

# NOURISHING NETWORK

A NEW HUMAN CODEX ON SOCIAL GLUE

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***Aristotle suggested that humans flourish when “they live wisely, justly, and in harmony with the world [...] a sense of well-being is achieved not simply through sensory pleasure, but also through things like good health, security, companionship, autonomy, a sense of being respected and socially recognized, and a feeling of connection with the community and environment. All these things are important because humans are ethical, social and creative beings, as well as sensing bodies.”<sup>1</sup>***

This text gathers a report of readings,  
personal stories and experiments.

Make sure you sit comfortably to read this  
text, you can sip a drink if you wish.



*I would like to thank my parents for allowing me to  
come into the world,  
Samuel for his total support, his positive spirit and  
his daily beauty,  
Michou for her energy and support which gave me  
confidence,  
Anne and Gerjan for their time and kind advice,  
Elisa, Johannes, Julia, Margaux, Emma, Lila, Rachel,  
Lucas, Nargisse, Sandra for all the warm and inspi-  
ring discussions,  
Thanks also to all the strangers I met during this  
process.*

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In my everyday life I barely talk to people I don't know. I interact with my friends, with my teachers, with the clients of the restaurant I work in. I talk briefly to my neighbors, exchange a few words with the baker or the supermarket cashier. That is about it. In the city I live in, I don't talk with strangers. I don't talk with people that are not part of my community. Sometimes I am asked for a lighter but most of the time I use my bike to get from one place to another, which leaves no time or opportunity for someone to talk to me.

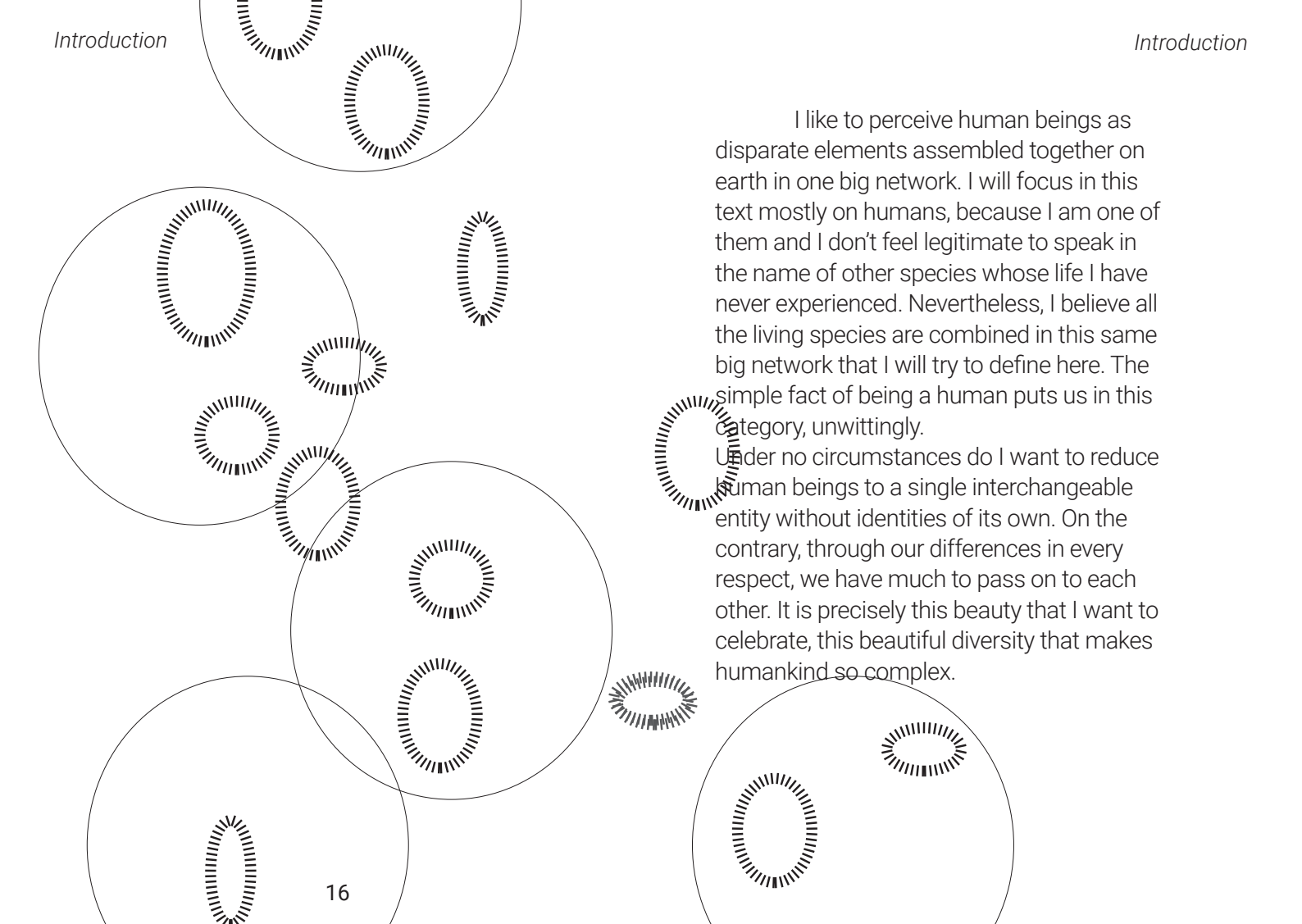
I see people in the street, they sometimes see me too.

An exchange of glances may occur. A smile sometimes if one of us is in a good mood. These are the moments that make me feel good. To have an exchange with someone I don't know, a kind exchange that gives me energy.

Before settling down in the Hague, I lived in Brussels. I used to greet a group of men who always gathered on the bench in front of my building. They come there everyday to chat, they can spend hours, despite the sun or the rain over their heads. Sometimes I would just greet them with a smile. Sometimes we would talk. The repetition of my passage made me familiar to them. They would be waiting all day, most of them were from Le Petit Château which is the arrival center for applicants for international protection in Belgium. For many reasons, we were different, a few decades separated us, we came from different countries or even continents, we did not share the same religion...

In my everyday life in The Hague it is very rare for me to exchange with someone outside my sphere. At school I meet people who, by being part of the same school, bring us closer together on many points. I therefore don't learn from people outside my network. I miss that kind of interaction. I believe I am not the only one feeling that way, especially in big cities. I believe we learn the most from people that differ from us. And it is a pity that most public spaces are so segmented, even the streets where these encounters could happen because of the neutrality of the ground, are only being used as transportation. Do we really interact and cooperate with others? And especially others who differ from us?



The background of the page features a series of overlapping circles of various sizes. Inside several of these circles are smaller, dashed outlines of circles or ovals, some of which are also overlapping. This creates a complex, layered geometric pattern that suggests a network or interconnectedness.

I like to perceive human beings as disparate elements assembled together on earth in one big network. I will focus in this text mostly on humans, because I am one of them and I don't feel legitimate to speak in the name of other species whose life I have never experienced. Nevertheless, I believe all the living species are combined in this same big network that I will try to define here. The simple fact of being a human puts us in this category, unwittingly.

Under no circumstances do I want to reduce human beings to a single interchangeable entity without identities of its own. On the contrary, through our differences in every respect, we have much to pass on to each other. It is precisely this beauty that I want to celebrate, this beautiful diversity that makes humankind so complex.

I am particularly interested in these moments of creating a bond between people, a bond that unites people with each other. These encounters can, of course, create friction when opinions or habits diverge, but the simple fact of being aware of this allows openness and respect for the other.

Try to imagine the human network as a rhizome: a multiplicity of interconnected and interdependent roots operating on a horizontal system, with no beginning and no end<sup>2</sup>. The rhizome has no center as well, which makes it difficult to be destroyed. Elements standing inside the rhizome are all in the middle. They stand in this *intermezzo*<sup>3</sup>, that does not allow any hierarchy nor any relation of power. The concept of rhizome refers to an underground plant stem which grows horizontally, stock and provides proteins and starches for the plant.



The botanical notion was reinterpreted by the two French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari around the 60-70s.<sup>4</sup>

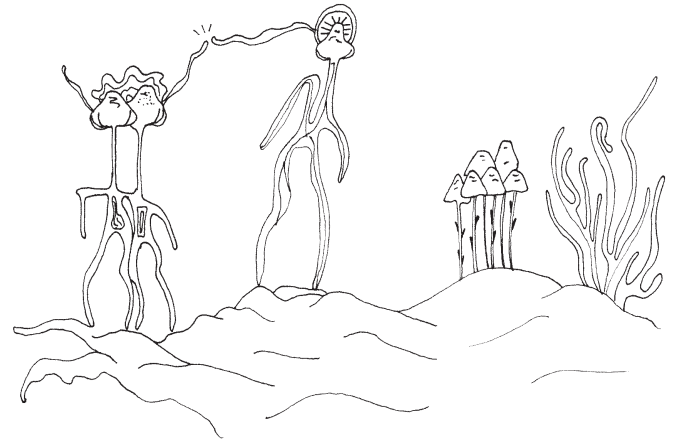
In their book *Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari developed the concept of rhizome as a model in which the organization of the elements does not follow vertical hierarchy, instead propose a celebration of horizontality. They developed the concept of rhizome to understand and visualize relationships between different elements in an alternative power relationship.

They defined several principles including the connection between different points of the rhizome, "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other and must be."<sup>5</sup> Another important concept is the notion of multiplicity : everything is made from something else, it is never standing alone.<sup>6</sup>

There is no unity, but only multiplicity. If there is unity it means there is a power giving orders to unify the elements.

I believe that by keeping in mind these two notions- connection and multiplicity - and by applying them to human relationships we can better understand others that differ from us. The "Other"<sup>7</sup> is the one in front of you in the street, or in the line in the supermarket, he is part of your network. You can and must be connected to him/her in a way. You are of course different for many reasons, just by being someone else than you, makes him different than you, but you are part of the same human assemblage. Without going into an anarchist-idealistic approach, I think that considering the Other, being part of the same network could lead to less inequality, more tolerance and more mutual respect.

I do believe that human relationships can learn from the mycorrhizal network<sup>8</sup>, an underground network that connects plants together and allows a transfer of different nutrients like water, carbon, minerals to plants but also survival, growth and defense. The mycelium, branches of the fungi, is a kind of root that communicates with the plant and transfers what it needs. It also helps plants to communicate with each other. Plants and fungi collaborate in a mutualistic manner<sup>9</sup>, getting and receiving, becoming vital to one another. Every part of this network is benefiting from the other. If I perceive the person standing in front of me as someone part of my network I will behave and engage with him/her in a more fruitful way. Giving and receiving much more than exchanging suspicion and distance. This is actually the main reason living species cluster together and begin to settle down; to combine forces and prevent enemies.




With my experiences as well as supported by readings, I began to question the sociability of humans. People barely talk to each other, focusing on their individual lives, and being kind and interested to people who seem like them. Cities are segmented into rich and poor areas, Chinese or Moroccan neighborhoods, student hostels or elderly centers... I miss interconnection between different social units, between what I call community: a group of people sharing commonality and coming together in the world.

I am seeking for these moments of full care and generosity, of flourishing connection between people, moments of enchantment that pushes us toward the other in an informal and free way. I believe these interactions are particularly fruitful when they occur between people of different origins, economical and social level, and on the level of work and habits. Interaction for me happens when there is a transfer of knowledge, of skills, of practices between different humans. It requires commitment from two characters. The Oxford dictionary defines interaction as communication or direct involvement with someone or something.<sup>10</sup>




Joseph Beuys understood society as a social sculpture. This assemblage creates a community in which people are tied by personal relations and not by laws or any force. For him, everyone is a creator, every aspect of life could be approached creatively.


**What design strategies can I develop to foster social interaction with and between different communities? What tools and skills do I have in my hands to make visible this social link which inevitably exists between humans? And what kind of places are specifically designed to enhance encounters, relationships, interaction and enactment towards others, especially between different groups?**



I am aiming in the first chapter of this research to give my definition of a community and describe what binds people together, what is the social glue.



In the second chapter, I will mention two public spaces in the Netherlands, Malieveld in The Hague and T Karregat Centre located in Eindhoven, designed by the architect Frank Van Klinger. These two locations represent my case studies for two main reasons. They allow different actors to claim the places and thus adapt the place to the different activities that take place there. These places are open to everyone and allow deep interaction between their different users.



I will describe in the last chapter the on-going development of a series of practices and actions that I have set up to gain access to communities.

# **| WHAT IS THE GLUE?**



Humans are primate. As primates we are different from other species because of our ability to grab things with our hands, our various ways of moving around and our high level of interaction and cooperation with others. Cooperation is the skill of listening to the other in front of you, letting room for the other, trying to understand him/her and responding in an empathic way<sup>11</sup>. One important figure who helped me build theory this year is the sociologist Richard Sennett. Particularly, in his book *Together The rituals, pleasures and politics of cooperation*, Sennett proposes cooperation as a craft and listening as a skill to understand each other, a skill that we lost for him in our modern cities.<sup>12</sup>

There are a lot of reasons why as an urban dweller you are not engaging with people outside your community.

People you don't know are by definition strangers, they are not familiar to you. It is possible that you don't trust them, and feel fear probably because of the violence reported in the media or worse, the violence you may have experienced. There are more people living alone in big cities than ever before increasing naturally the chances of becoming isolated.<sup>13</sup>

As a city dweller you may be experiencing a lot of anxiety for many reasons- from the traffic jams to the constant excess of stimuli, through the work pressure -to name a few.

Therefore you do not let yourself to spontaneous actions, you rather use rational thoughts to act. It reduces the wish to discover something new, and reduces the wish to go to the other.

As the British writer Dougald Hine mentions, *"we live in a social ice age where we can not do an action without being paid in return. We measure everything and price everything."*<sup>14</sup>

Our sociability has been frozen up, it means we engage with others only if we are paid back in return or because a powerful state is asking for it. The society I live in, is ruining the giving culture and reduces the social glue that exist between humans.<sup>15</sup> However, streets should be a sociable place where people would feel safe.<sup>16</sup>

***" Give. Give again. Keep giving. Don't stop. Don't expect something in return, don't calculate. Don't calculate a return. Don't financialize. Don't compete. Don't worry if it's too much, or not enough. Give what you can. Maybe a bit more than you can. Keep giving. Give. Give again. Don't stop. This is to give generously. Thank you, thanks. To receive a gift, whatever it is, with grace, with thanks, without need, fear or debt or obligation. This is to receive with generosity."*<sup>17</sup>**

What is exactly this social glue I am talking about?

The glue is the bond between people, it is the interest that people have in common, the social connector. The glue is the main ingredient to create a community. The glue is what sticks people together. Which can be the activity one does after work, the food you share with friends, the help someone needs to reach something (food or a shelter)...

Anything that requires interaction between different individuals.

A community is a group of people glued together through the fact of sharing at least one specific characteristic, which enables these people to create social connection and interaction. The feeling of belonging to the same group creates a commitment towards the others, a way of acting together in which people work out the value of face-to-face relations.<sup>18</sup>

The community is a group of equal members who share a common experience. It is being part of the same network. I do not refer here to the digital network, I believe human relationships truly happened in a face-to-face physical gathering. I believe a community should remain open to newcomers but also to new rules. The organization of the community should remain organic and porous.<sup>19</sup>

What (kind of) space does a community need to nourish itself?

After reading *The Great Good Place*<sup>20</sup> written by Ray Oldenburg I discovered the notion of **Third Place**, a place which is not home (the first) nor work (the second) but a place communities need to have. It is a place where you relax in public, and you meet family or friends but also where you meet new acquaintances. These places are important for the well being of citizens, for maintaining civil life and social cohesion.

This is where people talk to each other, engage freely and make decisions for their life.

Ray Oldenburg describes cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons as examples of third place which represent the heart of a community. He names 6 principles to describe a third place:<sup>21</sup>

- Neutral ground: you don't need to be there but you choose to go
- Leveler: No importance of individual status (economic, cultural, age, gender....)
- Conversation is the main activity
- Accessibility: Open and accessible to everyone
- Maintaining: Group of people taking care of the place
- Low profile: The place should not be pretentious

-Playfulness: No tension or hostility but tolerance and humor should shape behaviors

-Home feeling: People should feel at home because they belong to the community

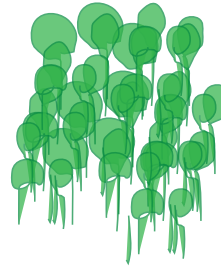
I am seeking for slow moments where interaction appears in an informal<sup>22</sup> way, where people gather, and enjoy a face to face encounter. I will describe now two places from my surroundings which I consider ethical, as Sennett understands it; equal, democratic and open for different groups to take over.



# **CASE STUDIES**

Malieveld is a large grass field in the heart of The Hague. It belonged to the Haagse Bos until the 17th century, after which it was razed to the ground so that the wood could be used as protection against Spaniards.<sup>24</sup> After the war, the field was used by the aristocrats to play the game Malie, a game similar to cricket. Nowadays, Malieveld is used for kermis, protests, festivals, concerts, markets. When no events are held on Malieveld, the field is empty, leaving the possibility for anyone to use the space for running, playing, picnicking and so on.

I was quite surprised when I discovered Malieveld. The Netherlands is a small and densely populated country where everything is being precisely designed in an efficient way, everything is being cared of.<sup>25</sup> Even the sea is itself used to build artificial islands, as well as former lake drained to create polders.<sup>26</sup>



Haagse bos



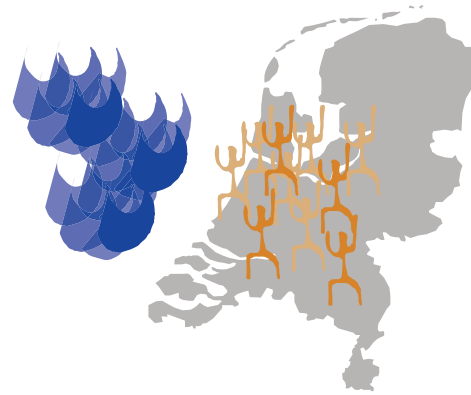
Malieveld  
Created in 1594  
Superficie 550x200m



The land, being under the sea level, is protected from flood by a pumping system, canals and sand dunes. There are not many ruins in The Netherlands except Teylingen Castle in Sassenheim or the never-finished Kasteel Almere started in 2000. The Netherlands is in the top two of exporters of food, producing a lot in the huge greenhouses, especially tomatoes and potatoes. And the old saying goes *"God created the world but Dutch made The Netherlands."*



Water became land



Too many people on the land + floods

Therefore the fact that a huge piece of land (5,2 hectares which can accommodate 75 000 people)<sup>27</sup> remains empty in the middle of the third biggest city seemed to me curious. While not being the economic capital The Hague is the political one. This is where you find the great institutions, like the States General, the Executive Branch and the Supreme Court, as well as ministries and royal palaces. The important national decisions are taken there. If the Dutch want to protest they do so in The Hague for its political status, and they do it on Malieveld.

Protesters  
against the  
same cause



Consequently, when a protest is planned, a lot of people from all over the country are joining Malieveld. This is the only place in The Hague where it is allowed to protest. When citizens are coming for protest, they share the same cause and fight for it together. When a concert, festival or kermis are being held people with the same interest, habits join together to celebrate it.

Temporary events outside  
daily life where different  
communities gather





I discovered Malieveld with the fair.<sup>28</sup>  
 A curious moment in a city. A kind of door open to another world. A world where partying, entertainment, and surpassing oneself are the key words. A kind of **heterotopia**, the other space of the philosopher Michel Foucault. The space that functions differently from the ordinary, with its own set of rules and functions apart from it.<sup>29</sup> It is neither a utopia nor a dystopia since these are projections of what our world could be, heterotopia truly exists in our world. I felt the kermis as separate from the ordinary. The fair is an interruption of the rhythm of everyday life. A kind of place for rituals, with gates you need to pass, but everyone is welcome, you can choose to go there or not, to participate in a game or just visit, you are free to move how you wish to.



The fair has its own aesthetics, very bright and deep colors, representations of landscapes that in the imagination evoke distant places or even evoke holidays: coconut palms, desert, camels, bikinis... The fair is also a very noisy place, there is different music at almost every stand which produces a rather extraordinary cacophony. The brave people on the attractions shout with pleasure or fear, being shaken from all sides. The fair-ground people shout into the microphone to announce winners or simply entertain people on the attractions.

Malieveld functions as a ritual<sup>30</sup>, a symbolic place that interrupts the course of the usual rhythm of the city because it holds extraordinary events for a certain period of time. Cities are planned, and behavior as well. Most of the modern European cities are organized according to the CIAM movement-architecture ideas set up in the 30s to make cities more efficient, functional and rigid<sup>31</sup>, around housing, recreation, working and transportation.



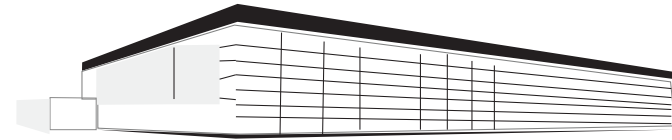
Cities should be structured, organized to not leave room for improvisation nor chaos. Malieveld represents a temporal scene for anti-structured behavior. A place where a bit of chaos is accepted, where life is being celebrated. Where every citizen can be who he wants for a period of time.<sup>32</sup>

It is also a place where people come in community to bond and entertain themselves. Be it for visitors who want to get together to enjoy themselves or for the fairground people working on site who share the same rhythm of life. Indeed, fairground people live closely together, they know each other from stand to stand, living the same nomadic life, going from city to city during the season of fairs and meeting in each fairs.

Malieveld is an empty square letting people use the space as they wish to. It is particular because of its size. Can I find a specifically designed space which offers people the possibility to choose which activity is happening and welcome everyone who wishes to come for a true interaction? An inside space in the Netherlands which uses the same codes as Malieveld but as a designed building?

Frank Van Klingereren was a Dutch architect (1919-1999) who considered himself as a social engineer. He considered his society too compartmented which created isolated people. It is a mistake for him that we create separate schools, separate universities, separate shopping malls, separate theatres.<sup>33</sup> We need more multifunctional space where people actually live together. His goal was to push people to meet each other. For him people were clotting too much in groups and spaces which led to not enough interest in others and little social cohesion. Older people sit all day long in their old people's homes, young people stay with each other in their student building, not to mention the categorizations according to social classes. Van Klingereren perceived his buildings as tools for encounters and social integration.<sup>34</sup>

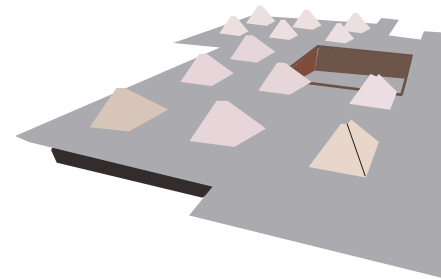
In the 1970's when the main Van Klingereren's buildings were created, it was a time needed for another kind of development. Bored by the monotonous architecture from the post-war reconstruction, Frank Van Klingereren was wishing for a more open society.<sup>35</sup>



DE MEERPAAL

With his building T'Karregat, situated in the East side of Eindhoven, Van Klingereren imagined a kind of a Dutch Mediterranean village. He was inspired by Mediterranean villages and squares where people gather in the open air, chat for an entire afternoon, and play chess. Where young and old people meet each other. He wanted the same for The Netherlands. Because of the rainy climate, he needed to adjust his concept. He could not provide an open square, instead he created an almost empty building with a roof and glass windows to protect the users from the climate. His buildings were a kind of a community center, where theater play, tennis games, cinema and so on could be held at the same moment. It was a collective space for communal activity and collaborative interaction. He didn't provide too much architecture.

For him the emptiness of the space would let people the possibility to adapt the space as they wish to. He provided possibilities. There are merely any walls inside the building, some boxes to allow exhibition space, otherwise spaces are not defined with a specific function. Two big notions are present in his building, the nuisance and the unclotting.<sup>36</sup>



T KARREGAT

Nuisance; the noise created by the fact that every activity could be held at the same moment. People are so close to each other that they need to talk, it can be in friendship or hostility but either way it needs to result into a compromise, forcing people to find an agreement. The space and the users would need to adapt according to the use, therefore it creates an interaction with the social and the built environment.

Un-clotting is the second big notion of Van Klingereren. By proposing a place where everything and everyone could come and organize something, people from different horizons, age, religion would be welcome. People would engage with each other. The center works as the living room of the neighborhood for everyone. The place was needed, it worked for a couple of years and 300 volunteers were taking care of the building.<sup>37</sup>

Although, T'Karregat was renovated in the 80s to reduce the nuisance. Walls were built to create isolated places, leaving no more space for unplanned encounters. The true essence of the building is now a distant memory. The building was a multifunctional place with great social ideas. After the 70s the society changed, leaving hippies and socio-political ideas behind for a more individualist society.

***Working together and living together require skills such as being able to listen, showing an interest and, especially, developing empathy: 'Looking outward makes for a better social bond than imagining others are reflected in ourselves, or as though society itself was constructed as a room of mirrors. But looking outward is a skill people have to learn.'*<sup>38</sup>**

***Be conscious of the islands and archipelagos, the continents and their drifts, look outward, be curious, try to listen carefully and really see the other in front of you. Do this in the knowledge that every morning we are all united in a mass choreography of immense value.***<sup>39</sup>

For both Malieveld and T'Karregat the lack or the partly fixed element provides potentially and possibility for interaction to happen between different actors. It gives room for everyone to actively take part in civil life.

**||| NEW SET  
OF PRACTICE:  
HOW TO GET  
ACCESS  
TO AN  
EXISTING  
COMMUNITY?**

A goal of this study is to enter communities I am not part of. I have first researched different kinds of communities as I understand them, a group of people glued together through the fact of sharing at least one specific(s) characteristic(s), which enables these people to create social connection and interaction. The first part of this process was to identify different kinds of communities to later select a few interesting for a further observation.

The identified communities are the following:

Community of access and movement: by the path you choose to follow you are part of a community. Which path do you take to go home? Some people use only grass to reach a location, some others choose only pavement. The movement you choose tells a lot. On your feet, on one foot and one hand. Jumping or dancing.

Community of habit: what is your routine? Which attribute do you have? What are your interests? For example- having a dog, dancing salsa, adding jam on your peanut butter toast...

Community of culture: it is your identity. What you choose to nourish yourself with. What food, but also what music, what theater play you are choosing to see...

Community of making: what do you do? What do you make - what action do you do? It can be work related or a state of mind. What materials do you use?

Community of maintenance: state of mind, behavior, how you take care of something or someone. For example, street cleaners, urban greeners, scarf collectors in bars at the feet of those who have dropped them... This segmentation helped me to outline which experimentations I wished to carry out in my surroundings.



First experiment

Type: Community of access

Name: Walkers on roof

Goal: Accessing other's roof

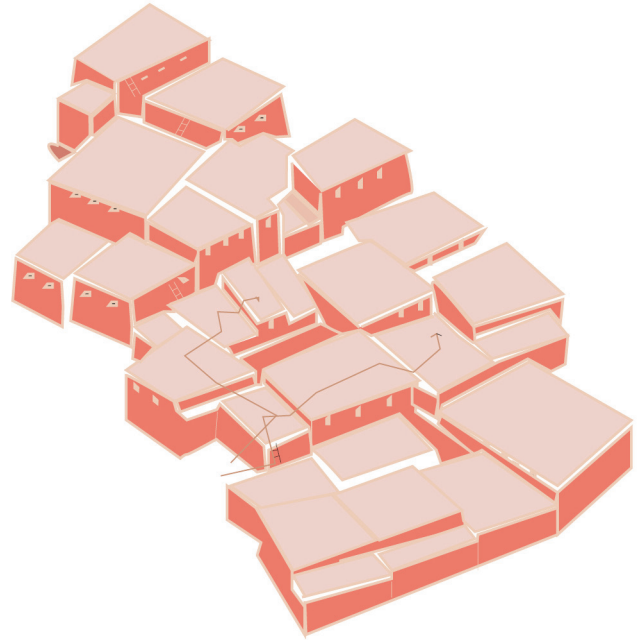
Situation: entering our house from the main door is the norm



A lot of people have already experienced walking on a roof whether it is for a dinner with friends on a sunny Dutch summer or a romantic drink with your beloved. I know a couple who give seeds to birds everyday at the same time on their roof. There are also people working on roofs, fixing some components.

I was inspired by an ancient village called Catal Hoyuk. It is considered as the first settlement, in actual Turkey. Inhabitants had to enter their houses through the roof because they had no streets. They would need to use a ladder to go up and walk on other people's roofs to access their house. Ovens were located on roofs and shared by several houses. Roofs were used for transportation and as gathering places between neighbors.

I decided to access my friend's roof to see how it feels to perceive the city from top. Not being Santa Claus and not having a helicopter, I could not access their house from the roof. I entered their house through the main door and went on their roof. I was imagining the consequences in urban organizations of using roofs as new streets. What would happen in the streets? Would they be used for different purposes? Would urban planners and architects design them for more encounters, more gathering places? And how to avoid that roofs become an alter-ego of our actual streets; functional space for transportation, advertising, money making...



Type: Community of habits :

Name: The dog walkers

Goal: Trying to enter a dog community

Situation: I don't have a dog. So I don't belong to the dog walkers community.

How can I interact with the owners? They would not even look at me if I don't have a dog. I am invisible. People with a dog interact with each other because their dogs first bump into each other. Dogs sniff each other's bottom, whether they know each other or not. It is their way of recognizing each other and saying hello. So the dogs interact, see each other from afar and run towards each other because they recognize one of their own.

The owners find themselves in a special situation. They have to keep an eye on their dogs, make sure that the meeting with the other dog goes well. Dog owners approach each other. And find themselves close to each other. This pushes them to interact most of the time. The conversation starts with talking about the dog and often continues about something else. The dog is therefore a social connector, a social glue.

The simple fact of having a dog creates this community. A community of habit around the same attribute: a dog. They walk their dogs in the same parks because The Hague does not have many other parks where you can walk your dog without a leash. So the dog walkers find themselves going to the same park everyday, often at the same moment of the day because of other obligations they have (work, child, groceries, activities...). It is therefore common that dog owners know each other. And see each other only when they walk their dogs.

How can I be part of this community? This community to which I do not belong but I see everyday in the streets of the Hague, especially in the park at the end of my street. With this experience I want to reach strangers in the street. People with whom I have a priori nothing to share.

I could make a tool to attract the dog, with the aim of reaching the owner. I tried. It didn't feel right. Why would I play with the dogs when they are already playing with their owners? It seemed forced.

I could rent a dog for a week. There are applications on phones facilitating dog-sitting. But I needed to lie saying "I love dogs, I had one when I was four but now I am a student living in a small flat. I can not have a dog. I would be glad to walk your dog twice a week...". I am sure it would allow me to meet people, dog owners or dog lovers. But I think the conversation would have turned only about the dog. I will also soon be limited in the story I have with the borrowed dog.

I could make my own fake dog. With the fake dog, a conversation would start and won't be only about the dog because of this limbo state of being a dog but a recognizable fake one.



So I decided to do so. To create my own fake dog. See when I enter the community. I did a 4-day experience where I created my dog at home, in a kind of in-home workshop. I walked the freshly created dog to the park at the end of my street. I used the same path everyday to do so. Putting my blue jacket on and my black cap. With this uniform I am in a making-mood. All the tools I will use for this experience will only come from my house. I started the first day by dismantling a rolling table, then I added a string in the two holes on the left side. I then placed different objects on the board to see which object would be the most qualified not to look like a dog but simply to evoke the dog. I chose a brick. Perfect for the first experience. I went out. Forgetting I was still wearing my work blue jacket. Walking on the right side of my street, then crossing the street.



I could see that people were looking at me with curious eyes. Some dared to talk to me, asking what I was doing, some were just surprised, intrigued and kept their thoughts just for the moment they passed by me. Some were so intrigued that they came to me. And asked me what I was doing, if it was my dog, the name of my dog, if they could touch it.

This is the kind of moment I like. To provoke a reaction in someone's mind. Just the fact that the passerby is asking what is happening is important. "Should I talk to her or not?" "Is she mad?" "Or not, she might just be an artist". This is some kind of thought I am sure people were having.<sup>40</sup>

While walking I realized I was still wearing the working-blue jacket. Oops. "Am I still working?". "Is it influencing the experience, not to be dressed in the usual way, with everyday clothes? When I just want to be perceived as a woman doing an ordinary activity which is to walk my dog".

Probably yes. One lady I have met, who lent me her dog that day, directly asked me if I was an artist.

So I decided to reproduce the experience with my everyday clothes, with a black coat. I didn't have the same strong interaction I had just before. People didn't dare to talk to me. It was also later in the afternoon, getting dark.

I shall reproduce the action tomorrow, with another kind of dog. I did with a fur coat on the same board with wheels. I went with my ordinary coat, in the morning. I saw a lot of different people with a dog. Including a woman. I wanted to talk to her. I sat on a bench waiting for her and her dog. She started talking to me in Dutch, I answered in English, saying I was walking my dog.



Just before she would have touched him, I informed her it was not a real dog. I didn't want to freak her out. I told her, it was a fake dog for me to feel how it feels to have one. She understood and gave me her number if I wished to walk her dog from time to time. I was happy I could reach someone with my little fake dog.

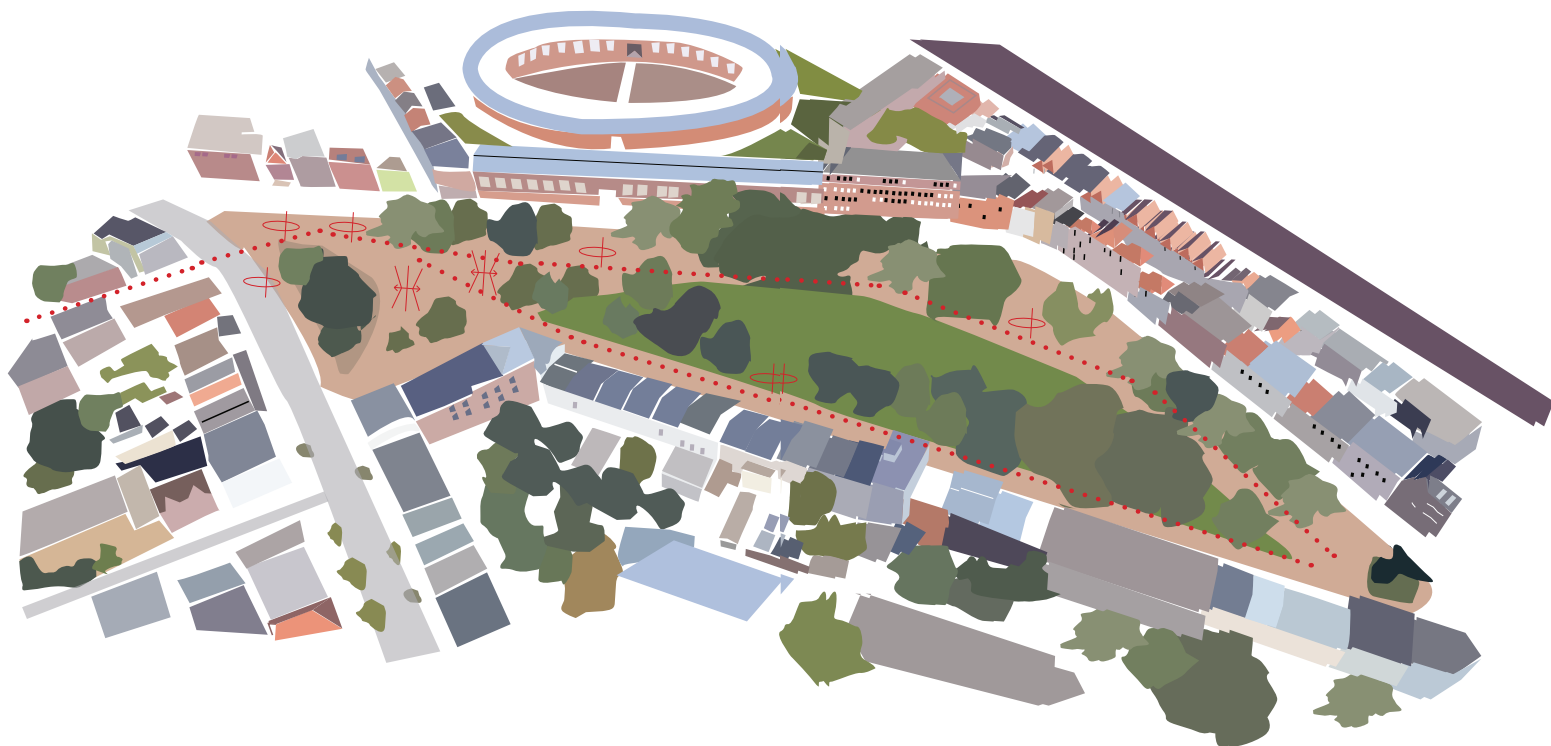
The next day I texted the woman with the dog, and she invited me to her place. We drank several cups of coffee and chatted a lot. After that, we walked each of her dogs to the same park I had been to everyday since Sunday.

- "- He looks old, doesn't it?***  
***- Yes he is. But I am still walking with him, taking him out.***  
***- Yes of course, it is important for them. Can I touch him?***  
***- Yes go ahead please!"***

We met other people with dogs, talked with them and went back to her home to have another coffee. It was a really nice encounter.

Is the experiment finished? I had what I wanted, met someone with a dog, I also entered someone's house. I did one last walk with my dog, this time my dog had eyes and ears. I met Do, we talked about Aruba island and he walked together. My dog allowed me to talk with strangers.







Type: Community of maintenance

Name: Cleaning windows

Goal: Being part of the street maintenance community

The situation: By cleaning their windows, I am trying to reach stranger, I am also here to give them a caring action



I went out with my yellow flashy jacket, freshly found in a second hand shop. This is the kind of jacket that street workers or construction workers wear to be easily seen from far. By their uniform, those people are part of a community. By wearing that jacket I am one of them. I want to clean something. Cleaning is a caring action, you give of your time, energy, even love. Windows are an element from the street that can be easily cleaned. It is in the border between private and public space, being on the edge of the pavement and not yet inside of people's homes.

So I went out with my jacket, and my tools: a mop brush, a newspaper and a soap bottle. I rang people's doors to propose to clean their windows. One guy told me he already has a company taking care of his windows. I moved on. When people didn't open the door, I just cleaned their windows, thinking that they would be happy to find their window clean and free of pigeon tracks. I also met one man who was cleaning windows too.

I understood that there was a contract made between buildings and cleaning companies depending on streets. The man didn't seem to doubt my affiliation to a cleaning company. I started thinking that wearing the yellow jacket made me part of the cleaning crew. It was my goal. But I also wanted to interact more with people. The fact of being so closely looking the same as a street worker didn't raise any question. Should I wear something else, to start raising questions about me doing that?



Type: Community of culture

Name: Giving a cookie

The goal: Being part of the giver community

The situation: Giving for free to a stranger is suspicious

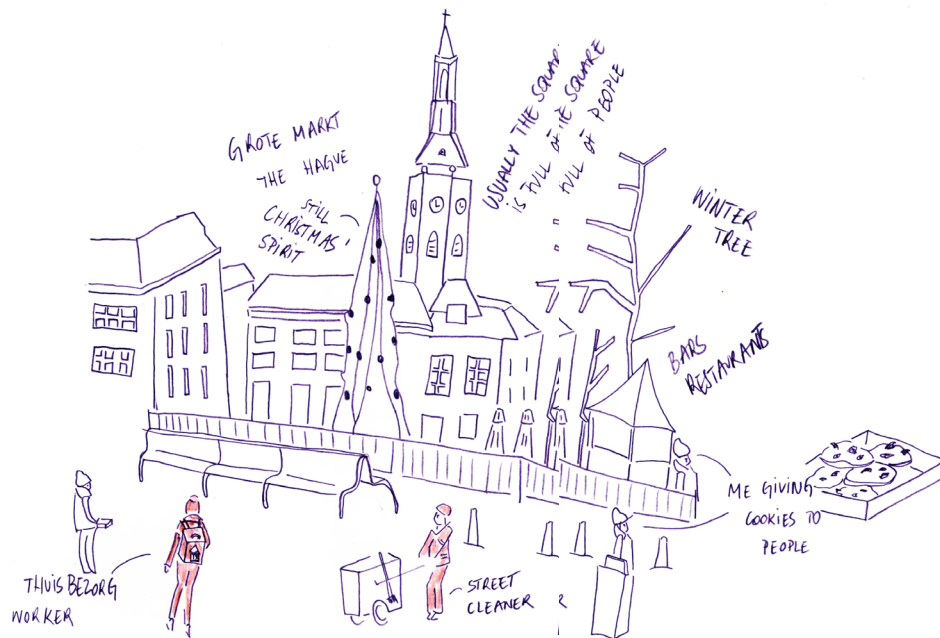
A woman in Amsterdam inspired me for this action. I was sitting on a bench when I heard a woman offering macaron to people around her. No one accepted her macaron. They were either already eating or suspicious about someone offering something for free without any counterpart. We started talking about life, mostly her life. She was just coming out of a period of depression which made her look through black glasses. Finally going out from that period she just wanted to spread love around her. Telling people how much beauty they had inside, caring about people she would meet in the street. She even asked the police to take care of the city of Amsterdam for all the beautiful people in the street. At the end of our talk she gave me a teddy rabbit. I only had a key ring to offer her. I will not forget this encounter. Free gift and spontaneous love from a total stranger.

I decided to try to give something to people I meet. I dressed as I would dress everyday, and displayed a camera on my chest to record the experience. I went to Grote Markt, a central square in The Hague and started offering cookies to passersby. Almost all the people I proposed refused my offer. Being I believe suspicious about me, a stranger, offering something to them. Eating something from a stranger requires a lot of trust, you accept to ingest something in your body, in a way you are risking your life. I understand the fear, especially in times of a pandemic.

Only two men accepted my cookie, a man working as a street cleaner walking slowly toward my direction and one man from the delivery company Thuisbezorgd resting on a bench during a break. They were both working. Did they feel my cookie as a reward from their work?

And the other people didn't think they deserved it? Can't we accept a gift for free, from someone we don't know.

Do they need to wear orange clothes to accept cookies? I believe this is an option. I was myself wearing orange clothes when I cooked those cookies. We had a kind of a connection through that color.



DOES IT FEEL STRANGE  
IF YOU ACCEPT A COOKIE IF  
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING?  
LIKE IF YOU DON'T  
DESERVE IT?

ONLY PEOPLE (WORKERS) WEARING  
ORANGE ACCEPTED MY COOKIES.  
IS IT A REWARD?

THE OTHER ONES  
SEEMED EITHER SUSPICIOUS  
OR IN A RUSH.

NO! THANK YOU

THIS HAPPENED  
ALSO JUST AFTER  
CHRISTMAS - PROBABLY  
PEOPLE ATE TOO MUCH  
ALREADY

Type Community of making

Name: Kabk

Goal: Enhancing, making visible the creative community inside school

The situation: A community already exist, I am part of it, I want to make it visible again

During the first part of the academic year I followed an IST (Individual Study Track) about Researching on Assemblage. Assemblage is a form of art which combines different elements together.

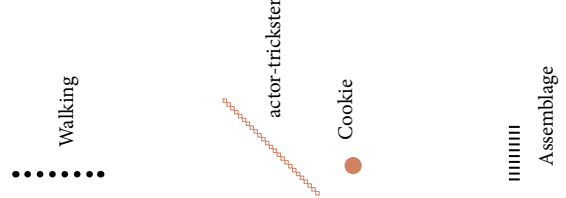
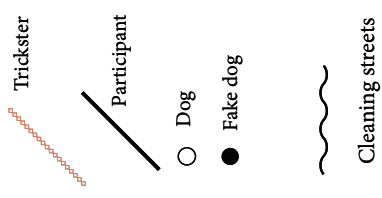
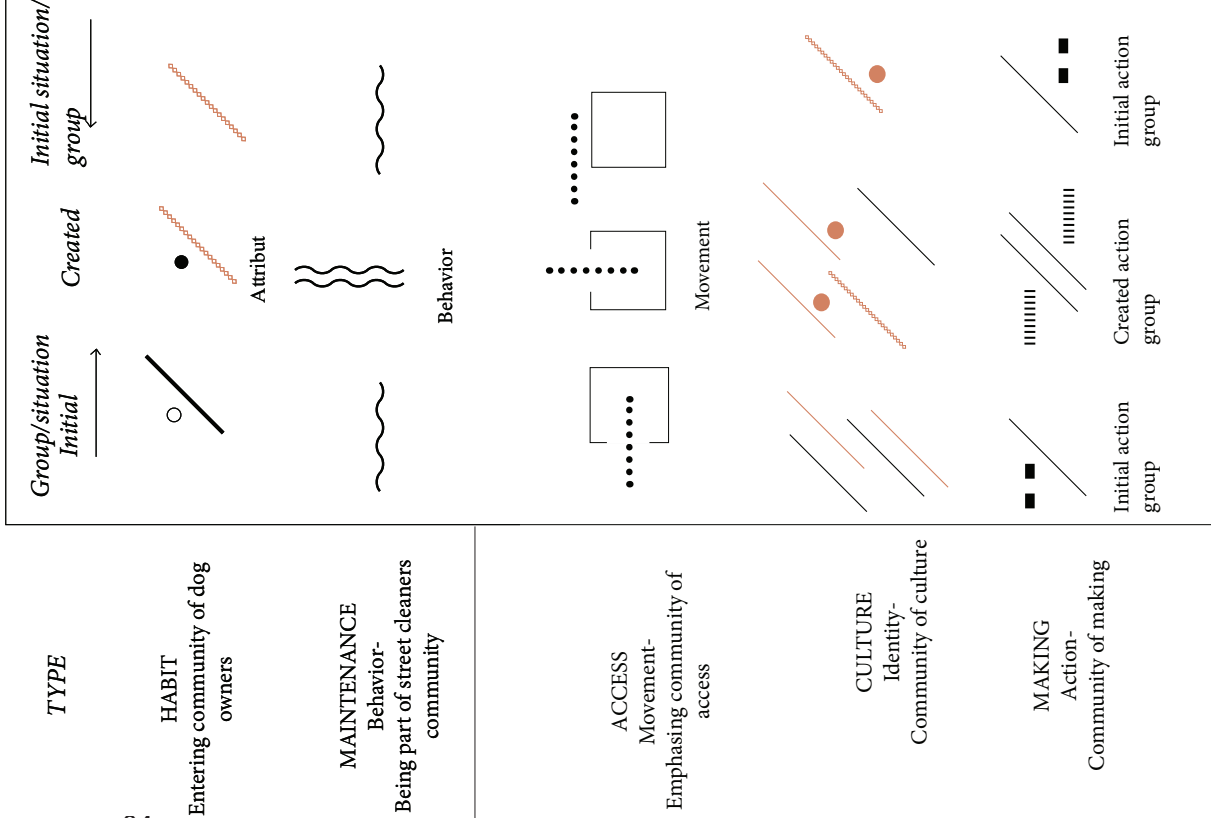
For that course I made a project about exchanging objects and messages with strangers. I asked a group of people (first years of my department) to come with objects and make an assemblage with them. I told them when their assemblage was done that I will offer this assemblage to someone they don't know. I asked them to write a message to communicate the gift.



The second part of this project was to ask another group (students from the IST class) to create an assemblage with objects. Same as before, I asked them to write a message for the receiver of the gift. The third part of this project was to give each participant an assemblage gift. I photographed each person with his assemblage and another picture with the gifted one to keep a trace of this transfer. I didn't want to be the one choosing which assemblage should go to which participant. Therefore I asked each participant, in two different sessions (one session for the group INSIDE and another session for the group IST) to pick a paper with key words which refers to an assemblage.

This exchange was a way for me to materialize the link that exists between different people in a community. It showed me the importance of communication and emphasized the social importance of meeting and exchanging in a pleasure setting. Of course the encounters were for a brief temporary moment, even invisible if you consider that each participant did not meet each other physically but the poetic aspect of it was what mattered for this experiment.







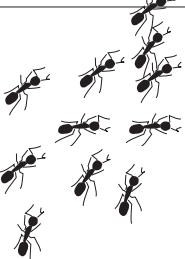


**BEFORE  
IT IS TOO  
LATE  
APERTURE**

***Aristotle was declaring in his book *Politics*, that a city is composed of different kinds of men, similar men can not create a city. A city needs diversity. In time of war, refugees arrived in Athens and brought new ways of thinking, new craft to the city, that enriched Athens.***<sup>41</sup>

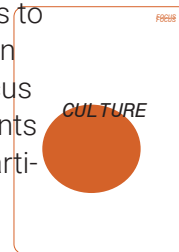
With my experiments, I travelled to different communities. I opened my world, to discover new ones. I infiltrated myself into different groups, developed tools to reach them and changed my usual behavior to reach strangers. Because I believe this research is not only relevant to me, I wish now to open these experiments to everyone who wishes to consider the Other as part of his/her network. I am not speaking only to designers or artists per say, but to every human being who wishes to flourish from the rhizomatic community. Everyone who wishes to use a creative way to reach Others. And if you read my manifesto you understand that I believe everyone one has an artistic side with beauty to share. We all need to interact, to understand each other in order to live together in the world.

I hope this research can be used as a manual to reach as yet unknown people. In this kit you are holding you can find a set of tools to understand what a community is, how to identify them **(I)** in what kind of places they like to gather **(II)** and how to reach them. **(III)**. In the last part of this research, the set of actions can be easily reproduced, copied, and improved by anyone.

During my research I have been collecting different communities and gathering places that I organized as postcards. This archive can be completed by anyone since it is a never ending process.

	Date		
	Name		Ants colony
	Surface		
	Location		
	Status		LWGP
	<div>  </div>	<div> <p>Characteristics</p> <p>Complex organisation of workers and drones around the queen. Ants are social animals. They live around an organised community under the power of the queen.</p> </div>	
Age average			

Finally you can find cards that will help you to engage with Others. You will find all the ingredients to interact with different groups of people. There is a set of tools to help you carry out these actions and a set of focus to approach different communities. You can combine different tools with different focus together. The purpose of these experiments is free depending on the actor and the participants.



I hope you can develop a playful attitude towards the Other after reading this new human codex.



**Take care and stay open,  
this is what matters.**

1. David Frayne, *Refusal of work* p4
2. Rhizome, first a botanical term that has been transformed into a philosophical concept by Deleuze and Guattari
3. G. Deleuze and Felix Guattari *A thousand plateaus*, Bloomsbury revelations p5
4. *Ibid* p. 13
5. *Ibid* p5
6. *Ibid* p7
7. Using Lacanian vision of « Other as other subjects whom the individual encounters in social life »
8. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mycorrhizal\\_network](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mycorrhizal_network)
9. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutualism\\_\(biology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutualism_(biology))
10. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/interaction>
11. Richard Sennett *Together The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* p233
12. Richard Sennett *Together The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*
13. Eric Klinenberg, *Palaces For The People*, How social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life, p31
14. Francien van Westrenen, Maaïke Lauwaert, *Facing Value: Radical Perspectives from the Arts*, p179
15. Francien van Westrenen, Maaïke Lauwaert, *Facing Value: Radical Perspectives from the Arts*, p185 Reference to the notion of Gift that the philosopher Marcel Mauss developed
16. Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling, Ethics for the City* p23
17. Neil Cummings *Generosity* Neil Cummings, 'Generosity', in *Truth is concrete: A Handbook for artistic strategies in Real politics*, ed. Florian Malzacher (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014)
18. Richard Sennett, *Together The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* p265
19. *Permeable*, which allows exchange, influence
20. Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place* Da Capo Press, 1989
21. *Ibid* Chapter 2
22. *Informality* allows serendipity which is a fruitful accident. You find something else that you didn't expect and it procures rich discoveries
23. *Ibid*. p17
24. <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malieveld>

25. <https://work-body-leisure.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/publication/work-body-leisure-marina-otero-verzier>
26. I am talking here about Flevoland, the island built in 1986 on the sea which created the 12th province of the Netherlands
27. <https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/zakendoen/evenementen/locaties/malieveld>
28. Dutch word for fair, Kermis: Church-mass)
29. *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* From: *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* October, 1984; ("Des Espace Autres," March 1967 Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec)
30. Arnold Reijndorp *No slaughterhouse without a fair : the anti-structure of a Dutch city* p144
31. <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/heritage/ciam-congres-internationaux-darchitecture-moderne>
32. Referring here to the concept developed by Victor Turner of the unstructured *Communitas* which is a group of people formed because of a rite of passage, a share common experience. The special event abolishes the social differences to create a equal group of people. Turner, Edith. 2012. *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
33. F. van Klinger quoted in 'Vernieuwende Nederlandse architectuur', *Wonen*, 1, 1970, p. 10.
34. *Facing Value: Radical Perspectives from the Arts* (Francien van Westrenen, Maaïke Lauwaert, 2016) p143
35. Oase 57-62 *Marina van den Bergen & Piet Vollaard The Biggest Living Room in the Netherlands*. Pdf
36. Oase 57-62 *Marina van den Bergen & Piet Vollaard The Biggest Living Room in the Netherlands*. Pdf
37. *Ibid*
38. Richard Sennett, *Together The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* p278
39. *Facing Value : Radical Perspectives from the Arts* (Francien van Westrenen, Maaïke Lauwaert, 2016) p413
40. Talking with a friend from Brussel, that is what she told me. « I would never have talk to you. No I would not have ask you what you were doing. I would immediately thought you were an artist. Especially if you were wearing a blue jacket. »
41. Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling, Ethics for the City* p7

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