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**SUSTAIN**

making space  
for art in  
transitions  
that matter

# Table of contents

**Introduction 3**

**Editorial 6**

**Spacemakers Stories 7**

**Creating space for transition** · Godelieve Spaas **11**

**A white dot** · Arne Hendriks **17**

**Quotes 20 & 25**

**Making space for vertical thinking** · Godelieve Spaas **21**

**Makers of change** · Sandra Boer & Jetske Freeve **26**

**Working with artists** · Edo Roos Lindgreen **28**

**Analogy between Spacemakers and the Reed Plant: an alternative perspective** · Marga Rotteveel & Ine Mols **30**

**Toolkit 32**

**Bookshelf 41**

**Research team 42**

# SUSTAIN

SUSTAIN explores the role of Spacemakers: parties that aim to contribute to systemic change by creating space for art in unusual places such as within the economy, science, or technology. The goal: to work with art towards a sustainable and just society - ecologically, economically, and socially.

## About Sustain

There's a lot going on in the world. There are almost as many conflicts as there are countries, more people on the move, a climate disaster looms, and inequality among people only continues to increase. Huge challenges where quick solutions are of very limited significance. But how do we find our way out of the current polycrisis? How can we work on systemic transitions? The urgency is palpable, yet, encouragingly, we see more and more initiatives aimed at transitioning to a sustainable future.

We also see more and more artists trying to shape a future based on a different sustainable model. The role of the artist is undeniably unique. SUSTAIN examines the role art can play in visualising, driving, and shaping the transition to a world where we would actually want to live. More precisely: with SUSTAIN, we look at the collaboration between artists and other parties and the role of so-called Spacemakers in realising that collaboration.

Artists inquire into the unknown, they question what seems logical, and connect seemingly disparate elements. Precisely those qualities are of great importance for realising systemic transitions. However, accessing the spaces where artists seek to make an impact is not always easy.

Spacemakers see a clear role for art in transition issues. Whether it's about collaborations with science, technology, economy, or other domains, Spacemakers strive for a prominent role for art in those contexts to achieve meaningful transitions. Therefore, they try to create space for art in places where art often does not easily or naturally come to the table. With this practical research, SUSTAIN offers

more insight into the exact role, methods, and added value of Spacemakers in the transition to be made. The research and the results contribute to the further professionalisation of this emergent sector.

SUSTAIN is a collaborative project between The Hague University of Applied Sciences and Avans University of Applied Sciences. The research was conducted by Jacco van Uden (Professor of Change Management), Godelieve Spaas (Professor of Economy in Common), Olga Mink, Marga Rotteveel, and Kim Caarls. Additionally, we have collaborated closely with six Spacemakers: Art Partner, Circus Andersom, Future of Work, In4Art, V2\_, and Waag. The box below introduces these Spacemakers further.

SUSTAIN has yielded two main outcomes:

1. **The Spacemaker Toolbox** (see also Cahier The Help), a practical tool for Spacemakers to explore and professionalise their work internally.
2. **The Spacemaker Stories**, a series of cahiers where we look at the Spacemaker practices from a distance, helping Spacemakers articulate more clearly what they do, why they do it, how they do it, and the value they create.

In short: where the Toolbox focuses attention inward (strengthening the Spacemaker practice), the Spacemaker Stories consist of a collection of stories, reflections, experiences, images, concepts, and ideas that help give Spacemaking a place in the realisation of systemic transitions. The Spacemaker Stories also serve as a tool for artists and parties wanting to work with art to clarify what the possibilities with Spacemakers are and how to make choices that suit the situation, stakeholders, and issues.

## The Spacemaker Stories

What motivates Spacemakers? What are their dreams? How do they connect art with other domains? What are their stories?

Each Spacemaker has a unique story, with each Spacemaking process having its own dynamics, approaches, and outcomes. The various cahiers aim to inspire anyone looking to make space for art, providing building blocks for crafting individual or collective Spacemaking narratives. They don't impose a strict framework but offer ingredients with which Spacemakers, artists, and organisations can develop their own narrative: what change do we want, what is the role of art, how can we leverage the tension between art and other domains, how do we create space for art, and what can that lead to?

These questions, loosely based on the structure of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*, form the foundation of the five cahiers. The protagonist in this journey is the Spacemaker:

- The Calling:** This cahier addresses the call to adventure, or what motivates Spacemakers to create space for art in other contexts to effect systemic change. It explores the difference they aim to make and the values and beliefs that drive them. What's at stake?
- The Promise of Art:** Building on the calling, Spacemakers share their vision of art's promise for systemic change. Why is it important to create space for art? What role does art play in the transition?

- The Tension:** Spacemakers navigate the relatively unknown territory of art in other contexts, encountering tension between different worlds. This tension can be both constructive and obstructive. This cahier delves into the nature of this tension, its origins, and its manifestations.
- The Help:** How do Spacemakers create space for art in the transition? What kind of spaces are created? And where does the Spacemaker position themselves within this space?
- The Gift:** What do you leave behind as a Spacemaker? How do the gifts of Spacemaking contribute to the transition towards systemic change? And how do you know or measure the value of what you leave behind?

Whether you're a Spacemaker, artist, client, funder, or simply curious, these cahiers offer inspiration on how art can collaborate with other domains and highlight the significance and value of Spacemakers in these collaborations. Discover, learn, and contribute to system transition through embracing art and Spacemaking.

Welcome to The Spacemaker Stories, where you travel with Spacemakers creating space for art on the path to a sustainable future.

*Kim Caarls*  
*Olga Mink*  
*Marga Rotteveel*  
*Godelieve Spaas*  
*Jacco van Uden*



# The Space- makers

**ART PARTNER**, founded in 2008, is an organisation that mobilises highly educated creative thinkers, such as theatre makers, artists, and philosophers, to use artistic interventions as catalysts for change in organisations. They believe that art can reveal the hidden aspects of systems and processes and collaborate with leaders who recognize the value of imagination and the artistic mindset. With their Creative Catalyst Cycle, focusing on artistic research, they develop tailored interventions that stimulate profound changes in organisations. Sandra Boer and Jetske Freeve, the current partners, act as 'Spacemakers' and facilitate collaboration between clients and artists to achieve impactful change.

## CIRCUS ANDERSOM

brings Disruptive Connection. Circus Andersom is the collective of autonomous project developers Esmé Calis, Martijn Engelbregt, and Allard Medema, supported by a variety of creative makers under the business leadership of Linda Koene. With location-specific research trajectories, they entice places and people who (un)consciously yearn for change. With installations, performances, workshops, and alternative research methods, Circus Andersom awakens and invites dreaming. A range of direct artistic and disarming work forms reassures participants while simultaneously challenging them to become more human. Under the banner of Physical Philosophy, Circus Andersom unravels body-oriented wisdom to enable the restoration of the connection between heart, head, and gut. Participants are encouraged to look afresh at so-called certainties. They do not shy away from friction and deliberately seek wonder because they believe in unexplored paths within our compartmentalised society. People should feel more space to be themselves.

## FUTURE OF WORK,

under the artistic leadership of Olga Mink and Godelieve Spaas, is a hybrid platform for artistic research and co-creation. The foundation establishes new forms of collaboration and sustainable strategies around work and the economy, proposing visions that promote dialogue about an economy where our needs are subordinate to the requirements for a healthy ecosystem and a just society. They recognize the need to rethink the economy and artistically connect social, economic, and cultural ecosystems, giving co-ownership to creators, designers, citizens, knowledge institutions, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

## IN4ART

operates as an independent institute for art-driven responsible technological innovations. Connecting science, technology, and art, In4Art focuses on creating space for experiments that enable responsible innovations. They seek unexpected solutions to bring about positive global changes. In4Art aims to reconsider ideas about societal and economic structures by prioritising circularity, biodiversity restoration, and inclusivity. According to In4Art, the potential of art in our society and economy must be utilised to transform our current economy with new thinking and to realise responsible innovations.

## V2\_

Lab for the Unstable Media, led by Michel van Dartel (director), is an interdisciplinary centre for art and media technology in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Since its founding in 1981, V2\_ has provided a platform for artists, designers, scientists, researchers, and developers to present, produce, archive, and publish their work at the intersection of art, technology, and society. V2\_ aims to ensure that art and design play an essential role in the societal embedding of technological developments. Through critical dialogue, artistic reflection, and practice-oriented research, V2\_ explores issues related to the social impact of technology.

## WAAG

promotes critical reflection on technology, develops technological and societal design skills, and stimulates social innovation. Together with a team of designers, artists, and scientists, Waag applies public research methods to technology and society, aiming to involve as many people as possible in designing an open, fair, and inclusive future. Waag Futurelab contributes to sustainable research, design, and development for a just society by exploring emerging technologies, questioning cultural assumptions, experimenting, designing alternatives based on public values, and working with society to build an inclusive future.

# Editorial

In these cahiers, the Spacemakers are the heroes of the story. Called to create space for art, they have the courage to accept the challenge and embark on a journey—a transformative journey for themselves and for their fellow travellers. This journey contributes to systemic transitions towards a fair and sustainable society.

In this particular part of their story, the Spacemaker not only acts as a hero but also as a mentor in the journey of other heroes. The mentor supports the hero in both word and deed. The Spacemaker helps artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, and others in crossing the threshold to embark on their journey, enter unknown territory, and embrace uncertainty and not knowing. According to Joseph Campbell's book (2020), the mentor takes on many guises, as do the Spacemakers. In analogy to Campbell's mentor, the Spacemakers share their wisdom, equip the hero with tools and confidence to overcome obstacles, and guide them through uncharted territory, facilitating growth and learning. The mentor offers support and encouragement but does not necessarily make the path easy for the hero. Sometimes, the mentor intentionally places the hero in challenging situations to foster personal

growth and development. These tests are designed to strengthen and wise the hero. The mentor also aids in making ethical decisions and finding meaning in what occurs and what arises.

The metaphor of the hero's journey takes centre stage in this cahier, encapsulating the transformative essence of systemic transitions. These transitions involve intertwining various processes to craft a new paradigm, precisely the objective of the Spacemakers when integrating art into different domains.

Just as the mentor assumes diverse forms throughout the hero's journey, each Spacemaker uniquely carves out space for art. In the article 'Making Space for Transition', you will delve into the various roles Spacemakers undertake in systemic transitions, exploring how they navigate and contribute to different transition processes.

'Making Space for Vertical Thinking' draws on the work of writer and theatre-maker Marjolijn van Heemstra to explore the unique role of art in a society that is accustomed to deflecting problems elsewhere, rather than confronting its own issues—a legacy of its colonial past.

In 'A white dot', artist Arne Hendriks discusses the importance of always maintaining open space where new possibilities can emerge, as well as the significance of making space in an era dominated by growth.

Sandra Boer and Jetske Freeve of Art Partner describe their process of making space for art and emphasise the importance of intuition in their work. Edo Roos Lindgreen, Professor of Data Science in Auditing and former partner at KPMG, shares his experience of working with Art Partner and discusses the benefits that the space for art within KPMG has brought to him and his colleagues.

Finally, the cahier includes a brief summary of the Spacemakers' toolbox, developed by SUSTAIN researchers, to assist Spacemakers in exploring and further professionalising their practice alongside their partners.

*Godelieve Spaas*

*The Spacemaker not only acts as a hero but also as a mentor in the journey of other heroes*



*We give trust, but we never let go*

- ART PARTNER

Art Partner earns trust from clients and extends trust to artists, without relinquishing control. They establish the framework for each assignment, creating a space where the artist can work freely and the client can take a leap of faith, without knowing the final outcome.

The uncertainty can sometimes be challenging for clients. To address this, Art Partner developed the Creative Catalyst Cycle, which outlines the various stages of the process, from 'Need for Change' to 'Uncover', then 'Envision', and finally 'In Motion', 'Harvest', and 'Reflect & Continue.' Art Partner also offers solid support to artists. The mix of project-based and financial clarity along with profound trust in the artistic process has proven effective.

Art Partner forms the link between the organisation and the artists by, among other things, establishing frameworks, providing support, and ensuring open communication. In doing so, they facilitate a productive exchange between clients and artists.

*Listening is more important than speaking*

- CIRCUS ANDERSON

Circus Andersom acts as both artist and Spacemaker, creating space for their own art as well as that of others. They involve the physical dimensions of Earth time and Earth space in their work, with hands in the mud, feet in the clay, and heads in the clouds. By introducing innovative places and processes, they offer a different perspective on so-called self-evident truths.

An example of this is the creation of 'disappointment places,' where listening is central, making everyone feel heard. As a Spacemaker, Circus Andersom serves as the connecting link between art, other realms, and the everyday human, where everyone is considered equal and special.

*By combining different perspectives, we create a new 'third' space*

- FUTURE OF WORK

To accommodate art within a collective economy, Future of Work establishes new environments where art, the economy, and the public intersect. These environments function as spaces for discovery, imagination, and creation, where existing economic structures can be examined or disrupted, and new, collective economic forms can be explored.

Future of Work engages in collective artistic research by connecting ideas, individuals, and organisations through workshops, festivals, and exhibitions, while incorporating various partnerships and funding sources. They acknowledge and address tensions when necessary, fostering an atmosphere in which diverse viewpoints can coexist harmoniously.

As Spacemakers, they stand for using art as a starting point to look at the world, fostering connections, and pursuing collaborative endeavours. Their definition of success hinges on the ability to uncover fundamental truths or introduce new perspectives that benefit the economy, the arts, and the public alike. Contextualization, connectivity, inquiry, exchange, and intensification stand as the core components of their methodology for collective artistic action research. By conducting this research across different local settings, they strive to build a trans-local network of contributors collaborating on narratives, visuals, and practises conducive to a collective economy.



*It is our task to guard  
and make the space pro-  
ductive for and with all  
parties involved*

- IN4ART

In4Art initiates, organises, and finances artistic experiments and responsible innovation in the fields of nutrition, production, health, and biodiversity.

In its pursuit of responsible change, In4Art constantly searches for interesting ideas or prototypes to collaborate on. Working alongside artists, they identify which concepts hold value. Through project management and their art-driven innovation method, they create safe zones and ensure the necessary conditions are in place to foster the required space. They view it as their responsibility to protect this space and render it productive for all parties involved, providing allocated budgets, resources, and dedicated teams.

Subsequently, they aim to transform the insights derived from artistic experiments into new proposals for more responsible innovations using their PESETABS analysis. This analysis adheres to the principle that economic and social advancement must be both regenerative and distributive to support more sustainable, green or caring innovations.

*We explicitly make space for  
completely non-functional  
ideas*

- V2\_

V2\_ creates space for art and artists to contribute to transitions by establishing autonomous spaces where professional interdisciplinarity and audience interaction are safeguarded.

They facilitate space for production by organising financing that minimally impacts the freedom of creation and thought. Additionally, they surround creators with teams of experts from diverse networks in relevant disciplines. Presentation spaces are then created where audience participation is always welcomed. Space is also designated for publishing, further disseminating what has been developed in education, archives, teaching, and more, through targeted public relations and communication strategies.

The strategy of V2\_ is not focused on rendering these spaces merely functional; rather, the value of completely non-functional ideas is embraced.

As a Spacemaker for art across various domains, it is essential to stay true to the essence of art and clearly communicate the unique contributions art makes to those domains, without assuming their roles.

*To disrupt binary  
oppositions and find other  
ways and methods to  
create balance*

- WAAG

Waag operates with a team of social researchers, critical makers, hackers, designers, artists, and scientists. Employing public research methods, they focus on technology and society. They do this by creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and co-creation. Their aim is to enable as many people as possible to co-design a future that is open, fair, and inclusive. They create these spaces by organising both formal and informal interactions among various stakeholders, ensuring open and clear communication, as well as clearly defining roles.

Tension is viewed as a natural part of the process. The Spacemakers are flexible regarding their position, ranging from research and coordinating roles to striving for a balance between art and other domains. Waag translates the various ways of working that exist within the diversity of domains in which they operate.

# What space do Spacemakers create?

GODELIEVE SPAAS

Spacemakers approach the task of creating space for art in various ways, each driven by their unique perspectives and opinions on the role of art in serving their objectives in other domains. This cahier explores the diverse methodologies employed by Spacemakers. However, the nature of the spaces they generate also varies. Hence, I've compiled a thesaurus of the different space concepts encountered, each accompanied by proposals on how art could contribute to them. As I write, I've come to realise that artistic contributions to a space are indeed interchangeable.

## **Liminal Space: A Meeting Place of Possibilities**

Liminal space represents the threshold between the old and the new, where the usual limitations fade. Art can serve as a tool here to translate the abstraction of this space into tangible expression, thereby allowing new paradigms and approaches to emerge.

## **Convivial Space: A Nexus of Collaboration and Community**

Convivial space creates a context where collaboration and community thrive. Art can be used here to shape these spaces, allowing multidisciplinary teams to find a fertile ground for synergistic innovations and cross-disciplinary exchanges.

## **In Between Space: Bridging Diversity**

In-between space serves as a transitional space between different ideas and disciplines. Art can act as a universal language that facilitates this transition, creating a fertile ground for new insights and concepts.

## **Hybrid Space: Synthesis of Complexity and Diversity**

Hybrid space goes beyond simple combinations and involves the creation of something new from a mix of elements. Artists can play a role in shaping these hybrid spaces, where diverse ideas and practices merge and result in innovative approaches.

## **Third Space: A Metaphysical Space for Creativity**

Third space transcends traditional work and thought environments, providing a playground for freer thinking and creativity. Art can function in this context as a catalyst for exploring new perspectives and developing innovative solutions.

## **Void: The Creative Power of Emptiness**

Void represents a space without a predetermined purpose or meaning. Art has the power to fill this emptiness with new ideas and perspectives, creating a fertile ground for creativity.

## **Holding Space: A Safe Haven for Creative Development**

Holding space creates a safe environment where individuals and communities can experiment and innovate without fear of judgement. Art can serve as a bridge to self-development and innovation.

## **Brave Space/Safe Space: The Dance of Challenge and Security**

Brave space and safe space are contexts where open dialogue and expression are encouraged, while ensuring the safety and well-being of participants. Art provides a framework to achieve this delicate balance and create a fertile ground for transformative interactions.

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# Creating space for transition

GODELIEVE SPAAS

In today's world, we are confronted with a multitude of significant challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, growing inequality, exclusion, and exploitation. These issues are interconnected and complex, influencing each other in various ways. Consequently, the paths towards solutions or change are manifold and systemic in nature. The severity of these crises has led to discussions of a transition from merely experiencing change to fundamentally altering the era we live in (Rotmans, 2014).

This shift implies that relying solely on existing knowledge domains and paradigms may not be sufficient. Technological innovation and market mechanisms alone are unlikely to address these challenges effectively. Instead, we must expand the space for exploration, meaning-making, and action to uncover the right questions and alternatives. Only then can we truly transform the systems that shape our world. Art has a role to play in stretching this space for exploration and change. However, for art to effectively contribute to systemic change, we must understand what such change entails and what it demands from us. We must also explore how processes of Spacemaking can facilitate this transformation.

In this article, I will discuss the importance of integrating diverse knowledge domains in systemic transitions. Drawing on two complementary transition theories, I will explore how Spacemakers can position themselves within the broader process of system transition and how creating space for art can support tangible transition processes among individuals and organisations.

## Spacemaking between different knowledge domains

"The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." - Audre Lorde (2007)

Dismantling the current system necessitates adopting a fresh perspective. Only through this lens can we identify what is stagnant, no longer viable, or actively harmful. This process alone enables us to uncover the barriers holding individuals and society back, and the beliefs that persist despite their detrimental effects, sometimes contrary to one's own better judgement. To reveal the flaws within a system requires viewing it with unfamiliar eyes. The moment of realisation that the prevailing narrative is flawed is poignantly illustrated in 'Une Tempête' (a reimagining of William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' by Aimé Césaire, 1969), particularly when Caliban speaks:

Prospero, you are the master of illusion.  
Lying is your trademark.  
And you have lied so much to me  
(Lied about the world, lied about me)  
That you have ended by imposing on me  
An image of myself.  
Underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,  
That's the way you have forced me to see myself  
I detest that image! What's more, it's a lie!  
But now I know you, you old cancer,  
And I know myself as well.

An apt description of what could be termed a tipping point is the realisation that the story you are part of is incorrect, and you know you have the power

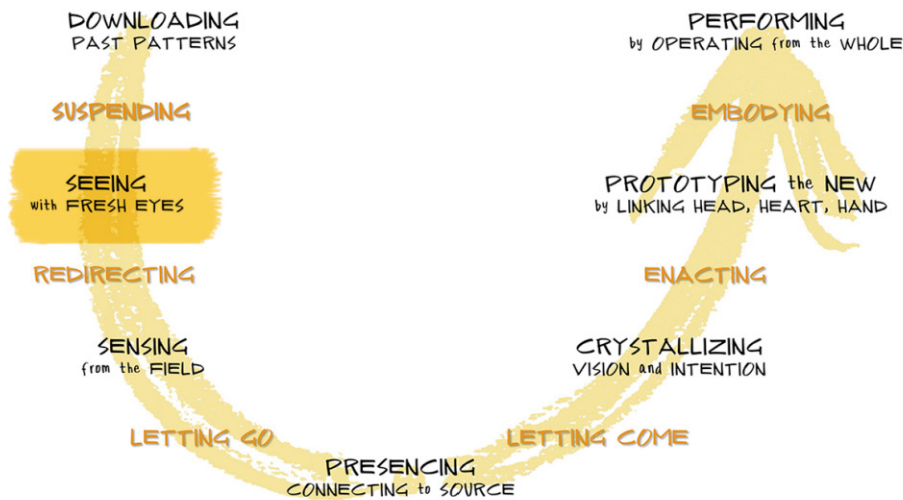


Image 1: Theory U, Otto Scharmer (2015)

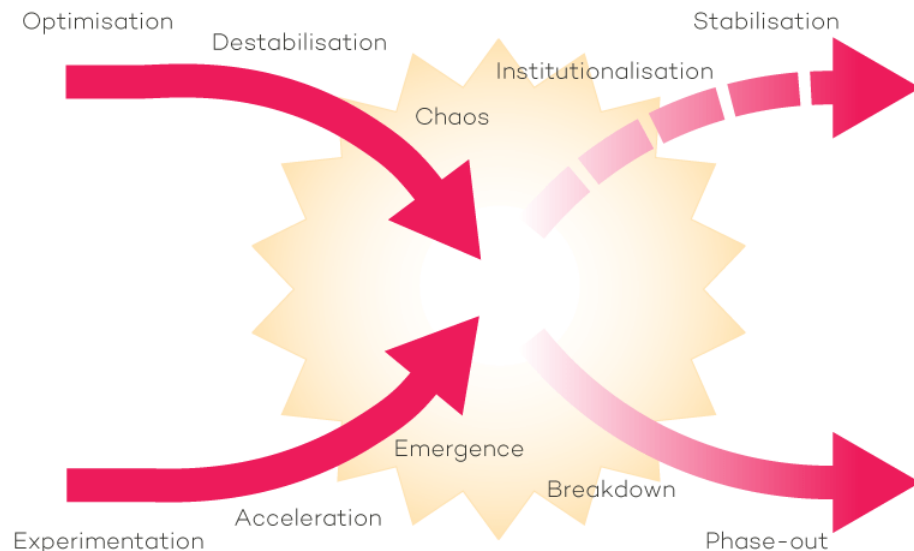


Image 2: The X-curve-framework (Drift 2022)

to create a different narrative. It is the moment when you realise that within the existing knowledge domain, you cannot develop, experience, or understand the new. The realisation that science, economics, business, and technology, in isolation, are insufficient to solve the issue is captured in Mike Hulme’s words: ‘We live under the illusion that there is a big thermostat knob with which we can turn down war, hunger, disaster, and injustice.’ Understanding and addressing the significant issues of our time requires more than just a calculator or the knowledge currently provided by science (Maxim Februari, Vrij Nederland #1, 2023).

Arguably, the primary value of Spacemakers lies in their ability to introduce a distinct language and approach to knowledge development, thereby broadening perspectives within the spaces they create. A system transition—a shift in era as described by Rotmans (2014)—cannot occur within the confines of the prevailing system’s knowledge domain. Identifying flaws within the current system and envisioning alternatives necessitate engaging partners and gaining insights from outside the existing framework.

To envision a different system, diverse forms of knowledge are indispensable. In this context, the development of artistic knowledge can serve as a catalyst. By facilitating space for art, Spacemakers enable a shift in thinking and action through the introduction of an artistic lens for understanding and interpretation. This approach fosters a more expansive and inclusive method for addressing complex challenges and exploring new possibilities.

Otto Scharmer (2009, 2015) contends that systemic change cannot be achieved merely by addressing surface-level symptoms and structures. Instead, we must delve deeper and adopt a different perspective to transform the underlying paradigms of thought, tapping into our deeper wellsprings of creativity. Theory U provides a framework and methodology for going beyond the surface level of events and crises to understand the underlying structures, patterns of thinking, and root sources responsible for their emergence. By neglecting these fundamental aspects, we risk becoming ensnared in a cycle of repeating the same old patterns.

Spacemakers facilitate the creation of space for art, which, in Scharmer’s terms, involves examining patterns from the past, adopting a fresh perspective on the present to shed outdated notions, and fostering awareness of new possibilities in connection with one another and the environment. From this awareness, new ideas can gradually take shape through a process that engages the head, hands, and heart.

Spacemakers guide artists, entrepreneurs, policymakers, scientists, and others through a collaborative process of reassessing and reimagining the systems we inhabit. They integrate various forms of knowledge development, spanning from analysis to storytelling, from reason to intuition, and from emotion to action, to imagination and physical experience, encompassing indigenous wisdom and cutting-edge technology. Art, above all, is adept at opening up alternative realms of knowledge. Not because art possesses all the answers, but because it offers pathways to different ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting. Art lends a voice to emerging ideas, the ineffable, and the overlooked. By creating space for art within diverse domains, Spacemakers enable the exploration of new questions, alternative perspectives, diverse meanings, and forward-looking actions.

### Spacemaking in Systemic Transitions

Spacemakers play a crucial role in accelerating, decelerating, deepening, changing, or broadening transition processes by creating space for alternative content, ultimately contributing to systemic change. In this article, I distinguish between broader system change—the ongoing shift in era—and the various concrete transition processes that contribute to it. In this section, I explore the broader change and the role of Spacemakers within it. In the third and final part, I detail how Spacemakers contribute to specific transition processes, whether within or between individuals and organisations.

Systemic change does not follow a predetermined blueprint but emerges from a complex interplay of processes, events, circumstances, coincidences,

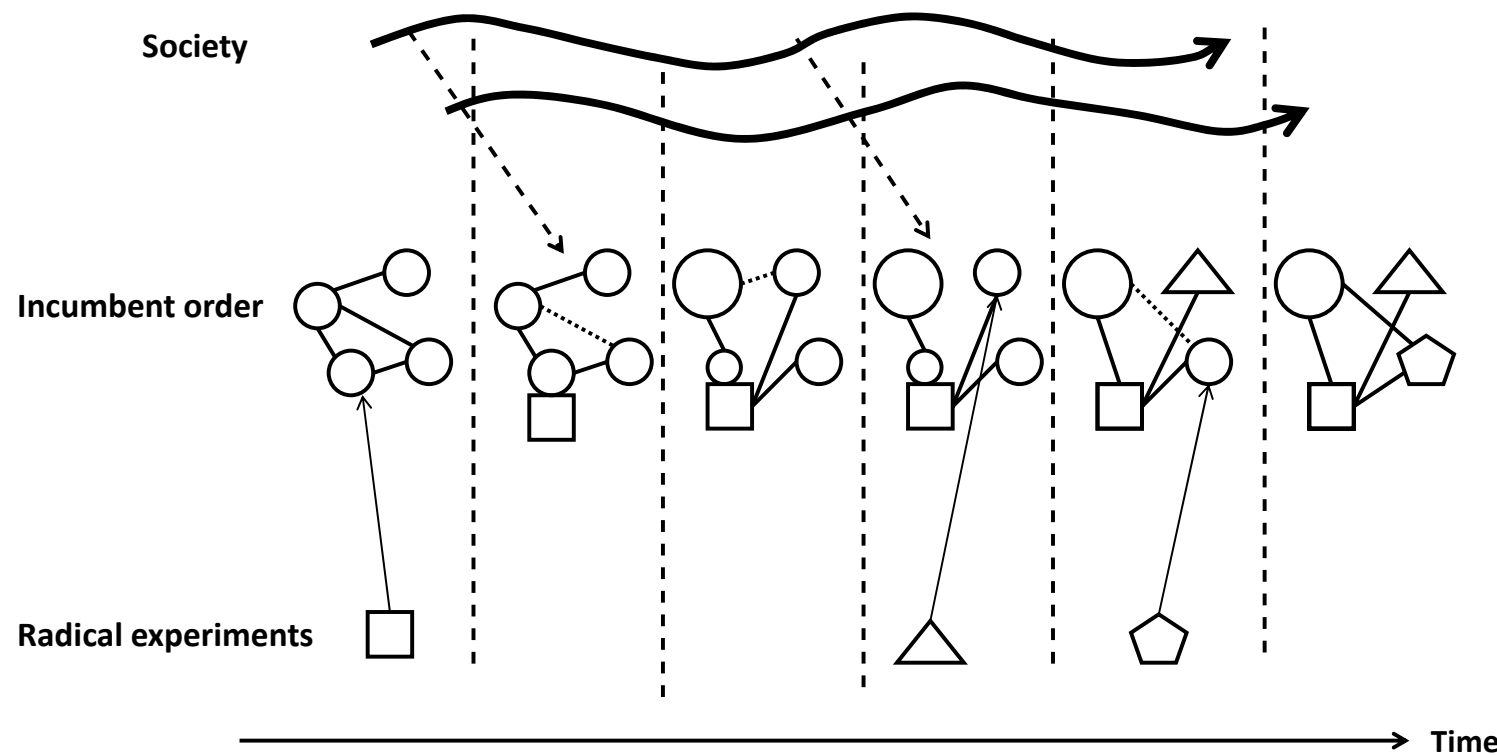


Image 3: Transition processes for system change, free from Schot and Geels (2007)

stories, ideas, and convergences. Sometimes, fragments of the existing system, from which change originates, become apparent, while at other times, they remain hidden. Building on Jan Rotmans' ideas, DRIFT, the research institute dedicated to transformative knowledge for sustainability transitions, has developed the X-curve framework. This framework aids in understanding and interpreting the overarching process of systemic change.

Much of the research on transitions tends to focus on designing the new system, with comparatively less attention given to the breakdown process. However, both processes occur simultaneously and influence each other. The X-curve framework (DRIFT, 2022) illustrates the turbulent and chaotic dynamics inherent in an ongoing transition. By its nature, a system transition is not a straightforward process of creation or design. Instead, a multitude of often contradictory processes unfold concurrently, making it challenging to discern connections or comprehend

the outcomes of their interactions immediately. The framework makes the interplay between construction and breakdown transparent, enabling us to identify the processes at play and gain insight into their implications. System changes manifest themselves during their unfolding—a system, whether existing or nascent, reveals itself in flux. Change emerges as a dynamic process, characterised by low predictability and controllability. The attendant uncertainty and chaos necessitate careful attention and interpretation. Emerging elements seek recognition, while those fading away yearn for release. Existing frameworks, fear of the unknown, and uncertainty impede the interpretation and understanding of this unfolding process.

The X-curve delineates the various phases of degradation and construction occurring concurrently in a system transition. This delineation facilitates the interpretation and understanding of the phase at any given time, enabling individuals to choose which processes

they prefer to contribute to, without neglecting the others that are transpiring simultaneously.

In the context of larger systemic transitions, art, and by extension, Spacemakers, play a pivotal role in navigating the interplay between creation and destruction. Spacemakers facilitate the integration of artists and art into various points along the X-curve of transition dynamics. Sometimes, art serves to symbolise what has yet to materialise, while at other times, it reflects emerging or potential realities. Art aids in attributing meaning to our experiences, our perceptions of the present, and the aspects of the past we choose to leave behind. The X-Curve framework equips Spacemakers with the language to interpret the potential of art within the system transition. It enables them to comprehend and recognize the broader landscape of systemic transitions, thereby guiding their contributions based on the context or situation at hand. Moreover, the X-Curve illuminates the processes driving systemic change while also

shedding light on the uncertainty and chaos inherent in such transitions, affecting individuals and societies alike. In essence, art, facilitated by Spacemakers, serves as a powerful tool for navigating the complexities of systemic transitions, offering insights, interpretations, and possibilities that contribute to shaping the evolving landscape of change.

In the SUSTAIN project, we studied how Spacemakers occupy various positions within the dynamics of transition. We plot the diverse practices of Spacemakers in the X-curve framework below. Art Partner believes that addressing issues purely through rational means is insufficient for making a significant difference. They argue that engaging both the head and heart, alongside love, attention, and space, is essential to fully understand issues. Consequently, Art Partner is often found at the core of system transition, where chaos is most intense. They create space for art to maintain vigilance over doubt, fear, interrelationships, and care for one another during transitions.

Thus, Art Partner primarily operates in the middle of the curve, where the old is already crumbling, and the new is not yet firmly established.

In4Art creates space for artists to envision the future. They aim to contribute to the development of a fair and sustainable economy by giving artists the opportunity to visualise and materialise this vision. In doing so, they generate momentum towards what is possible.

Circus Andersom steps into the discomfort of existing frameworks and habits, highlighting what goes wrong—often issues we're all aware of but haven't yet confronted. They make the need for change or de-escalation both tangible and accessible, doing so with a light touch.

Future of Work operates mainly in the ring around the centre of the curve. They unite society, artists, and the economy to collaboratively envision a utopia, while simultaneously highlighting areas of concern. Through a co-creation process, they focus on concrete steps that individuals and organisations can take in both building the new and dismantling the old economic systems.

Waag and V2\_ both explore the utopias and disasters that technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) enable. They create spaces for artists operating at the extremes of the curve in all directions. Similar to Future of Work, they engage audiences in these spaces to offer both the audience and the artists a wider perspective on trade.

In general, the Spacemakers note that their work currently focuses primarily on creating space for art during the uncertain phases of recognizing what no longer functions or in the stages of uncertainty about what will happen next. This approach emphasises looking forward to what may emerge rather than institutionalising and stabilising innovation. It's not that Spacemakers see no value for the arts in these latter stages; rather, they are simply less active in these areas at the moment. This might be due to the system not being ready yet. It could also be that established organisations, when it comes to optimization and institutionalisation, have a limited understanding of how art can contribute. After all, these stages are where organisations typically have the most experience. The value of art is generally more recognized in processes of innovation and change.

## Spacemaking in transition processes

While the X-curve assists Spacemakers in interpreting their position and contribution to the larger systemic change, the transition model by Schot and Geels (2007) and Grin et al. (2010) provides insights into how various concrete transition processes in organisations and society influence one another. This theory clarifies the interplay among tangible changes within established organisations, radical innovators, and society at large. It highlights the need for interaction among change processes operating at different levels to facilitate systemic transition. Transition processes that contribute to systemic changes occur at the nexus of established orders, innovators, and society. It is this interaction that catalyses shifts within the system.

All these diverse transition processes collectively have the potential to instigate and materialise a change of era. The model demonstrates that as societal desires and values evolve, established organisations are compelled to seek collaboration with innovators to align their structures with the new zeitgeist. Conversely, radical innovators challenge societal norms, expanding the realm of what is perceived as important or feasible. Within the established order, opportunities for innovation also emerge, driven by factors such as resource scarcity, shifts in markets, and the desire to maintain a competitive advantage through innovation. The model provides tools for interpreting the role of Spacemakers within and between concrete change processes, enabling a deeper understanding of their significance in relation to broader systemic change.

Katrien Termeer (2018) has highlighted the critical role of radical innovators in driving systemic change. She argues that small-scale radical initiatives, or 'small wins', can invigorate the system, especially if they maintain their radical nature, focus on successes rather than setbacks, and embrace the iterative nature of the process. In this context, Spacemakers and artists sometimes assume the role of radical innovators themselves, with entities like V2\_, Waag, In4Art, and Future of Work often identifying with this role. However, the essence of Spacemaking lies

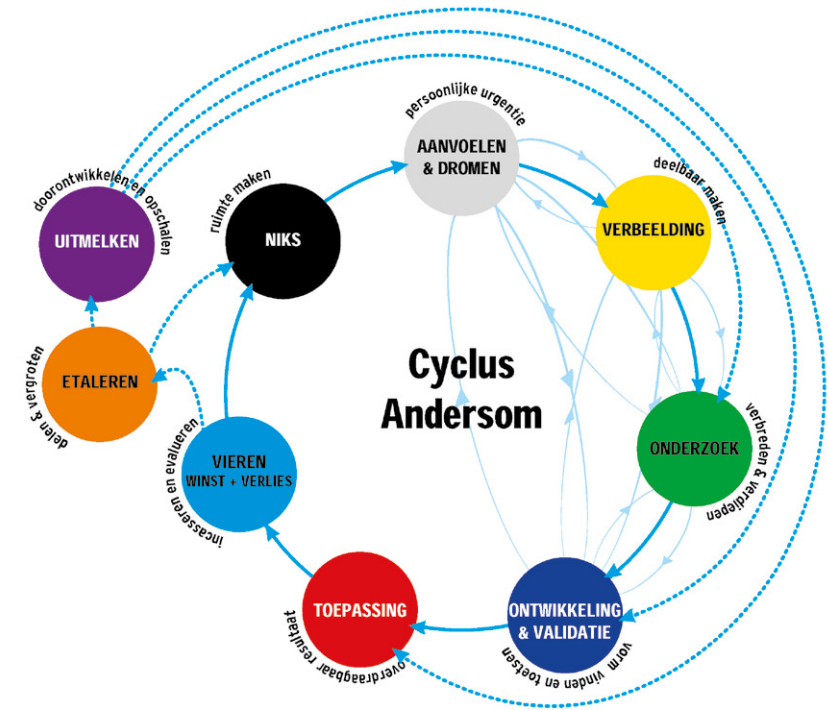
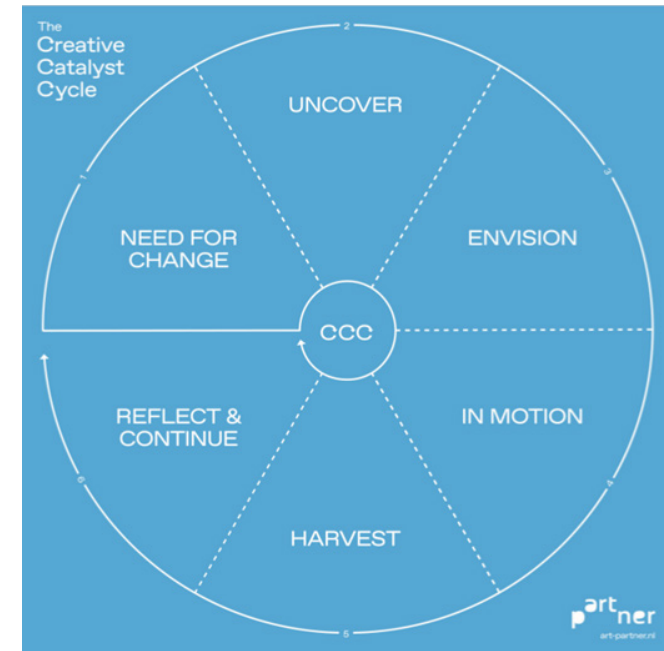


Image 4: Working method of Circus Andersom

Image 5: Creative Catalyst Cycle Art Partner



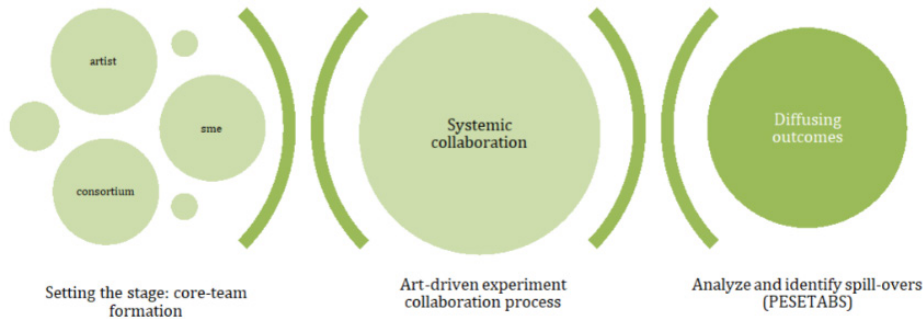


Image 6: In4Art Hungry EcoCities S+T+ARTS Residencies Art-Driven Innovation HEClab matchmaking methodology: phases of matchmaking, (In4Art, 2023)

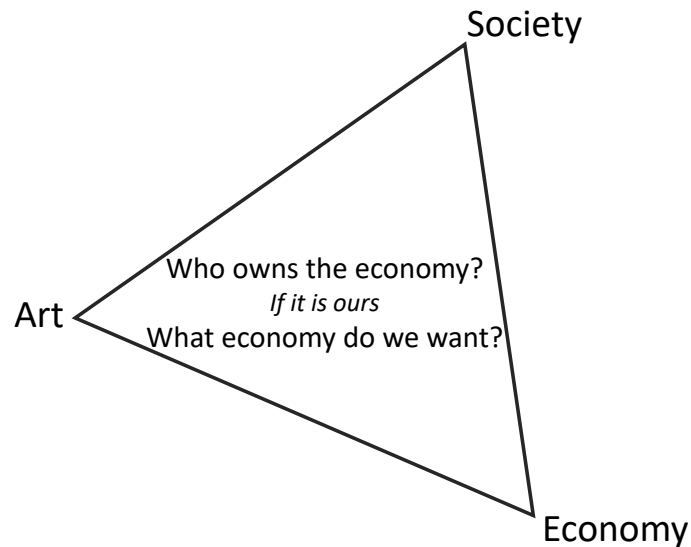


Image 7: Future of Work 2023, Mink en Spaas

in its ability to navigate between different orders. Spacemakers create spaces for the arts within established organisations, society, and among radical innovators. They facilitate and enhance ongoing or evolving transition processes, accelerating, deepening, or broadening their impact. Crucially, Spacemakers act as connectors between processes occurring in different spheres. They serve not only as translators, matchmakers, protectors, provocateurs, and interpreters of the relationships and interactions between art and other domains but also between established organisations, society, and radical innovators. By creating space for art, Spacemakers contribute to transition processes by introducing alternative and sometimes radical perspectives, fostering connections between different domains in a respectful manner, and persisting through uncertainties, even if immediate outcomes are not evident.

Each Spacemaker operates uniquely, yet they all contribute a distinct knowledge domain to the change process, which constitutes their primary added value. Spacemakers facilitate interactions between different orders and catalyse change within these orders by offering alternative perspectives. This broader perspective is crucial for effecting a system transition—a change of era, as described by Rotmans (2014)—which necessitates the integration of diverse knowledge domains. Recognizing the flaws in the current system and envisioning alternatives requires insights and partnerships from outside the existing framework. Spacemakers carve out space for art in domains where its presence might not be immediately recognized.

Circus Andersom, Art Partner, and In4Art each adhere to a more or less fixed pattern in their work, albeit with variations tailored to specific projects. Circus Andersom and Art Partner employ a cyclical framework, while In4Art utilises a step-by-step plan approach.

Below, I briefly outline the working methods of several Spacemakers in transition processes within and between orders. Further details about their methodologies can be found on their respective websites and in the articles listed in the references.

**Circus Andersom** encapsulates its working method in the 'Cycle Andersom'. Central to their approach is their own commitment, grounded in a question, idea, or theme that demands change. They extend invitations to others to join them in this pursuit. Their methodology aligns with the principles of design thinking, emphasising the creation of openings, chaos, emptiness, and emotional resonance over conventional problem-solving. Interaction with other domains occurs dynamically throughout various phases of the process, adapting and evolving as necessary.

**Art Partner** specialises in assisting organisations grappling with social issues that defy purely rational solutions. These issues encompass themes such as inclusion, equal opportunities, (sexually) transgressive behaviour, empathy, integrity, and trust. Their approach focuses on bridging the gap between two domains that may not naturally intersect or understand each other. Art Partner orchestrates a collaborative process in which artists and organisations work together to address the organisation's challenges. They facilitate this process by fostering encounters, providing a safe space, and helping the client navigate the tension inherent in such collaborations. The methodology, evolved from years of experience, continues to be refined and expanded by Art Partner.

**In4Art**, originating from the entrepreneurial sphere, focuses on fostering art-driven innovations for organisations and the economic system. Their approach, termed 'Matchmaking,' encompasses all activities undertaken to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration aimed at achieving experimental objectives that lead to art-driven innovation. This process involves organising interactions, facilitating knowledge exchange, and jointly co-producing prototypes. In4Art outlines three key steps within this process:

1. Setting the stage
2. Systemic Collaboration
3. Analyse and identify spill-overs.

Indeed, In4Art integrates its commitment to economic renewal with the collaborative efforts of entrepreneurs, organisations, and artists. Together, they drive systemic change and foster innovation across these sectors.

As part of their efforts, In4Art publishes articles that document the systemic changes observed within their projects. These publications share insights, lessons learned, and emerging trends with a broader audience, contributing to the discourse on innovation and transformation within both the economic and artistic realms. Through such publications, In4Art aims to inspire and inform others about the potential of art-driven innovation to catalyse positive change across various systems and industries.

V2\_, Waag, and Future of Work operate differently from Art Partner, In4Art, and Circus Andersom in that they do not adhere to a fixed format but instead begin with a set of principles or anchors that serve as guiding frameworks, allowing for flexibility and adaptation.

**V2\_**, known as the Lab for the Unstable Media, prioritises the artist and collaborates with social or entrepreneurial partners to enhance art's role in technology-driven systemic change. V2\_ particularly focuses on addressing Artificial Inequality, innovating within the art field itself by forging connections with other domains. Their core activities and ambitions centre on developing languages and professionalising their partners, primarily artists. This involves engaging partners from diverse domains in workshops and organising opportunities for artists to showcase their work, including works in progress, with public participation. Additionally, V2\_ strives to create publication avenues for artists, their network, and their initiatives.

**Waag** also focuses on effecting system change through technology, albeit with a distinct emphasis compared to V2\_. While V2\_ leans towards innovating art, Waag directs its efforts towards societal and economic transition. Similar to V2\_, Waag does not adhere to a fixed pattern of work but rather seeks approaches that align with the project's objectives.

Waag also focuses on effecting system change through technology, albeit with a distinct emphasis compared to V2\_. While V2\_ leans towards innovating art, Waag directs its efforts towards societal and economic transition. Like V2\_, Waag seeks approaches that align with the project's objectives rather than adhering to a fixed

work pattern. For example, in exploring an alternative internet that views individuals as citizens rather than consumers or subjects, Waag emphasises public values in technology, design, and usage. They advocate for a collaborative process that embodies open, democratic, and sustainable principles, envisioning this as a Public Stack—a shared space that reflects these values. Another focus area is their research on techno-optimism. Through Critical Making, which combines physical object creation with critical thinking, Waag facilitates a deeper understanding of technology, ethics, and societal issues, fostering a nuanced discourse around techno-optimism.

Over the past two years, **Future of Work** has developed an approach to collective artistic research that involves collaboration between society, art, and the economy. This approach centres on exploring two fundamental questions: 'Who owns the Economy?' and 'What Economy Do You Want?' By engaging in collective artistic research, Future of Work aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among diverse stakeholders to critically examine ownership structures within the economy and envision alternative economic models. Through this process, they seek to amplify voices from various societal sectors and facilitate discussions on the desired future of the economy. Future of Work leverages the power of art to provoke thought, inspire creativity, and stimulate meaningful conversations about ownership's role in shaping the economy and the possibilities for creating more equitable and sustainable economic systems.

Future of Work develops and constructs a platform for a collective economy through a series of encounters where society, art, and the economy collaborate. Each encounter centres on an installation, which serves as a place of intervention, workshop, meeting place, and source of inspiration. The installation acts both as a record of the previous encounter and the starting point for the next meeting. From this relay of continuous development, questioning, and revision, a community of disparate peers working towards a collective economy emerges.

The Spacemakers not only vary in their approach to creating space for art but also in their preferred domains

for doing so. Circus Andersom primarily focuses on creating space for art within society itself, aiming to provide room for what provokes discomfort, thereby instigating movement and change.

V2\_ and Waag operate within the intersection of art, technology (particularly artificial intelligence), and society. V2\_ engages audiences in technological art practices, inviting active participation in the creative process. Conversely, Waag collaborates with artists and audiences to envision potential new societal structures or future establishments. Future of Work extends its efforts to create space for art within both society and the established order, aiming to collaboratively shape a new collective order. In contrast, Art Partner, often serving organisations within the established order as clients, specialises in creating space for art within the confines of the established order itself.

## Summary

The primary impact of Spacemakers lies in their ability to integrate diverse domains of knowledge. By doing so, they broaden the perspectives of both established entities and innovators within society, fostering connections between the processes of change occurring in these different spheres. Through their involvement in numerous change processes across various domains, Spacemakers play a pivotal role in facilitating the transition of larger systems, such as the economy, society, technology, and science.

In times of major crises, these systems undergo significant shifts, leading to the questioning of underlying assumptions and the emergence of alternative perspectives. Spacemakers contribute to this transition by creating space for art within the myriad processes of change. Their involvement aids in both the deconstruction and reconstruction of systems, facilitating the evolution and adaptation necessary for navigating through times of transformation. Through their interdisciplinary approach and commitment to fostering dialogue and innovation, Spacemakers play a crucial role in shaping the future landscape of society and its institutions.

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# A white dot

ARNE HENDRIKS

At one point in the 18th century, a group of Jewish religious scholars were sitting together, pondering the eternal question of how human existence was possible. Given that God is omnipresent and perfect, while humans are far from perfect, a strange dilemma emerged: perfection and imperfection cannot coexist in the same place at the same time. Since God was omnipresent, there was simply no room for mankind. It was then that one scholar, Isaac Luria, envisioned a solution. He introduced the concept of 'Tsimtsum', which translates roughly to 'withdrawal' or 'shrinkage'. Luria proposed that for something new to emerge, God had to withdraw from a part of His own infinity, making shrinkage a creative act of making space.

Just before I decided—due to various circumstances, for which I am only partly responsible—to become an artist, I was invited to give a lecture as part of the Capita Selecta at the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam. The lecture series was titled 'Miraculous Transformations'. For my talk, I aimed to delve into what I had termed the 'pre-creative space': a conceptual realm filled with ingredients until they are transformed into something meaningful by something, let's call it a spark, in a creative expression. Now, many years later, it's challenging to pinpoint exactly what I was seeking, but it was related to space—the space where we are and the space we yearn for—and how moving from one space to another gives rise to meaning. The evening before the lecture, a fellow artist glanced over my notes and casually

mentioned that, in discussing the concept of space, I should not forget to actually be present in that space. Initially, it seemed like friendly advice, and I assured them I would indeed do so. However, a few hours later, I realised I didn't know how. I could discuss space, and my mind could engage with the conceptual space I had described, but I was at a loss on how to transition from the space of text to the actual space of action. I felt like an impostor. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say that the space I had occupied until then no longer matched the question I was asking myself. In a literal moment of bewilderment—when reason failed to offer a solution—I tore my lecture notes to shreds. The next day, I stood on the academy's stage without any prepared content and informed the audience that I would not deliver the lecture but instead wanted to change something. Rather than presenting a space filled with more answers, I posed a question: 'Help me change.' And they did, at least those few who didn't, quite justifiably, leave in annoyance. That evening, after spending an hour on stage engaged in questioning and being challenged by the audience, I became an artist—not through knowledge, but through the acceptance of not knowing; not by exerting control, but by relinquishing it. I withdrew from a part of myself, allowing a new self to emerge. Now, as an artist, I search for that creative space within organisations, within people, within situations that can foster meaningful change, because there is, indeed, much that needs to change.



In search of space, I visited the Japanese island of Okinawa. On Okinawa, people have more space because they are very small, often not taller than one metre and fifty centimetres. They also have more time because they live very long lives; nowhere else can you find so many centenarians. I myself occupy almost two metres of space. When I step inside somewhere, the space fills up, so I hoped to learn something from them. I arrived late and did not expect much of a welcome, but as I stepped out of the taxi, the door of my hostel swung open, and in the doorway stood a strikingly small old woman who beckoned me in with childlike enthusiasm. In her tiny kitchenette, she immediately placed a steaming bowl of miso soup in front of me and said, 'hara hachi bu.' I didn't understand her, and we looked at each other inquiringly. Then she extended her left arm and ran the fingers of her right hand 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 steps down her forearm. She then demonstratively put the fifth and last imaginary step back, grabbed it between her thumb and forefinger, and reached out to me. Seeing that she was not holding anything, I extended my hand anyway, and with visible pleasure, she pushed that imaginary fifth step into the palm of my hand. She said again, 'hara hachi bu,' turned, and disappeared from the kitchen. I looked at the empty palm of my hand, trying to understand what had just happened.

I walk into a store selling flooring and purchase four metres of white vinyl, four metres wide. Together with the salesman, we determine the centre with a diagonal cross. I screw in a screw, which I brought from home, into the centre and attach a rope nearly two metres long to it. At the end of the rope, we attach a pencil. I apply some tension and draw a circle just inside the edges of the vinyl. The shop is quiet, and the salesman lends me a hand. With choreographic precision and a sturdy pair of scissors, he cuts the circle out of the vinyl. Done. Now, lying there, that white space appears vulnerable to me—and a little inane, amateurish, obvious. A too literal expression of my search for space. Moreover, I soon discovered that four metres of vinyl is pretty unwieldy, even when rolled up. I hadn't thought that through properly. Fortunately, my studio is nearby, and as I awkwardly

drag my newly acquired 'space' behind me, a couple of neighbourhood kids notice me and ask what I'm doing. Before I know it, they each have a piece of vinyl under their arm, and we are walking down the street like a human caterpillar.

'Hara hachi bu' means 'Eat until you are eighty percent full.' So, you shouldn't eat until you are completely full, but rather keep some space free, about a fifth. As I sat in that small kitchen staring at the palm of my hand, I was actually looking at free space, that fifth imaginary step backward. It was a gift. With the dance of her right hand, Ms. Kuranari—that was her name—gave me space. After retiring as a teacher, she and her husband opened a lunchroom in Okinawa because, as she put it, she still had 20 percent room to do something else. 'Hara hachi bu' is not just a wish at the beginning of a meal, but a life philosophy that suggests in any situation, we need to maintain the space to change direction, to dance, to listen, or simply to invite someone in. The challenge lies in finding, preserving, and practising this space.

*Arne Hendriks is an artist, researcher, and exhibition maker based in Amsterdam. In his work, he deliberately explores the boundaries of specific cultural values that shape our relationship with the planet.*

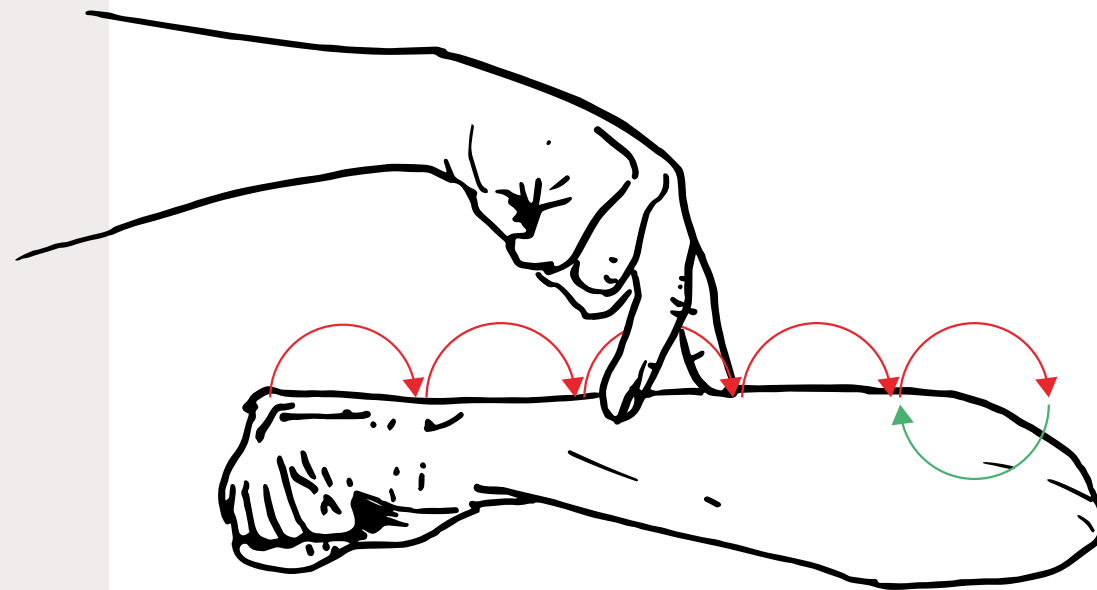


Image 2: Hara hachi bu, drawing by Arne Hendriks

The task of the artist is to deepen the mystery.

- Francis Bacon

A Spacemaker acts as a translator  
between ways of working, rather  
than as a translator of concepts.

- Spacemaker

No one has any idea what is right or  
wrong, what to do or not to do. Therein  
lies our true strength: that we are  
ignorant together.

- Lucas de Man

High Pressure

Draw a fictional line. There lies your goal.  
Yet Zeno's law and the snail (Or turtle?) remain  
valid. Based on your feeling, mark a finish line  
and depart at your ease,

Thinking: I have the route in my pocket -  
I'll reach the finish line at the right time,  
My entire journey goes smoothly -  
But then you commit a foolish act.

The closer you are to the limit,  
The harder the goal seems to attain.  
Even when it's within reach,

To the millimetre - it keeps shifting.

The distance compresses itself. That area  
Of resistant nothingness is called a poem.

- Gerrit Komrij

# Making space for Vertical thinking

GODELIEVE SPAAS

On 14 November 1969, NASA launched Apollo 12 to the Moon, marking the second manned flight to its surface. This flight was part of a multi-year program aimed at exploring the Moon. The astronauts deployed measuring devices to map the magnetic field and to assess the strength and direction of the solar wind on the lunar surface. They also measured the density and temperature of the lunar atmosphere. These devices transmitted information back to Earth well into the 1970s, providing valuable insights into what the Moon has to offer us here on Earth.

Unbeknownst to the astronauts, they also left a museum the size of a fingernail on the Moon. This was covertly mounted to the lunar lander by a technician, following a request from artist Forrest Myers.

The museum features, in addition to an artwork by Myers himself, works by Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, David Novros, Robert Rauschenberg, and John Chamberlain. A total of six drawings were miniaturised to fit within the museum. To give an idea of what is exhibited in the Moon Museum: Warhol created a drawing that simultaneously depicts a

Image 1: View from the Voltzberg, Suriname

Image 2 en 3: Marjolijn van Heemstra in her Theatre Lecture: What is Space Worth, photo Bart Grietens

rocket, a penis, and his initials. Oldenburg sketched Mickey Mouse, and Rauschenberg contributed a simple black line. The original of this collaborative artwork is displayed at The Met in New York.

The motivations behind NASA's lunar endeavours and those of the artists, including Forrest Myers, are starkly different. While NASA aims to map the Moon, transitioning from scientific curiosity to exploring lunar resources, Myers's intention in bringing art to the Moon could be seen as offering a gift. This act symbolises an outreach, a gesture to connect. According to Marjolijn van Heemstra, NASA and the US's actions are rooted in what she terms 'horizontal thinking,' in contrast to the 'vertical thinking' that inspires the artists.

Drawing from 'What is Space Worth' by Marjolijn van Heemstra, we can delve into the nuances between horizontal and vertical drives in space creation. In her books and the theatre lecture of the same name, van Heemstra takes us from Suriname to the Moon, and beyond to Jupiter and Mars.

## Horizontal thinking

Her narrative begins at the top of Voltzberg in the heart of Suriname's jungle. In 1923, the then-governor Aarnoud van Heemstra ascended the mountain with a small group. His daughter Jacqueline, accompanying the expedition, described the summit view in her diary as 'Trees, trees, and more trees.' Years later, Marjolijn van Heemstra, following in the footsteps of this relative, also climbed the mountain and found the view breathtakingly beautiful yet simultaneously overwhelming due to its vastness. At that time, the Governor likened the view to a broccoli field. Marjolijn van Heemstra argues that by comparing the jungle's grandeur to a vegetable field, he 'totally subordinated the beauty of nature to what that nature could contribute to the Dutch treasury' (Heemstra, 2023, p.14)."

Further along in the book, Van Heemstra ventures into space, beginning with a close examination of the moon. Extensive research has led to the perception of the moon as a veritable mine, teeming with mineral

resources that are increasingly scarce on Earth. Among these resources are gold, cobalt, iron, palladium, platinum, tungsten, and helium-3. The proximity of the moon, reachable in just three days, coupled with the presence of helium, offers the potential for energy generation on the lunar surface to extract and transport these valuable resources back to Earth. Or maybe even to fly on. To new potential gold mines such as the asteroids Davida, Alauda and Palma located between Mars and Jupiter, where trillions of euros worth of valuable resources are up for grabs.

Space barons like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk smell their opportunities. According to these entrepreneurs, we need space colonies to solve the problems we have on Earth. Only thus can we save humanity.

Just as Governor Van Heemstra reduced the jungle to a broccoli field, the new space travellers are reducing the moon to dead matter—an unexplored space, a place that belongs to no one and holds no inherent importance. It's a place where no one can object if we decide to turn it into a colony.

The way we interpret space determines how we interact with it. By considering an ancient rainforest solely as an agricultural crop, one disregards its rich history as a resilient and diverse ecosystem that secures the future of life on Earth. Comparing it to broccoli makes it easier to replace with other crops. Crafting a narrative that renders nations or societies as inconsequential gives rise to a sinister kind of space: one that can be seized, 'cultivated,' and 'exploited' without remorse. Without acknowledging the life or story of that place itself, we can ruthlessly appropriate it, without connecting with what is already there, other than what we need.

What drives people to approach a space this way? Whether it is Suriname or the moon.

According to Lorenzo Veracini (2021), this stems from a deeply horizontal attitude in problem-solving that propels settlers and space barons. By orienting towards other places (like distant Suriname or the even further moon), individuals can avoid confronting the deficits and problems of the present moment. We don't have to



change, we just have to move—to the colonies initially, now to the moon, and later to other planets and asteroids. Space appears boundless.

This tactic of substitution, where change is replaced by displacement, can be explained, according to Veracini, by a great resistance to adaptation. It's about changing the world so as not to have to change oneself. As Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1958) wrote, 'Elsewhere, everything must change so that everything can stay the same here.'

Those resistant to change, or unsure how to enact it, seek solutions externally. They look to distant space, or distant times—anything to evade introspection and maintain the belief that they embody the solution, not the problem (Van Heemstra, 2023).

Van Heemstra's work underscores the vulnerability and danger inherent in shaping space. What do you change in the space you enter? What do you overlook or fail to recognize that already exists in that space? This oversight may not necessarily stem from unwillingness, but rather from a lack of framework to recognize its value. Or it may arise from a sense of knowing better, a desire for something different, or privilege. Labelling the moon as lifeless, the jungle as a broccoli field, or a land as empty serves to justify entering a space for personal gain or validation. What already exists, or has existed, is disregarded or subordinated to what is yet to come or what could come. But there is never truly nothing; at most, there is something that we fail to appreciate. And therein lies the essence.

And that is precisely what art is capable of. Art seeks change—not only within itself but also within others and elsewhere. It aims to question and challenge what appears to be obvious. Art strives to make tangible what lies beneath the surface. It challenges the status quo and its assumptions regarding valuation, value creation, and value destruction.

Art does not delve into the composition of the dust on the moon, its temperature, wind directions, or raw materials. Instead, art explores the vibrancy, the



Image 4: Marjolijn van Heemstra in her Theatre Lecture: What is Space Worth, photo Bart Grietens

meaning, the unknown, and our relationship with the moon. In doing so, art introduces vertical thinking into a horizontal world.

## Verticaal denken

According to Marjolijn van Heemstra, art embarks on a quest for truth by observing and posing questions. In her work, she ponders what the moon desires, what its value is, and why we fail to protect or grant it rights. These questions disrupt the movement to further exploit the moon. To see the universe as an

escape route from Earth's cramped, squeaky and creaky (eco)systems.

The idea of space becoming our new land of plenty may sound enticing, but it also prevents us from considering whether we need to change ourselves. Shouldn't we be critically examining our systems and fundamentally rethinking our actions rather than fleeing to extraterrestrial realms?

Vertical thinking doesn't orient itself towards the other, elsewhere, and tomorrow; instead, it focuses on oneself, here, and today. It involves confronting problems

rather than shifting them, by examining, acknowledging, and effecting change within oneself and the immediate environment. In vertical thinking, progress isn't always about achieving more, faster, and farther; it also involves achieving less, slower, and closer. It accommodates what exists and allows for coexistence, embracing difficulty rather than avoiding it.

The implications of vertical thinking are indeed daunting. Granting rights to the moon, nature, or others entails relinquishing some of our control and predictability. Embracing the stratification and complexity of the world we inhabit becomes our

Horizontal thinking	Vertical thinking
Moving forward	Change
Multiply	Vary
Move	Stay and connect
Accelerate	Slow down
Narrow	Deepen
Flee	Endure
Predictability	Evolve

Characteristics of horizontal and vertical thinking, following the work of Vernaci, van Heemstra and Spaas (2024).

reality rather than the pursuit of constant expansion and exploration elsewhere. It necessitates changing ourselves rather than attempting to change the other. It requires seeing the other, being curious about it, connecting with it.

According to Marjolijn van Heemstra, the essence of art lies in revealing what is occurring or what is conceivable. Reflecting on this, I contemplate whether the message of the moon artists resides in uncovering the expansionist motives underlying lunar exploration. This notion gains strength from the fact that no one can confirm whether the museum actually reached the moon. No one has ever checked whether it was and still is there, and the artists involved are silent about it.

### Making space for vertical thinking

Spacemakers create space for art in various domains, creating environments where art can maintain its essence and operate vertically. In these spaces, art isn't obligated to serve progress; instead, it's encouraged to slow down, reflect, and depict the present reality and possibilities.

By introducing art, Spacemakers infuse more horizontally-oriented environments with vertical thinking. They establish environments where vertical thinking becomes the standard, fostering transitions and provoking change.

The essence of an art space lies in making tangible the complexity and diversity of an issue or phenomenon. It's a space where the interconnectedness within systems is illuminated, and transition processes intersect. Art proposes connections that may not emerge solely from narratives within a single domain, thereby adding to the complexity. Perhaps the core of art lies in extending vertical thinking into other spheres. Introducing art into the economy, for example, might involve offering the economy a taste of vertical thinking—an opportunity for individuals within the economic system, including entrepreneurs, employees, and consumers, to experience reality

from a place of tranquillity and presence. It's about exploring alternatives to the relentless pursuit of accumulation, displacement, and progress that we often take for granted.

Such spaces could lay the groundwork for a new paradigm in art and economics. However, this can only occur through a genuine effort to comprehend the other—to learn their language. In this light, Spacemaking could be viewed as a process aimed at fostering mutual literacy.

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A Spacemakers position is constantly evolving; we try to disrupt binary thinking and look for other means and methods to create balance.

- Spacemaker

Matchmaking is about organising interaction between disciplines and facilitating knowledge spill-overs.

- Spacemaker

The conflict between art and politics ... cannot and should not be resolved.

- Hannah Arendt

Creativity is the power to reject the past, change the status quo and seek new possibilities. Simply put, apart from using one's imagination - perhaps more importantly - creativity is the power to act.

- Ai Weiwei

# Makers of change

JETSKE FREEVE EN SANDRA BOER

Clients and artists inhabit two different worlds, worlds we know and feel at home in. As Spacemakers, we have always seen ourselves as the link between these two realms, with one foot in the artist's studio and the other in the boardroom. This special position has given us a front-row seat for over fifteen years to witness clients gaining new insights as a result of an artistic intervention. No matter how many times we've experienced it, it remains a special moment.

A similar thing happened to us when we joined the sustain project. It made us realise that our work is also a creative process aimed at creating change that lasts. This process, like that of artists, requires an open heart. The courage to face uncertainty. To accept that sometimes the most beautiful things begin invisibly.

Our work begins when an organisation expresses a desire for change. We focus on assembling the best creative team, facilitating creative processes, and building bridges between different worlds to support

deeper-level change. This has turned out to be more of a creative process than we initially thought.

## How does this making process work?

With clients, we are bridge builders and relationship managers. We look beyond formal conversations to understand the person behind the leadership role. This approach helps us discover their true concerns, their dreams for the organisation, and stimulates their curiosity to approach things differently. We respect hierarchy and use it as a tool for change. Importantly, we avoid organisational jargon, we are authentic conversation partners for leaders.

In the transition process, we act as space holders, collaborating with clients and artists to create fertile ground for transformation. We embrace the uncertainty of not knowing what will emerge from this collaboration.

This is achievable because our creative process is founded on clear steps. In fact, we've developed a specialised model for this purpose: the Creative Catalyst Cycle. This model outlines the stages of the process, from the 'Need for Change' to 'Uncover,' 'Envision,' and finally 'In Motion,' 'Harvest,' and 'Reflect & Continue.'

*For us as Spacemakers, maintaining integrity is paramount*

By faithfully following our structured process, we trust that something valuable will invariably emerge. For artists, this is familiar territory: forging new paths and initiating the artistic journey from which creation blossoms. For organisations, this approach can be uncomfortable; they are used to having outcomes predetermined before a project begins. In response, we offer a pillar of support, a stable foundation.

For instance, we meticulously organise the entire process, presenting clear proposals and detailed plans, and formulating precise creative questions or objectives. This structure enables clients to confidently embark on the journey.

With artists, our role is different. We recognize the value of their experiences and perspectives as goldmines for change. We guide them in making their visions concrete, uncovering layers of meaning often overlooked within organisations.

For us as Spacemakers, maintaining integrity is paramount. We attentively listen to ourselves, questioning whether an issue invigorates us, if the approach resonates with us, and if the subject enriches us. This demands individuality, through which we create a protective environment for the integrity of the artist, the client, and ourselves.

Viewing it from this perspective, we as Spacemakers are not merely bridges between two realms; we are Agents of Change, unveiling the unseen in a distinctive and meaningful way. And what we have observed happening with our clients, when a new realisation dawned upon them, is now occurring within ourselves: the transformation has begun.

*Sandra Boer (1972) and Jetske Freeve (1978), both partners at Art Partner, are Spacemakers. They create space for both clients and artists, allowing each to excel in what they do best and catalyse change.*

Image 1: Changemakers (Makers van Verandering),  
Anook Cléonne 2024



# Working with artists

EDO ROOS LINDGREEN

Sometime around 2010, I engaged in a conversation with an attendee at a women's network meeting hosted by the accounting and consulting firm where I was overseeing innovation at the time. Her name was Sandra Boer, and she was the founder and proprietor of a fascinating company called Art Partner, which facilitated the integration of artists into organisations. Sandra explained that a unique dynamic often unfolded when an artist collaborated with an organisation: the organisation's employees were stirred, even ignited, by the artistic passion emanating from the artist. This not only fostered increased creativity within the organisation but also heightened self-awareness and job satisfaction among its members.

I had witnessed this phenomenon before. Artist Joost Conijn once gave a presentation for partners and employees of our firm. There, he explained in plain language how he drove to Eastern Europe in a wood-fired car and then flew to and over Africa in a self-built plane. That presentation had a profound effect on the attendees - everyone secretly wanted to be Joost Conijn. Conversely, Joost Conijn also seemed to like the idea of becoming an accountant.

Our office could use a creative injection, especially to encourage innovation. An earlier attempt to develop and market new services was fraught

with difficulty. Partners and staff had a strong tendency to stick to their familiar routines and found it challenging to explore new avenues, especially if it meant abandoning their usual approaches. Additionally, previous scandals and resulting regulations had created a climate where creativity and innovation were not encouraged but rather inhibited. In short, I invited Sandra for a follow-up meeting, at which theatre producer Andreas Vonder also joined. It marked the beginning of years of cooperation during which Sandra and Andreas ensured an ever-surprising deployment of artists in our practice.

## Two examples

For a strategy session involving four hundred consultants, Sandra arranged for a group of artists to participate. They offered various performances, workshops, and rituals tailored to address the issues within our organisation. One particularly poignant moment was when artist Lina Issa shared her story: unable to visit her family in Lebanon, she sent a stand-in in her place, which moved many employees to tears. Another session involved colleagues simply looking into each other's eyes for 10 seconds, sparking new friendships. Lastly, an artist posed a simple question during a session: 'Write on a note who or what you would like to be, if you

Image 1: Grainne Delaney, story coach en trainer at Art Partner, Photo: Bart Majoor

could choose.' The outcome was confrontational as most participants expressed a desire to be a bird—free to fly away from a golden cage?

Andreas Vonder and actress Grainne Delaney were commissioned by our company to develop a storytelling program titled "Into the Light," aimed at helping participants refine their presentation skills in authentic theatre settings. This program celebrates its tenth anniversary this year and has been attended by over a thousand participants, many of whom have described it as a transformative experience. (It is also available as an open program.)

These are just two examples of the numerous ways in which an artist's creative passion can be integrated into an organisation. Sometimes, it doesn't work as expected, resulting in uncomfortable silences and disappointed audiences. However, the organisation usually doesn't suffer any lasting damage. How can you ensure its success? There's no one-size-fits-all answer. Adequate preparation, professional direction, an inspired artist, unconditional support from the client, and a receptive audience can contribute, but success is not guaranteed. Art, by its nature, is unsettling. However, when it does work, when the fire ignites and people are genuinely moved,

extraordinary things can happen that have the potential to permanently change an organisation. So why not give it a try?



*Edo Roos Lindgreen is Professor of Data Science in Auditing at the University of Amsterdam and Director of Executive Programmes at University of Amsterdam Business School. Previously, he was a partner at KPMG.*



## ANALOGY BETWEEN SPACEMAKERS AND THE REED PLANT

# An alternative perspective

MARGA ROTTEVEEL & INE MOLS

**In her quest for a clear understanding of the characteristics of Spacemakers, researcher Marga Rotteveel has utilised an analogy: the reed plant. In a personal manner, she delves into the comparison between the unique attributes of the reed plant and the practice of Spacemakers. Employing this natural metaphor, Marga casts an alternative light on the role and functions of Spacemakers. Through the power of imagination, she seeks to contribute to a clearer comprehension of the complexity inherent in their work.**

Many analogies can be drawn, a few of which are outlined below:

Similar to how reeds provide stability and protection to shores, Spacemakers play a comparable role by fostering a stable and protected environment for artists and the development of their projects.

The flexible stems of reeds symbolise the adaptability and resilience demonstrated by Spacemakers in their practice.

Just as reed seeds spread through water to new areas, Spacemaking represents the dissemination and exchange of art across various domains.

The resilience of reeds, influenced by fluctuations in water levels, mirrors the dynamic nature of Spacemaking, where external forces are met with a flexible and adaptable approach.

Comparable to reeds acting as host plants for insects, Spacemakers nurture the growth and development of diverse art projects. Spacemakers demonstrate care towards artists and collaborating parties by providing support, symbolically reflected in the protective hairs on the plant's ears. These hairs act as a parachute for the fruit, safeguarding it and allowing it to float on the water surface until it finds fertile ground.

Just as the roots of reeds spread horizontally to foster new connections, Spacemaking establishes cross-links between art and other disciplines and domains.

Spoken-word artist Ine Mols, inspired by Marga Rotteveel's photos and the reed's characteristics, has composed evocative texts for each theme of the five cahiers. These texts are designed to stimulate reflection on the practices of Spacemakers.

## The help

With my feet in the clay  
The earth holds me tight  
and I hold her  
Standing firm against the current  
The water nourishes me  
and I nourish her

Seemingly uncomfortable resting place  
I protect the birds  
And they me

We are not the water  
We are not the shore  
We live somewhere in between  
and between us, life lives  
We create space  
by taking up space  
Generously giving  
and occasionally  
daring to wait  
Daring to doubt what we expect





# Spacemaker toolbox

ART AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Spacemakers play a crucial role in promoting systemic change by providing space for artists in different domains such as economy, technology, science and policy. Art challenges established norms, questions logic and connects seemingly contradictory elements. The SUSTAIN research, conducted by The Hague University of Applied Sciences and Avans University of Applied Sciences resulted in the Spacemaker toolbox. This toolbox aims to help Spacemakers explore and further professionalise their practice.

The Spacemaker toolbox is composed of four components.

Note: This is a brief summary of the Spacemaker toolbox. For detailed explanations and instructions, please refer to the full version on

<https://lectoraatchangemanagement.nl/sustain>



# 1. Art: Qualities & Fields of Application

In this section, the Spacemaker identifies the unique qualities of art that can contribute to systemic change. The matrix includes five qualities of art (investigate, reveal/unmask, dismantle/undermine, speculate/imagine, design/develop) and place them in different application areas, such as economy, society, ecology and technology.

		qualities of art				
		to investigate	to reveal /unmask	to dismantle /undermine	to imagine /speculate	to design /develop
fields of application	economy					
	society					
	ecology					
	technology					
	art					
	business					
	science					
	policy					
	education					
	other, namely...					

Image 1: Art: Qualities & Fields of Application, The Hague University of Applied Sciences and Avans University of Applied Sciences 2024



Image 2, 3, 4 and 5: Putting Qualities & Fields of Application into practice, photos by Joris Maatman

# 2. The Mixer

Image 6: The Mixer, The Hague University of Applied Sciences and Avans University of Applied Sciences 2024

The mixer functions as a self-reflection tool for Spacemakers. It highlights explicit and implicit choices made by Spacemakers at the project level, identifies differences of understanding

by various stakeholders, and supports strategy formation by comparing the current situation with alternative approaches.

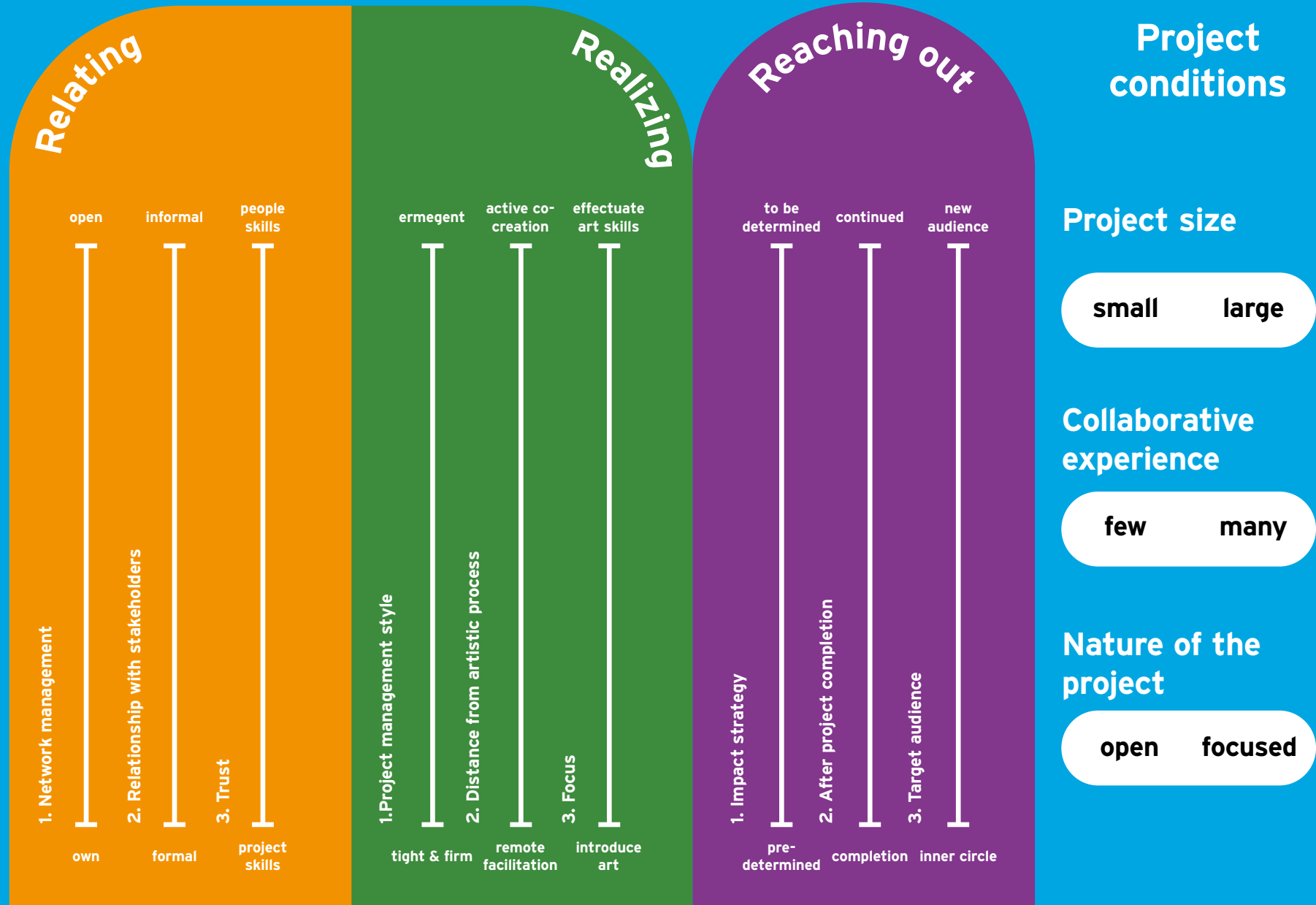
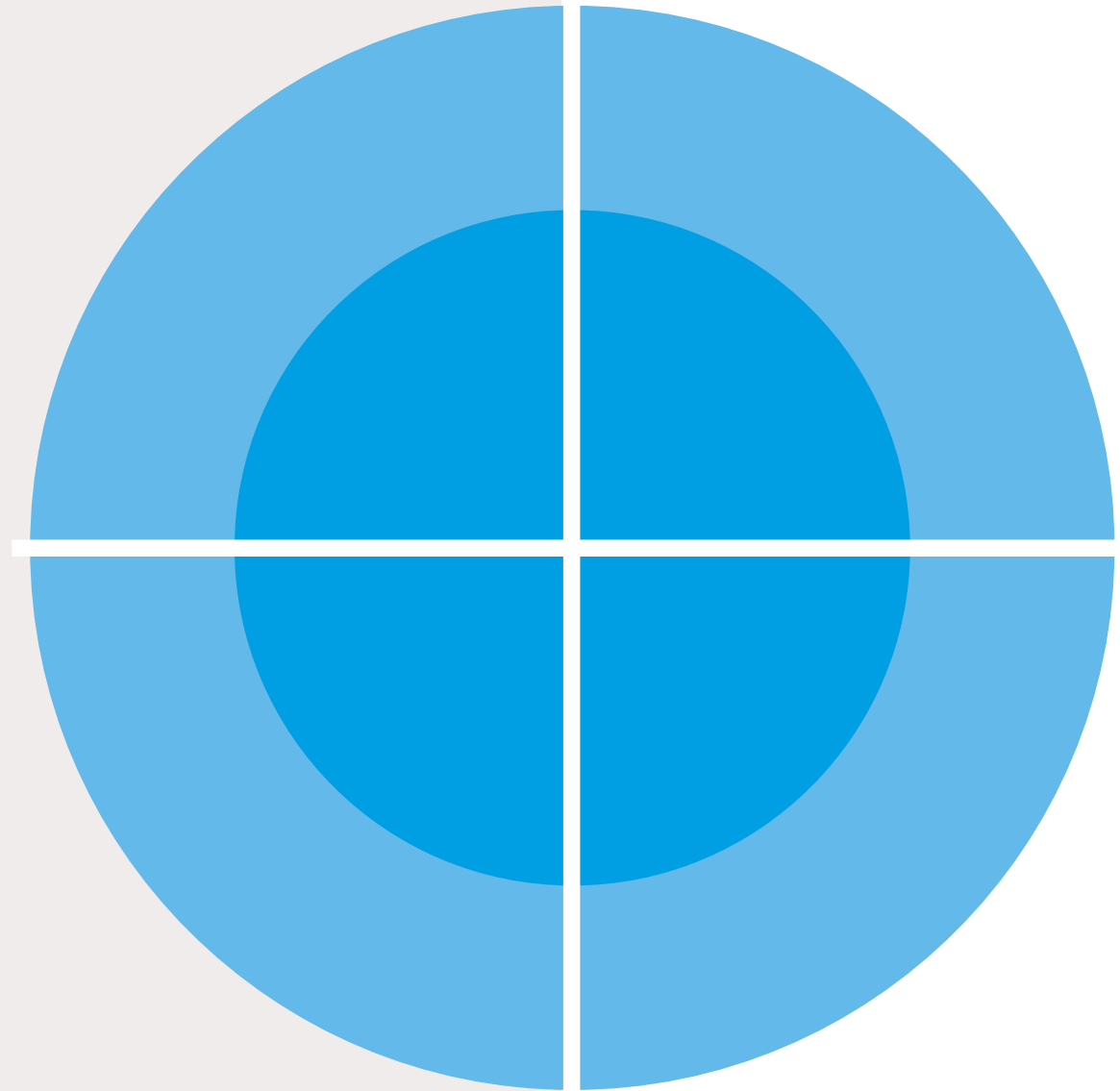




Image 7, 8, 9 10, 11 and 12: Working with The Mixer, photos by Joris Maatman

## 3. The Spacemaker Ecosystem

The effectiveness of Spacemakers is influenced by the level of receptivity to their practice in the field. The 'Spacemaker Ecosystem' tool maps all stakeholders and helps strengthen the cohesive network. It promotes collaboration and helps build a healthy, mature and fertile ecosystem.



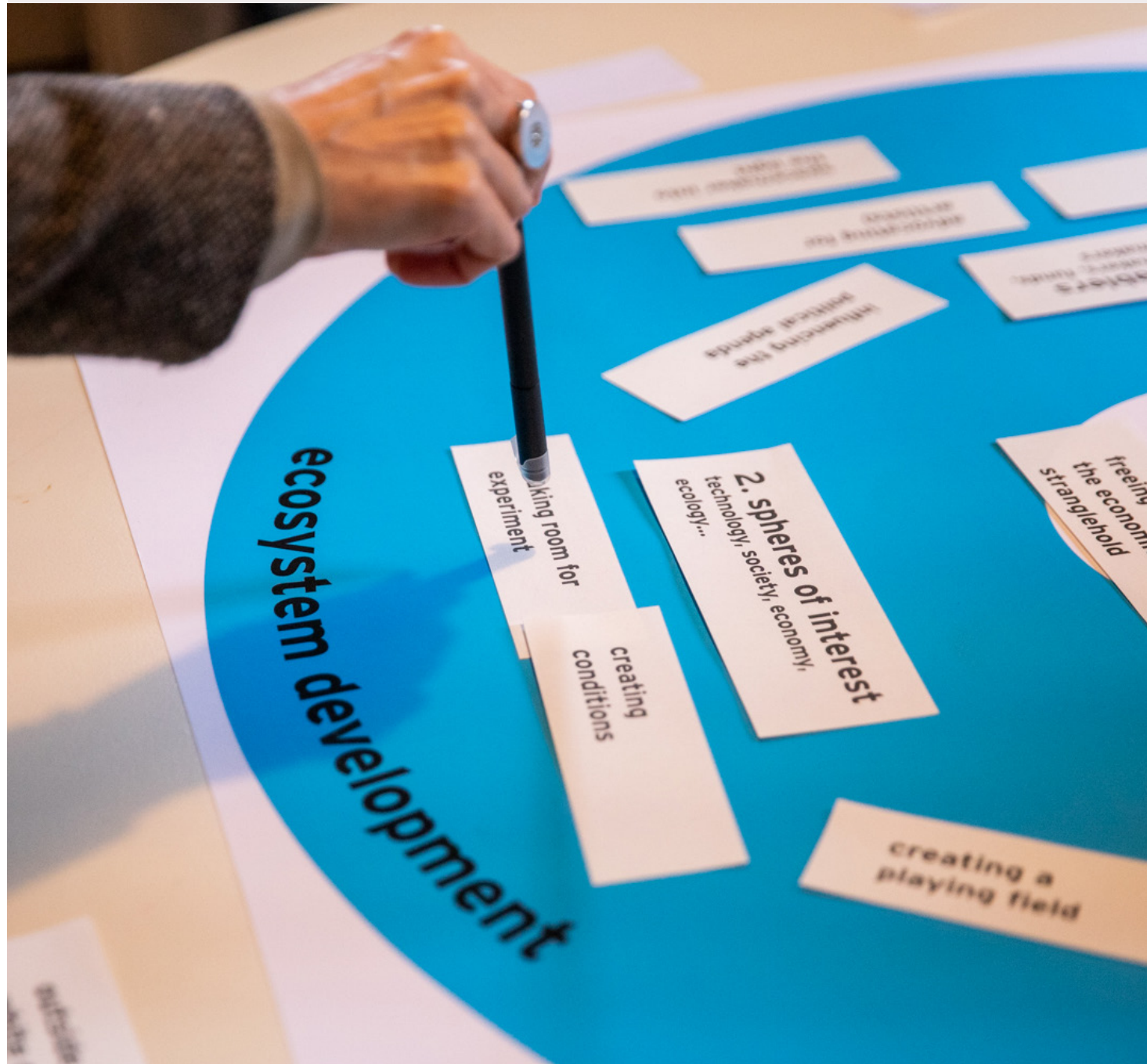
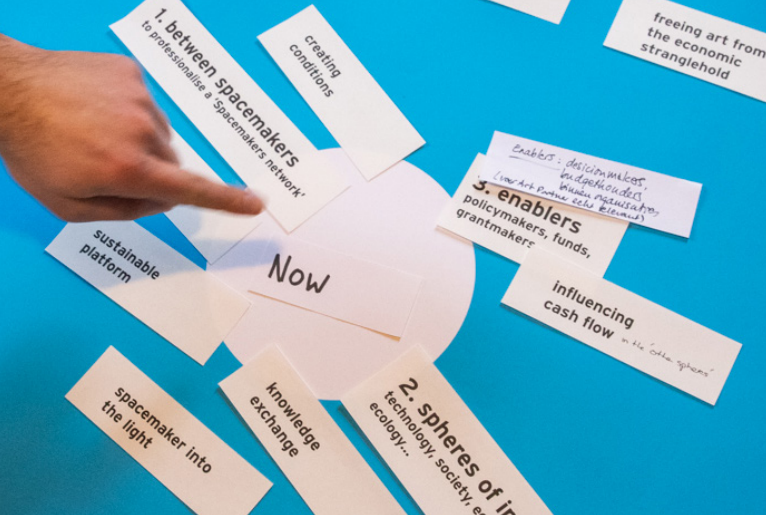


Image 15, 16, 17 and 18: Trying out the Spacemaker Ecosystem, photos Joris Maatman

## 4. Positioning

The positioning tool makes the Spacemaker's position between art and other domains tangible. By physically working with this intuitive tool, Spacemakers gain insight into (unconscious) patterns and relationships in the Spacemaker-art-other domain triangle.

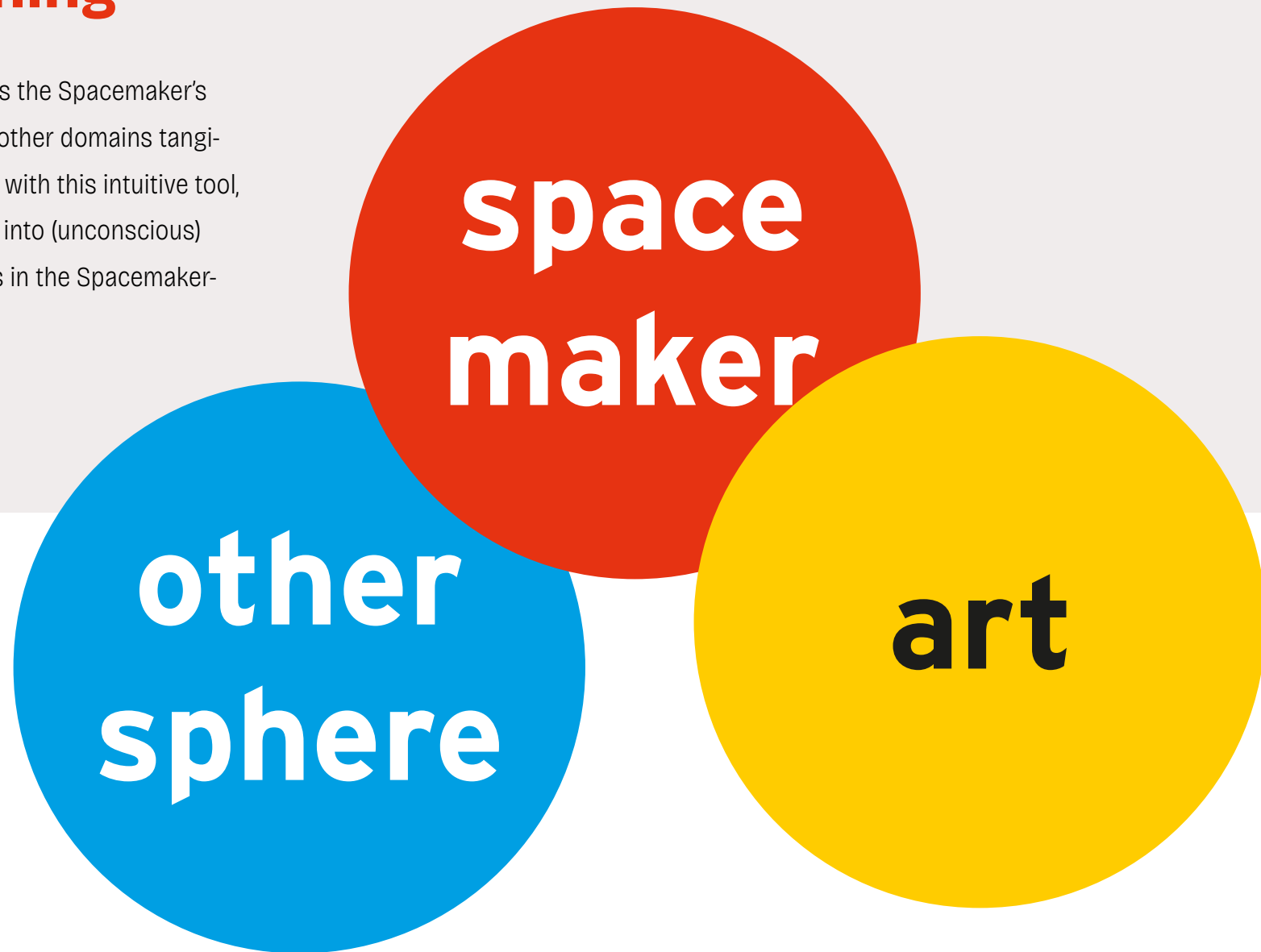


Image 20 and 21: Positioning, photos Joris Maatman







**Graswinckel, A., & Pos, J. F. (Jaartal onbekend). De VerdwaaalAtlas. Uitgegeven door Arcadia.**

For anyone who wants to tackle the future optimistically and decisively.



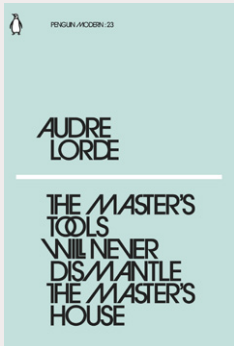
**Van Heemstra, M. (2023). Wat is ruimte waard? Uitgave van de Maand van de filosofie.**

About our tendency to transfer problems to others and elsewhere instead of changing ourselves and our unwavering belief in progressivism.



**Spaas, G. (Host). (2020). De Tussenruimte [Audio podcast].**

A series of conversations with fifteen pioneers who reside in the space between art and entrepreneurship about the economy of tomorrow.



**Lorde, A. (2018). The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House. Penguin UK.**

About how frames can make you believe in lies and the importance of freeing yourself from them.



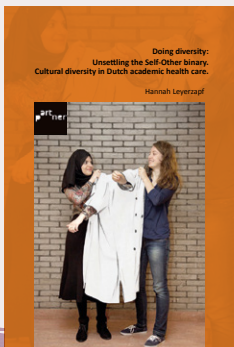
**Schinkel, W. (Interviewdatum, 2021, December 20). 'De staat werkt niet voor jou.' VN Interview, maandag.**

About the fragility of the system and how by pulling on our own thread of the mesh-work, we can change the system.



**McWilliams, D. (Host). (doorlopend). The David McWilliams podcast [Audio podcast].**

A weekly podcast that simplifies the economy, making it straightforward and accessible.



**Leyerzapf, H. (2019). Doing diversity: Unsettling the Self-Other binary: Cultural diversity in Dutch academic health care. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.**

About the importance of breaking established thought patterns to achieve a more dynamic and inclusive approach in healthcare.



**Twaalfhoven, M. (2019). Practical Heroism - TEDx Apeldoorn 2019.**

The most important social issues of today require an artistic mindset: the skill to ask questions with an open mind, to see beauty, to imagine the future, to wonder, experiment, and play.



**Bloos, M. (Host). (2018). Poëzie van het Bankieren [Audio podcast].**

A search for the person behind the banker/bank employee. Poetry of Banking is part of the Artist in Residence program of New Heroes at Rabobank.

# Research team



**Kim Caarls**

Kim has a background in migration research. She prefers to delve deep into the life courses of migrants, because only then can you fully see the impact of migration. Additionally, she likes to explore other global themes, such as climate and social inequality. The SUSTAIN research, focusing on the role of art in the transition to an ecologically sustainable and socially just world, aligns well with her interests.



**Olga Mink**

Besides working as the artistic director of the Future of Work Foundation and conducting research within SUSTAIN, Olga also holds the position of Head of the Maastricht Academy for Interdisciplinary Arts.



**Marga Rotteveel**

Marga is part of the 'Economy in Common' research group at the Centre of Expertise on Wellbeing Economy and New Entrepreneurship at Avans University of Applied Sciences. Her research focuses on the role of art in domains beyond art itself and its contribution to transitional issues. Additionally, she advocates for recognition of the value that artists bring, broadening the traditional focus from financial compensation to a more inclusive, collective approach. Marga has a deep-rooted connection to the visual arts, which consistently forms the foundation of her work as both a researcher and educator.



**Godelieve Spaas**

Since 2018, Godelieve has been serving as a Professor of Economy in Common at the Centre of Expertise for Wellbeing Economy and New Entrepreneurship at Avans University of Applied Sciences. Together with her research group, she aims to transform our current economic system, which is based on 'Taking', into one of 'Care Taking'—a system focused on nurturing each other and the Earth. By collaborating with researchers, artists, and entrepreneurs, they develop alternative narratives, equitable and sustainable regulations, and practical experiments within an economy that prioritises the well-being of all life on Earth. Their research approach is participatory, visual, creative, situated, and experiential.



**Jacco van Uden**

Jacco has a background in organization studies. In 2013 he was appointed professor of Change Management at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (NL). A significant portion of the research conducted within the research group takes place at the intersection of organizational studies and art. For more information, please visit: [www.lectoraatchangemanagement.nl](http://www.lectoraatchangemanagement.nl).

# Colophon

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