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Sense

**"WE NEED TO  
MOVE AWAY  
FROM BEING  
TAKERS AND  
BECOME CARE  
TAKERS"**

**"The truth  
Each owns  
itself, and  
the human  
economy  
depends  
on it."**

**"The  
economy  
should serve  
the people,  
not the  
other way  
around."**

**"The  
Economy  
is a dance  
that we  
all have to  
participate  
in."**

Robert Reich  
Former U.S. Secretary of Labor  
says:

**"The economy  
belongs to every-  
one, but it's been  
hijacked by a small  
group of wealthy  
individuals who  
use it to enrich  
themselves at the  
expense of every-  
one else."**

# Who Owns the Economy?

OLGA MINK and GODELIEVE SPAAS

**S**ometimes asking a question is more important than the answer. And sometimes, a children's tale can capture profound layers of meaning, touching our emotions in ways that few things can. 'The Giving Tree' by Shel Silverstein is such a story.

It goes like this:

*Once there was a tree who loved a little boy. The little boy visits the tree every day to play with the leaves, climb in the trunk, and swing from its branches. As the boy grows into a teenager, he doesn't visit the tree as often anymore. When eventually he returns, the tree is thrilled with joy and exclaims, 'Come, boy, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches, and be happy!' But the boy says that he is too old to play now, and that he needs money to buy things. He asks the tree, 'Can you give me some money?' To which the tree answers, 'I am sorry, but I have no money. Take my apples and sell them. Then you will have some money, and you'll be happy.' Years later, the boy returns. The tree is thrilled with joy again. 'Come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy!' The boy responds that he is too busy to climb a tree and that he wants a house. He asks the tree, 'Can you give me a house?' The tree replies that she doesn't have a house, the forest is her house. 'Cut off my branches so you can build a house,' offers the tree. And so the boy did. And the tree was happy. After a long time, the boy returns once more. 'Climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy!' says the tree. The boy explains he is too old and sad to play. He wants a boat to sail far away. 'Can you give me a boat?' he asks the tree. The tree offers to cut down her trunk to make a boat. So the boy did. And the tree was happy. In the end, the boy returns as an old man, and the tree sadly tells him she has nothing left to give. 'I am sorry, but I am just an old stump.' 'I don't need very much now, just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired,' said the boy. 'Well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting. Sit down, boy,' said the tree. So, he did. And the tree was happy.*

## *Generosity*

This bittersweet tale symbolizes the delicate balance between humanity and nature. As the little boy matures, his desires grow more insatiable, leading him to demand more from the tree to fulfill his needs. In its boundless generosity, the tree grants each of the man's wishes until it has nothing left but its roots. The tale illustrates humanity's ignorance and the selfishness of its desires, how it often overlooks the inherent beauty, generosity, and abundance of the natural world. It reveals a transformation from a life rooted in friendship, kinship, and trust to one driven by selfishness and greed, ultimately leading towards loneliness and separation. Reflecting on this narrative prompts us to ponder: What compels us to become such needy and oblivious beings?

## Connection

According to Charles Eisenstein, our supposed ‘wealth’ is a disguise for our inner poverty, a substitute for what is truly missing. As our genuine needs are no longer fulfilled, we replace them with material possessions. Eisenstein argues that most of the tasks we must do to sustain our materialistic lifestyle are not truly satisfying. According to Eisenstein, what we are missing is connection, meaning, and deeper fulfillment in our lives. We pursue material wealth as a surrogate for these essential needs, only to realize that material possessions do not fulfill us on a profound level. The story of ‘The Giving Tree’ highlights the destructiveness of humanity’s unchecked desires and the urgency for evaluating our priorities in a world driven by materialism.

## Separation

Besides encouraging reflection on our needs, the story prompts us to question our assumption that we can endlessly extract from nature without considering the consequences of our one-sided actions. Not only does it remind us to take a step back and appreciate what we have, it also exemplifies how we arrogantly claim dominion over our surroundings. This ignorance and sense of entitlement, deeply rooted in Western culture, often remains unnoticed by many. Part of this arrogance comes from religion, especially Christianity, which has influenced how we perceive our relationship with nature. Throughout history, this religion has promoted the idea that humans are in charge of nature, viewing the Earth as just here for our use. This way of thinking regards nature as having been made by humans (created by God), and as being there to serve us. It’s a mindset that has made us think we’re superior and in control of nature. It also led us to see ourselves as separate from or above the natural world. (Brand, 2019). This idea has deeply affected our culture in how we treat ourselves, other species and the environment, leading to the exploitation of nature and damaging of ecosystems, without much thought for their delicate balance.

## Breakdown

Most importantly, ‘The Giving Tree’ painfully mirrors the evolution of our economy to where we are now. Along the way, we withdrew from our connection to nature. We have lost touch with our attunement to life, and our responsibility to care for each other and our environment in the best possible way. We allowed our influence in shaping the economy to diminish, as we’ve outsourced our moral compass to the market. Alienation, separation, loneliness, exploitation, and depletion have become commonplace in an economy obsessed with the fantasy of unlimited growth. Our collective household is structured around a system driven by the accumulation of wealth, assuming ‘the economy’ as a machine, ‘acting as the engine at the core of human societies’ (Alvarez Pereira, 2021). As our emphasis on freedom and individuality has grown, it overshadowed our sense of belonging and interconnectedness. This shift has introduced a mechanism of separation that fosters extreme isolation and discontent. The poignant tale of the boy and the tree resonates because it highlights the breakdown of a profound relationship: our relationship and interdependency with the intricate web of life.

## Market Logic über alles

In contemporary society, we have surpassed this breaking point of relational well-being: no longer do we value friendship between cultures and communities, trust among people, or kinship with other species. The relentless pursuit of unlimited growth and production maximization under Neoliberalism has blinded us to the reality that well-being is not solely determined by material prosperity. In past decades, we witnessed the growing influence of economic logic as it extends its reach into other domains. We have become increasingly preoccupied as to whether something is beneficial or detrimental to the economy, often overlooking its broader implications for society. An example of this shift can be observed in the public sector, where there is a growing emphasis on adopting market-based principles. This frame led to the erosion of fundamental human values, such as care, trust, and dignity, as they became overshadowed by a focus on efficiency, profit, and return on investment. In his book *The Invisible Hand*, Bas van Bavel describes how economies flourish and decline over millennia. A recurring pattern in the announcement of decline is when the market, rather than society, determines the value of money, labor, and land. Subsequently, an economic system emerges that overshadows other domains and loses balance with society and politics. Democracy morphs into an ‘econocracy’: a society where political objectives prioritize their impact on the economy, disregarding other aspects of human well-being such as equality, social justice, or environmental concerns. (Earl, Moran, and Ward-Perkins, 2017 and Lomeli Aguirre, 2024)

## *Re-imagining the Economy*

We find ourselves in an era where the economy dictates our decisions and actions, rather than the other way around. How can we rethink notions of ownership and reclaim an economy for the common good? How do we shape an economy where relatedness and taking care of each other become the main drivers underpinning society? Can we envision a system where people experience sustainable happiness rooted in deep connections with each other? This form of well-being is cultivated through the sharing and exploration of abundant resources such as knowledge and expression, fostering meaningful connections with others and the environment. It embraces the softer, socially oriented aspects of society, striving to empower people to feel connected and balanced within their social and natural surroundings. In such an economic paradigm, a sense of agency and belonging emerges as a more meaningful resource, rather than mere ownership and the illusion of control.

### Ownership in a More than Human World

The quality of our relationships with others plays a significant role in determining our health, sense of fulfillment, and overall well-being. In a world where human and non-human entities coexist and intertwine, the concept of ownership needs a fundamental reset. Traditional notions of ownership, rooted in human-centric perspectives, often overlook the broader interconnectedness of life on Earth. When we consider ownership in a more than human world, we must expand our understanding to encompass the rights and well-being of all beings, not just humans. In ancient nomadic cultures, owning material possessions was viewed as a burden because it tied individuals down and limited their mobility. Instead, these cultures valued communal resources and shared stewardship of the land and all living beings. In today's neoliberal economy, ownership is often equated with success and achievement. The growing emphasis on wealth accumulation as a status symbol has led to an expanding gap, where the richest 1% own more than the remaining 99%. Simultaneously, we are erecting border walls to exclude the dispossessed and displaced, a consequence of our wealth accumulation leading to the collapse of ecosystems.

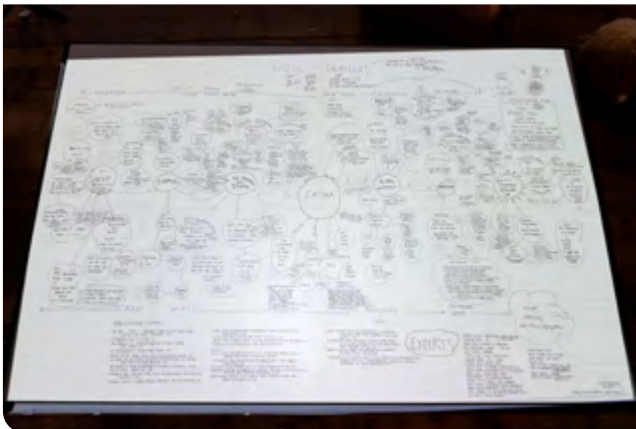
## Questioning Ownership

This wealth inequality has significant social, economic, and political implications, contributing to disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and power. If we keep turning away from the interconnectedness between these conflicting worldviews, we risk further exacerbating social exclusion and environmental degradation. By recognizing our societal blind spots, we can begin to challenge our shortcomings and start re-imagining new economic realities that prioritize equity, sustainability, and the protection of ecosystems and vulnerable populations. The question 'who owns the economy?' serves as a thought-provoking catalyst, fostering meaningful dialogue to discuss who benefits and who wields power over the economy. Since the question is inherently a philosophical one, it leads to inquiries into broader concepts such as power dynamics, social justice, ecocide, ethics, and even the nature of reality. Therefore, this rhetorical question is not intended to elicit a literal answer, but rather to highlight the complexity of economic issues and the underlying principles that shape human interactions and societies. We believe that ownership of the economy should become a collective endeavor, instead of an individual pursuit based on competition, exclusion, and greed. In this quest we should involve all people, not just those in power, or engage in critical inquiry and dialogue about economic structures and dynamics. It is paramount that we need to include a broader layer of society to dismantle our unconscious biases.

## *Festival*

Looking for answers and new perspectives, we sparked the idea for a festival to foster different economic narratives. We decided to put together an exhibition on the intersections of art, society, and economy, in order to bring different experiences, practices and perspectives together; a festival that would shine a light on the flaws of our capitalist system by showing how it encourages unsustainable consumption, leading to exploitation of people, exhaustion of soil and the collapse of ecosystems. For decades, economics was dominated by unquestioned theories regarding scarcity, free market forces, and limited government regulation, but today, most of these theories are considered outdated. Instead we should start considering the economy as our collective responsibility to take care of the Earth and each other. By acknowledging that the economy is intertwined with all aspects of life, we can develop a holistic approach that embraces the complexity of reality. This way, we can work together towards a regenerative economy that is not based on the accumulation of wealth, but on creating well-being for all life on earth.





# Who Owns the Economy?

The festival that we organized with the Future of Work Foundation, encompassed a diverse array of exhibitions, workshops, performances, debates, and events, all designed to foster co-creation and collective discovery and experimentation. A core principle of the festival was active participation by all attendees, including artists, communities, designers, entrepreneurs, students, scientists, researchers, NGOs, and cultural organizations. Participants and audiences were urged to actively engage, collaborate, and directly influence the discourse through their involvement in the projects and activities offered.

The focal point was a monumental installation featuring a variety of quotes and answers about ‘ownership’ printed on large fabrics, shaping the centerpiece of the exhibition. Visitors entering the space, were invited to contribute by writing down their thoughts about ownership on cards, displayed on the wall. Surrounding this installation, the exhibition was thoughtfully curated to explore different economic narratives, fostering conversation, experimentation, collective inquiry, and discovery of new insights. Responses from visitors to the question *Who Owns the Economy* varied widely:

- Some emphasized that the economy belongs to everyone, as it is a shared space.
- Others questioned whether the economy belongs to those who have the time and privilege to ponder such questions.
- Several respondents argued that the economy should not belong to any specific group, but rather to life itself—to the Earth, its inhabitants, and the natural world.

- Some suggested that the focus should shift from ownership to access, with everyone entitled to the benefits and opportunities provided by the economy.
- Many emphasized the importance of the economy providing for all people, especially those who are currently marginalized or excluded.
- There were also those who stressed the need for the economy to care for the entire ecosystem and all forms of life.

- In addition to these responses, participants attributed ownership of the economy to various entities, including money, robots, sheep, ancestors, land, air, bees, communities, tax authorities, Klaus Schwab, consumers, workers, large corporations, God, nature, and genes.
- A few noted that the African economy is owned by western companies and that African farmers hardly make a living.



Illustration by Olga Mink.

## *Collective Space for Imagination*

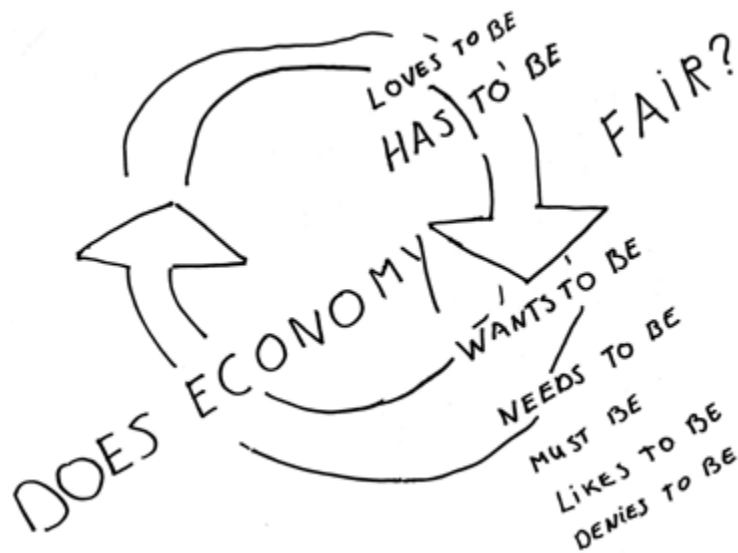
Challenging conventional thinking proved daunting, as we are entrenched in the familiarity of the status quo. To envision a truly transformative economy, we need to breathe life into unconventional ideas, amplify marginalized voices and unknown territory. Everyone was invited to contribute to engaging dialogues about economics—transcending the constraints of traditional discourse. By encouraging visitors to articulate their wisdom, imagination, values, experiences, visions, opinions, hopes, fears and dreams, we aimed to ignite a collective space for economic thinking. Through this inclusive dialogue, we sought to weave together thoughts and ideas that will inform a new outline for a more just, sustainable, and compassionate economy. Within the festival, we choose to further investigate the possibility that the economy belongs to all of us: humans and non-humans, the living and lifeless, the physical and metaphysical. With that choice, we claimed that the pursuit towards a more just and healthier economy can only be achieved as a collective endeavor. We wanted to bring across the notion that the economy isn't a law of nature but a narrative that we ourselves created, and therefore we can also change; a cultural construct which is based on a set of rules and agreements that we can alter. This means it's possible to craft different narratives, establish new rules, and act differently in how we organize our common household. In an economy that belongs to all of us, we can influence how we organize it, consequently, granting us agency within the economy we are part of.

## *What Economy Do We Want?*

Following the first question of ownership, we also formulated a second question: What ideas, questions, opinions, suggestions do you want to bring into a conversation about an alternative economy? We created a space where visitors were invited to exchange, write, experiment, and discuss this theme. Alongside the exploration of economic ownership, a dedicated workspace was made for discussions and collaborative work on the question: 'What Economy do we Want?' This workspace hosted workshops, and gatherings, aiming to promote active engagement and provide visitors with opportunities to participate in the creative process. Here, the term 'collective' resonated deeply, reflecting economies designed to enhance the well-being of all beings on Earth. At the heart of this collective endeavor lay a simple yet profound question: If the economy is meant to serve us all, how do we transform the existing system, and what kind of economy do we envision instead? Asking for input how to contribute to the emergence of alternative economic realities, people brought forth the following ideas:

- Focus on craftsmanship, local production, and sharing.
- Alternative forms of ownership and power distribution.
- Degrowth.
- Giving non-humans and the Earth a voice in the economy.
- The importance of meaning and purpose.
- Decolonization.
- Ending the spiral of violence, extraction, and exploitation.
- Setting limits on profit and income.
- An economic foundation of care, sharing, love, regeneration, and restoration.





Silang Pransdhita

says:

Every single human on earth should define and decide the way they living good living through the system of economy by sharing the benefits in justice.

Charles says:

**Use the Jubilee system to reset all debt every 7-70 years.**

Jan Juffermans

says:

If we don't stop this growing economy, everything we have created is lost! And everyone as well!

Anonymous says:

**Organising a politics of living together, not based on the logic of economy (transactions).**

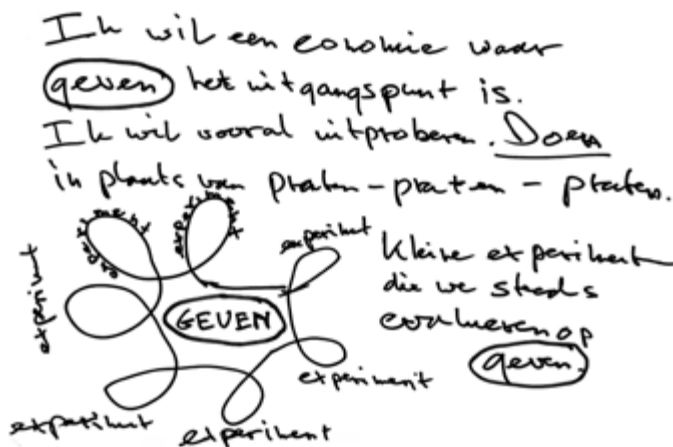
**What would a society look like that is not based on economic principles but on the principle of listening to each other's rhythm, and connecting to it?**

**An economy is based on the principle of hospitality. How are we conditioned to trust others?**

Petra + Ewelina

says:

The Economy we want to see is owned by the whole network of life. Wellbeing is the value in the economy of ALL LIFE.



Greete van Bruggen

zegt:

2. herdefinieer!
1. centraliseer!

Economic is ecologic

I WANT AN economy where we feel we are interconnected with our surroundings and ourselves. An economy which is based on the original meaning of the greek word OIKOS - our shared household and that we collectively decide how we manage that household a.k.a. "the planet." We need to march toward a "headset" in which this planetary household becomes something that we can relate to. that we see the interdependencies



TERESA

says:

The economy is not an entity that can be owned. It is a practice of taking care of all that sustain life. NO one owns the economy and it / they / the economy should be organized to be in service of the living world.

Ilse says:

The economy should become a collective economy, moulded, and shaped to save and help everyone and everything, including nature in all its forms, without commodifying it.

TERESA

says:

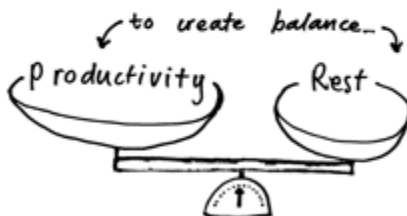
THE QUESTION should be who contributes the most to the economy. This will give an idea who owns the most and who the least.

Shrink mindset

Value decline

Practice to give more attention to the night

Emphasize the worth of hibernation as much as the summer



We need to focus on the opposite of the current highest weight.

Niek says:

The "non-owning" owner.

Cooperation on human level.

Care taking as capital.

Install "greenwashing" police.

"We need boundaries to capital".

Capitalism has to go.

JAP

zeit:

Capitalism is a construct to benefit just some

from the system

A tasty acrobat

says:

The economy does not really exist, like math doesn't really exist.

The story of economy can and should be mutated, transformed before we go extinct.

## Artworks

The artworks in the exhibition reflected on similar notions, engaging audiences to act, explore other ways of caring and sharing, and challenge the prevailing status quo.

The work *Extinction Claims* by Paola Cirio invited the audience to hold major polluters responsible for the ecocide they deliberately caused for their own profit. In this artwork, thousands of vulnerable and endangered species facing extinction become plaintiffs, claiming financial reparation from major oil, gas, and coal companies. Cirio aggregated data and images of species and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change, then coded an algorithm to calculate a financial compensation. The results are published on the online platform Extinction-Claims.com, where visitors can claim economic reparation from these companies on behalf of the endangered species. The platform generates simplified legal claims and petitions for each species, which can be submitted to government agencies and used for lawsuits against major polluters. The project aimed to make critical information about endangered species accessible, while illustrating the massive scale of the crisis and holding the Carbon Majors accountable. The artwork includes an installation composed of hundreds of images of endangered species, as well as public distribution of printed materials that provided data regarding the emissions of the respective fossil fuel companies. With the project, artist and hacker Paolo Cirio activates the established order to restore what has been lost or is on the verge of extinction. Cirio aims to shift the responsibility bypassed by these companies by mobilizing the public to demand compensation for their harmful impact on endangered species and the environment. Advocating for accountability, the artwork seeks to empower individuals to take action against major polluters.

The WOOD FOOD INK Market by Constructlab challenged us to confront our assumptions and conventional patterns in how we approach production, transaction, distribution, and resource utilization. Visitors, artists, residents, communities and suppliers collaborated on the production of wooden stools. Is there wood available nearby for production? Do you get paid for your contribution? Can you buy the stools? Each of these questions leads to new inquiries, each relationship to a different perspective on collaboration, and each answer exists only momentarily until another answer, perhaps better or different, emerges. The WOOD FOOD INK Market created a space in which various voices come together to reshape our exist-

ing ideas about working together. What are the intrinsic motivations and values that drive individuals and communities? The project seeks to uncover the underlying motivations in the production process. Constructlab is interested in the rationale that emerges from their experimental economic practice and, by engaging participants in dialogue, the workspace serves as a catalyst for action and reflection about a collectively shaped and owned economy. Instead of focusing solely on material gain or convenience, the project encourages individuals to prioritize actions and transactions that align with their personal values and contribute to their sense of meaning and fulfillment. This could ultimately lead to more conscious decision-making and a greater sense of purpose in our daily lives.

Jatiwangi art Factory (JaF) is an Indonesian community that integrates contemporary art and cultural practices into the local discourse of rural life. One of their projects involves the liberation and reclamation of land surrounding their area, with the goal of creating forests. By freeing the land from ownership and economic exploitation, JaF aims to restore it to its natural state and reintegrate it into the local ecosystem. The initiative recognizes the multifaceted importance of natural land, acknowledging its role as a supplier of oxygen, provider of shade, and habitat for countless forms of life, including insects, worms, and various organisms. Through the FAMILY FOREST PERHUTANA project, JaF aspires to transform eight hectares of land into a sacred nature conservation area.

Under this project, interested individuals have the opportunity to purchase 4x4m<sup>2</sup> plots of land, which are then donated to the Sacred Forest. In return, buyers receive an exclusive certificate crafted from a soil stone, symbolizing their contribution to the preservation of nature. The Family Forest is not just a passive conservation area; it is actively cared for by local communities, including schools, where children are given the opportunity to learn about nature and ecological principles through hands-on experience. This aspect of the project not only fosters environmental stewardship but also promotes community engagement and education, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the forest and its benefits for generations to come.

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- 1. FAMILY FOREST PERHUTANA, Jatiwangi art Factory;
- 2. Extinction Claims, Paola Cirio;
- 3. WOOD FOOD INK Market, Constructlab.





## New Questions

Reflecting on the diverse projects presented, the festival has brought forth different narratives regarding the kind of economy we desire or elements thereof. These narratives can be categorized into two main groups. The first category features ideas concerning the *dismantling* of the current economy and its consequences. What destructive patterns can we identify within the current model? How to recognize them, and how to call for reparation or healing? The challenge within this category lies in our ingrained acceptance of existing dynamics, making it difficult to discern its patterns, principles, and narratives. Consequently, not only is it challenging to deeply understand what is going wrong, but it's even harder to hold responsible parties, including ourselves, accountable. Quoting Simone de Beauvoir: 'It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting.'

The second category delves into the *construction* of alternative economic patterns, principles, and narratives. How can things be different? Better? Fairer? Theory, experiments, and scattered ideas offer a wide range of inputs in this category, often by flipping characteristics of the current economy: from growth to degrowth, from profit-driven to wellbeing, from destruction to regeneration and from ownership to commons. Yet, here lies the challenge of breaking free from the frames we adhere to in the existing economy. How can we think beyond the patterns deeply ingrained within us, thereby transcending merely flipping the status quo? By reclaiming land, labor, or other tangible assets into the social or cultural domain, a new space is created to develop radically different patterns, discover groundbreaking principles, and interpret lived experiences through new narratives. This category also builds upon the work of Bas van Bavel, who highlights that once land, money, and labor become purely transactional, economic decline is imminent. Construction can only occur by liberating elements from the market and reorganizing them in alternative domains.

## Artist Responses

Some of the artworks presented as part of the festival contributed to the dismantling of the existing economy, while others contributed to the construction of a new economic reality. Paolo Cirio's work meticulously unravels the disastrous consequences of the fossil fuel industry on biodiversity. In doing so, he maps out a fatal pattern and provides us, as viewers and participants, with the opportunity to take action and hold polluters accountable. His work deconstructs the mechanisms of the current extractive economy, by emphasizing its injustice and by taking legal action against the damage done. Cirio's work contributes to the dismantling of the incumbent economy and exposes its flaws, consequently providing new pathways for action, and change.

The projects developed by Jatiwangi art Factory and Constructlab fall into the second category. Their work constructs alternative economic patterns and principles by liberating land and labor from the market. JaF achieves this by collectively purchasing land to restore its intrinsic value. The project emphasizes the shift away from viewing land solely as an economic resource and allowing it to revert to its natural state through forestation efforts. Additionally, the project challenges individualistic notions of ownership by collectivizing ownership and dividing the land into smaller plots. This approach fosters a more communal and sustainable approach to land management. Constructlab liberates labor from its transactional nature. Collaboratively making stools becomes an exploration of labor as a means to foster a sense of community and interconnectedness between individuals, the materials they work with, and the outcomes they create together. Constructlab teaches us to scrutinize and reshape the relationships and patterns among people, and our way of exchanging goods and resources. They highlight the idea that collaboration fosters deeper connections with our surroundings, the artifacts we create, and with each other.

The works of JaF and Constructlab are both artistic endeavors that serve as platforms for exploring new patterns and principles of creation and exchange, fostering care for one another, all species, and the Earth. Through these explorations, they initiate conversations with the public, probing what could succeed and what falls short. Is there an alternative approach? This process gives rise to a diverse array of principles, from which new narratives can emerge. By combining dialogue with practical engagement, action with reflection, imagination with interpretation, a space is created to break free from the market and our entrenched economic norms.

## Audience Responses

The responses from the audience align with the categories of *dismantling* versus *construction*. Many people perceive economy as something that primarily benefits ‘The Haves’ and neglects the less fortunate. They express their discontent and disappointment that the economy does not cater to their needs. They seek paths for action to address this, but often experience feelings of powerlessness and exclusion. They emphasize the importance of halting the exploitation and depletion of both people and the Earth. In the category of *constructing*, they often refer to alternative models such as the Doughnut Economy, degrowth, and the commons. They also emphasize the necessity of democratizing the economy, which would ultimately lead to a fairer and more just system for everyone, not just those who already hold power and primarily benefit from it. By diversifying the economy and making it less monolithic we can move away from a rigid structure. This one-size-fits-all approach ultimately marginalizes those who cannot keep pace, pushing them to the fringes of society and consolidating even more wealth, power, and resources among a smaller group. Diversifying the economy enables a more holistic and pluralistic perspective that can ensure the well-being of all people, species, and the planet. Considering not only the financial value but also social and ecological implications grants access to many unheard voices.

## *What’s Next?*

How to proceed from here? How can we reclaim the economy by addressing what needs to be dismantled while simultaneously building something new by liberating ourselves, our mental models, our ideologies, our culture, our artefacts and our interactions from the market ideology? In both cases, this requires a space for mutual learning and collective experimentation, where we can break away from our deeply ingrained economic patterns, principles, and narratives. With Future of Work Foundation, we envision the continuation of our work as a place where the conceivable, achievable, and imaginable converge, pushing the boundaries of economic thought into uncharted territory. With this approach, we try to integrate different ways of knowing and plural forms of sensing, culminating into new narratives, images, and practices. A tapestry if you will, that gracefully weaves together the essence of what seeks to emerge across different contexts, disciplines, knowledge domains, and regions.

## *Rehearsing ‘Lanterfanten’*

To move ahead, we must learn how to reconnect with the notion that we can overcome loneliness, disconnection, and our looming unease. We can replace these feelings with joy, purpose, and connection if we have the courage to abstain from what we believe we want—from our shallow cravings and (unfulfilled) desires. Ultimately, this requires us to assess our deepest values, fears, and hopes, despite the daunting appearances of the monolithic structure we call economy. We should try to embody a more open-minded approach to life: Let’s explore the vast, open-ended plains ahead of us. Let’s allow ourselves to be more playful and adventurous. Let’s rehearse how to be without purpose, ambition, or intention for a change. In Dutch, there is a beautiful word called ‘lanterfanten.’ It’s a word that everyone knows but is hard to explain. It has a negative connotation because it originally referred to a lazy person. The root of the word may come from the words ‘land’ and ‘beggar’ (truant in old French). ‘Lanterfanten’ has no specific meaning and could describe an act of ‘doing nothing in particular.’ It could mean hanging around, listening to sounds passing by, enjoying a view, or just setting your mind free. It is precisely this plurality and ambiguity of meaning that is the beauty of ‘Lanterfanten.’ Engaging in ‘lanterfanten’ implies that though someone appears to be occupied, in actuality they are not actively pursuing any meaningful or purposeful tasks. Perhaps this is the way to shift our mindset to a more relational way of being? What if we would collectively start practicing ‘lanterfanter-ing’? Can we reinvent this unfamiliar practice and trick our preoccupied Western mind towards less productivity and more playfulness? By reclaiming our stolen time, we can create space for possibility to emerge. A space for being without a sense of purpose. And for learning again what it means to be human.

*Let’s play and climb the tree, and swing from its branches!  
And be happy.*



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## Artworks

The article features photos of artworks displayed at the 'Who Owns The Economy' festival, organized by Future of Work in Den Bosch 2023. <https://www.futureofwork.nl/english/>

**Arne Hendriks:** The incredible shrinking man. & Abundance. <https://futureofwork.nl/english/participants/arne-hendriks>

**Carlijn Kingma:** Waterworks of Money. <https://futureofwork.nl/english/participants/carlijn-kingma>

**Construct Lab:** Wood Food Ink Market. <https://futureofwork.nl/english/participants/constructlab>

**Cynthia Hathaway:** The Wool Assembly Line. <https://futureofwork.nl/english/participants/cynthia-hathaway>

**Jatiwangi art Factory:** ECO-ON-MY. <https://futureofwork.nl/deelnemers/jatiwangi-art-factory-jaf>

**Klaas Burger:** Fair Jobs. <https://futureofwork.nl/deelnemers/klaas-burger>

**Paolo Cirio:** Extinction Claims. <https://futureofwork.nl/deelnemers/paolo-cirio>

**The100Hands, Falk Hubner, Godelieve Spaas:** Alchemy of Exchange. <https://futureofwork.nl/english/event/exchange-project-lecture-performance>

**Theresa Feldman:** BoC.fm map. & Oikotopia. <https://futureofwork.nl/english/participants/teresa-feldmann>

The photos were taken by Ben Nienhuis.



**GODELIEVE SPAAS** is a professor of economy in common at Avans University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. She is a maker and curator at the Future of Work Foundation and a member of the Pari Center community in Italy. Godelieve believes that a fundamental change in the underlying principles of our current conventional economic system is pivotal in healing the social, cultural, and ecological trauma the world faces.



**OLGA MINK** serves as the artistic director at Future of Work Foundation, and as the Head of the Academy of Interdisciplinary Arts (iArts) in Maastricht. With a broad range of research interests, Olga explores the relationships between humanity, art, nature, technology, and economy. Previously, she directed Baltan Laboratories, where she facilitated international artistic collaborations across various disciplines. Olga has co-edited several books, including her most recent publication, *Co-emerging Economies*, co-edited with Reon Brand. Known for her interest in relational art, Olga occasionally creates tangible artworks such as 'Gaslighting,' a large-scale neon installation created in collaboration with Munne, and the project 'Who Owns the Economy?' with Godelieve Spaas. Her diverse background and interest in art, research, and curation are evident in her numerous contributions to contemporary art and culture.