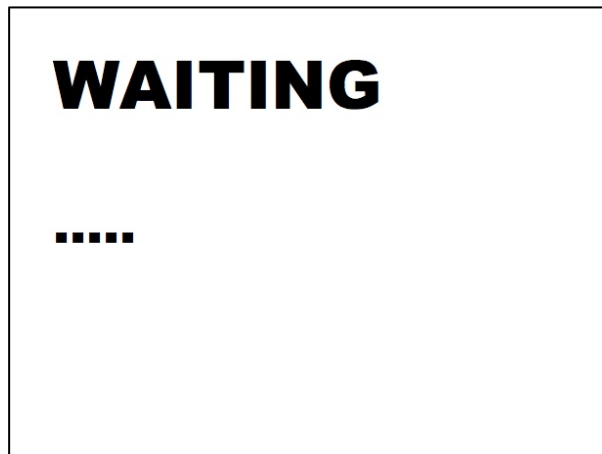


NOTES - Prototyping Residency Sprint Feb 2020

INTRODUCTION: This adaptation and expansion of a presentation I made at the Sprint includes a small number of definitions and quotations.¹ Some of the definitions draw on radio/communications terms others come from two recommended texts and also the p2p foundation. The presentation reflects on "commoning" in relation to artistic practice as experienced during the 2019 Proto-Typing Residency at Timelab / De Schuur Ghent.

During the residency we engaged in a series of under the radar "minor gestures"² as a way of engaging with the immediate neighbourhood and streets around Timelab / De Schuur. These minor gestures were used as a way of gently laying the groundwork for future residents/projects. As a "motley crew" of commoners we agreed to come together under the umbrella term of the Dutch word "Onderhoud" which means both maintenance, support/repair of individuals and things. It also bares the meaning of a serious conversation.

The local farmers market was the locus for the more a visible of these minor gestures, through a series of activities such as conversation, sketching, soup making, interventions/games, after school pancakes and hyperlocale radio broadcasts using "Radio Onderhoud".



WAITING - Part of the work of being a resident was literally allowing for free form/open time and waiting for a connection or way to join forces. This was an active waiting: trying to tune in to each other and to find the connection that would enable a meaningful engagement for us around the activation of commoning. This work solidified initially around ideas of the minor gesture³.

CHANNELS - Multiple different frequencies running at the same time, sometimes overlapping and sometimes staying separate, sometimes connected...

TEMPOS - People have very different conceptions of time and like to work at very different speeds. That is their pace, their rate or speed of motion or activity. These different time signatures or conceptions of time need very clear negotiation in relation to both commoning and/or co-creation.

¹ At start of the residency period, fellow resident Einat Tuchman shared two key texts of relevance. These were the Minor Gesture by Erin Manning and the Undercommons by Fred Moten. Additional texts came from P2P foundation website.

² Manning, Erin, The Minor Gesture, Introduction, "In a Minor Key" p1. "The minor is a continual variation on experience. It has a mobility not given to the major: its rhythms are not controlled by a preexisting structure, but open to flux. In variation is in change, indeterminate. But indeterminacy, because of its wildness, is often seen as unrigorous, flimsy, its lack of solidity mistaken for a lack of consistency. The minor thus gets cast aside, overlooked, or forgo en in the interplay of major chords.

³ Manning, Erin, ibid

FREQUENCIES - People function at different frequencies and speeds, some are in sync, some are out of sync. Frequencies combine in different ways, and tune in and out of each other sometimes causing harmonics, distortions and occasional blocks. Frequency in terms of iteration and sequencing.

AIRTIME - who's on, who's off, who speaks, who listens...

We used some systems for managing in person communication – a card on the table when you want to speak..further experiments with decision making tools would be important for future residents.

SILENCE - taking time to sense and give attention to the (more) silent channels in the group. Realising that people process information at different speeds and some need more (introspective) time before speaking aloud or taking action.

LISTEN - We tried hard to listen and not talk over each other. We really needed to learn how to listen, to give attention.

CARRIER - A person or thing that carries, holds, or conveys something. It can also be used to describe a blank channel used as an aid to transmitting a message. It could also relate to invisible labour and the minor acts of maintenance & care that carry things forward. These are often the most imperceptible.

SIGNAL - a gesture, image, action, or sound (not necessarily verbal) used to convey a message.

WAVE - the signal or salute of a hand as you pass on the street or the invisible radio wave which carries a message.

WEAVE - the combination of multiple strands to make a complex story, pattern or movement.

WEFT - through our combined trajectories in the neighbourhood we wove visible and invisible lines. These were generated by presence, greetings and making everyday connections, crossing thresholds, engaging in conversations and asking questions .

LOCUS - the place where something happens, the weekly **LOCAL Boer'n buurtmarkt** (farmers and neighbourhood market) was a place for more a visible presence, through minor activations such as conversation, a game, making of food (soup), and our fugitive broadcast.

FUGITIVE

Lasting only a short time/fleeting. While a minor event may be fugitive & non-spectacular its resonance may last much longer and it may lay the groundwork for future work where something more involved, profound or longer lasting can be achieved.

MINOR

working in a minor key was in no way accidental, the minor key whilst risky because of its precarity and invisibility, also "has a mobility not given to the major: its rhythms are not controlled by a preexisting structure, but open to flux.."4

MEDIUM

Any form that can carry or transmit meaning.

CONFUSION

Change and artistic practices always entails a certain degree of confusion. It takes time to shift and re-think habits.

COMFUSION

⁴ Manning, Erin, ibid

We easily agreed on logistical elements and sharing of resources but it was much more difficult to reach a consensus or agreement in relation to a framework which allowed for meaningful commoning in relation to artistic practice.

NOISE

A certain amount of **noise** is likely and even desirable, but will add a level of confusion. There are different types of **noise**, such as physical **noise**, psychic **noise**, semantic **noise**, institutional **noise**.

HABITS

Long held way of doing things, "a recurrent, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition."⁵

HABITUS

" a system of embodied dispositions, tendencies that organize the ways in which individuals perceive the social world around them and react to".⁶ This includes shared experiences which can reproduce the existing social order but can also be thought of as a more dynamic process where adaptations and accommodations can instigate small cultural/social shifts⁷.

THRESHOLDS

Threshold both as an edge activity but also as a real physical entity **in space**.

The crossing of physical thresholds can take different levels of effort depending on who you are⁸.

"Commoning is a threshold activity. To make common is to participate in an unfolding movement for social change, with positive implications for politics, economics, and the planet"⁹

ABUNDANCE

Commoning is described as coming from a place of abundance both materially and spiritually. The term abundance comes from the Latin *ab-unda*, meaning the wave, which overflows.¹⁰

ADVERSITY

The process of commoning is relevant in times of adversity and when resources are scarce. At time of writing, we are in a different phases of lockdown due to Coronavirus and are now more powerfully aware that each individual's welfare is part of a larger collective health. The need for a commons based approach to resources and societal change is ever more urgent.

COMMONING

"To turn a noun into a verb is not a little step and requires some daring. Especially if in doing so we do not want to obscure the importance of the noun, but simply ground it on what is, after all, life flow: there are no commons without incessant activities of commoning, of (re)producing in common. But it is through (re)production in common that communities of producers decide for themselves the norms,

⁵ From The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition.
<https://www.wordnik.com/words/habit>

⁶ Definition of "habitus" -From Marshall, Gordon, The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University, Press, 1998 accessed via Archive.org

A set of acquired patterns of thought, behaviour and taste, which is said by Pierre Bourdieu (Outline of Theory and Practices 1977) to constitute the link between social * structures and social practice (or social action). The concept offers a possible basis for a cultural approach to structural inequality and permits a focus on *agency. ...p 268

⁸ A discussion with Erin Manning on the different efforts involved in crossing thresholds depending on your level of privilege <https://onlineopen.org/how-the-minor-moves-us-across-thresholds-socialities-and-techniques>

⁹ Extracted from "Some Principles of Commoning" by Tim Rayner which describes " 'ethos', or way of being, that underpins the practice of commoning.."
<https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Commoning>

¹⁰ *ibid*

values and measures of things"¹¹.

"Each act of commoning – be it a matter of collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer production, open space technology, or democratic assembly – is an experimental contribution towards a new social and economic paradigm."¹²

NEGOTIATION - CONSENT

The bounds of what is to be shared needs careful **negotiation & consent**. What level of sharing will there be? Within a commons based residency what elements need consent & negotiation? practical/logistical resources, production/non-production, the material/symbolic, creation/co-creation, the end-goal/shared dream. What elements are agreed & when do you decide ?

TUNING-MAINTENANCE-REPAIR

The relationships between a group of artistic commoners needs continual adjustment, support and care.

PROTOCOLS

Clear protocols and agreement around communication, channels, timings, practicalities are important. These can include agreed time schedules for face to face discussion, and different channels or platforms which allow for synchronous and asynchronous communication.

FACE TO FACE in person directly

SYNCHRONOUS in real-time

ASYNCHRONOUS not occurring at the same time

PLATFORMS

In the context of artistic practice, commoning and production: any form that can support pooling of content, and accommodation of multiple practices. Potential platforms include a radio channel, a chapbook, a zine, a publication, a performance, an event, a piece of software. Platforms can also include existing platforms designed to enhance collaboration and these can be open source or proprietary.

PROTOTYPING

Prototyping can take the form of experiments and putting elements in relation; that can be people, systems, organisations.

Prototyping allows for trialing, testing, versioning.

Prototyping can be low impact, iterative, extensible & future orientated!¹³

STUDY

In "The Undercommons" Stefano Harney & Fred Moten describe study as "what you do with other people. It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice..."¹⁴

ONDERHOUD

¹¹ Extract from Massimo De Angelis to describe "commoning": as an active verb as popularized by historian Peter Linebaugh. <https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Commoning>

¹² Extracted from "Some Principles of Commoning" by Tim Rayner which describes " 'ethos', or way of being, that underpins the practice of commoning.." <https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Commoning>

¹³ This description prototyping reflects some of the discussion related to the concept of prototyping at the Prototyping Residency Sprint at Timelab in mid Feb 2020

¹⁴ p110 Harney, Stefano, Moten, Fred, The Undercommons

We agreed that the Dutch word "onderhoud" was a good umbrella term for our investigations and neighbourhood interactions while in residence at TimeLab /De Schuur. Onderhoud implies some measure of improvement and takes in maintenance, repair, and a serious conversation. It is close in meaning to the German "Unterhaltung" or French "entretien". Onderhoud also sounds like the Dutch word 'onderhuids', which means 'under the skin';
Onderhoud the first step.....