ecologicART
PORTFOLIO
workshop CApE 2023
#CAPE
On the 27th of April 2023, the workshop Ecologic Art took place at the University of Copenhagen, thanks to the close-knit collaboration with the Center for Applied Ecological Thinking, or CaPE. Two special guests and a group of artists worked together to explore the relationship between the environment, the arts and spiritualities.
Center for Applied Ecological thinking

or CApE

Center for Applied Ecological Thinking (CApE) is a research and knowledge center. The center was established in 2021 and is a part of the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.
CApE’s aim is to draw on the humanities’ great reservoirs of knowledge of ethics, imagination, and cultural values to respond to the imminent crisis, to reconceptualise current ecological thinking, and to engage with stakeholders in the pursuit of new, applied routes towards sustainable transition. Many of the insights that characterise Scandinavian models of sustainability governance demonstrate that better ways of life on this planet are possible.
EcologicArt: a context

The concept of nature has affected the arts and many religions. This workshop aimed to explore the connection between artistic practices and spiritual beliefs related to nature; these last are, for example, eco-spirituality and religious naturalism.

At the end of the 19th century, new spiritual and religious movements emerged despite secularization, and the arts came under their influence. Some of these movements integrated nature into their viewpoint. Moreover, the last century witnessed the rise of land art and artists’ interest in ecological issues. Is the contemporary artistic practice infused with a secular spiritual approach to nature and life?
How is the experience of ecological concerns processed in art and literature?
Connecting Immaterialities

Behind the tangible aspect of the environmental crisis, our present confronts us with more invisible factors. This workshop explored the connection between two immaterial cultural elements that nevertheless may impact the material world: aesthetics and spirituality.

Reflecting on this connection may unveil specific worldviews linked to ecological artistic practices, which may better support the communication of unexpressed anxieties and mobilise action.
THREE ASPECTS

SPIRITUALITIES

ECOLOGICAL THINKING

ART
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:

- ALEXANDRA MOLTKE JOHANSEN
- ELIN SUNDSTRÖM
- LEA PORSAGER
- NANNA DEBOIS BUHL
- SHËKUFE HEIBERG
- URSULA ANDKJÆR OLSEN
MICKEY GJERRIS

Mickey Gjerris (1969), M.Th., PhD, associate professor in bioethics at the Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen. Since 2004 researching different aspects of the ethical relationship between humans and nature, focusing on areas such as animals, agriculture, biotechnology, climate change and biodiversity. He has published +50 peer reviewed papers and +10 books. From 2010-2016 he was member of the Danish Ethical Council, an advisory body to the Danish Parliament, he has given several keynote lecturers at international conferences and is an often-used speaker at public events and often-used expert in Danish media.
BIRGITTE KIRKHOFF

Birgitte Kirkhoff established Being in Practice in 2021. In courses, retreats, and as mentor, she connects the dots between art, ecology, and spirituality towards conscious being and practice. Currently, she works on a book about Spiritual Ecology, told through 12 different people’s practices. Birgitte is an Art Historian and has worked as a gallerist, a curator, and a director. In 2012-14, she curated an exhibition series within the realm of New Materialism, called Materiality 1-3 (on things and memory, soil and time, and on consciousness). Being in Practice has its roots in this work. Her final position was Director at Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde, 2014-2021. As part of the Great Resignation, she wanted to dedicate her life to matters closer to the heart and quit. Birgitte is a fan of Spiritual Ecology that covers all her interests and continues to expand its inclusion of voices and subjects. www.beinginpractice.dk
REFLECTIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP
NOTES FROM DISCUSSIONS

/ USE THE POWER YOU HAVE FOR BENEFIT OF THE OTHER. BUT WHICH IS THE BENEFIT OF THE OTHER?

14

/ WE SHAPE THE LIFE-WORLD OF EACH OTHER.
Why is it important?
LECTURE 1

WHO HAS TIME FOR POETRY WHEN THE WATER RISES?

MICKEY GJERRIS
SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS SHOULD BE SOLVED WITH SCIENCE. WHAT ABOUT ETHICAL PROBLEMS? LIKE EXTINCTION.

ETHICSHASSOMETHING TO DO WITH YOU. YES, YOU. BECAUSE WHAT YOU DO MATTERS. PROBABLY IT WILL NOT CHANGE THE SYSTEM BUT DEFINES WHO YOU ARE.

STICKING WITH ONE’S OWN VALUES CAN CREATE CONFLICT BETWEEN PEOPLE. BEYOND “ME BEING RIGHT AND YOU BEING WRONG” THERE IS “WE HAVE A PROBLEM”, AND WE CAN ADDRESS IT OR NOT.
THE INDIVIDUAL IS NEVER INVOLVED WITH THE OTHER WITHOUT HAVING IN HER HAND SOME OF THE OTHER PERSON’S LIFE... WE ARE EACH OTHER’S WORLD AND DESTINY... WITH OUR BARE ATTITUDE TOWARD EACH OTHER WE SHAPE THE LIFE-WORLD OF EACH OTHER... THIS PHENOMENA IS HIGHLY DISTURBING.
K.E. LØGSTRUP: THE ETHICAL DEMAND (1956)
CONSIDERING THE AMAZING STORY OF HOW OUR GALAXY CAME TO LIFE, THE CREATION OF MILLIONS STARS, THE GENETIC EXCHANGE THROUGH EVOLUTION...

TODAY YOU ARE HERE.

BEING ON THIS PLANET IS THE "SPECIAL TIME", LIKE A COFFEE BREAK IN A NORMAL DAY. NOT BEING HERE IS THE "NORMAL". SO, ARE YOU HERE TO DO WHAT?
"WE HAVE A PLANET AND WE MANAGE IT. ALL WILL BE FINE."
IT’S NOT THAT SIMPLE.

… WHERE TO GO NOW?
LECTURE 2

SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY

BIRGITTE KIRKHOFF

CREATE AND WITNESS
WHY ART?

I. ART CAN RAISE AWARENESS AND AFFECT OTHERS. THIS IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO.

III. ART CAN SHOW NON-ARTISTS HOW MUCH AGENCY EACH PEOPLE HAS. YOU HAVE CHOICE IN HOW TO REACT TO A SITUATION. ARTISTS DON'T DO THEIR JOB AND KEEP DOWN THE HEAD.

   SPEAK UP YOUR TRUTH AND STAND UP.

III. THROUGH ART, WE LEARN NEW WAY OF DOING, WE LEARN TO BE MORE, WE LEARN TO UNLEARN WHAT IS NOT USEFUL ANYMORE.

IV. ART MIRRORS THE COMPLEXITY OF THE WORLD.

V. ART TELLS STORIES OF PLACES AND COMMUNITIES. WE TELL STORIES TO FEEL PART OF A COMMUNITY INVOLVING THE NON-HUMAN.

   WE ARE HERE TOGETHER.
THE KEYWORD OF THE WORKSHOP:
CONNECTIONS

/ ONE SPECIES (HUMAN) DECIDE THE FUTURE OF OTHER SPECIES

25

/ HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND HOW TO BE HUMAN AND WHAT NATURE IS?
SPIRITUALITY IS HONOURING LIFE WITH A SET OF PRACTICES:

I.
LISTENING DEEPLY TO PERCEIVE WE ARE ALL CONNECTED.

II.
OBSERVING WITH LOVING EYES.

III.
NO HUMAN EXCEPTIONALISM.
DURING THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY, ARTISTS HAVE USE THEIR WORK TO CONNECT THEIR IDEAS OF SPIRITUALITY AND ECOLOGICAL THINKING.
LIVE SUSTAINABLY

THE EARTH IS WORTH IT

Be custodians, not consumers
ARTISTIC ACTIVITY BY NANNA DEBOIS BUHL
pieces of you
in my
heads
ARTISTIC ACTIVITY BY SHÊKUFE HEIBERG

ARTISTIC ACTIVITY BY URSULA ANDKJÆR OLSEN
ARTISTIC ACTIVITY BY ELIN SUNDSTRÖM
FINAL THOUGHTS:

FROM THE ARTISTS
WE WILL PROVE CAPITALISM WRONG AND DEMONSTRATE THE HUMAN AS KIND, LOVING, COMPASSIONATE

THE MARKET RAISED MY CHILD WHILE I MADE MONEY, WHAT ABOUT YOU?

THERE IS A PARTY AFTER THE PARTY

A PLACE HAS SO MUCH TO SAY, IN SO MANY VOICES, AND THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO HEAR THEM.

WE ARE A SPECIES AMONG SPECIES AND OUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB NOW IS TO STEP BACK AND HOLD SPACE FOR THE OTHERS

WHERE ARE THE MALE PARTICIPANTS? AREN'T THEY INTERESTED?
SUGGESTED READINGS:


DISCOVER MORE:

- Elin Sundström
  https://www.elinsundstrom.net
  IG: @elinsundstrom_
  - Mickey Gjerris
    www.mickeygjerris.com

PEOPLE:

Organizer - Samanta Viziale
Support organizer - Anne Sofie Lindberg Knudsen, Amalie Voss.
Photographer - Mads Bolding Fenger Poulsen
Chief of CApE - Stefan Gaarsmand Jacobsen