

## WORKING TOWARDS A LIVING FUTURE FOR ALL

An enquiry into freedom, love and responsibility through 'social sculpture and connective practice' and the capacities needed for working towards shaping a living eco-social future!

**A Social Sculpture-Connective Practice Pilot Program in Holland** - designed and led by Shelley Sacks and co-facilitated by Clarine Campagne

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**You are invited to participate** in a *Social Sculpture-Connective Practice* program in Holland 2019-2020. It is a 'creative enquiry' that understands the multiple crises all life forms are facing as 'an opportunity for consciousness', and explores the capacities we need, individually and together, to work towards shaping an eco-social future.

### WHAT IT OFFERS

As part of this experiential enquiry into the capacities we need, the program offers an in depth introduction to the field of *social sculpture-connective practice*, that nourishes existing initiatives or inspires you to develop new ones. It also enables a lived experience of the connection between inner and outer action; an exploration of life forces in the social field, and an understanding of 'the connected self' that is essential for new social forms of freedom, love and responsibility to develop and be strengthened.

*Social Sculpture and Connective Practice* is not simply 'art' with a social focus. So you don't need art skills of a traditional kind to participate. *Social Sculpture* is art in the widened sense that Joseph Beuys understood it: "Every Human Being is an Artist" working with "the invisible materials of speech, discussion and thought" as well as values, attitudes and habits of thinking, to shape a future based on the interconnectedness of all life forms.

### THE FORMAT AND TIMEFRAME

**The program consists of 4 parts, each 3-days in duration, and runs between November 2019 and May 2020. The specific dates are:** Nov 28-30, Feb 13-15, March 19-21, May 14-16.

**Part 1 lays the basis for Parts 2, 3 and 4, but can also be taken as a stand-alone introduction to the field of *social sculpture and connective practice*.**

**Parts 2, 3 and 4** enable participants to integrate the *social sculpture-connective practice* insights, principles and methodologies in their existing work and to develop new initiatives. These practical and concrete ways forward can be developed individually and in collaborative groups. The program will also offer two specific practices that can be used in varied situations beyond the program.

*After the program, an additional 1-day event, will share the fruits of this program with a wider group of people, extending the program to future participants, and the possibility that some of this first group contribute to an evolving Social Sculpture Academy 'faculty' in Holland.*

## THE TEAM

This pilot program is designed and led by Shelley Sacks, with co-facilitation from Clarine Campagne. Drawing in part on the social sculpture ideas of Joseph Beuys, Shelley has developed her 'connective thinking and practice' approach for over four decades in many fields of change and transformative work, as well as in the spheres of academic research and interdisciplinary arts. This program benefits from Shelley and Clarine's combined experience, working with large numbers of committed people, in many contexts.

## HOW THE PROGRAM CAME ABOUT

This pilot program in Holland is one of the first programs of the new *Social Sculpture Academy*, which has evolving hubs in Germany and India, as well as Holland. Other hubs are envisaged in Sao Paulo and Hong Kong.

One aim of the *Social Sculpture Academy* hubs is to make it possible for people to access the insights, approach and methods that formed the *Masters in Social Sculpture and Connective Practice* program in Oxford. Despite its 2-decades long success, it was only accessible to a very small number of people with time, university degrees and money. This new program in Holland follows the decision to close the *Masters* in Oxford and to make the core elements of this unique program available globally to as many committed explorers and change-makers as possible. This impulse has been actively encouraged and supported by Clarine.

## THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCULPTURE AND CONNECTIVE PRACTICE

The *social sculpture and connective practice* approach, methods and core practices in this program have grown out of my own long journey to understand, work with and communicate the social sculpture/social art ideas of Beuys and Steiner. The understandings gained have not simply been developed in an academic context. How could this be possible without doing it? Most of what has been taught in Oxford on the *Masters in Social Sculpture and Connective Practice* has been developed in situations outside the university, many of them very challenging. These situations have included villages, towns and cities in many countries, as well as work with groups of individuals, organizations and NGOs, exploring steps toward a 'sustainable future' and to shape or refine 'agendas for transformation'. This wide range of experience beyond Europe and the art-world, in academia and civil society, in urban and rural communities, provides a rich pool of practice-based knowledge for the *Social Sculpture Academy* hubs in different places to draw on. And although each hub introduces the field of social sculpture and connective practice, they all have an approach and focus that arises and develops from each specific context.

## SOME WELL KNOWN SOCIAL SCULPTURE - CONNECTIVE PRACTICES

*Earth Forum* is one of the widely known *connective practices* used by change-makers in many countries. First developed in 2002 to help deal with conflicting visions of a 'sustainable future' in a South African village, *Earth Forum* was then further developed for the 2011 *Climate Summit* in South Africa, in response to an invitation to find creative ways to engage communities, local organizations and decision-makers in reflections on the Climate Crisis, before, during and after the summit. Since then over 100 *Earth Forum* facilitators have been trained, and *Earth Forum* has successfully been used in many countries, including in China with 120 young change-makers, and most recently with peace workers, philosophers and eco-social activists in the complex Northeast region of India.

*Exchange Values: Images of Invisible Lives* is another social sculpture arena that has nourished the field of *social sculpture and connective practice*. Since it began in 1996, *Exchange Values* has travelled to 13 venues round the world and engaged thousands of people in its connective processes. In these 23-years, it has both fed into and been enriched by the social sculpture research done in the university context. In Holland's *Frans Hals Museum* in 2017-18, *Exchange Values* created an arena for individual and collective *imaginative work*: for reflecting together on our role as consumers in the global economy and exploring philosophical-spiritual questions like the link between freedom and responsibility through a social sculpture process. For 6 months in Holland, hundreds of people participated in the 'connective practices' at the *Exchange Values* round table. These included students, teachers, cultural workers, anthroposophic groups, NGOs and even CEOs and farmers from the global fruit producers and distributors network. Using methods like *active listening* and *imaginal work*, the work at the *Exchange Values* table and its interwoven themes – what lies behind the food we eat; the relationship of producers and consumers and the consumer as the 'contract-giver'; alternatives to monoculture farming; the future of work; and how we can work towards an eco-social future – was an opportunity to explore the needs and longings of each individual, and then to consider these needs in relation to the needs of others and of the planet. It was also an opportunity to *experience* how the inner field of values and attitudes is linked to the outer field of forms and actions, and to inspire insights into the relationship between freedom and responsibility.

In the past year many people in Holland have participated in the *Landing Strip for Souls* process, exploring 'personal renewal' or renewal within an organization or movement. This *practice* has also highlighted interesting similarities and differences between 'biography work' and the *Landing Strip* approach. It shows how finding and following ones questions through inner images of the world 'out there', helps to overcome blind spots when looking for ones questions. This process of encountering ones questions *in* the world opens up new perceptions and possibilities for connective action.

The enthusiasm generated in Holland by *Exchange Values*, *Earth Forum*, and the *Landing Strip for Souls*, has encouraged us to develop this more in depth exploration and 'training' opportunity in the field of *social sculpture and connective practice*.

## **MORE ABOUT THE NEW PILOT PROGRAM in Holland**

**Part 1** introduces the field of *social sculpture and connective practice* through its ideas and principles as well as through its practices and methods.

These include:

- core capacities like 'imaginal work in the inner atelier', 'active listening' and 'working with the invisible materials' to enable 'imaginal modes of thinking' and new forms of thinking together
- special methods for gathering ones own substance and letting ones soul speak, like '*Journaling for Transformation: 'Dialogue with Oneself, Dialogue with the World'*
- the *Connective Practice 'Theory of Change'* for 'seeing how one sees and thinks', and for doing 'mind-shift' work, and
- the process for connecting inner and outer fields of questions as in the 'Landing Strip for Souls'.

The *Connective Practice 'Theory of Change'* will also begin a process – as individuals and the larger group – of exploring and 'mapping' steps toward a living future for all. This inner and outer 'action map' will create a resource for practice, both within and beyond the program.

Another focus that runs through the program is on the *connected or social self* that Steiner described as the 'I-Sense'. Understanding how this differs from individualism and egocentricity is necessary in order to work with the tensions between the self and the world. It is also necessary for developing new social forms, which allow for and depend on the unfolding of individuals. Alongside this is an equally important exploration of what we understand by vitality and life forces, and how vitality can be enhanced both in individual life forms and in the wider field. Together both these foci enable us to look at our picture of a human being, our sense of life, and to come closer to the notion of warmth and "warmth work" – that are so central to the field of social sculpture and connective practice.

Through short inputs between the practices, Part 1 will also highlight the links between the social sculpture ideas and proposals of Joseph Beuys, their relationship to Rudolf Steiner's 'social art', Goethe's phenomenology and Schiller's 'aesthetic education of the human being', as well as other thinker-practitioners like Paulo Freire, Joanna Macy, philosophical practices from the east, and forms of mindfulness practice.

All these explorations introduce us to core ideas, principles, methods and practices in the field of *social sculpture* and to ways of enabling free and responsible *connective practice*.

#### **Part 1 lays the basis for Parts 2, 3 and 4.**

**Parts 2, 3 and 4** enable participants to integrate the *social sculpture-connective practice* insights, principles and methodologies in their existing work and/or to develop new initiatives. These practical and concrete ways forward can be developed individually and in collaborative groups.

Participants will also, by the end of the program, be able to use the '*Journaling for Transformation*' method and the '*Landing Strip for Souls*' with other potential change-makers beyond the program.

#### **Each of the 3-day long processes** [in Feb, March and May] includes:

- a. Working with the capacities and methods introduced in Part 1 ('Journaling for Transformation'; the 'Connective Practice Theory of Change', 'imaginal work', active listening, and the 'Landing Strip for Souls'). These will be practiced and reflected on in Parts 2, 3 and 4, to gain a sound understanding of how they work and what they offer in the field of transformation.
- b. Individual supervision-mentoring
- c. Small group work
- d. Creative exchanges in the big group that enable new collaborations to emerge, and existing work to be deepened and strengthened
- e. Space for exchanges with others outside the program, that are or could be involved in your initiative.

**Although Part 1 can be taken as a stand-alone element**, the value of doing all 4 parts – which include i. being ‘trained’ in several practices, ii. in-depth group exchange, iii. several sessions of individual mentoring, and, iv. structured processes of reflection on your practice - is that it will greatly enhance your capacity to work independently and to integrate the connective practice strategies, insights and methods into ongoing and new initiatives.

We hope you will be interested in joining us on this unique program, and after its completion, sharing it with others in a larger, public event, as well as considering if and how, this pilot and other initiatives could form the Dutch part of the Social Sculpture Academy.

**Places are limited, so please do apply soon.**

We envisage up to 16 participants doing all 4 parts. The first part may have more participants. If possible, we would like to be in contact with each person who applies, to ensure that the program is what you want and that you have some background experience that relates to the program’s aims and explorations.

If you have questions please contact **Shelley Sacks** [[ssacks@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ssacks@brookes.ac.uk)] and/or **Clarine Campagne** [[clarinecampagne@gmail.com](mailto:clarinecampagne@gmail.com)]