



NTGENT

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Unmasking the green myth 2

28 October 2023 | Gent, Belgium

WORKSHOP CONTENT

*This workshop started with a **powerful presentation by Mary Ann about sacrifice zones and green colonialism**. How people are sacrificed in the name of green energy.*

She shared the terrible history of the Marshall Islands that was used as a sacrifice zone.

Sacrifice zones is a term coined by communities and activists and it refers to indigenous territories that are nihilated for nuclear production and rendering bodies and environments as disposable. Mary Ann referred to 'the more than human', how we tend to only think of violence in the sense of human centralized, but how there is as much violence happening against environments. Mary Ann spoke about the importance to not compartmentalize struggles, but to see how everything is entangled.

Also, Mary Ann gave attention to so called 'climate change solutions' and spoke about decarbonization consensus, green energy transition, the green fix or techno fix.

There is a clear shift to renewable energy, but where do the resources come from?

Electric cars need lithium, lithium comes from specific places (Asia, Africa, south America), salt lakes. These forms of green energy are not attacking the roots of the crisis, it's just reforming the consumption of the capitalist economy.

Green colonialism is the idea that certain places in the world can be sacrificed, so certain people can continue their privileged lives. It constantly reproduces asymmetries of power. The importance of dismantling green colonialism and the geopolitics of green colonialism and to give space to marginalized voices. Underpinning the logics: a zone that is being sacrificed departs from the idea that it's an empty space, that there are no people, or that they are unimportant, or the idea that the land is unproductive. All examples of colonialist tropes & imperial geopolitics.

After discussing this presentation, Lara shared the materials she found online that shows very white and privileged ways to deal with ecological crisis and so-called green economy:

- **Britt Way “Keeping cool amidst the climate crisis”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_PEkL3ik
- **Nick Wheeler speaks with Steve Malkin; founder and CEO of sustainability certification body, Planet Mark.** They talk all things environment, and how we can all contribute to a more sustainable planet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTBInvEuFt0>

Mary Ann responded with two video's that responded towards the many blind spots of white privilege. (one as a response to COP... and one of an artist...)

We ended the day with reflections and propositions towards the set-up of our “performative conference” and its points of departure. We spoke about forms of grief and of physical approaches. About the importance to not pretend there are easy solutions. We spoke about the complexity of a term like ‘hope’ and how this is a fragile balancing act between hope and despair. We reflected upon who we want to speak to and what makes sense. We wondered about the possibility of ecological crisis and the use of humor, the importance of anger and the risks of satire.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE ARTISTS:

LARA STAAL

Lara Staal, born 1984 in Zwolle, The Netherlands, is a researcher, writer and curator. She studied theatre pedagogy at ArtEZ in Arnhem and theatre science and dramaturgy at the University of Amsterdam. Between 2013 and 2016, she worked as a programmer at Frascati where she developed various sociopolitical programmes in which alliances were created between art and other fields on the basis of shared urgencies. She takes interest in developing innovative forms within which dialogue and reflection can take place.

JOERI HAPPEL

Joeri Happel (born 1991) is a Dutch theatre maker and actor. He graduated as an actor from KASK in 2021 and is a member of the collectives Camping Sunset and Zuidpark. Joeri previously performed at Compagnie de Koe and at Toneelhuis. He adores experimentation and co-creation. Performances through the collective Camping Sunset are created with the audience, without a director where spectators watch the piece emerge and evolve over time. The work he makes varies between naturalistic drama, existentialist clownery, political satire, poetic abstractions and pamphleteering.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE SCIENTISTS:

MARY-ANN MANAHAN

Mary-Ann Manahan is a Ghent-based feminist activist researcher. Her doctoral research delves into the intersections of indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination, forest conservation, and development. Preceding her academic pursuits, she has 17 years of professional practice collaborating with an activist think tank, advocacy NGO grant-making organization, and social movements. Her advocacy spanned areas such as redistribution, ecological, gender, and social justice, along with exploring alternatives to development. Mary Ann earned her undergraduate degree in sociology from the University of the Philippines-Diliman and her master's degree in Globalization and Development from the Institute of Development Policy and Management at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. She perceives her doctoral and teaching journey as a strategy of self-care, enabling her to sustain her commitment to political work and activism.

ANNELEEN KENIS

Anneleen Kenis is a senior post-doctoral research fellow affiliated with the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), and she is associated with both the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at KU Leuven and the Centre of Sustainable Development (CDO) at UGent. She holds a Ph.D. in Bio-Engineering Sciences with a focus on Political Ecology, along with master's degrees in Psychology and Sustainable Development and Human Ecology. Her previous research has delved into various topics, including the marketization and commodification of climate change in Green Economy discourses, grassroots climate movements, transition management, localization, and the intersection of genetic engineering and democracy. Her research interests encompass (urban) political ecology, feminist and queer ecologies, gender studies, scholar activism, social movement studies, and critical political theoretical approaches to climate change, air pollution, and genetic engineering (e.g., technocracy).

PHILSAN OSMAN

Philsan Osman is a student of African Languages and Cultures at Ugent. She volunteers at Black History Month Belgium, writes for the online feminist magazine Spijker Magazine and works as an educator for Avansa Oost Brabant. In her research, she works around the theme of 'ecofeminism', the link between women's oppression and environmental degradation. On this subject, she wrote the book 'Care to Care: Ecofeminism as a source of inspiration'.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) LINKED TO THE WORKSHOP

