

The Dream of The Tree [U] – Methodologies of Resilience I (FS 2024)

'Resilience' in material science is the ability of a substance, an object, or a material to spring back into its shape or previous state. In plant science, 'resilience' means the ability of a plant to regenerate following disturbance, either through the replacement of damaged tissues or by the germination of its offspring from seed. In social sciences, 'resilience' is the ability of humans as an individual or community to withstand external strain and stress and further heal, and rehabilitate. Drawing from these structures of resilience we will study examples of abstract and actual methods that we observed, gathered, experienced, learned, and unlearned.

What are the modes of our creative resilience practices? How do we define the spectrum of transformation, sedimentation, and rupture? How do we locate transition and what are the measures of restoration? We lay the grounds to enable such knowledge and cultivate strategies for coping and adapting. What for many of us means a daily practice of being. We will forage for, find, and practice our methods of resilience through art.

The workshop invites participants to build their own practices that interact with their context(s) in Bern. The practices can act as prompts of ways of existing together, embodying the future(s) we seek, experience different modes of resilience or to listen to quiet and silenced possibilities which can be later shared with a wider audience.

Based on our unique curatorial and artistic practices, the workshop will include somatic exercises, sketching, transcriptions, and active listening. Using narratives, sound, images, and humor we will compose our own definition of resilience. Together we will make space for care, consideration, and reflection on our struggles, our battlegrounds. We will explore the entanglements and methodologies across geographies, timelines, species, and beings in the hopes of preparing for our common 'troubled' future(s). As Donna Haraway would put it: to have a collective future, we have to learn to 'stay with the trouble'. So come and join this experimental query by thinking transversally, comparatively, and collectively.

Shima Asa, Andrea Palášti, Halim Ramses, Cheshmak Shahsiah.

*'Methodologies of Resilience I', co-facilitated by residents of the Sommerakademie Paul Klee 2023-2024 is based on an ongoing collective process of thinking and knowing together. The second part will take place in November 2024.

Language: English

Shima Asa is an Iranian artist/curator based in Montreal. Her artistic practice focused on the materiality of sound and narrative. In her works, she listened to human voices and silences and explored the spatiality of aural experiences through elemental matter and structural designs. She joined the CCC research-based master's program at HEAD Geneva, where she conceived the theory of exhibition as a listening-scape and wrote her thesis on how the forms of listening/being there can cultivate modes of inhabiting a work of art. *Taklif: Ideas of femininity*, her recent work as co-curator evolved from collective reflections on alternative ways of describing/ascribing experiencing/experimenting with feminism. *Taklif* was homework, a platform for listening.

Andrea Palášti is a Hungarian/Croatian/Serbian artist and educator based in Novi Sad [Serbia], who works across artistic, curatorial and pedagogical boundaries experimenting with ways of knowledge production. Her projects are made visible through photo-exhibitions, historical and scientific research, illustrative lectures and participatory workshops as means to encourage a nuanced understanding of our world. Working with different communities in diverse informal group actions, she is experimenting with cross-discipline presentations acting as: a misleading tourist guide, a more-than-human fitness trainer, a dilettante freshwater ecologist, an ignorant art[ist] teacher, an unlicensed press photographer, a quasi primatologist, a noted expert on Dalmatian pyrethrum, an accidental historian, a passionate archive researcher and a perfect dinner-party hostess. She is part of the collective Danube Transformation Agency for Agency [Vienna-Novи Sad] and a team member of MMC LED ART [Novi Sad]. Since 2016, she has been lecturing at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, where she teaches Elements of Visual Art, blending her collaborative artistic research projects with educational strategies.

Halim Ramses is an artist & cultural practitioner based in Cairo, Egypt. Halim focuses on the notion of “gathering” as an act in itself. Thinking of gathering as a form, an ephemeral moment yet an embodied affect.

Through his practice he incorporates different mediums including participatory performances, tours, pedagogical programmes, story-telling and spell making sessions. As part of Halim's artistic practice, he facilitates the Re-imagining Egyptology Program which is a space for artists from diverse disciplines to come together and collaboratively work, discuss, share resources. The program is a collective exploration of attempts to challenge official and colonial understandings of Egyptian history and to disrupt the normative imagination of Egyptianness.

Cheshmak Shahsiah is an interdisciplinary artist and educator from Iran who works with various mediums such as prints, videos, and performances. They began their artistic journey with graffiti in 2003, and later took part in a number of group art projects in Tehran. They have worked with several groups and collectives in Iran, the United States, and Germany. Cheshmak's interest in artistic processes and experimentations led them to pursue an MFA at the University of New Mexico. They are currently living in Tehran and working on a community art space project called Kargah while researching the politics of mourning as a mood of organization for potential collectives to emerge.

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	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:30 - 12:30	<p>>9:30 Meeting each other / getting familiar with the space / words of welcome and introduction.</p> <p>>9:45 Introducing ourselves, names, and pronouns. Describe ourselves in six words only.</p> <p>>10:00 Building our common ground/rules.</p> <p>>10:30 Group exercise 1</p> <p>>10:45 Discussing the course flow</p> <p>>11:00 Break</p> <p>>11:15 Tree of Heaven Performance (Andrea)</p>	<p>>9:30 Fitness For Unlikely Species (Andrea)</p> <p>Fitness as a Method of Resilience</p> <p>>10:45 break</p> <p>>11:00 Ice, Water and Other Disobedient Objects (Andrea)</p> <p>Disobedience as a Method of Resilience - ice art group</p>	<p>>9:30 Up Against Supposition: Seeing With Ears, Reading With The Body 2 (Cheshmak)</p> <p>>10:45 break</p> <p>>11:00 Up Against Supposition: Seeing With Ears, Reading With The Body 2 (Cheshmak)</p> <p>Optional: We can discuss the text and video.</p>	Production	final production & Final presentation setup
12:30 -1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Shared lunch / Feedback session / Longer break 12- 1.30
1:30 - 4:30	<p>>1:30 Mapping out resilience (Shima)</p> <p>>3:00 break</p> <p>>3:30 A listening</p>	<p>>1:30 Dragging Love: Casting Love Amulets</p>	<p>>1:30 A Conversation Circle: Gathering As A Form. (Halim)</p>	<p>>1:30 group exercise 2</p> <p>>2:00 Preparation</p>	Final presentations > Closing round

	session (Shima)	Collectively. (Halim) >2:30 break >3:00 Up Against Supposition: Seeing With Ears, Reading With The Body 1 (Cheshmak)	>3:00 break >3:15 Group activity: a visit to the Tracing the Story of Mitholz Exhibition at the Alps Museum.	for presentation: developing the projects through one-on-one sessions and a collective feedback session.	
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The Tree of Heaven and *Other-than-Human* Stories

The illustrative lecture will tell the story of the Tree of Heaven at the London Zoo. The Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) first arrived in Europe in about 1751 from China as a praised ‘beautiful exotic’ specimen and widely planted as shade trees for public promenades and in gardens, but soon after it began spreading alarmingly across the landscape. Today it is ambiguously referred to as one of the ‘worst invasive plant species’ in the world. Beside being among the most pollution-tolerant of tree species, the Tree of Heaven is also human-resistant: it is fiercely resilient to human intervention and will respond to cutting by throwing out underground suckers which can damage pavements, drainage systems and building foundations. So what can the Tree of Heaven teach us about resilience? How to persist on Earth which is rapidly transforming itself by man-made climate change? And how can art help us think beyond the mere ‘invasiveness’ of species, a terminology that is clearly a product of western scientific thinking and an anthropocentric way of viewing Other-than-Human species.

Duration: 1:30 h

Mapping Out Resilience

This session will lay the grounds for understanding resilience. To question what resilience is, how can it be situated, defined, redefined, and documented? We will study modes of listening and how they can be used as methodologies for artistic practice and creation. Mapping here is homework to set sound, silence, and the spectrum in between to perform as a method.

Accessibility: Please approach Shima if you are sensitive to special sounds.

Duration: This session includes a 20-minute listening span.

Fitness for Unlikely Species- The Danube Edition

Have you ever wondered how it is to ruffle due to a light breeze or to withdraw with the low tide? How to dance as wrigglers, or to burrow yourself as a clam? ‘Fitness for unlikely species’ is a 30 minute fitness training and an illustrative lesson all rolled into one. The exercises are transforming our bodies into a performative choreography by mimicking entities whose shapes, movements and existence are affected by climate breakdown and biodiversity loss: ripples, rough waves, high tides and low tides, wrigglers, the dogfish, the fire-bellied toad, or for example, the freshwater mussel *Unio Crassus* by mimicking their movement and burrowing behavior, because understanding how clams' move across space and time can be a fundamental question in rivers's ecology. Physical exercises improve muscular strength and boost endurance, but they also increase cognitive performance. By using the practice of mimicry, these shape-shifting somatic exercises can be regarded as relational tools for finding new ways of resisting, coping and grieving. In particular, the exercises might also help trainees to address their own eco-anxiety and environmental grief. As Donna Haraway puts it: we are STAYING WITH THE TROUBLE!

Ice, Water and Other Disobedient Objects

In 1992, the Serbian artist Nikola Džafo initiated the art collective LED ART (Ice Art) and together with other artists created a performance by the title “Frozen Art” in which artworks were frozen in a collective action in a rented refrigerator truck parked on a busy street in Belgrade. In the conditions of WAR, freezing artworks was a symbolic act: an engaged critical commentary of the “icy reality,” on the destroyed and “frozen” state. Freezer trucks and ice correspond to our current “icy reality,” even though we are melting due to global warming. The workshop will begin with a discussion and the philosophy behind some of the actions initiated by the group Ice Art during the 90’s in Serbia, as an example on how disobedience can be seen as a method of resilience. Can water and/or ice be used as ‘disobedient objects’ and respond to current ecological, social and political developments? The workshop will take a closer look at the medium of water and ice, how it can be modified, rearranged and used in different (artistic) actions, times and spaces.

Dragging Love: Casting Love Amulets Collectively.

Halim invites you for a collective session of spell casting, we will be casting one of the most commonly casted spell types that function as a manifestation of love. It is literally translated from Arabic as Dragging The Lover.

It is an opportunity to Somatically realize our bodies in the new space that we will be in and to slowly think about the type of love energy we want to manifest and attract. Each one of us will come up with their own amulet that can accompany them.

Indoor/outdoor depending on the weather.

Accessibility:

We will go through every prompt mostly while sitting, we will be laying down and slowly casting spells through writing and drawing. Only one exercise requires to slowly roam around. For any requirements feel encouraged to address Halim with your needs.

Spiritually: it is a very slow process, and Halim will make sure to explain every step so one can decide if they feel comfortable going through it or not.

Duration: 60 min

Up Against Supposition: Seeing with ears, reading with the body.

This session invites individuals to listen to a sound piece that is made by a group of queers living in Tehran - individuals who survive through unlearning their bodies and their assigned social roles. We will explore the nuanced intersections between perception, privilege, and survival. By translating auditory experiences into drawings, which will later serve as scores for interactive performances, we aim to celebrate diversity, creativity, and resilience within our community.

Accessibility:

In the first part of the workshop, participants will engage in listening and drawing activities. No drawing skills are required—everyone is encouraged to participate at their own pace. The second part focuses on performance, where everyone is invited to engage based on their individual abilities and comfort levels.

Duration:

The first session - Tuesday afternoon - 90 minutes (introduction, listening, and drawing)

The second session - Wednesday morning - almost 120 minutes (performing the scores)

Video: In the Air by Liza Johnson (2009)

[Liza Johnson | Wexner Center for the Arts \(wexarts.org\)](#)

Text: [Unlearning the Common by Lauren Berlant](#) (from the book, On Withdrawal--Scenes of Refusal, Disappearance, and Resilience in Art and Cultural Practices)

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Gathering as a form: Assembling As A Method of Resilience.

A conversation circle, where a list of projects which were grouped together to *explore assembling as a form of resilience*- illustrating the different notions of coming together in space, focusing on the complexities of care and the highly sensitive methodologies required to create meaningful ways of being with each other.

The projects will be printed and physically present in the classroom. Participants are invited to listen to the project(s) that will attract them. The projects will be assembled in terms of layers, each layer will get deeper into the project. It is totally possible that one might find that the first layer is sufficient without the need to go further in detail. Participants are invited to interact with as many/few projects as one feels. We can think of these projects as a conversation starter exploring where they can direct us in our conversation thinking on how they relate to your context and practice.

You can access the list from [here](#).

Indoor

Accessibility: no movement is required, we will be sitting in a circle either on cushions on the ground or on chairs depending on preference/need. For any requirements feel encouraged to address Halim with your needs.

Duration: 60 to 90 min











