



TRAFÓ HOUSE OF CONTEMPORARY
ARTS (HUNGARY).

trafó

An Ecofeminist World Café

22 April 2023 | Budapest - Hungary | Szeszgyár Community Park

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The first STAGES workshop (22 April 2023) was organized in the garden of Szeszgyár, a Queer ecofeminist community park and nature preserve on 8000m². The organizers, Trafó and the members of the Human ecology department of Eötvös University, invited artists, scientists, activists and experts and more than 30 people showed up. After a short introduction of both the project itself and the participants, we used the world café method to encourage dialogue. Each participant discussed 4 thematic questions.

Whose responsibility is it to protect the environment?

The discussion focused on whose responsibility it is to "protect the environment" and how this responsibility can be captured. The question was also deconstructed: how accurate and useful is the term 'environmentalism', since it reflects the separation and binary opposition between nature and culture, a paradigm that separates us from the environment and allows the exploitation of 'nature' (and of certain social groups), which is one of the root causes of the ecological crisis. On the other hand, 'environmental protection' is a term conceived for professionals, which suggests that 'environmental protection' can be outsourced to certain professional groups, professionals, NGOs, soothing the conscience of the individual.

The extent to which cultural and creative workers have integrated sustainability into their work processes, the dilemmas they face, and the extent to which sustainability choices can be seen as a compromise, and how sustainability can be reconciled with aesthetics, were also discussed.



PICTURE 1 - WORKSHOP ATTENDEES AT ONE OF THE WORLD CAFÉ TABLES

Art and science

At this table, we tried to find answers to the question of the role of science/art in climate change, and how these two fields can help each other, especially in terms of reaching more people and raising awareness about climate awareness and sustainability.

In education, too, these questions can play an important role, and art can help us to get closer and understand the science better. Finding and using the right rhetoric when communicating scientific information is crucial. It is necessary to find a common language to bring science closer to everyone. In this context, data visualisation has been raised several times as a possible way forward and a possible solution and tool.

What will the future look like? Positive practices

We discussed possible scenarios, utopias, dystopias, and the direction in which the world is heading in their opinion or knowledge. There was talk about the emergence of new philosophies and the possible end of the Anthropocene era. New social norms and rules are emerging, capitalist logic is being questioned, money is being redefined, and so on. The question has been raised as to how social rules will be made - authoritarian, democratic, perhaps spontaneous, or will artificial intelligence take over?



PICTURE 2 - WORKSHOP ATTENDEES AT ONE OF THE WORLD CAFÉ TABLES

Beyond the future, we talked about the positive sustainability practices that already exist. Some of them are not yet significant enough, but are already present in smaller circles. Others are more widespread. Positive practices and trends include the emergence of manifestos (even artistic ones), pressure for power and activism. In contrast to the logic of capitalism, there is the practice of communal ownership, renting, exchange, mutual aid, the practice of working together, and the questioning of growth orientation in general. A change in attitudes, the role of education (which is also very important in the process of depopulation), the acquisition of information and knowledge about ecological problems.

What is the biggest environmental problem?

The discussion was not so much about the environmental problems themselves, but about the underlying causes. The first question was what the environment is, and it immediately became clear that there is no strict separation between the natural and the built environment, as the two are almost everywhere at the same time. Pollution and waste were often and emphatically mentioned as environmental problems, and the reason given was convenience: we want to make everything simpler and more convenient for people, but this means a lot of rubbish and pollution.

In connection with this, the theme of over-consumption and the capitalist logic that creates a consumer out of man was raised. This is linked to the acceleration of life, the general problem of lack of time, and there was also an opinion that the biggest problem is that people are looking for happiness in the wrong places. The patriarchal system, the rule of money, people-centredness, the complex problem of tourism and the lack of knowledge and communication were also mentioned as causes.

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

