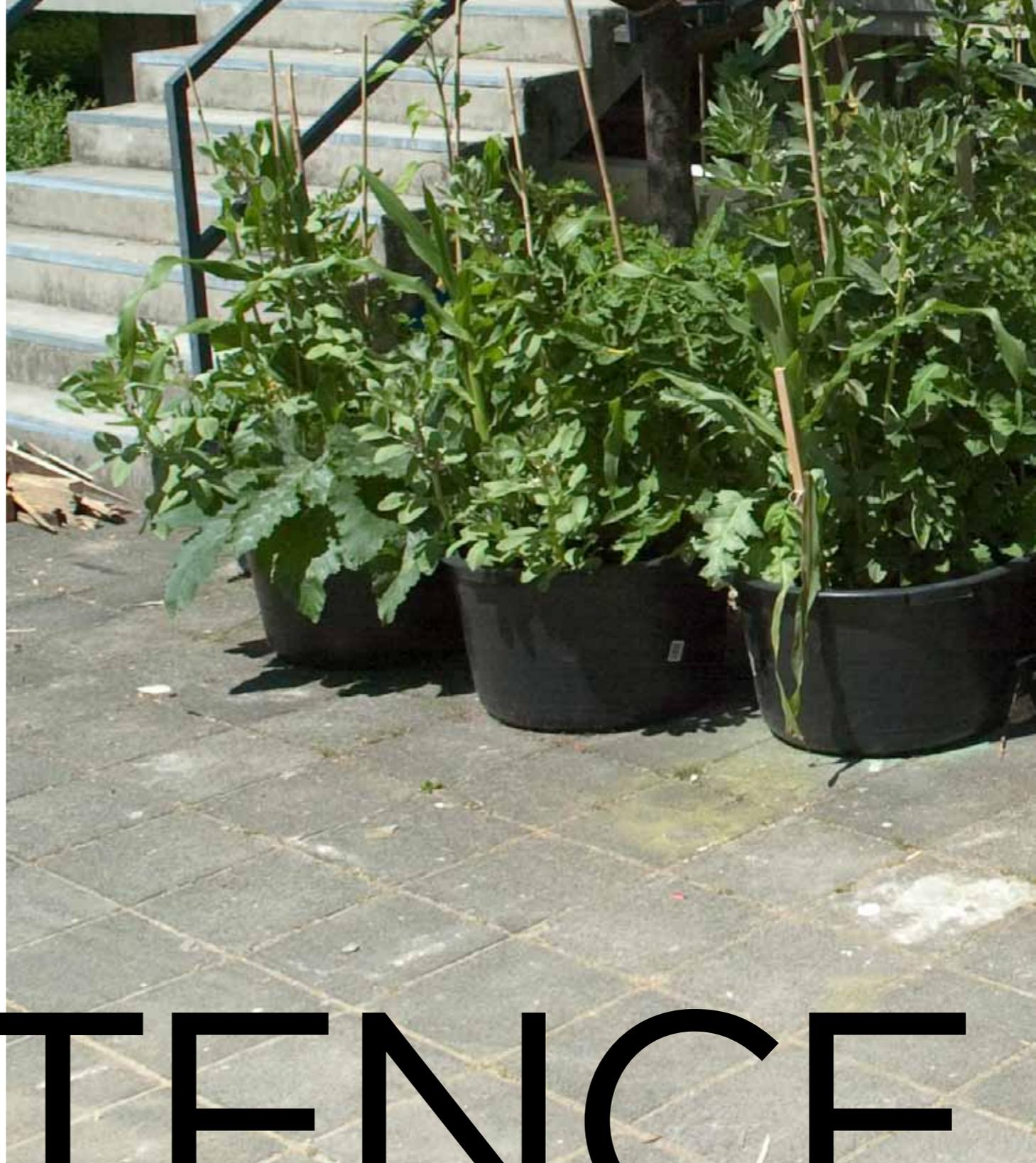
Ingratitude



Leonie Woidt-Walliser



“CO-
EXISTENCE





WITH
NATURE”











“SELF
SUFFICI

ENCY

VS.



CONSUMER
SOCIETY”



PROJECT BENEFIT PARTY

Shelter dance performance

EARTH

"This is your shelter.
This is our space. This is your space.
Mi espacio, tu espacio, nuestro espacio.
Your presence makes this space become alive. Life surrounds you, you inhale life, you exhale life.

This is your Earth.

Everything that surrounds you belongs to you, can you feel it? Everything that surrounds you is part of you.

Can you see the sky?
You can choose the colour you want it to be, it can have as many colours as you wish...Its your sky.... Don't you remember???

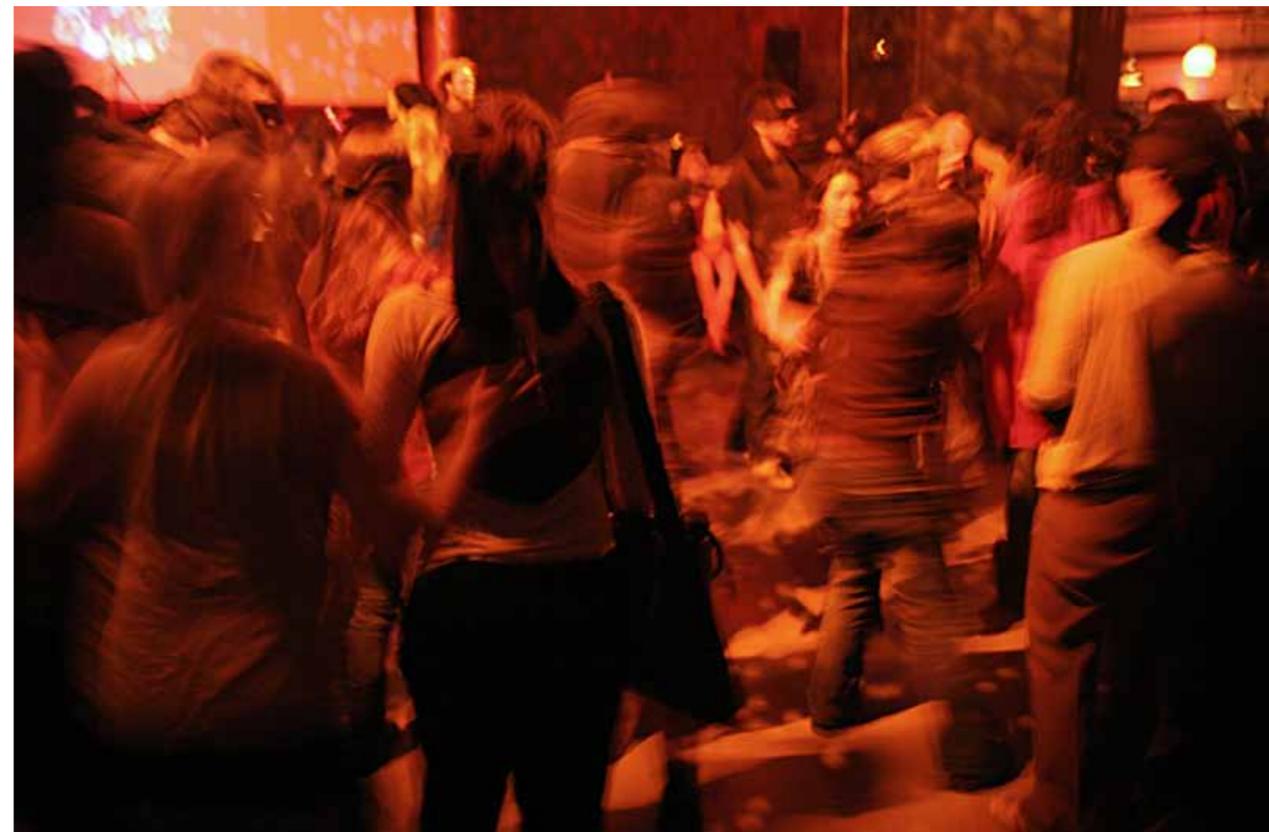
Can you feel the soil under your feet, its warm, its nice..
Under your feet, under the earth, there are centuries and thousands of years, and thousands of lifes, of histories, of glaciations, of memories...

But something is changing.. there are little roots growing down, through the earth, getting longer, and longer, and thicker, and stronger...
Its under your feet, under the earth
Under your feet there are architectures of memories
Memories from yesterday, from tomorrow... reaching in distance, through the soil. They are reaching
How far can your memories go?
Can you remember when everything that you found in the way it was just there waiting for you.
Nobody is a stranger, anything is unknown..
Can you remember when you didn't have to think what to do, where to go..
Can you remember when you could just laugh without explaining why.
Can you remember when was the first time you....
Can you remember where....
Can you remember when was the...
Can you...
The time, the first time

AIR

In your hands rests the history of the universe...maybe you need to move your fingers, one by one to remember it...But now your arm is slowly

“PRIN



M A A L



moving, and one finger wants to point in the space, and draw a line in the space.

Drawing a line in the air, your handprints on the air, your choices, your dreams are somewhere in the air, in the space.

You know where is the right place, you always knew...

This flower is your hand, with this flower you can leave a message in the air.

Painting in the air

WIND

Your message is now printed in the space, you have now the opportunity to take the first step, your first step, in any direction you desire.. You are free to explore this land, maybe you want to reach somewhere in distance.

Maybe you want to reach the shore of the river. Maybe you want to reach the mountain. Don't be afraid, you are safe, nothing will happen to you. You know which is the right direction.

We will guide you ...

The wind will guide you.

The wind is coming,

the wind is around you

Let the wind be there for you

WATER

The wind is gone...

suddenly you can feel a small drop of water on your left shoulder, then another drop on your nose. Yes. Its raining, very slightly. Raindrops on your skin... water on your skin...

Your body is absorbing this water through your skin,

water is travelling inside your body,

water is flowing,

water is vibrating,

water is dancing under your skin...

S O C I A L

let it be there, let it be there. Can you listen?
the water is telling you a secret.
Un secreto. El secreto. Tu secreto. Mi secreto...agua... secreto... agua...

FIRE

The vibration gets bigger, and bigger... your body starts moving, your body is shaking!

Water is moving your body, very slightly, water is moving you...
water makes you travel,
you are here,
you are not here,
you are turning around,
you are looking up,
looking around,
you are twisting,

you are shaking,
you are melting,
you are watering the space,

you are evaporating into the air,

you are energy in the air,
hot energy in the air,
you are a flame
all your body is sparkling

you are here,
you are not here,
you are there, you are not there,
you shake, and you dance, and you shake, and you dance, dance! Dance!
Dance! you cant stop dancing!!

The first time
Your handprints in the air,
your choices,
your dreams

Its under the earth
Your message
Is somewhere, in the air..."

— **Carla Behal**



INTER



ACTION”



Tierrafino

Earth construction as artwork Carl Giskes

In the summer of 1989 I was experimenting with mixing sands and clay for decorations on newly brownclay plastered walls of a friend, in the vicinity of the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum. By chance the musician/artist John Cage from the US was visiting the house at the time. It may have been the master's magnificent smile - Cage was nearing eighty - that made me realize I have found something perfect. By now I know I have given new life to the ancient building material clay.

In Africa, the continent I encircled during my seven year walking-trip, first along the east side from Tunis to South-Africa, then walking the west side,

I felt the day-to-day beauty of clay building in all its aspects. I was in sheer admiration when I stumbled upon the mighty city of Djenné, known as the world's most beautiful city, and completely built in clay. Trained as an engraver and as an ornamental paver I was only 21 when I saw Djenné. No wonder as a young artisan I came to celebrate the ideas of the revered Egyptian earth-architect Hassan Fathy who pleaded: 'Give us the courage to build schools that emanate the peace of the holy earth.'

The warm feeling you have when you live in clay in the so-called 'Third World' you don't feel in the West. I lived with primitive people in their clay houses for many years during my world tour on foot. Coming back to Europe after journeying Africa, the Americas and Asia, visiting 78 countries, I came to work closely together with Germany's famous artist Joseph Beuys for several years.

In a letter of the late eighties I wrote: 'Dear people, My motivation is to build healthy houses.' That is what I did ever after. The number of clay building projects realized surmounts 500 by now.

Art is important... why?

Art starts with creating space and in this new things can develop. The real capital is art, not money. My way being creative is making business with material which creates healthy spaces where people feel safe to explore their own creativity, their talents.

That's why I am pleased to help young artists with their projects... Dušan is making great project, proposing sustainable living and coexistence with nature. His project is simple but the impact is huge, he creates a space where people can feel connected, can sit together in a circle and new things can develop.

The interesting thing was that he wanted to use our waste material... Material that falls on the floor when we're producing in our factory. It was collected all colours together and was just piling up, looking for a new destination.

This is a the perfect solution for our waste material to get a new life, to upcycle it by bringing it in a new form.

And what will be the next life? Will plants be growing in it again?

Living on earth in earth.

"SIMPLICITY
+ MODESTY
≠ POVERTY

I want to thank all the people who contributed to this project.