

## ***Gathering Amidst The Ruins: on the potential of assembly within the context of art institutions***

Wednesday 27 October, 19.00-21.00

In de Ruimte, Utrecht (Next to Casco Art Institute)

Co-presented by Casco Art Institute and Club Solo

Contributors include Hodan Warsame, Jeanine van Berkel, Dagmar Bosma and Tomi Hilsee. Ying Que, a member of the steering committee of Casco's annual Assembly, gives an introductory reflection and Philippine Hoegen moderates the evening

Transcript by Mira Thompson

Leana Boven: Hi everyone, welcome to the event Gathering amidst the ruins organized by Casco and Club Solo and everyone here, welcome. We are looking very much forward to this evening, also a small note: if you want to wear your mask, feel free to wear it. Let me get my notes. I will give the floor to Philippine Hoegen in a bit. Let me first introduce Philippine. Philippine Hoegen is an artist, researcher and educator based in Brussels, currently working on a long-term, practice-based research project, titled 'Performing Working.' Philippine will tell you more about the project. Please give a warm applause for Philippine.

Philippine Hoegen: Thanks very much. And a warm applause for Leana also, who is the brain behind this project. Just to tell you quickly: this evening is the first one in a series of three. It's part of what is called Symposium On Tour initiated by Club Solo. Mayke Breukers and Florette Dijkstra are hiding in the back, but they are the motor behind these series of events with many iterations. Amongst them is a book called 'The artist and the future' which you can order now, free of postal charges until the 14th of December. I'll tell a little bit more about the other events in this series at the end of the evening, but for now this evening is about gathering amidst the ruins, where we talk about assembly. We'll welcome five speakers who will each give a very particular subjectivity to the subject of assembly and unpack this notion of assembly as a way of being together, a way of speaking together, a way of working together. To begin with I want to invite Ying. Ying Que is an anthropologist, educator and cultural activist, based here in Utrecht. She's closely entangled with the ecosystem of Casco, where we are this evening, and she was very involved in the series of assemblies Casco organized and will tell us about this. She's also a tutor of Casco Coop DAI, there she teaches on food commons and ecology of belonging. Her practice is informed by anarchist, feminist, decolonial work - generally aimed at facilitating collective practice. With her queer collective 'Niet Normaal' she organizes parties and protest exhibitions at the cultural centre Moira. Take it away, Ying.

### **Ying Que**

Ying Que: Hi. Thank you for the introduction Philippine and Leana for the invitation. I'm glad to be here. This is my homebase, so I'm very happy to reflect with you on the questions that are posed for today's event Gathering amidst the Ruins. I'm going to run you through three of Casco's assemblies to give you a sense of the evolution, the questions we've dealt with and the way it was organized.

Before that I would like to reflect on what an assembly is. Something that is quite remarkable for me is the difference between assemblies from the grassroots and self-organized communities versus the assemblies that are popping up in the institutionalized art world. The word assembly is broad. It may refer to all kinds of gatherings. It's used in coding and programming language, and the Dutch parliament is also called the general assembly. In using the word I would like to approach it from a social movement perspective which is mostly based on the Occupy Movement, who, in turn, were deeply inspired by Zapatistas. Assembly here refers to a gathering of people that practice direct democracy, bottom up organizing.

It's not necessarily the form that Casco has taken on. They have taken on the form of a conference or workshops offering tools and methods of collective practice mixed with open spaces, but these forms of assembly from the grassroots is really the form where I believe the form of assembly within the art institution lies. This is an unfinished mural that the Zapatista left at Moira last weekend. As you may know they are an airborne and seaborne delegation arriving to the continent, they arrived in the past few months. They're in the NL, and visited us this past weekend. As we were hosting breakfast there was paint around and they did that, which was an amazing gift. One of the core things and reasons they're here is that they want to present their seven principles or as they call it: Principios del Mandar Obedeciendo - leading or ruling by obeying. Mexican Argentinian academic Enrique Dussel called this obediencial power; the delegated exercise of the power of all authority that fulfills political justice. This is in relationality and oriented not towards domination, but towards ethical social justice. Relationality as a whole is a concept on it's own. To address it shortly: it is posed in decolonial thought as a way of dialogue, understanding a cross colonial difference accompanied by the urgent task of listening. To return to the picture. On the top in red it says Sembrar Resistencia - Resistance. In pencil Paracossa char rebeldia - to reap rebellion. On the bottom you have these seven principles for Mandar Obedeciendo - lead or rule by obeying. First is Obedecer y no andar - to obey not command. Second is Representar y no Suplantar - to represent and not to substitute. Third is Servir y no servirse - to serve, not to be served. Construir y no destruir - to construct, not to destroy. Proponer y no imponer - to propose, not to impose. Finally Bajar y no Sobir - go below and not up. Oh I forgot Convencer y no Vencer - to convince, not to defeat.

The key to these principles is that it's always the people that decide. It implies that political leaders do not make decisions on behalf of their community as its representatives, but rather act as the community's delegates. Implementing decisions made in local assemblies. A traditional decision making mechanism and these exist on a village level in contrast to traditional assemblies of Mexico, including women. Empowerment has been at the centre of the Zapatista revolution. Assemblies elect delegates to a municipal council, the next level of the Zapatista administrative structure and next to the regional level several autonomous municipalities presented to delegates Juntas de Buen Gobierno - the councils of good government. They are called like this in contrast with the Mexican bad government. JBG members serve for three years on a rotating basis in shifts as short as three weeks. What I think is interesting here about assembly is that it fulfills a crucial role within the structure for governance. Zapatistas are practicing this on a large scale, where they moved from autonomous territories to autonomous

municipalities. An assembly was already an existing form for democratic gathering amongst Indigenous communities that they're representing. In 1994 and 1996 the Zapatistas organized the intercontinental Encuentros, which are considered to be the first and largest global anti-neoliberal gatherings from which the peoples global action was born, who initiated the anti-globalization movement.

That movement was at the foundation of the Occupy movement, who adapted Zapatista strategies to their own situation. A small group of anarchists and anti-authoritarians gathered to plan to occupy Wall Street in the neoliberal central of Manhattan. They set up their assemblies based on anarchist and Zapatistas principles like self-organization, mutual aid and solidarity. Little did they know that at the time their actions would go global. Their defining political strategies were horizontal consensus decision making and the political use of masks. This is a picture I took of my field work in 2012 in NYC. Horizontalism proposed the popular assembly as an alternative to the party system. It aims to be non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian, without leaders. I quote: "The aim of the assembly is simply to bring into direct immediate contact the people with themselves as opposed to a small gathering of representatives speaking on the behalf of the people. If there is any alternative at all to the problems posed by political parties it must begin with the popular gathering of the people. In particular those who are excluded from the party system. These assemblies are then connected to other assemblies through other horizontal social networks, including national and international gatherings. In contrast to the corruption of the party the horizontal diffusion of power reduces the likelihood and effect of political corruption since the assembly has no leader to be corrupted."

Obviously that was an ideal. My personal facilitation practice has its roots in the horizontal facilitation methods used by Occupy, but now I'd rather call it anti-oppressive facilitation, in which Hodan, who will speak here later, is a great companion and inspiration. Because obviously in practice, hierarchies, power relations and power abuse are always present and not simply unlearned by simply gathering together under these principles. Rather, existing inequalities will inevitably show their true colors and Occupy was actually critiqued to be just a democracy of 'who shows up.' A Mexican artist friend from Grata (15.47) described the method of horizontalism not as a flat process that has no hierarchy, but as a process that goes in waves. Gathering like that has to be rehearsed and adapted, but it's been something like a horizon to walk towards. Consensus decision-making processes are another core matter. Instead of a majority decision, each and every person present in the assembly has to agree to the decision made. In practice it means meeting for a very long time until everybody's heard and some kind of compromise has been reached. Why all this when talking about assemblies in the context of art institutions? I wanted to lay out these foundations to think further about assemblies in the art world.

In the case of Casco the assembly has been taken up as a politicized form of gathering, of bringing people together to share knowledge and strength to be harvested for processes of collective co-organization. Casco assemblies have been described as an annual get together for communing art institutions through collective unlearning workshops and action plans. They started as an attempt to gather people who are interested in the commons (I say 'they are', I

should say 'we') and in tools and methods of collective practice, and please note that these assemblies were called by Casco as an institution. The direction of the program and invitations of guests were taken on by the Casco team and the steering committee, consisting of artist Annette Kraus, curator Yolande Zola Zoli van der Heide and myself. Although institutional - considering the size and the monetary wealth of Casco I think it's up for discussion whether our assemblies are an assembly from above or from below.

Quoted from the website "the assembly is neither a symposium nor a political assembly, but a hybrid form of collaboration, sharing and collective care. Each assembly devotes itself to an agenda item in working sessions, workshops, lectures and pitches, and we dedicate ourselves to collective decision-making processes and an agenda for further development. During assembly financial and non-financial resources are collected that are used to realize that agenda. Assembly works according to the common principles of cooperation, whereby each participant is given a valid voice that can be heard in various ways and participants actively learn about the different ways in which a working method based on the commons can be introduced in their own work practice and organizational structure."

I can see how all these assemblies or gatherings in the ruins/amidst the ruins of what feminism and anti-colonial scholars have referred to as CPC (capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism); ruins from colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism) as an attempt to mobilize people around collectivized forms of working together. If even in the ruins there is life, how should we organize our survival? Each assembly put forward a question. This is the first one from 2018, titled Elephants in the Room. It asked within the context of the commons: "How does art institutional change relate to unlearning?" Particularly with regards to redistribution of power? This assembly was based on the study line around unlearning which was a collaborative research trajectory undertaken by the Casco team and artist Annette Krauss, and is still an ongoing study trajectory for Casco. It looked at oppressive institutional habits and routines that we unwillingly or unconsciously reproduce. Racism is an example of that. Working for a boss is an example of that. At Casco, we looked at how we as an organization could revalue reproductive labor and care work. So, the assembly was also the occasion for the launching of that book, Unlearning Exercises. The program was built around six unlearning sessions dealing with under any reproductive, laboring care, colonial legacies built in environments, decolonizing practices, diverse art economies and funding paradigms. And finally, an experiment with the collective pot. Alright, I'll try to finish quickly. That was 2018.

This is 2019. Our House is on Fire. The question asked there is "What practical measures will art and art institutions take to care for our planetary commons with the power of imagination?" So this assembly gathered around the draft for a climate justice code, which kind of mirrors the governmental codes around the Fair Practice Code for artists wage, but also the Diversity and Inclusion Code. It was an invitation to those with the power of art and imagination to reconcile the way in which we as artists and art institutions practice our politics within daily life in response to the climate crisis. So, the first draft was written by an editorial committee consisting of different collectives and organizations, busy with climate justice and the commons. And then they proposed a draft for the assembly to be reworked over the course of two days. From that

assembly, a working group committed to taking on the code and somehow finalizing it. And since then, they have been writing, inviting, commissioning more texts, and kind of embarked on an intensive study trajectory about anti-racism for white people. This last one, this is the assembly we did last year in 2020 from behind our computers because of the pandemic. The question was “When there's never enough time and survival is uncertain, how do collective art practices continue their ways of being together and shape art institutions working for the commons?”

It was an interesting shift, because at this time, it was actually Casco's ecosystem that shaped the content of the assembly. During the first day, 20 or so groups connected to Casco through vision through practice, or ongoing collaboration, presented a C-word during different conversation tables. The collected response together made up C-words for the commons. The second day was kind of like different mapping workshops to show connections and entanglements and or counterpoints. Almost there!

Last Monday, we had a meeting with the Casco team and the steering committee, because we have to write something about the assembly process. And I'd like to share a few questions from that meeting here to you all to bring for the next few hours. One question is about the assembly as a process for de-instituting. So what's an institution? Should we understand it as a legal entity? In that sense, it has very practical benefits, such as having a bank account, common administration system, but it also has the tendency to become monstrous, bureaucratic and rigid. Right? Institution also includes the habits and routines ingrained and reproduced within our bodies and also in policy. So if we are the institution, does it mean that we should aspire to reform or to abolish the institution? How to leave an institution that doesn't give life?

For us, the Casco assemblies have moved within the dimensions of reproductive labor and care work and put core focus on unlearning modern colonial institutions. So it's been about noticing what has remained invisible, what has been silenced, and geared towards trying to revalue all that, but we haven't formulated any specific protocol or core principles for our assemblies, apart from values and ethics that are found within the commoning practices. We also talked about how potential could be in the structure of governance. So in that sense, it has been top down, called and filled in by Casco and steering committee, drawing in like minded people and collecting is parallel to the solidification of what we have come to call the ecosystem. So can the assembly function as a governance structure for the ecosystem? If so, what and who is the ecosystem? And what are the collective decisions that an assembly would be making? A lot of time so I'm gonna leave you with that. Let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Philippine: Thank you so much. You leave us with questions, but we also, I'm sure, have other questions. There will be a general discussion at the end. So please hang on to your question. Try not to forget it. Your time will come! For now we're going to listen to Jeanine van Berkel, who's a graphic designer, visual researcher and a writer. She's interested in what way her multi-ethnic body relates to the bigger colonial structures, especially focusing on the relationship between Curacao and the Netherlands, and her ongoing research and story, and through the

semi forgotten memory of herself and the known, both known and unknown histories of her various motherlands, she looks for answers and shapes of what silence looks like.

### **Jeanine van Berkel**

Jeanine van Berkel: Thank you for that introduction. I'm excited to be here. I wanted to start with a moment and if you feel comfortable to all close your eyes and if you don't, that's also okay. (sounds of ticking ceramic pieces).

It took 361 years of history before I was born, when the Spaniards stole Curacao from the Arawaks in 1499. The Netherlands still could steal from the Spaniards in 1634. I was born in Curacao in 1995.

And now I'm here in between Curacao in the Netherlands, in between Black and white. I'm a consequence of this colonial history. In "Venus in Two Acts" Saidiya Hartman says, "Laws give rise to longing and in these circumstances, it would not be far-fetched to consider stories as a form of compensation or even as reparations, perhaps the only guidance we will ever receive."

I lost something but I forgot what it was. At night I lay in bed and think of all the things I forgot. It's weird to think of the emptiness of your memories because what comes to mind? I visualize rooms with fading shapes. Sometimes we reoccur if somebody tells me a story. Most of the time I start a memory of the retelling where my last memory once was. I crave for knowledge that I will never know. (same sound of ticking ceramic pieces) You can open your eyes again.

Two years back I finally started my research which I call *soft histories*. I say finally because I've been carrying this topic of my research my whole life and keeping a distance was the safest choice. Sometimes people are just not ready to talk about their pain, maybe that's okay. While researching or searching, I explore the silences of communal and personal history, lost memories, oral stories, and everything that falls in between the gaps. The different iterations are part of an ongoing research and story to the semi forgotten memory of myself. The place where I began, the people who are or are not here, the people I don't know yet or any more, the known and unknown history and the various model lands of my ancestors. Maybe I will find what I'm looking for. Maybe not. I found new words to talk with but also lost some things to say. (same sounds in the background)

Mama couldn't talk for 10 years after we left the island. She left our words behind because there is nothing left to say. Sometimes grief is slow like that. I just said "Mama, I hope you can hear me." Silence is also a ghost. Sunday is my sister and my brother, but only halfway they said. They told the story about how everything will be forgotten. How there only will be empty shells to see. How the hands will become a shell one day, how my face is fading. How their face is also fading. I can only think about how ironic it is that I'm trying to remember only for him to forget how time is not on my side. They also asked if I wanted to see this show. I said 'no' alternative ending. I said "I don't know." Again, I said later "nog een keer." I said nothing, because there's nothing left to say. (same ticking sounds)

I was introduced to the concept of ghosts and haunting during the workshop *Ghost stories and the invisible* by Leana Boven, which was a part of the workshop series *Diary as feminist genre* initiated by Emma van Meijeren. Here Avery Gordon talks about ghosts as the embodiment of what we can fully grasp as well as beings that are made invisible. This workshop departed from a recording's understanding of ghostly matters, which is the book 'Ghostly matters: haunting and the sociological imagination.' I quote here from there: "To be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects." I saw a connection to the topics I've been thinking about, but also in the way I've been working. I keep coming back to the same objects, the same texts, the same photographs, the same questions and the same absence of knowledge. Like Eve Tuck describes in *A Glossary of Haunting* I quote here: "Haunting lies precisely in his refusal to stop." I can start reshaping this question of the past because it shapes my presence. In a way I'm the ghost that is haunting myself. (same ticking sounds)

There's one cabinet in the house that knows everything. It sits in the hallway, never catching the sun. Its caramel colored roots are sleek. The top part expands into a small table with different stacks of insect envelopes. I know this is not the place I'm looking for. I moved down to the slightly bent doors. I open a cabinet and see piles of paper, small boxes and folders, left there to be forgotten. Not sure where to begin, I grab a shoe box in a bag. I shift through papers as fast as I can. Suddenly, I see my eyes looking back at me. I carefully examine the face because it's not mine. The features feel familiar. I almost recognize myself. I know. This is the hand. The man who looks like me. From that moment I can't stop. For years I have been, and am still wondering. What do I keep looking for? Mama asked me why I say it's the price I have to pay for silence over and over again. In the end the question is what do I take and what do I leave behind?

Simon(e) van Saarloos talks in 'Herdenken herdacht, een essay om te vergeten' about ghostly matters. In the footnotes they discuss the way Gordon is advocating that sociology should deal with what is lost and gone. And I quote here: "that which is apparently not present or physical forms us. It creates a social world. That knowledge of things behind things belongs to sociology and can be achieved by listening to echoes and memories from the past. Gordon's book encouraged us to look, listen and fantasize beyond the comprehensible."

I've been listening to the silence in my personal history, but also the shared history of the ABCSSS islands. Throughout history, many different people have come to live on the different islands. Everyone carries their own generational knowledge and trauma in their bodies and because of these different perspectives, we have different experiences. The question for me then is how can we come together? When it's my time, your time, our time? To speak or to listen? Which stories do we share? Which stories are unique? Which stories do we store in our collective memory? In general, I'm looking for recognition in visual representation, cultural repetitions, and shared stories. Despite the fact that I hear more and more stories, the islands still do not feel represented enough. Out of some kind of scarcity.

I long for gathering. I long to hear the untold stories, the stories behind the mainstream, the stories without words. Somehow I'm looking for community because of my fragmented perspective to our body and to our minds. I feel lost in the inbetween. What do we or I do with the remnants of the past? How do we navigate what's left behind? An important part for me is the way we share, in what kind of space are we? What do we see? What do we hear? How do we position our bodies in relation to the listener? How do we position our bodies in relation to the speaker? This may also be due to my design background, but I'm mainly looking for space to feel safe to speak. In my practice, I do this by means of sounds or smells, objects. (sound of ticking ceramic pieces)

These handmade ceramic pieces are the embodiment of trying to make memories concrete, and they are an interpretation of the sounds that shells and coral make in the water. They remind me of bones from the past. They carry the imprint of my hands, my body, they're the negative space of my fist, and when they're hung, they sound like the wind chimes in the Caribbean. (sound of ceramic)

This is how memory works. I take a piece while it's still soft, move it around to my left hand, shape it, move it in between my fingers, move it until my hand hurts. My left hand gets into my right hand to my left hand to my right hand, but it's not quite right yet. So I do it again. And again. It tries to slip away and I make a fist. They are bones, coral chimes bust, mine. They are yours. My hand is thinking about the fist, thinking about the imprint of my skin. Thinking about how to imprint on the memory, thinking about how I'm back at the beginning with all the bones that I've made. Thank you.

Philippine: Thank you so much Jeanine. This was not only about participation in assembly, but also an exemplification of what an assembly can be. Thank you so much for that. Again, remember your questions, there is going to be time, don't worry. But now we're going to go immediately onto Hodan Warsame, who is a facilitator working on anti-oppression and intersectionality. And with Hodan, we'll also come back to the Casco assemblies. So in case you thought that went very fast when Ying was speaking, we're gonna hear a bit more about them.

### **Hodan Warsame**

Hodan Warsame: Thank you! So yeah, anti-oppression facilitation, like Ying said. Thank you to Ying and Jeanine, for sharing. I find myself wondering who I'm in the room with. What is this assembly? Who's assembled here? So I just wanted to ask, just to get an idea of who I'm speaking with. Are there a lot of students of art institutions in the room? Are there teachers here? Or other people that work at art institutions? Except for the Casco people that I know. Sorry, ex- students? Yeah, yeah. Okay.

So most of my assembly experience is attending or participating in assemblies that Ying, Binna, Yolande and Annette organized and that was new for me. And since then, I've gotten to know the institutional art world a little bit more. And I'll start with sharing what struck me and what I found very valuable about the assemblies that I took part in, why I found them such welcoming

spaces. I really appreciate the people at Casco. It starts with personal relationships. And there's a lot of care and a lot of trust, when you get an invitation, that's how I've experienced it, at least from Annette, and Ying and Leana, Yolande, and Marianna. And I named the names of people, because I feel like that's what is at the core of what those assemblies were about, that it's about learning and unlearning together, and that the assemblies indeed, the way that Ying also told the story, that they're part of a process, an ongoing process that the people are committed to, in trying to learn together and to also hold each other accountable. To reflect openly, transparently, to make mistakes, to talk about it, to invite others knowing that you're not an expert. To build, learning together to undo some of the hierarchies that exist, I found it really valuable. For me, it was really special for me to be in a space with people from all over the world. It wasn't just people from Western Europe, or from the States or Canada, it was people from all over and, and at the same time, there was transparency about, okay, there's, I mean, it is an institutional group of people who are working with an institutional structure and trying to do something different. Also being open and honest about the violence that is part of it.

And so when I read ruins, I was like, ruins? How come ruins? Institutions are violent, and white supremacy and capitalism, racism and patriarchy - that's part of those and are very much alive, alive and well. And if you're part of an institution, if you're working at an institution, if you're students at an institution, if you're doing a student initiative, if you're a teacher, and you're giving a class, and you're part of the bureaucracy, and the workings of an institution, if you're a person who's a curator, working independently in institutions, or part of an institution - we're all complicit in that violence. And, they're hard places to be. And it's very, very easy to, in an effort to survive and also to just make a career and also to be safe, and also to feel like you're important, to participate in violence against others, to be silent when you see stuff happening. And I just want to bring that into the room, even though it's an invitation.

It's generative, and not only critical, as like, okay, let's not let's not pretend, because if you're a person of color, if you have disabilities, if you don't have the right papers, it's gonna be very difficult to survive and to maintain your mental, emotional, spiritual health in places that are very white, and very white supremacist with all the CPC that comes with it. I'm at the moment working at the National Museum for World Cultures. It's not an easy place to be. And so I want to start with first saying what I really enjoyed about the Casco assemblies, and then move on to how I now look at assemblies in general. Now having a little bit of a bigger view and a little bit more experience in the cultural institutional world from working it, but in it both as an activist, a freelancer and also now an employee.

What I liked about the Casco assemblies, I already said, is the collaborative learning, unlearning and holding each other accountable. I feel like sometimes an assembly kind of can become a trend, probably it is by now, as Ying alluded to, but in a sense in the art institutional world of what I found really genuine and generative, that it was a space, that it was gatherings that sort of built upon each other and that it's part of a longer process. That at the core were personal relationships and also a lot of care and a lot of contact between people. That's how I experienced it. And that I genuinely felt this is some place where we can learn together, gather to do things in a different way, because we are all impacted by or can see other people

impacted by these violent institutional habits. And that's cool. It was an assembly for an assembly's sake, you know, it was an assembly because you come together, you're all invested in moving forward and creating something different together. So I really liked that. I liked the trust that the team put in me, and I liked the opportunity to make mistakes. And yeah, I mean, the workshop that I gave with my friend Aisha, I don't think it was a particularly good workshop. But I learned, we learned, we talked a lot about it afterwards. And we were like *arrggg* we didn't really know what we were doing. We thought we did, but we didn't really, but that was the coolest thing that we could, you know. So now, looking in hindsight, how do I see assemblies? What would I like to share with you as people who are inhabitants of the institutional art world? When you use a word like that, and I really loved your presentation, Ying because it really brings it back to what we are talking about. It can sort of erase the hierarchies, as you said, it can erase what using the word assembly implies, or it sort of creates this illusion of horizontality of there are no hierarchies anymore.

But the last assembly that I was part of, yeah, there were people there from the academic world that manage budgets, budgets of millions of euros. And they're working together with people all over the world. And they're talking about we're brothers and sisters, and I'm like... How is this assembly in the way that it's organized, and the way that people are relating to it and to each other within this process undoing the hierarchies that exist. Hierarchies between people that have European citizenship, and people who don't have papers, or the hierarchies between somebody who's freelance or has a very precarious financial position, or contract, versus somebody who is very high up in an institution and has a permanent contract. So it can be very performative. And I think that that's what I've learned that the art world can do so well, it can really, really play the word, the word game really well, and the branding game really well. And it's sort of that I'm coming in as an anti-oppression facilitator, giving workshops here and there. And it's really the ability to take something and to sort of hollow it out of its meaning and use it because it's trendy, use the word because it's trendy, and sort of perform or play this game or sort of 'toneelstukje spelen' you know, that doesn't really have anything to do with the actual creation of a better world or to shift things materially. I think that's really astonishing. And it's really confusing to me, and it pisses me off. And also, it makes it very frustrating to be even in a space like this, but I'm here because I'm really grateful that I was part of the Casco assemblies and I'm happy to share, to give my compliments and to be grateful. But I'm also kind of like, I don't trust the art institutional world. I don't trust it when they use words that are like decolonial assemblies. I don't trust it. Because behind it, I've seen that the same people that are organizing that kind of stuff, or using those words are being extractive.

The ideas of Black women are being copied and not credited. Students are being mistreated to the point where they have to leave art school, because they're seen as their art is too much about their identity, when they want to talk about for example their Blackness or want to talk about being from Palestine. So it feels like a lot of the time in the art institutional world when I hear things like assembly or words like that it's just using something and not really living it. And I think that what I learned from my experiences of assembly was about how do we shift power dynamics, relating to the question of the first assembly. How I see the art world using assembly now or how I imagined it is because I've seen it being done with other words like decolonial, or

anti-racism, or Black Lives Matter. I feel like, whenever I hear somebody, using those words, organizing something, inviting somebody even to talk about it, I'm like, how do you treat your people? How do you treat your students? How do you treat your colleagues? How do you treat your guests coming to speak? What are your relationships like? I feel like participating in spaces like this, in organizing stuff like this, what art institutions can do is sort of like, it really covers and lets people hide from accountability. And I feel like Casco assemblies were partially also about building in accountability, at least, I don't know, maybe, a romanticized vision. But I think that what can happen is that you can be invited to be an expert and talk about assembly, and how to, you know, gather together, work together, speak together, in a way that dismantles power relationships, and you can be a very horrible colleague. You can be somebody who basically is stealing other people's, you know, people of colors ideas in your school, or in your institution, you can be somebody who's basically only interested about making a career and walking all over people, especially people of color, people with disabilities, people who don't have papers, people who have experiences of all these structural oppressions. So I'm calling bullshit on assemblies, unless they're organized by my friends, who I can hold accountable. If somebody comes to you and says you stole my idea, or if you're organizing an assembly, and you're not thinking to yourself, why am I organizing this assembly? From whom does that idea come from? Where do the ideas come from that I want to discuss here? Who has done the work before me? How do I include them? How do I build upon their work? When you're getting pissed off: you're not really doing anything that's in the spirit of assembly. Thank you so much! Thanks a lot.

### **Tomi Hilsee and Dagmar Bosma**

(movie (2021) played first, where we can hear Dagmar Bosma and Tomi Hilsee talking)

Dagmar Bosma:

Hi all,

This is Dagmar, I can't be with you tonight but for the occasion I will take you on a walk around the rubble beaches of Brienoord Island in Rotterdam. This place has known a lot of industrial activity and I've been told that rubble from the WW2 bombardments was dumped here too. Today you find here an overgrown landscape of vibrant ruins. I often visit these beaches to glean scrap metal which I use in my art practice. Bits and pieces find their place in loose assemblages and rust-dyed textile works. Parts become a momentary whole.

One definition of ruin could be that a structure becomes a ruin once gaps form through which 'the outside' and 'exterior forces' can come in freely. Ruination, in other words, is a process in which the delineated becomes porous.

This here is a landscape of things in a wild assembly. Fishing ropes tangled up in the branches of trees, rusted metal covered in moss or disguised as bark. At the first sight the things that come together here seem to have merged to a point of indistinguishability. But upon closer look we find things also have their own peculiar characters. When you pay attention, you will see the particularities within the whole.

The structure of the institution traditionally is delineated and upright: the institution carries its shape forward, into futurity. It is a house that pretends to stand permanently, protected and reliable. But when it comes to assembly what we need might actually be:

an opening,

a porousness,

mutability,

impermanence,

the merging of intentionality with chance occurrences,

the possibility of transformation,

the potential for something to crumble,

allowing something to erode under the exposure of 'external forces'.

The artist Beverly Buchanan wrote about the form of the ruin that it is 'Not weak in the sense of an instant falling apart at the seams, Rather - it is made to eventually crumble.'

Tomi has told me before about their research into neolithic longhouses. When a longhouse would wear down and fall into ruin, a new longhouse would be built right next to it, as if in extension to the ruin, which was allowed to remain in direct proximity. The ruin as a place to gather around, stay with and learn from.

Don't look down on the ruin! Take it as a model for assembly.

Tomi Hilsee: Yeah, thanks. I really like and appreciate this definition of ruin that you've given us. Which if I repeated this, a structure becomes a ruin whose gaps form through which the outside and exterior forces can come in freedom. Ruination, in other words, is the process in which the delineated becomes porous. I think this already makes me think a lot about how this can relate to political process, and also literally to structures or modes of assembly. And yes, it's very much linked to this process of longhouses and their decay. I was reading a bunch from Penny Becker when I was doing thesis work, and it was the case a lot for these longhouses, for the name of the period that it would be built next to the former longhouse, these longhouses would be left to decay in the situation in which they were built in, just alongside the the existing longhouse. This is a completely fascinating instance. Yeah, I was drawing a lot of inspiration from longhouses not just as a model for architecture or comments or politics. But not just as a model, but it's something to think about who has to join with us like this. The way of relating, and how these longhouses were made through the specific relations and decisions. There is quite something there..

Now one of the principal aspects of interest is that there is a continuity within us that could be called a tradition. But each longhouse is specifically different from the next longhouse. So there are things that are constant, but they're never the same also. So this is quite interesting. So there's what you could call a knowledge of building, right, which was derived from wild practices, which were socially emergent, and were manipulated in specific decisions by specific households. So you have these moments of variation occurring at the moment of building the house, right, the post layout had to be set to the ground, as the house was being built. And this was part of the numerous decisions that have been made before and during construction, right?

The size, location, collecting, when people have built the structure, and so on. This knowledge of building would also be the memories of when other houses have been built, and referencing earlier phases of the settlement. And if I read a quote from Penny Beckel, who I mentioned, she says that "We are not dealing with a general sense of ancestry, but the specific relations between households and people, which were kept alive through the physical location of the house close to those that might have been abandoned." And I could just go on about, I can keep quoting her. She says: "The continued manipulation of post-spaces, or what she means by the post-space is that the longhouses, the space that you move through is dictated by the space between these posts and posters or hold up the structure of the house and also tells you how you move through it. There's a certain orientation of the pose to children. So they will have men, each house has a slightly different engagement between people and architecture. If a house form had remained truly stable, and not open to manipulation, it would not have continued for so long as it would not have been able to play a role in the ongoing negotiation of the different possible ways of being in the community. And I just think that's such a truly poetic and beautiful, not very material reflection of I think, if you think of the longhouse as an institution, it's also very beautiful, not even metaphor, but just the description of an institution can be it, which I think relates a lot to what you were saying about porosity and, and learning to decay and also right for this going back to this knowledge building.

I can maybe describe how I think that this becomes relevant to what I do also as an architect, or someone that's involved in creating assemblies. So for me, I think this signifies the shift from a typological to a topological form of thinking, right? Like we can think of the longhouse or assembly, or architecture. A type of logical frame of reference in which we're dealing with typology for a lot of architectural history is dealing with a typology for these types of houses, right? This is a canal house, this is a longhouse, this is whatever. And then the type kind of dictates the tradition. And the type is kind of repeated, almost as a method and a topological way of thinking. It's a differentiation from thinking in terms of entities, towards thinking in terms of relations that define the space of possible entities. So it's making a topology, like a landscape or a field in which it's possible for things to be created. So there's some reference, some knowledge of building which maybe comes from the memories or relations to what has been there, and it's maybe decaying next year, whether you've been a part of, but you're not bound to repeating those things as they were, but you can kind of enter a new starting from where you left off. And for me, I think this completely changes my way of thinking about how we would make stuff or how we would decide together what to do, which can be a political exercise of how to deal with institutions and assemblies and so on. It's something a friend of mine who I've also collaborated with and is a mentor of mine, what I would call a shift away from method and model. Like to be against the method, right? A method is to say that this is how we do things. And you do like that stuff. Then you have a certain kind of result, like a scientific method, for instance. They say that model method implies a presupposition of translatability, or applicability. And therefore, universality. We did this here, it is a method, we can do it again, elsewhere, because we know it works. A mode is instead situated or singular, it works here and now. It is working. Mode is not a model. A mode is a way of doing something as you were doing it. Once you stop, it's over. Yeah, so sorry, if you think that's like a very weird format that I'm sitting in, but I'm not so good with ideas of these things.

So I'll just speak very briefly, very briefly about two assemblies I was organizing as a teacher at WDKA last year. I was part of a group of people that were organizing, like some official assembly, and this was also something I was doing as a student at TU Delft. And I think something which I think is like threading through these assemblies, which I think goes a lot with what was being said earlier, which I think is something which has to be like, against the form of things, because I think, I mean, it's obvious you can have a non-hierarchical collective of white supremacist, for instance. So the form of how things are, by itself does nothing, right. So that's why I'm thinking in terms of architecture, which is like an anti-format, and I'm also anti-method. So I also think, like, related to that, I think, I'm quite interested in things in which the, I mean, you have a type of thinking which the values are preceding the event, and you have another type of thinking in which the values are kind of emerging through the unfolding interactions within an event, right? So with these assemblies, I think that there's an attention towards that distinction, I think it's a very important distinction, right?

Here it doesn't mean that we're coming in defenseless and porous. We are, let's say, not identifying with a pre-existing set of values, which is going to say, this is what we care about and I'm gonna have an affinity with those people beforehand. But it's I'm coming into, I'm committed to engaging in encounters as a person with values, right. So I think that this is something that we did with the assembly of WDKA, which of course started, I don't know if you're familiar with this institution, silencing some master's students from giving their support for Palestinians. And then a bunch of teachers and alumni and students got together to make our own assembly to say what kind of demands we want of the institution. So within this concrete list of demands that we gave to the institution was also the sort of long and wild list of all the demands that came out of our countless meetings and pad edits and assemblies, to say, what do we value? What do we care about, right? And then we just sent this whole process to the institution. So they have a concrete list of demands, and they also have all the demands, which we didn't ever have the time or probably would never have the time to get into and resolve and come to a consensus about, right. So there's this tension between wanting, I mean, this tension between the oppressiveness of having to speak as one voice, and also having to be able to speak collectively, right. And that tension is sometimes I mean, for the most time, pretty much all the time, it's never resolved, right. I think that there's something quite beautiful, and the process becomes visible. And the process is also part of the demands, and you kind of leave it at the doorstep of the institution, you say you figure it out. I think there's also something beautiful and that sort of multiplicity of voices, which can become visible. And the assembly is not avoiding that, but sorting through those processes, which I think begins from your person with values that engages with other people through potential acts of friendship, which is maybe hopefully moving towards this horizon of equality, not assuming you're at inequality.

And so we also did something similar here. This is an exhibition that we did in the corridor at TU Delft which is opposite the supposed canon of architecture, which is, of course 100 white men from Europe and US that have a very particular idea of who practices architecture. And you're an individual, that is, of course hiding the unpaid labor and stolen ideas behind your work. So what we did was we created an undefined list, you know, a rewriting of the canon, which was,

like intentionally an indefinite list of knowledge that are otherwise excluded knowledges. And what we did with this was, it was a potentially endless list of things that people wanted to add into this canon. So people would say, I want to put this here, because I think it's important, then we say, okay, then we should put it there. But then we're not taking that as a sort of endpoint. But it's a basis for us to begin engaging with each other. So this rewriting of the canon became a sort of ongoing exhibition that is then also a presentation to the institution, but also really just the gathering amongst ourselves of how we talk about what knowledge matters and account for it, and we can remember things and make note of these things, and so on. So this is also just the same as the other one where we're just presenting our process. And the outcome isn't finished. And yeah, it just goes on like that, let's say. So I mean, I don't know if this question of what it means to build an institution I'm not so sure about, right? I mean, in some sense, the gathering, and this ongoing attentiveness is assembling, I guess. And maybe that is a pressure on the fact that it has occurred and is continuing to occur.

And maybe it can just supersede the institution by going around. But for that, I'm not sure. I just will conclude by wrapping up, I think is important for how we're thinking about architecture and assemblies, which maybe repeating a little bit that I'm a bit interested in architecture, which is the shift away from forming representation of things that what they look like, and how they are actually like existing as a space, and more on how those things are made. And how we do things and how we interact with each other, beyond objects and protocols. So I think that's also related to assemblies. I think it's so that it goes beyond just having a collective consensus handbook or putting chairs in a circle, right. So it's like these next steps that I think, you know, a collective by itself doesn't mean anything. It's very much also, the politics of buildings is very much related to that. Because of the building - if we just look at the facade, it's very much hiding many things behind it, of how it's been constructed, how it's been brought there, how it's been financed, so on and so forth. A building site itself is an assembly, it's an assembly of bodies, material relations, and so on. So it becomes critically important that you have a design responsibility to engaging in that as a sort of choreographer for the beginning of this stage of ongoing life, which is also going to happen within the building and the building became, and so on. I think that, that ability to engage in, in how you're going to start, continue, and during that process is very much also coming from, from our knowledge of, I don't know, ruin your day, or decay or something. Because our knowledge has come from somewhere, we are people that are entering into situations with skills and practice and experience and history, and values, right? And so the skill to be able to respond to a situation, I think, is maybe what you could say, allows for the possibility of ethics or improvisation or encounter. So I think that's what I like to focus on when I'm thinking about building things or assembling things is that performative shift. So I will stop there.

## **Conversation**

Philippine Hoegen: Thank you so much. Just to immediately jump in a conversation I would like to hold on to what you were saying about anti-form and anti-method and then you're talking about sorting through processes, and process as it actually becomes the method. As a question to Hodan and Ying to start with I guess it's interesting to me anti-form, but for me, form is also

exactly the thing that's going to.. can also be code of conduct or it can also be exactly the thing that will ensure that something is non-repressive, etc. And I'm very curious, maybe in light of what both Jeanine and Tomi and Dagmar have presented; whether Ying and Hogan could say something about what happened in the assemblies in Casco if certain practices were also consolidated, whether there were practical lessons learned that we can take into a future of assembly to exactly counter the bullshit assemblies that Hodan is referring to?

Hodan Warsame: We're trying to figure out if there were, if there were any rituals or habits or...?

Ying Que: Maybe you can say something from your experience in giving that workshop with Aisha. I think it was funny that you were saying, like, we just did something and made it because I really appreciated that workshop, because it was very practical. Maybe you can give something about that?

Hodan Warsame: That's what I did like, that the emphasis was always on practices. And in all of the conversations I've been part of a lot of people, of course, talked about, talked about the history of their collective and how they develop the practice, but it was really cool that a lot of the conversations were about: this is how we did something. And it was practical. And that's why I also felt like it was useful because it's about comparing, comparing notes, comparing process and, and learning from each other in that way, and not so much, you know, thinking together and talking together in an abstract way is also very useful. But the emphasis on practical steps that people took and what worked and what didn't work. I really like that emphasis.

Ying Que: Yeah, because you actually, that workshop, you really focus on the work floor, right? So maybe you can say something about the response of people that were participating in that session? How are they reacting to these questions that you like, very upfront, ask them like, okay, what does your team look like? You know, we can talk about diversity, but what are you actually doing to implement that?

Hodan Warsame: Oh, what did I ask? What did we ask you? So it was about this, this was four years ago. So this was about indeed, this was the one that was about care, and reproductive care, reproductive care? What do you call it again? What do you call reproductive labor? And so who's doing the cleaning? Who's doing the sort of shoulder to cry on, who's making sure that the machine runs and people can do their work? And how is that divided? And how does gender and race and citizenship and ability and sexuality all these axes of privilege and oppression, how does that impact that and what does that? Okay, so what does that look like in your workspace? So, yeah, I guess we did ask those questions. And how did the people respond? I guess, people who thought that we flattened everything. They were like, I guess that people were right. I mean, it felt like it was not. It was a little bit.. maybe reductive that people felt like that. That's what I remember. I misremember also?

Philippine Hoegen: That's a very useful answer. I mean, I'm very interested in these questions that all of you touched on in different ways of the ambition of horizontality, which actually then hides all sorts of hierarchies, whether it's hierarchies that have to do with the past, or whether

it's hierarchies that are not spoken about. Who is sitting on top of which budget, etc. I'm quite curious about the public... Speaking of sort of practices.. What did it do for you? The fact that Jeanine was, for example, bringing in these sounds, or speaking in a slightly different way, hesitantly sometimes or introducing silences. I'm just curious whether somebody has something today to say about what that did to the dynamic of, of yeah, the speaker who speaks and the listeners who listen.

Anybody? Come on, I'm sure you have something to say.

Answer from the crowd: I just told my friend that when I came in we just came out of a conversation and it was kind of chaotic in my head. I found it difficult to focus on the first speaker. I'm sorry. It wasn't that it wasn't interesting. It was just difficult to focus because of my other situation, but then you asked us to sit down and close our eyes. And it is weird that it was like you, leading the conversation makes me think about it's like, you're on the stage. But you were not really on the stage, but it was not hierarchical. But it's, it was interesting, in my opinion, because we felt really, like you were asking us to be in the same space. And that was really interesting for me. So that's what I can say about that, that it was really bringing everybody together and instead of really forcing people but just asking in a really gentle, nice, quiet way of...

Philippine Hoegen: being present...

Same person in the crowd: Yeah, being present

Another person in the audience: So also in a way keeping or next to like being together also kind of allowing a person to be alone or allowing a person to be in its own kind of space and time and body and experience. Which may be a way we can also create togetherness. But I think also that's, yeah, that's also kind of beautiful that yeah, it's not maybe about who's there who's here or who's behind me, but just about like, okay, close your eyes and that's the space that's all the space you have. And that's a very special space.

Binna Choi: So maybe I will use this moment to send Philippine away because of some inevitable reason she needs to leave now. So I'm taking over in tune with Leana. So thank you so much for moderating.

Philippine Hoegen: I really apologize. I have to get the train back to Brussels where I live because otherwise I have a problem in the morning. Very, very sorry and thank you so much, everybody.

Audience: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Binna Choi: Great, and I also like to check about the kind of listening capability in the room because I don't have good hearing ability and then when I was standing over there already it sounded so distant. And then when you are here, it's incredible. So if you want to experience

more, you know, please come closer if you need to. Right. Thank you. A bit different. Yeah, so what? Yeah, by the way, my name is Binna, and I'm the director of Casco. So I've also been a part of organizing assembly at Casco through this and through the last three editions. And I was also behind organizing this symposium, I wouldn't call it assembly, this is definitely something being assembled, but I wouldn't call it that. I proposed to make a distinction from assembly and I've been kind of behind supporting Leana and it was Leana who brought this angle of ruin and I didn't understand it fully. But it really struck me as something very important. It just changed the perspective of sensing and understanding the time where we live in. It's very curious that I mean, like it's also kind of about very positive constructive human capability that we can be here without thinking of how it was for last one year in half by ourselves and then in our surroundings and then kind of massive extinction going on, but still like we have capacity for capability, openness, sensing it. So bringing this frame or perspective or ruin was like next to assembly was really shocking, but meaningful and then today's contribution really gave me articulation over what it is.

So what it is as I understood is this contrast between institution and ruin. So I think institution is effort to reduce, avoid the ruin and I felt when Hodan was speaking like I felt very uncomfortable because I felt like maybe I like it's not that I invited Hodan to praise of Casco assembly. But maybe you felt like I put her in that position. So it was great when she brought critique and then kind a position that we can easily fall into whether we are conscious or not. But nevertheless, I want to bring something positive about Casco assembly. Don't forget I'm the director, within this room going ruination actually also colleague and friend artist, Natasha, using this notion "ruinous ruin," so ruin I don't know. It's like, ruin that is really, really like ruin becoming ruin. So it's like a layered and extended process of ruination. I felt horrified when I attended an assembly that kept very proper protocol. And, and then if there's something meaningful in our assembly, it is messy and compositional and then we bring different tools here and there. And, it is personally also one way to really keep relationships, I was thinking of like, again like what is friendship in the ruin or within institutions? Because keeping institutions against ruin also breaks apart friendship. But within the assembly, I think we survive from this. So now I won't speak any longer, but another person can speak and then another and another, you can gradually disappear if you are bored. Drinks are there. Yeah.

Leana Boven: Thank you. Thank you, Binna, also. And thank you indeed for the sound. Yeah, thank you also for indeed making this connection between the ruin versus kind of the institution. Yeah. And to also the public, we said, the program would end at nine. So indeed, it is now nine. So maybe we can go towards the closing. But I would be really interested in also hearing the speakers maybe if they want to respond to one of the other presentations, or? Yeah, if you see connections between more maybe artistic approaches, or the more reflective presentations on the assemblies of Casco, for example, approaches, if someone wants to reflect on that. I see, Hodan? And if people need to leave, please leave if you have to. But do you have a question, Ying?

Ying Que: I'm curious about if there's a question from the audience?

Leana Boven: Is there anyone here who has a question to maybe one of the speakers or wants to say something or has a comment?

Person from the audience: So the question that I had listening to all of it, and thank you, for everyone who spoke is then the necessity of participating in institutionalized processes in the first place, right? Because I, again, I'm coming from a place where I haven't really participated in the art world or in a lot of these educational institutions. Right. And, but of course, it does still feel like, there is a place for that, but then listening to it, because they reproduce a lot of these systems of oppression, why participate in the first place? is my question.

Hodan Warsame: Can you say something about the position that you are coming from, if you're not coming from it.. if you're not really participating in the institutional world?

Person responds: Not in a way that I depend on it right. I don't really have the chance to in for many reasons, but at the same time, I do feel like a lot of the times in my life, I feel like I would want to but it's also still you know, there is that component to it that not only do like financial issues, stop me but also the philosophical issues.

Hodan Warsame: I could share my thoughts because I asked myself that question, what the hell am I doing there? Why, what? Where am I? Why am I participating? It's so difficult, it takes up a lot of energy, it's really draining, it's really, it's really tough to see people being hurt, it's really tough to be constantly in a situation myself where I know I have a little bit of power. And of course, I'm being exploited myself, also for my identities, and all that kind of stuff, being an activist blah, blah, blah. But like, it takes a lot of work to try to do it ethically. And you don't know who to trust. So what, why am I, what am I doing there? And at the moment, the only answer that I've can give myself is that financial necessity is a big part of it, you know. So I'm there because I think that there are people there that can give me the financial resources so that I can do work that I think is useful for other people, for the people. You know, for people that are not being served by the institution, at the moment, for example, the ethnographic museum. It's a museum that has participated in and still it's really upholding a lot of myths, a lot of stories that uphold whiteness that people internalize whether they're white or they're people of color, about their value in the world. And there's a lot of erasure of colonial history and the ethnographic museum has a responsibility to undo that erasure and to make accessible knowledge and to empower people to create their own knowledge. And not a lot of people are invested in that in a museum that I'm working in.

And so it's about okay, can I get a budget to redistribute money to hire my friends and collaborators and people that I think are doing good work so that they can do their work? I can? Can I facilitate them? That's how I see my position in the museum. Can I facilitate and redistribute money? Can I redistribute power? And that's it, I don't, I don't know where I can find that money elsewhere. You know, so and that's what's cool about Casco as well, which I don't feel I don't feel pressure to compliment Casco. Not at all. But I think it's really cool where you like, okay, this is how money and power is distributed in the Netherlands, you have to apply for

grants, as an institution, you have to get some institutional legitimacy. That's the way that it works. So when you don't want to play that game, and you want to redistribute power, you want to redistribute who gets to say, what is valuable in the world? And who gets to get the money and the resources and the time and space and the mental energy to create stuff in the world? How do you do that in a different way? Have you played the game that's being played against you? And I think that's really cool about what you're doing. Casco is like, okay, we're gonna try to change the rules, we're going to find allies, we're going to try to, you know, learn skills together and sort of like, be like, what's it called? Camouflaged in as an institution, but we're actually doing something else, That's not really what institutions are about. Yeah. Thank you.

Ying Que: Yeah, thanks for that. I want to echo that. In terms of like, okay, you go to the institutions, because it's when the resources are also like, for your own kind of survival, like how to pay your rent, you know, and so, yeah, I think that's very, very important. Because, yeah, we just live in this world where you have to wait, so where do you get it from? And then maybe something else to add, is to say, like, not all institutions are the same, you know, like, there is not one kind of institution, even if you look at the city, the two bigger political art institutions, or the two institutions are super different in terms of size, in terms of power, in terms of practice. Yeah, and I think for me, personally, because after I graduated from the institution of the academy, right, or the university, I quite quickly moved into Casco. But after some years, I also realized how the institutional rhythm really sucks you dry, you know, in terms of rhythm of exhibition, making events, organizing. It's very, like, quick, quick, quick, and like, a lot. And I couldn't. Yeah, it's not something easy to escape. But to move into a freelance position where maybe in that sense, you could have a little bit more control over what kind of jobs, what kind of projects, what kind of time you want to spend, coming from also an activist community. How can you make that space within these institutions? How do you kind of function as a parasite? Right? Where it's also for the question of the artists, the artists as parasites in the institution? What can we see in these big structures that have a lot of resources? How can we use these resources to redistribute them to our communities too you know, and I think Casco is quite unique in this I don't know, an institution, like Casco that functions like this. Because when I worked here, as community organizer, I just got a budget for, I don't know, paint for banners, you know, and they said, okay, here's our space, just bring your people and you can just use it whenever. I thought that was like: "oh, nice." And now after, like being not in the institution of Casco and the daily practice of it, I can see how that was weird. You know, so, but still, you can see how people are making more space for like, okay, social practice, you know, they want more communities inside, they're thinking about, okay, what is this whole diversity, like, how can we do that in our programming or whatever. So I think there is potential from the outside as parasites as activists and as artists as cultural workers. To influence the discourse. And ideally, it goes into the practice that is a whole next level of transformation. But yeah, it starts with the talking, right? What words are you using? And then what actions are connected to that? So, yeah, I believe we need to stay in the institutions too, because they're our survival, it is where our money comes from. We can redistribute that to our people, and then try to change a little bit in the way that they work or think.

Hodan Warsame: At the same time, you don't have to be identifying with the institution, you can see it as you're being offered a contract, you "je kan alle waarden en manier van werken onderschrijven" you can become a part of the machine and also the values and the way that people treat each other and the hierarchies that are there. There is an option to resist collectively. And you don't have to become a part of what you're not invested in. That's what my friend always says, I'm not invested in this institution, I'm not here for the survival of the institution, I'm here for my own agenda. She reminded me when I came to work at the museum, every day, when you go in, you have to, you have to think to yourself: What is my agenda today? How does the institution serve my agenda? And my agenda is not only mine alone, I'm serving and facilitating a collective agenda for liberation for more, you know, social justice. And if you don't have that clear idea, you're going to be used, or you're going to start playing the power games, and you're going to be starting, you're going to be really abusive, because that's what it asks people to do. You have to be exploitative, extractive, abusive, towards your colleagues, towards collaborators, towards students, and everybody, you know, it's very tempting to participate in those games, because that's how it works. So I'm sorry for sounding like a very paranoid person, but it is like that. So you can sort of change it to serve a collective, a collective agenda for collective liberation, for social justice, but not identifying with the institution and not being there for the institution, because it'll eat you up and spit you out. And then it'll be from assemblies going to, I don't know, some other trend where, you know, you know what I mean, it's not really about you. So, so just add, add that as well.

Leana Boven: Thank you both Hodan and Ying. And thank you also, for your question. You also had a question, right, or a comment?

Person from the audience: The only thing maybe I would like to add is to really, yeah, maybe, maybe look, to the diverse way that institutions are organized, and the people work in it, because I don't think that it's all bad you know. Also in art schools, a lot of good teachers, good policies. Some of it not, you know, but personally, I really like those people. You don't have to choose, I think, I mean, you can be part of an artist collective, or you can start something yourself and teach as an academy and do good stuff there, you know. And be part of something that not that you don't agree with, in total, but partly you really like it, maybe. I know, I do. You know, I love art schools, I love to be able to come here and that it's that this is organized. And you are here, you know. So I think that's also why I'm not against institutions. I think some practices are really, really, really not going well. A lot of it. I'm an artist, I work in the art world in different ways. You know, when you have an exhibition at the museum it is way different than when you work behind the desk, in in Witte de With, for instance, and, you know, nobody looks at you like you're anything, you know? I mean, it's quite different, the way institutions function. Some are worse. I just want to stress that it's good to maybe see details and see people and see ways also to collaborate because when I teach an article, I can sometimes propose classes that really change, I hope, something in the curriculum, you know, although it may be small, but you can contribute. So in that sense, I think it can also be very positive to collaborate not only to be a parasite. Okay, yes, sometimes and you have to be, you know, really critical.

Leana Boven: Yeah. Thank you so much for your comment. Yeah, I think we should close it here also to be respectful of everyone's time. But thank you so much to all the speakers today Tomi and also Dagmar who wasn't here. Hodan, Ying and Jeanine and also Philippine who left already and also, thank you all for coming. And thank you also Club Solo for a collaboration and a really beautiful way of working together. So yeah, no, there's more time but we have this space until ten to have drinks together. So you can also ask your questions to each other then. Thank you so much.