

TEMPORARY PERFORMANCE ARTIST COMMUNITIES

The Case Model of the Venice International Performance Art Week

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the case model for the Live art exhibition project Venice International Performance Art Week, founded and curated by artist duo VestAndPage (Verena Stenke and Andrea Pagnes) in 2012. Since its inception, it has promoted performance art and Live art practices on a local, national, and international scale through live performance events, exhibitions, formative learning programs, and co-creation experiences. Founded on the principles of sustainability, hospitality, and care, it has become a recognized international platform where dialogue and exchange, artistic expressions and cultures can flourish proactively among performers. The project formats have evolved over the time, progressively focusing on forming temporary performance artist communities in terms of a social sculpture. Its core mission is to foster *exchange* among performers, Live artists, and people: a *gathering reunion*, a people's project made by the people for the people. It functions as a think-tank for outlining conceptual visions which declaredly overcome imposed and external human conditioning, generating accretive reflection on topics such as poetic and civil sovereignty, inclusiveness, and accessibility through performance practices. As the project founders, we have also conceived it as a breeding ground for future professional opportunities of the participating artists, curators, and cultural operators, as well as a means to broaden the audience for performance art and Live art, both locally and internationally. The Venice International Performance Art Week has now adapted into an experiential co-creation artist-in-residence format. This enables to expand performance art and Live art beyond works of presentation and display, focusing instead on real time co-creation of interdisciplinary collective productions.

Keywords: performance, co-creation, artist-in-residence, artistic community, education

COMUNIDADES TEMPORALES DE ARTISTAS DE PERFORMANCE: EL CASO MODELO DE LA SEMANA INTERNACIONAL DEL ARTE DEL PERFORMANCE DE VENECIA

RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda el caso modelo para el proyecto de exhibición de arte en vivo Semana Internacional del Arte del *Performance* de Venecia, fundado y curado por el dúo de artistas VestAndPage (Verena Stenke y Andrea Pagnes) en 2012. Desde su inicio, ha promovido el arte del *performance* y las prácticas de arte en vivo en un escala local, nacional e internacional a través de eventos de actuación en vivo, exhibiciones, programas de aprendizaje formativo y experiencias de cocreación. Fundada sobre los principios de sostenibilidad, hospitalidad y cuidado, se ha convertido en una plataforma internacional reconocida donde el diálogo y el intercambio, las expresiones artísticas y las culturas pueden florecer de manera proactiva entre los artistas. Los formatos del proyecto han evolucionado con el tiempo con un enfoque progresivo en formar comunidades temporales de artistas de *performance* en términos de una escultura social. Su misión principal es fomentar el intercambio entre artistas, artistas en vivo y personas: una *reunión de encuentro*, un proyecto de la gente hecho por la gente para la gente. Funciona como un grupo de expertos para delinear visiones conceptuales que superan los condicionamientos humanos externos e impuestos, lo que genera una reflexión enriquecedora sobre temas como la soberanía poética y civil, la inclusión y la accesibilidad a través de prácticas escénicas. Como fundadores del proyecto, lo hemos concebido también como un caldo de cultivo para futuras oportunidades profesionales de los artistas, curadores

y operadores culturales participantes, así como un medio para ampliar la audiencia de las artes del *performance* y las artes en vivo, tanto a nivel local como internacional. La Semana Internacional del Arte del *Performance* de Venecia ahora se ha adaptado a un formato experimental de cocreación de artistas en residencia. Esto permite expandir las artes escénicas y el arte en vivo más allá de las obras de presentación y exhibición, mediante un enfoque, en cambio, en la cocreación en tiempo real de producciones colectivas interdisciplinarias.

Palabras clave: performance, cocreación, artista en residencia, comunidad artística, educación

COMUNIDADES TEMPORÁRIAS DE ARTISTAS PERFORMÁTICOS: O MODELO DE CASO DA SEMANA INTERNACIONAL DE ARTE DA PERFORMANCE DE VENEZA

RESUMO

Este artigo aborda o modelo de caso do projeto de exposição Live art Semana Internacional de Arte da *Performance* de Veneza, fundado e com curadoria da dupla de artistas VestAndPage (Verena Stenke e Andrea Pagnes) em 2012. Desde sua criação, tem promovido a arte da *performance* e práticas de arte ao vivo em escala local, nacional e internacional por meio de eventos de *performance* ao vivo, exposições, programas de aprendizagem formativa e experiências de cocriação. Fundada nos princípios de sustentabilidade, hospitalidade e cuidado, tornou-se uma plataforma internacional reconhecida onde o diálogo e o intercâmbio, as expressões artísticas e as culturas podem florescer proativamente entre os artistas. Os formatos do projeto evoluíram ao longo do tempo, focando progressivamente na formação de comunidades temporárias de artistas performáticos em termos de uma escultura social. Sua missão principal é promover o intercâmbio entre *performers*, artistas ao vivo e pessoas: uma *reunião de encontro*, um projeto de pessoas feito pelas pessoas para as pessoas. Funciona como um círculo de reflexão para delinear visões conceituais que superam declaradamente os condicionamentos humanos impostos e externos, o que gera reflexões acretivas sobre temas como soberania poética e civil, inclusividade e acessibilidade por meio de práticas performáticas. Como fundadores do projeto, também o concebemos como um terreno fértil para futuras oportunidades profissionais dos artistas, curadores e operadores culturais participantes, bem como um meio de ampliar o público para as artes da *performance* e as artes ao vivo, tanto local quanto internacionalmente. A Semana Internacional de Arte da Performance de Veneza agora se adaptou em um formato experimental de cocriação de artista residente. Isso permite expandir as artes da *performance* e as artes ao vivo para além das obras de apresentação e exibição, concentrando-se na cocriação em tempo real de produções coletivas interdisciplinares.

Palavras-chave: performance, cocriação, artista residente, comunidade artística, educação



TEMPORARY PERFORMANCE ARTIST COMMUNITIES: THE CASE MODEL OF THE VENICE INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE ART WEEK

ETYMON AND DEFINITION

The adjective *temporary* means lasting for only a limited time, and it derives from Latin *temporarius*. The noun *performance* means accomplishment, completion (of something), and it stems from the Anglo-Norman French *parfourmer*, an alteration (by association with *forme*: form) of Old French *parfournir*: provide.

The noun *artist* derives from Medieval Latin *artista*, from the Arian root *ar*, which in Sanskrit means mostly moving towards something and bringing closer.

In the late XIV century, the noun *community* appeared from Old French *comunité*: community, commonness, from Latin *communitas*: community, society, fellowship, friendly intercourse; courtesy, condescension, affability, from *communis*: public, shared by all or many.

The notion of temporary community refers to various types of conglomerations of individuals gathering together, occupying space for a determined period of time, and having particular attitudes, interests, visions, or circumstances in common. The formation of small communities within societies comes from different social, political, or religious circumstances and reasons. For instance, states of emergencies limiting people's freedom, or tragic events such as natural disasters and wars, often cause people to abandon their place of origin to seek refuge elsewhere in provisory settlements. These dramatic occurrences generate forced displacement and migratory flows as consequences. In turn, they form temporary communities in enclosed refugee camps regulated by the hosting countries. Temporary communities of this kind are precarious, often multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016).

THE CASE MODEL OF THE VENICE INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE ART WEEK

Since 2006, together with my partner German artist Verena Stenke with whom I work under the acronym VestAndPage, we have organized performance art and Live art projects that involve collaborative partnerships and are conceived on notions of collectivity and values of solidarity, cohesion, like-mindedness, cooperation, and mutual support. We operate horizontally and heterarchically and do not rely on common expectations or understandings of joint activities. In fact, we consider the individual actions under these values of greater importance and where the organization components and roles are unranked and non-hierarchical.

In 2012, we laid the foundations of the Live art exhibition project Venice International Performance Art Week and its related Educational Learning Program establishing the ideas of precariousness and temporary performance artists community as the foci of the overall project. Thematising the project this way gave a sense of direction to the organizational team, collaborators, donors, partners, patronaging institutions, taking part artists and curators who have contributed to its realization. For example, the Chilean performance artist Alperoa, as soon as he received the invitation to participate in the inaugural edition in December 2012, had the project's title tattooed on the left side of his chest. Since then, his tattoo has represented the logo and the institutional image of the Venice International Performance Art Week (Figures 1 & 2).



▲ *Figure 1 & 2 - Tattoo for the Venice International Performance Art Week.*

Note. Figure 1 (left). Alperoa. *Tattoo for Venice*. Tattoo artist: Daniel Campos, Concepción, 2012. Still from the video. Figure 2 (right). Alperoa. *Venice International Performance Art Week institutional logo*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist and the Venice International Performance Week Archive.

The constitution of a community is constantly subjected to contingencies and its life to obstacles and obstructions. Consequently, it is liable to change and often does not immediately come into effect as desired. Our idea of a temporary performance artist community is a resilient, transformable, not complete, imperfect, uncertain, context-sensitive model with its limitations and exceptions.

Situations that may harm the realization of a temporary performance artists community are several: communication difficulties and misunderstandings among the members to interact openly and constructively; organizational set-backs due to human errors; unpredictable events escaping rapid monitoring (VestAndPage, 2017). It is not a given that several performance artists, barely knowing each other, form a temporary community just because they gather together in a space and engage in performance art-related activities for a fixed time. However, since the project's foundation, the four terms *temporary*, *performance*, *artist*, and *community* have represented the aspirational description within the theoretical framework that guides our endeavor and curatorial effort. It inspired us to choose current and future courses of action and fulfil the projects' objectives, functioning as a filter to separate what is essential from what is not. Upon conception of the project, we did not rely on replicating the usual schematisms of hypertrophic art platforms or standard performance art festival formulas. In light of the emergence of the Social Age (Azua, 2009), which is all about human connections and social innovations, we thought of a model that, in the first analysis, placed human values would not be second to the artistic and curatorial propositions of the model itself. We envisioned a space of encounters and dialogue between artists of different generations and cultural backgrounds. A space wherein to share common interests, exchange ideas, and plan future joint activities while spending qualitative time together as like-minded professionals, ethics and aesthetics converge.

After the project's inception, we coined the expression *temporary artistic community*, reflecting on our previous militancy in Community Theatre, Applied Drama, and Social Theatre (VestAndPage, 2017). These theatre practices often happen in non-theatrical spaces where aesthetics is not a ruling objective but a tool for social development, critical thinking, participation, and radical inclusion of all people regardless of gender, social status, religion, race, and abilities.

As to the organization strategy, we looked at turning the hierarchical organization approach with vertical relationships into a horizontal structure to improve decision-making processes among the organization team members to enforce a sense of democracy based on permission, participation, and open communication. Being performers ourselves, we chose performance art and Live art as the content and backbone of the project. We consider the multifaceted practices of performance the most appropriate for diverse reflection concerning human civilization's evolutionary and devolutionary processes in the present times.

Right from the very first edition of the project, we displayed selected pioneer performers' documentation (as a tribute to those artists whose lesson has been determinant to the formation of our poetics) alongside contemporary performances in line with our curatorial focus. We wanted to re-shape the idea of cultural *event* into a recognizable place of magmatic creativity, intellectual freedom, and a shared sense of humanity. We thought of the Venice International Performance Art Week as a non-institutionalized inspired and inspiring place, where the audience and artists could feel closer. The way to advertise the project was not only through the usual channels and media outlets but through awareness. Young emerging artists and students living in the city of Venice and its metropolitan area, having become aware of the project, helped its growth through word of mouth. Indebted to Joseph Beuys's theoretical hypothesis of the *Soziale Plastik* or *Soziale Skulptur* (Social Sculpture), our idea of a temporary artistic community is that of a people's project created by the initiation and extension of our urgencies: to design the spaces which we have to call, thus implement communication among individuals through performance-making.

Beuys's vision of a utopian society is infused with political intention and social values. It is based on the concept that every aspect of life can be approached and processed creatively. Therefore, everything is art, and, as a result, everyone has the potential to be an artist. "Only on condition of a radical widening of definitions will it be possible for art and activities related to art to provide evidence that art is now the only evolutionary, revolutionary power. Only art can dismantle the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline" (Tisdall, 1974, p. 48).

Performance art and Live art can symbolize avant-garde counter-models to conventional perspectives and positions. They move freely, equipping spaces with the strength of encounters in difference. They can challenge the circuits of power and cultural production by fostering "dialogues across disciplinary and professional boundaries, local and national contexts, creating think tanks and networks of communication capable of permeating the cavernous space of the mainstream bizarre" (Gómez-Peña, 2005, p. XXIV).

To organize the Venice International Performance Art Week, we never relied on public funds. Our currency was our urgency. We shared this with our network of artists, curators, collaborators, volunteers, in-kind supporters, and donors. We created a linkage of people and professionals and asked them to reflect on the value their contribution would have made in



an art project built by people for the people, and not for art's sake. We invited performance artists and live artists from all around the world both to perform and to publicly debate on a daily basis their ideas. We held the space to create an atmosphere of reciprocity, where the participant artists could envision future collaboration and working opportunities with each other.

Late Singaporean artist Lee Wen (Figure 3) portrayed the spirit of the project with these words: "This is not a circus, this is not a show, this not a biennale, this is a meeting of artists and people who looked for the pearls in the rivers of human civilizations and came to share what they found" (Wen, 2012).



▲ *Figure 3 - Lee Wen. Sebastian Performance.*

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week, 2012. Photo: Monica Sobczak. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive.

In 2016, after completing the three biennial editions of Venice International Performance Art Week titled *Trilogy of the Body*: "Hybrid Body - Poetic Body" (2012), "Ritual Body - Political

Body” (2014) and “Fragile Body - Material Body” (2016)¹(Figures 4 & 5), we acknowledged the extent to which performance art and Live art were becoming institutionalized, also used as an expedient to entertain. Performance and Live art risk being turned into orthodox art forms emptied of their inherent confrontational, thus depriving them of their deepest motive, namely to “subvert the strategies of corporate multiculturalism” (Gómez-Peña, 2005, p. 249).



▲ Figure 4 - *La Pocha Nostra, Corpo Insurrectu*.

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week, 2014. Photo: Monica Sobczak. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In the figure: Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Balitrónica Gómez.

Figure 5 - *Franko B, I Am Thinking of You*. ►

1 From December 2012 to June 2022, the Venice International Performance Art Week, in its various editions and formats, has presented live performances and audiovisual documentation of over six hundred performers, live artists and performance collectives. For concepts, work descriptions, participant artists and image selections of the Venice International Performance Art Week's *Trilogy of the Body* (2012, 2014, 2016):

<https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/fragile-body-material-body-2016>
<https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/ritual-body-political-body-2014>
<https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/hybrid-body-poetic-body-2012>



Note. Venice International Performance Art Week, 2016. Photo: Edward Smith. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In the figure: Franko B and ORLAN.

Thus, in 2017, we thought of a new format. We wanted to implement the idea of a temporary artistic community as a co-creation experience on site. Performance and live artists were engaged in experimental processes with the purpose of creatively and collectively addressing this rising global tendency and increasing emergency; in short, to counteract the flatteries of dominant cultural powers. The definition of a festival is therefore inapplicable to the Venice International Performance Art Week; it is a creative think-tank addressing existential matters like *inclusiveness* and *equality* through performance-making. Teamwork is fundamental to implementing an artist-run temporary performance artists community model, and it begins by building trust with each person that contributes to the organization. In that, motivating participation, transversal collaboration on activities to pursue common goals, cooperativeness, loving-kindness, and attentiveness to the needs of the others are quintessential to succeed and work easier and quicker.

The notion of community pertains to the fields of ethics, social, and political sciences. For our team members, we established the following core points (VestAndPage, 2017):

Cooperation: it implies a willingness to engage and act with humility, inspire others, support, and nurture co-creative processes; it requires mutual assistance to foster internal cohesion and the team's capacity for collective action.

Responsibility: take action so that the effects are compatible with the continuation of the others' actions. It is to care for the complex reality by coexisting and co-operating. Understanding what is to be done also includes: questioning all aspects that come into play, recognizing that each community member can be the creator of something that might initiate a change and bring positive results for others.

Compassion: this is the willingness to be concerned for the well-being of others. It can be regarded as a dynamic, processual, and relational quality. The acts of noticing, feeling, and responding contribute uniquely to the realization and organization of a temporary community. Acting with compassion can lead to mindful awareness and understanding of who we and others are since it makes people feel listened to and recognized. Compassion is a supposed cognitive connection through perspective-taking empathy (Miller, 2007). Whereas the artistic drive is an innate, determined urge to attain an objective, compassion can function as a propeller to fulfil quests by stipulating a clear focus on the other.

Sense of belonging: belonging also means acceptance. If people animated by the same aspiration and purpose gather and meet in a place for a destined time to engage in specific activities in order to give shape to time-based artistic situations, a climax of reciprocity can spring up more quickly. Operating with mutual respect motivates participation, and it increases the sense of belonging to the community. When there is motivated partaking and involvement, there is also a more vital connection, as everyone in the community understands that their presence, proposal, and service can contribute to bettering the community.

In terms of teamwork, if the competencies of the team members are interchangeable, they enforce considerably the sense of allegiance of each member to align organizational structure to the project's stated mission, vision, creative strategy, and objectives.

Each person has beautiful stories to tell. Sharing one's differences and accepting them creates peace and revolves around the clarity and coherence of the narrative. Performance art and Live art focus on people, life, and society. In the first instance, they are different from



conventional art. They allow artists to connect with others, people with people, which is even more important than the art itself. They are practices aiming to propose to others how to reflect on something the artist has experienced. Shared experiences can make a difference for others with similar drives and concerns. In that, to validate the others' stories means to offer recognition, acceptance, and feedback about the other person's reality and identity in a non-judgmental way. Validation builds a sense of belonging and strengthens relationships despite maintaining different opinions (Hall & Cook, 2012).

Awareness of feeling: in recent years, many areas of the humanities, social, and environmental sciences have witnessed an affective turn to respond to economic and ecological crises, the insurgency of populist and nationalist movements, identity politics and an array of political struggles. "Deleuze, following Spinoza, displaced the traditional opposition of reason and emotion with the new opposition between sad and joyful passions, which diminish or increase our capacity to think and act, replacing judgment with effect as the very movement of thought" (Meiborg & Van Tuinen, 2016, p. 9). For Deleuze, this is a question of emancipating the thought of socializing the passions in a political body. The liberation of thought is the active becoming of passion, which involves joy, hence affect is a collective becoming inseparable from cognition (Deleuze, 2004). The French philosopher, putting passion at the core of thought, argues that through passion, we acquire our capacity for action and thus "the ability to produce concepts or what Spinoza calls common notions, which are adequate expressions of our communal being" (Meiborg & Van Tuinen, 2016, p. 12). These thoughts inspired us to redefine the Venice International Performance Art Week model in a more open, dynamic, and accessible way, without losing depth in approaching artistic and social issues.



THE EDUCATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM OF THE VENICE INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE ART WEEK



In 2013, we devised the ongoing educational learning program of the Venice International Performance Art Week², to address the scarcity of openly accessible non-institutional education spaces in the performance art and Live art sectors. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it treats the practice of freedom, which requires individual and collective responsibility. It is in this way that we can deal critically and discern how to partake in the transformation of their reality (Freire, 1970).

Within the present global scenario of uncertainty, temporariness has become an essential means of maintaining cultural production. This counts especially within those artistic areas considered to be the most precarious and less commercial, such as performance art and Live art, which ephemeral in their very nature, are much harder to commodify. This aspect amongst others, reminds us of its potential to dislocate the fixities of trite art-systems (Jones, 2013).

Short-term, intensive laboratorial activities, and temporary learning groups seem to be a logical outcome in times of increased economic hardship. They form fast and bring desirous artists together to share and implement their art practices, looking at the present

² Information, participant artists and image selections of the seven *Educational Learning Program Summer Classes* of the Venice International Performance Art Week (2013-2020): <https://veniceperformanceart.org/summer-class>

time critically. They enforce a collective understanding of the necessity for cultural-making processes to expand beyond the scope of resistance.

At this time, the formation of autonomous temporary learning groups is also a social-political matter. They function as an antidote to the norms of cultural hegemony, to the domination achieved by the ruling classes to legitimate social and economic structures according to their worldview, through ideological and cultural means to influence people's thoughts, expectations, and behaviors.

We foresaw the educational learning program as a liminal territory where emerging performance artists and live artists could exercise, embody, and perform creative ideas without the pressures of extrinsically motivated goals. We aimed at opening new territories for the exploration of performance-making in an extended, intensive time. The performance space was a common ground to practice creative freedom and facilitate performance-making processes rather than concentrating exclusively on the results of the artistic operations (the final performances).

We undertook regular analysis and feedback of the work activities and of the relationships between the tutors and students to improve the program's pedagogical aspect. Within this frame, the respect for oneself and the other attributes value to the individuality and necessities of everyone and encourages the participants to take responsibility and become educators of themselves.

From 2013 to 2020, every summer, we set customized summer classes and workshop paths, considering the specificity of each participant's cultural and social background, inviting external tutors of international fame who would support them in the pedagogical path. The selection of the participating artists in the summer classes and workshops always took place through an open call forwarded worldwide (Figure 6).

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week Workshop Series. Moments of the Summer Class. Still from the video. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In the figure: Amy Mauvan.

▼ *Figure 6 - Joint Performance Summer Class by La Pocha Nostra and VestAndPage, 2017*



THE CO-CREATION LIVE FACTORY FORMAT

In a city like Venice, the contemporary art scene is overruled by the hegemony of cultural institutions of established tradition and influential international art enterprises.

To keep our project uncompromised but evolving and detached from usual exhibition or festival set-ups, in 2017, we gave utmost importance to establish co-creative processes in a context of mutual sharing. We re-structured the Venice International Performance Art Week from a display of artist talks, documentative exhibitions, and live performance presentation programs into a think tank and a transformative space of creative inquiry. We felt the urgency to create a hub where emerging performance artists, live artists, body artists and body movers could gather and meet, confront themselves with different performing arts practices and find where they converge.

To shape the project's new identity and trajectory, VestAndPage conceived the format of *Co-Creation Live Factory*.³ We focused explicitly on emerging performers selected through an open call. Together with our tutor collaborators, such as the internationally acclaimed performance artists Marilyn Arsem and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and artist duo Andriago and Aliprandi, we helped them to give voice to their social concerns and urgencies in front of an international audience.

In this frame, we began to operate as filters to allow the participant artists to navigate creatively inside the community, respectfully and autonomously.

The core mission of *Co-Creation Live Factory* is that participating performance artists' choices and actions contribute to building a growing creative community. Our idea of co-creation is that every choice, belief, idea, effort, and interaction between the artists involved in the process reflects their lives and informs their approach to art. Being together and acknowledging one another can help artists to better frame and improve their understanding of reality, which is also the main reason why performance artists and live artists perform. Creativity implies the responsibility to choose and actively decide how to acknowledge the current transformative moment, developing agency by consciously participating in it. It strengthens values and mobilizes hopes. Post-truth and unceasing wars are caging the human spirit and progressive thinking behind a wall of diffused pessimism. Protests, public discourse, and criticism are indeed valuable. However, they alone are not enough to reject the viral propagation of devious trends and outbreaks on all levels of society; changes cannot happen without the emergence of new meaningful alternatives. Our standpoint is that those who have a vision, yearn for knowledge, and those who still hope and trust for societies to change, progress and evolve, should interweave in multiple co-creative processes of communication and interaction that endeavor to convey the immediacy of their experiences in order to keep culture in motion. Live art is choosing to oppose dominant, oppressive influences through performance-making, increasing the desire for self-actualization, the need for achievement, belonging, motivations based on thought patterns, social influences, and a sense of justice for good. It is to find ways to surpass traditional and hierarchical binary assumptions while examining interconnected co-creation processes as alternatives. (Figures 7, 8 & 9)

3 Extensive information, participant artists and image selections of the two editions of *Co-Creation Live Factory* (2017, 2020):
<https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/co-creation-live-factory-2020>
<https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/co-creation-live-factory-2017>



▲ *Figure 7, 8 & 9 - Co-Creation Live Factory:
Prologue 1, 2017*

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week. Moments of the final collective performance. Photos: Lorenza Cini. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In figure 7: Diane Rafaela. In figure 8: Ria Jade Hartley and Alex Talamo. Figure 9 (from left to right): Ria Jade Hartley, Sara Simeoni, Enok Ripley, Ash McNaughton, Alex Talamo, Daiane Rafaela, Madeleine Virginia Brown, Marisa Garreffa.

Clustered around the temporary performance artist community concept, the *Co-Creation Live Factory* wished to be a collective journey of relational artistic creativity and a challenging quest into the unknown, for it assumes no material goal. Its two editions, *Prologue 1* (2017) and *Co- Dissenting Bodies Marking Time* (2020), have been participatory processes of

collaborative creative inquiry to facilitate understanding of one's positioning in society: which new kind of relationships can performers and live artists interlace to interconnect socio-cultural backgrounds and personal identities through performance-making processes? Creativity emerges from visions, and visions shape different aspects of the creative process. Alfonso Montuori and Gabrielle Donnelly have investigated the application of creativity and its transformative potential in terms of consciousness, social change, and innovation to better understand how to live in a complex, pluralistic, and uncertain world. The human being is a creature and creator in creation. Their creativity does not have to manifest in earth-shattering revolutionary ideas but in a greater response-ability, de-automatization and less unquestioned reliance on rote, habitual responses. It is the ability to participate with greater freedom and openness to change, create more choices, and act upon them. Further, creativity is how a human being enables and generates space for another to create (Montuori & Donnelly, 2013).

A creative inquiry focuses on the relationship between theory, action, analysis, and practice. It is an ongoing reflection on concepts of being, knowing, acting, and relating (to one or more contexts). It is a continuous exploration of personal, interpersonal, organizational, communitarian, and social transformation processes and their interconnections. However, to understand the concept of creativity, it is essential to consider how history has informed ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Revising the past to reconsider the present, and imagining alternatives to embody the future, invites artists to develop a complex relationship with knowledge and how they should engage in the world. Hence, creatively inquiring down cognitive pathways means finding a sense of reality in non-reductive, non-simplistic, but not incomprehensible ways. It means understanding one's potential and limits, looking at the process of becoming as an unabated process of self-creation, and triggering a relentless integrative dialogue between complexity and simplicity.

Thinking, acting, reflecting, analyzing, and practicing in creative participatory contexts offers the opportunity to learn, test, and shape ideas. For us, they are qualities that may lead performance and live artists to make headway for other practices to address new areas of creativity. When thoughts are embodied in actions and inform performance practices, the theoretical dimension of art-making processes is enriched. Emotional intelligence and analytical capacity allow artists to challenge the binary system of modernity that has led to excessive polarization and opposition of thought.

Being a relational, participatory, and non-closed, pliable situation, the idea of a temporary performance artist community can offer opportunities to shape understanding and manifest it in various interactions and directions, inspiring, in turn, new generative contexts.

Crucial to this process is to foresee the trends in which creative interactions move and which values are enacted. It is to navigate the strata between the actual crisis and the artistic momentum with the Hegelian *Begeisterung*—an *enthusiasm* integral to inspiration and transformation, “since the artwork serves the inspiration or *Begeisterung* of the people” (Peters, 1997, p. 236).

Suppose the role of the performance artist and the live artist is to explore the unfamiliar, subvert pre-existing schemes, address fears to overcome, search for the unstructured and find new ways of interpreting reality by creating alternatives to collapsing systems and structures. In that case, the creative act should be “not a collection of skills but an eradication



of blocks” (Grotowski, 1968, p. 16). It is also an act of courage: a direct translation of the human drive to be free and create to liberate the self. This courage implies independence of judgment, preference for complexity, tolerance for ambiguity, openness to experience, and mutual support among artists.

HEADING INTO A NEW DIRECTION: RETHINKING PERFORMANCE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

With the sudden suspension of live performance activities due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we reflected on how to adapt the Venice International Performance Art Week model to this new, unexpected situation. We saw a potential way forward in the residential aspect of the project and began to drive it in this direction.

We used the experience of the residential pilot experiment of December 2018, which opened the *Body Matters* cycle. In this short residential journey, we and our performance collaborators gave life to the performance opera *Anam Cara-Dwelling Bodies*.⁴

In preparation for its public presentation, we trained intensely for five days to a common source from which to draw artistic material; we engaged in acts of recognition and belonging, creating the performance opera on-site without relying on a preconceived script. (Figures 10, 11, 12 & 13)

Sharing the idea that performance art and Live art are artistic practices to rethink “subversive possibilities for gender and identity within and beyond the terms of power itself” (Butler, 1999, p. 40), we designed art actions to overcome the myth of masculine force, sexual dualism, the oppressive “patriarchal technological rationality” (Caddick, 1986, p. 62), in short, to deliver an authentic experience of our bodies. We performed as “mirrors for each other, mirrors that reflect back aspects of the self that cannot be acknowledged or lived out, fantasies that can be lived through the other but remain problematic for the self” (Tookey, 2001, pp. 306-307), our performing bodies advocating for equality and “as a site of valuable knowledge production” (Cleary, 2016, p. 1). In an oneiric identification with each other, we performed defining our bodies as an expression of “wholeness, coexistence, and non-conditioned state of the being for the *commencement* of a new mode of existence” (Eliade, 1972, p. 176) and possible futures. Eventually, bodies as profiles of a same soul, which, although “separated by space and the evolution of time” (Nin, 1991, p. 7) are ever defiant of the rigidifying meaning of imposed frameworks of definition by a totalitarian ideology and white supremacy which juxtapose a male body, the subject, with a female body, the object (De Beauvoir, 1956).

4 Information, participant artists and image selections of *Body Matters: Anam Cara-Dwelling Bodies* experiential residency and performance opera (2018):
<https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/body-matters-anam-cara-2018>



▲ *Figure 10 & 11 - Body Matters: Anam Cara – Dwelling Bodies*

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week, 2018. Moments of the performance opera. Photos: Alexander Harbaugh. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In figure 10 (left): The Silent Choir. In figure 11 (right): Giorgi De Santi and Gülbeden Kulbay.



▲ *Figure 12 & 13 - Body Matters: Anam Cara – Dwelling Bodies*

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week, 2018. Moments of the performance opera. Photos: Alexander Harbaugh; Yansu Wang / We Exhibit (right). Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In figure 12 (from left to right): Sara Simeoni, Verena Stenke (VestAndPage) and Fenia Kotsopoulou. In figure 13 (from left to right): Enok Ripley and Marcel Sparmann.

Artist-in-residencies and exchange programs are essential for the artists' international growth and career. They offer access to networks and possibly new markets; they create links between local art scenes and international artists and audiences. Artist-in-residence has become a fluid concept encompassing a broad spectrum of activity and engagement. New technologies are providing unique experiences, including residencies in the digital space.

They were born to contrast an art made by a few and for a few and universalize the possibilities of making art. The goal was that artmaking could become more accessible even to those artists who, under normal conditions, would not have had the means, the tools,

resources, and the time it takes to create their art. Just as the terminology evokes, it is a concept that refers to the verbs remain, live, dwell, and linger.

Cultural environments have suffered severely in the last two years, forcing people to distance themselves from each other. During this period of stasis, we found essential the task of rethinking the ways of artistic fruition. In our view, transforming and expanding the concept and function of artist-in-residence does not mean renouncing on experiences of connection, interaction and comparison of this type that offer space, time, and visibility to artists for their formation and artistic growth.

Despite the restrictions imposed by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, an alternative response to support artists has been to continue artist-in-residencies remotely. The realization of virtual and online artists-in-residence, projects, and initiatives are aimed at carrying out a dialogue with several voices, thus avoiding the isolation of ideas and at the same time guaranteeing support to artists in the form of fees. Websites and online platforms that host virtual and online artists' residences are the devices that give evidence of these processes. They become not only environments where one can enjoy a work of art that can be exhibited online or in some museum, but places that welcome suggestions and ideas arising from discussions and exchanges that take place at time intervals between tutors and participating artists. In this way, the online platforms transform the characteristics of traditional artists' residences into an innovative and experimental online form.

Nevertheless, these itineraries should be methodologically well organized. Both online and physical artist-residencies share the core understanding that the work of art, or finished product, is no longer the most important outcome; the research process is. However, it happens that artists are often left alone in their residential path (where they frequently have to bear the costs of their staying at their own expense). This means they do not receive the necessary feedback and support they look for when they apply to situations of this kind.

When thinking of how to form our performance artist-in-residence in *hybrid-mode*, we did so with the intention of providing adequate guarantees to the selected and invited artists. We wanted the experiential residency path to be highly productive and rewarding.

Thus, in spring 2022, we initiated the hybrid mode *Co-Creation Experiential Residency: Body Matters* as the natural continuation of the Venice International Performance Art Week project, adhering to its core principles of inclusiveness, hospitality, care, accessibility, and togetherness, keeping the objective of enforcing our idea of a temporary performance artist community.

By founding a new cycle of art-in-residence, we aim to involve performers all gender identities and sexual orientations and potentially discriminated groups of different race, class, age, ability, sex, belief, and socio-cultural background and offer the space for them to focus and research on themes such as the self-relationship and the self-in-relation, with the guidance of supporting mentorship.

Additionally, we have planned that the existing website of the Venice International Performance Art Week will transform into a web platform progressively updated with proposals, ideas, and inspiring content from the artists participating in the residencies, responding to the specific thematic areas of each residency. For example, regarding the thematic area of identity issues, the objective will be to continually stimulate a dialogue



around new ways of being, the question of opacity, and the encounter with diversities and opposites.

Research and processes are fundamental to finding alternative possibilities of gathering both in the physical reality and cyberspace. During the pandemic, we began to plan the hybrid artist-in-residence cycle, assuming social distancing, a particularly inconvenient imposition concerning performing arts, as an innovative factor. We look at it as a condition that may favor processes of desirable encounters among artists and people also in the virtual space. This is because meaning in the encounter with the other takes place through a cognitive act which leads to the formation of new knowledge, in proximity as well as in remote. *Body Matters* artist-in-residence program is born to offer performance and live artists space and time to conceive critical projects they might otherwise not undertake. The series of artist-in-residence should function as places of confrontation, hospitality, and contamination between performance artists and live artists from different realities and experiences, who meet, get to know, and exchange practices and ideas, possibly producing new works without foreclosure of form, technique, or style.

Places of thought, study, research, and experimentation allow ideas to grow and projects to develop however needed, whether it be in a physical or digital dimension. In the absence of a physical space for coexistence and sharing, *Body Matters* was conceived of as an experiment which that may open radically new ways of performance production; it was designed for a scenario increasingly interested in de-localized, de-materialized, and distributed forms of performative body representation, allowing the participating performance artists to be responsible for the outcomes.

The pandemic has abruptly reduced the distribution and production of live performances for about two years but enabled performers and live artists to experiment with new forms. It offered them the opportunity to investigate unknown or little-explored performance practices.

The central element of the co-creation experiential residency cycle *Body Matters* should be identified in intersectional interaction, using methods that make performance a collective creation in hybrid. There are several possibilities. For instance, a performance artist acts remotely with a performative proposal that can be expanded, modified, or completed by the audience. This way activates a process that could continue indefinitely, stretching the limits of the possibilities allowed by the digital platform that hosts an operation. The artist who solicits the audience, in turn, expands, modifies, or completes the starting proposal. In this way, the starting proposal becomes a new input from which a renewed output is expected, according to a growth modality inlay.

In hybridization, intersectional interaction is a continuous mixing process between performer and audience, leading to a very primitive output (response from the solicitation). At the same time, it reduces the distinction and obstacles between interacting groups. As in life, it is often impossible to understand if an action was born from one person or as a response to external solicitations. Often, actions stem from a complex dynamic of osmosis between the inside and the outside. Therefore, future digital creations could reach levels so complicated that it will be difficult but fascinating to understand where artists' proposals or public contributions begin and end. This definition is broad enough to realize that intersectional interaction has different degrees of applicability.

Digital performances allow artists and their audiences to interact in ways that are not a substitute for a live event. The audience can interact with the performer's work, reacting, for example, with an impulse of the imagination that completes the contours of what they see and hear differently and perhaps more fluidly from the rhythms and actions that take place on a live stage. If it did not happen, there would be precisely the domain of form, where the only possible action is the contemplation of a rigid structure.

Interacting is, therefore, different from simply reacting: it means overflowing as much as possible from the limits of formal composition—which is not necessarily identified with letting the public enter the show through games—shows of hands, or requests for comments. Even if such things happen, they may be mere variations of a form that leaves no room for free interpretation or imagination. Performance activity on digital media is still challenging, and the human intellect proceeds with difficulty.

In short, what inspires us in developing a format of performance artist-in-residence as such are the critical issues posed by artistic experimentation. As the creative experience matures and technology advances, these problems will probably be left behind. However, pending these future developments, for us, it is a way to continue creating performance opportunities as open laboratories in progress when unpredictable and severe circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic occurs.

THE CO-CREATION EXPERIENTIAL RESIDENCY BODY MATTERS

COVID-19 has drastically changed the way people tell, interpret, and communicate their stories to others. After the two years of inactivity compelled by the pandemic, in June 2022, we made the Venice International Performance Art Week return with the first *Co-Creation Experiential Residency Body Matters*, reprising the idea of a temporary artistic community in a physical space.⁵

At the beginning of 2022, without the certainty of launching the new residential project in person-attendance, we extended the invitation to fifteen artists (performers, live artists, sound artists, dancers) to participate. We undertook a series of online meetings with them explaining the reasons for our choice and concept of the residency, thus undertaking a dialogue on how to develop it once we would physically reunite.

In one of the online conversations, we undertook with the invited artists in the months before the physical residency took place, performer Sara Simeoni (a dancer in Carolyn Carson's dance company) said: "It is a project that assumes the performative space as a place of precious vulnerability, and hesitation, but also of dynamic opening where memories and processes of transformation entwine. The meaning of the residence takes on a more significant value than the final collective performance. Imagining the future days when we will work together again in proximity, the performance space is like a blank page waiting to be written, a *sacred space-place* that contains a precious vulnerability arousing in me a sense of openness towards the new."

⁵ Information, participant artists and image selections of *Co-Creation Experiential Residency Body Matters* (2022): <https://veniceperformanceart.org/the-art-week/cocreation-residency-2022>

After working and living together for two weeks with fifteen artists, we realized that the *Co-Creation Experiential Residency Body Matters* was a moment of sustained encounters where different artistic research combined with performative responses to confront the emergencies of the present.

In the first stance, the co-creation experiential residency reflected the participant artists' urgency to gather and reunite again inside a physical performance space akin to a blank page. As the days passed, the space became a social-narrative incubator wherein performative systems and methods intertwined, searching for unconventional expressive approaches. An interface for inclusive stories that flow, unfold, blur, collide, merge, and coagulate. It was a space to inhabit, a quantifiable, transformable container of ever-changing identities; a shelter, a research hub activated by human bodies' performative responses to past, present, and future challenges; to generate questions on inclusion, innovation, and diversity. Eventually, an alternative for more sustainable living and artmaking, albeit temporarily, where performance and storytelling translate the essential human capacity to read and construct reality.

Speculative thoughts become easier to access when they take root in real-life possibilities and become tangible facts. However, they may remain aleatory when incorporated into digital constructs. Although allowing a great sense of freedom, some inevitably go adrift.

The participating artists, performers and live artists in the residency approached the performance space as an open box wherein to devise new, unconventional approaches to the normative. It is in this way, collaborating again in proximity, that we have attempted to envision potential habitats for gathering while reflecting on issues crucial to the contemporaneity, pondering on questions such as: after the experience of the pandemic, how do performers and live artists collectively approach a performance space, collectively, in proximity? Is it the same or an *out of place* space? Is it a space like before or somehow a *space-other*, perhaps disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory, and yet transformative? Which future environments are performers and live artists expecting to inhabit artistically? What narratives, tools of experience-making, and sources of inspiration do they seek? How do they foresee sustaining themselves in the future? How does the *new normal* brought by the pandemic affect embodied cognition processes? What new social scenarios await them? How do new artistic communities correspond to them? How do they draw on imagery, philosophies, theories, and methodologies to interrogate concepts of home, community, and sense of belonging in these precarious times? Eventually, is the artist-in-residence the ideal place to explore, challenge, test ideas, and receive feedback from each other, dwelling inside a shared space where the unheard may be heard and the untold stories told? For us, allowing a space where different performance practices converge is also a way to explore the idea of a temporary artistic community in terms of the body and the self. So, an artist-in-residence project of this kind may be articulated through its temporality, legacy, sense of inheritance, futurity, or aspiration. It may be conceptualized as occupying the physical, the spatial, the temporal and the cultural realm or as gaining coherence in nomadism, displacement, exile, migration, and threat.

To belong may be interpreted as something cultural or religious. Similarly, belonging could draw from spaces where one feels secure and safe or excluded from a place or community. It spans the personal, the local and the global, and it encompasses geopolitical concerns and their impact on people, communities, and populations. Today, it is also related to the pandemic's consequences and artistic and critical responses ranging from the intimate and personal to the universal.



For the impact of COVID-19 that has strained beyond the health crisis, accentuating inequalities endemic in society, and a new, dramatic war in Europe adding to others already existing, we sought a new way to gather artists to respond to these issues through their practices, challenging and describing the way the world is.

In organizing the first *Co-Creation Experiential Residency Body Matters*, we did not look for singular voices but instead gathered individual voices as a wholeness that can break matter, connect people, heal, and inspire other artists to share and create alternatives.

This *modus operandi* also counteracts performing arts infrastructures that ask mainly for already made works as products to feed the sector. Our artistic and curatorial urgency is to continue to drive performance more towards life itself, opening and holding new spaces for dynamic, ethnographic constellations, and ecosystems of performers and live artists who look for new pathways and realize their visions that they deem unfitted to what is prescribed by accepted standards. Thus, to propose, transform, shift, trust in change, intersect, and entwine in a climax of togetherness where everyone can express their embodied experiences of living and what they have been through the way that they live. In this performance ecosystem, everyone needs to be ready to guide a work session at any time, as well as ready to listen and take the propositions forwarded by their peers as an open invitation to create further. When decisions are taken but to enforce a harmonious constellation and not for the sake of oneself, there is no need to exercise authority as in hierarchical systems.

With this first residency, our idea of a temporary artistic community shifted into a place of belonging wherein to experiment with ways of thinking and seeing while aiming to move away from the mere representation of concepts towards a more in-depth understanding of the ephemeral, impermanent, fragility, that is the human body in action.

In that respect, a temporary performance artist community becomes a place to embrace life's complexity and pressures, listening with care to one another as a responsible action to nurture liveness. Also, it is a shared territory to address the urgency for forming a culture of care, diversity, and hospitality, where different ways of being intersect dynamically through performance practices.

The liveness of the shared co-creation processes triggered during this first residency allowed the participants to co-plan further artistic exchanges. Questions of interest of each participant artist have been explored and discussed collectively as a form to challenge and dissent from the status quo. Research subjects have been, for example, the impact of trauma and how this leads to a disconnection from the physical body, consequently the fetishization, alienation, and isolation that a stigmatic body experiences in everyday life.

Whether physical or emotional, wounds and scars are part of a person's story. From this assumption, we have conceived the cycle of co-creation experiential residencies as a safe place where each participant can share their struggles and accomplishments without judgment, to shatter the stigma they carry through methodologically organized performing arts. (Figures 14, 15, 16 & 17)





▲ *Figure 14, 15, 16 & 17 - Co-Creation Experiential
Residency Body Matters*

Note. Venice International Performance Art Week, 2022. Moments of the residential process restitution for a limited audience. Photos: Lorenza Cini. Courtesy of the Venice International Performance Art Week Archive. In the figures, Nicola Fornoni together with (clockwise): Irina Baldini, Ash McNaughton, Emily Welther, Marianna Andriago.

The complex set of social and political identities leads to a multiplication of distinct but overlapping modes of privilege, discrimination, and disadvantage. Adopting an intersectional approach through the practice of care in co-creation spaces increases awareness of where power resides and what the performing arts sector lacks today. Respecting complexity, increasing accessibility, and resisting simplification, the culture of care becomes an organizational practice to integrate and involve minorities that have been excluded historically or ghettoized in the performing arts sector.

Care as an organizational practice means responsibly reflecting on the needs of the communities and individual artists with whom one is committed and acting accordingly for their benefit and support without falling into standard assistance modes.

A few artists who have already collaborated with the Venice International Performance Art Week in the past years have been invited by us to partake in the residency and welcome new invited artists to ensure an accelerated sense of community and belonging. This strategy implies

implementing a sustainability plan to guarantee to each participant a constant and preferably increasing (or at least not less than the current one) residential, social, and economic well-being.

Care as an organizational practice can be defined as the effort to respect everyone's needs or requirements, designing the activities to allow each artist to participate in residential and community life in the most active, autonomous, and valuable way possible. *Inclusion* is the foundation on which this strategy develops in dedicating the necessary attention to the needs of each participant in achieving common goals.

Among the main reasons that can lead to the exclusion and discrimination of a person are race, gender, cultural origin, religion, and disability. Hence, inclusiveness should not be seen as a status but as a constant evolution and the process of change.

We have founded the *Co-Creation Experiential Residency Body Matters* cycle on the principle of diversity and all its variables as reference values. For instance, differently abled artists are considered a resource and should always be supported tirelessly to express their potential at their best, respected for their diversity, and made to feel welcome. To welcome means to go beyond egoistic stances. The reciprocity of hospitality is not a contract, but a common good, to be sustained through care. Enacting hospitality is essential, but it is not enough alone since a factual integration in the collectivity must necessarily sustain it.

The *Co-Creation Experiential Residency Body Matters* cycle espouses the principle of integration: it ensures the co-existence of human and creative differences, so that each artist may become a protagonist of the residency's process formation.

Inside a temporary artistic community of performers, taking care of the presence of the others is an act of responsibility. It is not giving a form from the outside to the presence of the other. It is to encourage the free creativity of each other professionally, emotionally, cognitively, and relationally.

Care as an organizational practice has, therefore, an interpersonal dimension and an external one: a) the relationship between the organizers and the resident artists is subtended by care; b) the relationship between all those involved, and the external environment is also subtended by care.

In this sense, the value of relational responsibility in the encounter with the other is added to the value of creative freedom: the ego's logic is reduced when one takes care of the creative freedom of one's fellow artist responsibly.

Levinas argued that freedom is not an acquired value to be defended. Freedom is built progressively by opening oneself up to the other responsibly—taking care of the other's problems and needs (Levinas, 1969).

In conformity with Levinas's proposition, we believe that a real encounter with the other is what enables care-full dialogue. This organizational practice also extends to the performance space, bringing forth operations that, although perhaps risking being unspectacular from the point of view of the spectator, are liberating, and therefore necessary.



CONCLUSION

Our idea of a temporary performance artist community may also be intended as communities of consciousness. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; however, it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight (Thoreau, 1983).

It is not just the sense of togetherness that makes a temporary performance artist community vibrant. It can turn the community into an exclusive and elitist system if wrongly interpreted. The transparent, open dialogue among its members (together with the productive confrontation of ideas and mutual trust) acts not as reliance or attitude. It is not something caused, but something developed.

Another critical aspect necessary to favor free creative dynamics within a temporary performance artist community is that it needs to be an institutionally independent, openly accessible, and self-sustainable space.

Performers and live artists with extensive artistic and educational experience can play a central role in forming new temporary creative communities, offering their expertise to emerging artists to further learning situations. However, facilitating performance processes committedly might be not enough. It is not just formative toolsets that foster creative development; it is above all by taking full responsibility to embody all those human values and qualities that performance art and Live art need today—to be inclusive, accessible, dynamic, and diversified. Indeed, the very essence of life is not just all nature but evidence of compassion, and altruism, which implies the art of listening to another's anguish, grief, annoyance, suffering, anxiety, and ultimately joy, to become hosts for the others.

A temporary performance artist community functions by treasuring individual and collective ethos based on respect, esteem, and appreciation towards the other. They enforce gathering reunions where experiments replace known formulas, where failure becomes a guiding light. Subtle energies affect our states of consciousness, perception, memory, emotions, empathy, thoughts, creativity, and the physical body. They stimulate the human being to be curious, inspired, motivated, intuitive, flexible, and spontaneous. They make people aware that to live the present is also an opportunity to develop competencies beyond rule-based expertise. They stimulate to play with constraints and possibilities rather than merely focusing on one of their parts. Eventually, they lead artists to explore creative paths where the degree of personal responsibility and freedom is much greater. It is arduous because it involves sustaining a crucial emotional aptitude with analytical thought beyond self-assertion. To scale up our emotional intelligence is not just a process of recognizing and understanding who we are, but of handling relationships, inspiring, connecting, communicating, and empathizing with others to overcome seeming separations, distances, challenges, and defuse conflicts.

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