

Celebrating four years
of global innovation

2014 – 2017

AGE OF WONDER LAND



100 Days of Learning workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, 2017.

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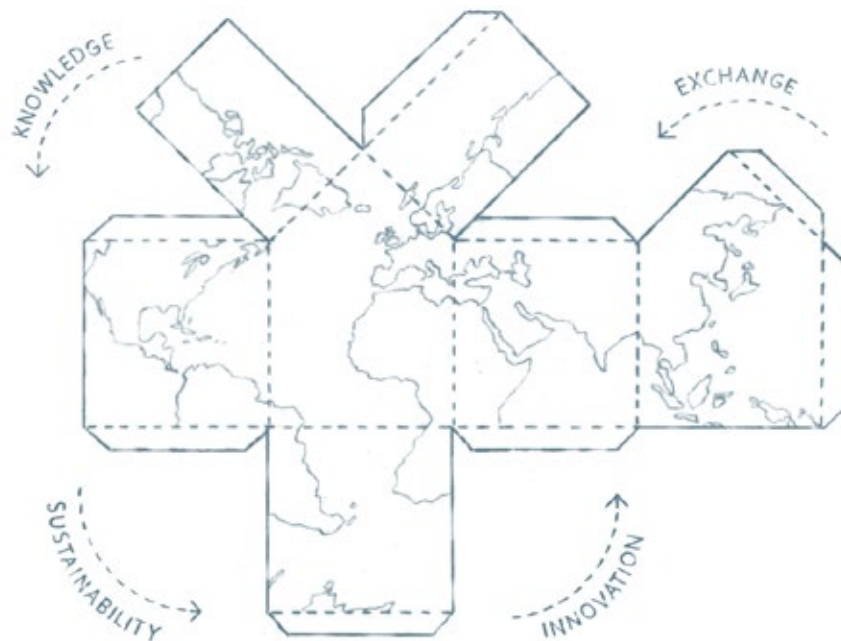


Dream Lab by Sandra Suubi,
Age of Wonderland 2014 in Natlab.

WHAT
YOU NEED
IN LIFE IS
ALREADY
IN AND
AROUND
YOU

Sandra Suubi

THIS IS ONLY THE END OF THE BEGINNING



Over four years Baltan Laboratories, Hivos and Dutch Design Foundation joined forces to create the *Age of Wonderland* programme, a response to wicked problems and outdated systems in society. It rallied the support of the creative global community, which fearlessly answered the call, head-on.

For four years creative thinkers, doers, inventors, artists and designers from all over the world reflected on the challenges that our planet and its people are facing. They explored a range of diverse issues and shared their perspectives within their communities, in Eindhoven with other creative professionals, and with visitors of Dutch Design Week and the World Design Event, in the form of workshops and playful interactions. After four years, the programme came to an end in 2017.

But it doesn't stop here

The outcome of this rich nexus of knowledge, resources and networks over these years is that *Age of Wonderland* – together with all the creatives that got involved – will have a lasting effect on innovation towards a fairer and greener world. In this publication, you will take an inspirational dive into *Age of Wonderland* and its multidimensional role as change-maker, platform and programme.

“WONDER IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM”

— Socrates

By the Age of Wonderland team

In a globalised world, we need to act together to successfully pursue the process of change by connecting people, knowledge and networks. Raising awareness about the asymmetry of our systems — often caused by power struggles and money — should not just be addressed, but must be replaced by new paradigms.

For four years *Age of Wonderland* embraced global challenges by creating an open dialogue based on empathy and curiosity. The programme stimulated a desire for change in which design and technology are important tools, and encouraged a reflective attitude towards developments in our complex society.

In 2014, Hivos and Baltan co-produced the development of *Age of Wonderland* by sharing their networks, resources and expertise. Hivos is an international organisation that seeks new solutions to persistent global issues. With smart projects in the right places, Hivos opposes discrimination, inequality, abuse of power and the unsustainable use of our planet's resources. Baltan Laboratories operates internationally as a collaborative platform

for future thinking that places art and design research at the core of its activities. By approaching creative, interdisciplinary practices as crucial ingredients for social innovation, both partners are addressing wicked problems in unconventional ways.

Baltan Laboratories saw Hivos as a partner to help realise a long-held ambition to grow its network internationally. From Baltan's perspective it was important that innovative concepts were developed by collaborating with the local ecosystem. For Hivos it was essential to be able to further develop follow-ups, and to support these more structurally. Despite the fact that both organisations had different goals in mind, their philosophies reinforced each other for the duration of the programme.

The focus and fellows

For each edition, a different subject was developed. The themes selected, were based on the potential of project to generate societal impact and the Sustainable Development Goals. As a starting point for these projects, we envisioned the crossover between social and cultural domains with economy, sustainability, education, food, energy, human rights. In this way, the themes were fundamentally approached from a broad angle.

The ‘pilot’ edition revolved around the role of designers globally to create impact with the theme “The Friendly Invasion of a New World Order”. The second edition was about Balancing Fair & Green food. The third year was dedicated to data. In the last edition - ‘100 Days of Learning’ – the aspect of personal knowledge was at the core, and it launched *Age of Wonderland* into a worldwide programme.



Age of Wonderland

Since 2014, Age of Wonderland has facilitated tailor-made collaborations between creative innovators from the Hivos networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and practitioners within The Netherlands. The programme is built on the premise that we need a more robust collaboration between creative makers and thinkers (read: innovators, scientists, engineers, designers, artists) from all over the world. When it comes to secure a livable, inclusive society and planet, we need to act on a global scale.

The process

An open call was made each year to select six international fellows, two per region (Asia, Latin America and Africa). It was important to strike the right balance between people, projects, gender diversity, and location. Another consideration was the subjects which resonated the most in The Netherlands and Eindhoven. For each edition from 2014 onwards, the six participants were invited for a six-week residency in Eindhoven. This allowed them to connect with local professionals as well as companies in Eindhoven to further their research. Their trajectories gradually evolved towards a more

Age of Wonderland 2015. Balancing Fair & Green Food edition in NatLab.



intense momentum over time, accumulating into a collective presentation during the Dutch Design Week of that year. Staging the research projects allowed for an open dialogue and to make new connections with a broad international audience. Also, new business models and start-up investors were connected to the programme.

The fact that fellows were brought to The Netherlands as ‘experience experts’ ensured that both the public and the network of professionals were equally triggered and perhaps enchanted by all sorts of ideas.

This back-to-front approach - traditionally, Westerners have imposed their knowledge and expertise on the Other as ‘missionaries’ – gave the programme an extra boost that resulted in sincere interest in new collaborations. At an international level there was a buzz about coming to Eindhoven and having new experiences in the form of an artists residency.

As well as the orchestrated introduction, it was also important to look at which projects had a natural match with the local network of companies and creatives. Like a true cultural melting pot, creatives came from Africa, Asia and Latin America to The Netherlands for a set time to lodge together, meet new people, develop ideas and get to know the city. A lively dynamic was fostered amongst

the fellows. This ensured the creation of new ideas, projects and co-operations, even independent of the *Age of Wonderland* programme once the residency was over.

The match-making

Working with local creatives and companies appeared to be a success, in the majority of cases. Fellows worked mostly with companies already affiliated with either Hivos or Baltan. In some instances, even start-ups started to sprout. For example, Ahad Katera’s project, which developed ties to DSM, and Roy Ombatti who was assisted by TNO and the Holst Centre. Sandra Suubi from Uganda was connected to CURE, a waste processing company, to collect plastic. Wonderful projects were also developed with Dutch makers by putting them in contact with *Age of Wonderland* fellows. Studio Joris de Groot and Iman Abdurrahman created their project ‘Backpack Radio Station’, and also Arie Syarifuddin who worked with Masha Ru and Atelier NL. Another inspirational collaboration was that of Paz Bernaldo and human geographer/urban designer, Isis Boot, and designer Marta Sierra García, whose different ways of working, from theoretical to design research, merged seamlessly (see section 2).

The *match-making* between creatives, designers and companies was not always straightforward. These



Roy Ombatti, Happy Feet project,
Age of Wonderland 2014.

processes had to be carefully guided and the objectives had to be clear. This was not always obvious, as some makers were not accustomed to thinking about their work in this way. And, companies are not always open to designers or artists, simply because they don't prioritise their time as such. But thanks to the connection made in 2015 with Rijnconsult, a number of *Age of Wonderland* fellows were linked to some organisations in food production, like Tomatoworld in the Westland. The fresh perspective of the fellows delivered proposals for new solutions to answer the challenges their companies faced. And in 2016, fellow Ahad Katera was matched to Enpuls/Enexis as 'artist in residency'.

The presentation

An important component of the programme was the meeting of the fellows with the public of Dutch Design Week (DDW). Workshops and lectures gave visitors to the event an insight into the projects, developments and research trajectories in collaboration with local makers and bedrijven. The presentations during DDW were less focused on product design, but more on the design of stale or jammed systems, one of which is our society — a trend that suits DDW and gave it an extra edge. The fellows got the chance to work on social quandries and shared their ideas and attempts to tackle

them. It wasn't really about what was presented, but more about exposing the process of how they got there.

The fellows functioned as intermediaries between both worlds. The dialogue with the public crystallised new insights and perspectives, judging from the enthusiastic responses from the fellows. After a period of introspection and focus during the first half of the residency, the attention, energy and public interactions of an event like DDW provided a fantastic dynamic, and gave an incredible push and stimulus to continue. The fellows felt enriched by the reactions and feedback.

For each edition there were also symposia held with different guests. This was to provide an element of necessary deepening of the subject from the perspective of different cultures. As well as these debates, the makers' hands-on mentality was an important way to connect with each other and exchange knowledge. The 9-day event was literally the icing on the cake!

The city of Eindhoven

The primary objective of *Age of Wonderland* was to bring global creatives into contact with the potential of the creative and high tech ecosystem in the city of Eindhoven. This city flourished as a result of the manufacturing industry. Philips landed here to make

light globes more than a century ago, and became worldwide market leader in the field of consumer electronics owing to the far-reaching development of automatisation within the production process. The impact of this has had an influence on the city to this day. The importance of collaboration is recognised because that's what made the city what it is today. Developing new ideas combined with entrepreneurship is woven into the mentality of people and companies here. Knowledge, technology and design form a significant trio for the future development of this region.

To stay ahead of the game it is essential to invest in people, culture and knowledge. The city can open up to new economic and demographic developments through actively involving other cultures and regions of the whole world. Only then will knowledge be dynamic enough, and a region can further develop and become resilient in these fast-changing times. This geo-political awareness is not always evident. *Age of Wonderland* tried to address this awareness by showing that this does not necessarily have to be a threat, but is in fact an incredible opportunity to offer new developments. The first edition was appropriately entitled "The Friendly

Invasion of a New World Order" to show that how much more can be achieved if you simply open up.

The ecosystem of Eindhoven's companies and designers based in technology and design seemed interesting enough to people the world over to test their ideas and possibilities in practice and to compare these with the local developments such as those found on the High Tech Campus and the TU/e. At the same time the goal of the programme was to get ideas from other countries off the ground and have an influence on the processes and innovative developments in Eindhoven. Some countries are much further than us in other fields. Think: mobile banking. That has already been developed faster in African companies. *Age of Wonderland* wanted to create awareness about this by involving policy makers, politicians and ministries. For example, Eindhoven's councillor for culture and innovation Mary Ann Scheurs has always had a special place in her heart for the project.

The grand finale

The experience and knowledge gained from previous editions resulted in the fourth and last edition: 100



Days of Learning. A radically different approach was taken. From the very beginning the team was aware that they had big dreams, but also a limited reach. For each edition, only 6 fellows could be brought to Eindhoven. In the trajectory where research and development were central, it was difficult for some to continue developing their projects because the time for collaboration, knowledge exchange and presentation was far too short and the financial support and manpower was lacking.

The idea behind 100 Days of Learning was to start a movement where people would share their life

experiences with each other, as ‘teachers’. The project encouraged a more personal form of interaction. At the same time people started thinking about themselves because the other would ask them ‘what is the most important thing that you can teach me?’ How can knowledge be transformed to something that is truly meaningful for someone else?

The power of 100 Days of Learning lay mostly in its huge scale and its low threshold. Anyone, anywhere in the world, could organise a Day of Learning, on the spot. Knowledge gained and lessons learnt



What's in a name?

The name Age of Wonderland originates from Age of Wonder, a festival that Baltan Laboratories organised in 2014 where the central question raised was “what connects artists and scientists?” The resulting ideas from this event were translated into a new platform, with an international programme and collaboration to stimulate collaboration between different cultures, and to facilitate exchanges between both hemispheres, worldwide.

were immediately shared via the online knowledge sharing platform, Medium. The cross-fertilisation proved invaluable. In this way *Age of Wonderland* could facilitate ideas, knowledge and inspiration by giving “dynamic learning and personal knowledge” a platform. This form of knowledge distribution, of culture fusion between worldwide actors finally came into play with 100 Days of Learning.

Age of Wonderland, 100 Days of Learning exhibition in Natlab, Dutch Design Week 2017.



People's Pavilion, World Design Event 2017, Eindhoven.

The conclusion

“Wonder is the beginning of wisdom.” So said Socrates and it seems apt for *Age of Wonderland*. The programme has shown that it is in fact by bringing together curious people from different backgrounds, creativity and expertise will eventuate. This is necessary to arrive at new ideas and wisdom. In addition, awareness is also created about the role of creatives in tackling and redesigning wicked, global, social questions. Within the space of four editions, an incredible number of projects were developed around social innovation, climate change, food, economy, “technologisation”, data, and so on.

Our ambition to generate enthusiasm for alternative roadmaps and sustainable ideas for a better future remains. Baltan Laboratories and Hivos continue in creating social impact by stimulating cross-pollination of ideas between people with different backgrounds: artists, researchers, companies, education, NGOs, cultural organisations, governments and citizens.

Age of Wonderland stops here. But we invite everyone to continue in its legacy, to feel ownership, and to contribute to a vital transition for a sustainable society.

THERE IS
NONE WHO
CAN NOT
TEACH
SOMEBODY
SOMETHING

Balthasar Gracían

CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS OF GLOBAL INNOVATION

URGENT MATTERS AND PROGRESSIVE CREATIVES



“We cannot isolate what happens here from what happens there. We need to co-operate with creatives around the world. The world is a tiny place.”

— Arne Hendriks, Curator and artist, The Netherlands

2014 FIRST FRIENDLY INVASION

Let's start at the very beginning. In the autumn of 2014 Baltan Laboratories and Hivos joined forces in what was called 'an international research and design project'. That September, six talented creative people from Latin America, Africa and Asia (*Age of Wonderland* fellows as they are called) collaborated with counterparts (designers and companies) based in Eindhoven on innovative projects during a 2-month residency. Their research and processes were presented in October during Dutch Design Week (DDW) in a group exhibition located in a living lab, at Natlab –

the old Philips laboratory. Here, coloured Post-it notes dotted the walls, tools covered the tables, and the noise of spinning bicycle wheels resonated across the space. Visitors of DDW engaged with the creatives via guided tours, talks and joined the creative process via workshops. This first edition was broad, and presented a diversity of innovative ideas and practices as a starting point for the pursuit of systematic and sustainable change worldwide. The subtitle: 'The Friendly Invasion of a New World Order'.

Fellows 2014

Andreas Siagian (Indonesia)

David Marín (Guatemala)

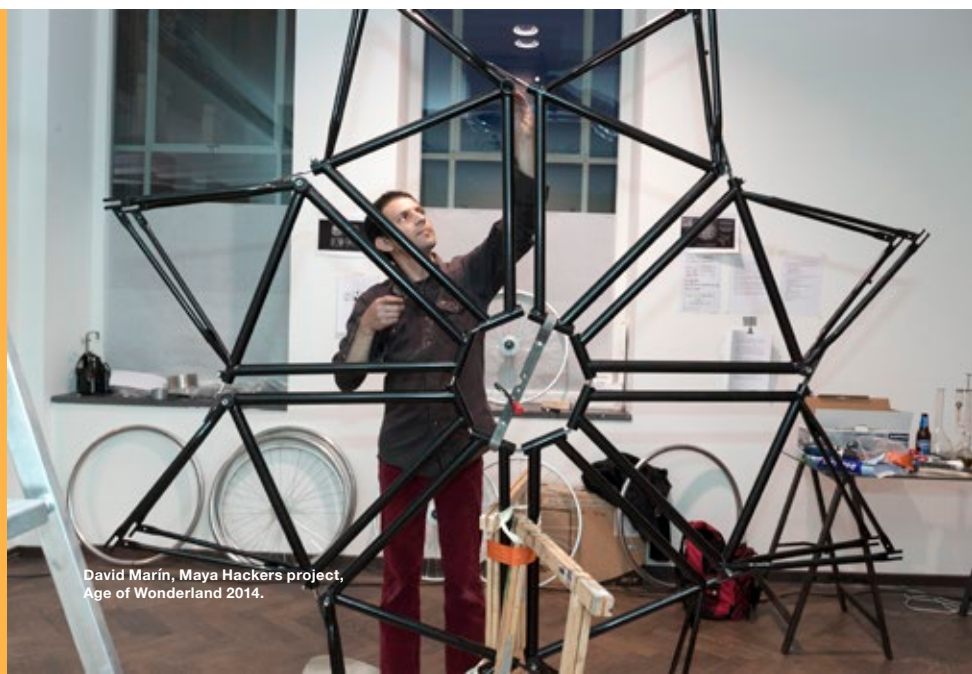
José Montealegre (Nicaragua)

Roy Ombatti (Kenya)

Sandra Suubi (Uganda)

Saska/Seterhen Akbar Suriadinata (Indonesia)

Partners our fellows teamed up with:
Griet Menschaert, TNO, the CornerStone,
Cure Afvalbeheer, and others



David Marín, Maya Hackers project,
Age of Wonderland 2014.



David Marín, Maya Hackers project,
Age of Wonderland 2014.

Scent and simplicity

One activist in the 2014 exhibition who ‘invaded’ was the artist and scientist **David Marín** from Guatemala, who explored sustainable alternatives for a popular Mayan souvenir, Mayan incense, which is pressuring the local ecosystem. He resolved to create a perfume through a network of small, localised micro-enterprises devoted to the regeneration of patches of forest. “Only when you get to the point where it is more profitable to take care of nature than to destroy it, then nature will be taken care of because as long as somebody can make money out of that, then somebody will do it,” said Marín. He was linked to Cartamundi in Belgium, a company that produces playing cards. Together they investigated the opportunities of producing the Mayan cards of the 20 Nawals (the signs of energy). Further, David was also in conversation with other artists about the production of a perfume line.

Act local, solve global

The new media artist and co-founder of the citizen initiative Lifepatch, **Andreas Siagian**, from Indonesia, considers small-scale activity to be vital to his workshops with the local community. His project back home was based on the global language of hacking. “In a country like Indonesia, hacking becomes natural,

because the infrastructure is very limited,” Siagian explained. His experience in Europe was that there is a bit less flexibility in working patterns, compared with Indonesia. During DDW, he taught visitors how technology works by using simple electronics, which he made in response to biological elements, such as touch, light and humidity. His practice still continues and he returned in 2017 for another workshop, emphasising that the solution to a global environmental problem can best be solved by local communities.

Learning by doing

A simple idea of technology also resulted in the project ‘Happy Feet’ by **Roy Ombatti**, a student engineer from Kenya. His mission was to design customised shoes for thousands of people who experience foot deformities, primarily as a result of infection caused by a flesh-eating sand flea known as a *jigger*. The engineer came up with the idea of making customised shoes from recycled plastic using 3D printing technology, *affordable* 3D printing technology. Ombatti worked together with SLEM, the knowledge and innovation centre for shoes in Waalwijk. There, the idea was born to only produce the soles of the shoe out of recycled plastic with a 3D printer and use recycled fabrics to bind the sole onto the foot.



Since his experiments and learning experience in The Netherlands, Ombatti launched the startup ‘African-Born 3D Printing’ (AB3D), which builds low-cost 3D printers from recycled e-waste and sells them to schools, makerspaces, and companies. In addition to building and selling printers, Roy now teaches workshops on 3D printing at local schools, sharing this technique with the next generation.

Active learning through collaboration

The idea of active learning was central to these first collaborations. Thinking and action found their meeting place in Eindhoven, facilitating an open space where participants and passers-by would exchange different perspectives on local systems, while reflecting on the global context. What came across was the resilience of participants, such as Ombatti, to develop a career within the creative professions despite significant adversity. They had forged their practice while living in difficult conditions with few support systems, and reached out to people, young and old, to facilitate new ways of thinking. They also inspired local designers and companies in Eindhoven. Arne Hendriks at that time said: “These are people where the

value of the work they do is in working together with people, sharing their knowledge. So, they are constantly present in their work. They do not hide behind smart, superficial beauty. They are here. So that means it is a learning environment for everybody.” A few years later, it proved to be a model for a new type of collective exhibition, which invited people to engage with the creative process.

SENSE
OF SELF DOES
NOT ONLY
APPLY TO YOU,
BUT ALSO
TO THE WORLD
AND PEOPLE
AROUND
YOU

Arne Hendriks

“We must simply not exploit natural resources. We should produce just enough to meet our needs and not for economic reasons. If we follow the instructions of nature, our ecological impact will just be the maintenance of the balance of the ecosystem. We hope the policy-makers dare to apply our thinking in the wider environment, to influence social behaviour at large.”

— Yoyo Yogasmana, Artist from Indonesia

2015 FAIR FOOD (FOR THOUGHT)

The 2015 edition of the *Age of Wonderland* expanded its 2014 set up, and joined forces with students from Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE), specifically the department of Food Non Food (now called department of Living Matters). The programme looked at ‘Balancing Green and Fair Food’, interrogating the sustainability of our food systems, looking at how they interconnect with the environment and searching for alternatives to feed communities. It challenged our fellows and DAE students to reflect upon the processes of food production, consumption, and distribution.

Projects developed during the residency programme proposed a direct solution for issues related to soil, water, rice, compost, resilience, plastic and abundance and ranged from the nomadic tastes of Kyrgyzstan, to the ancient traditions of a remote self-sustainable village in Indonesia, and a waste facility that turns bio-waste into organic compost in Tanzania. Some would just be developed locally, while it was hoped that others would inspire communities and be adopted elsewhere in the world.

Fellows 2015

Achmad Fadillah (Indonesia)

Ahad Katera (Tanzania)

Arie Syarifuddin (Indonesia)

Sari Dennise (Mexico)

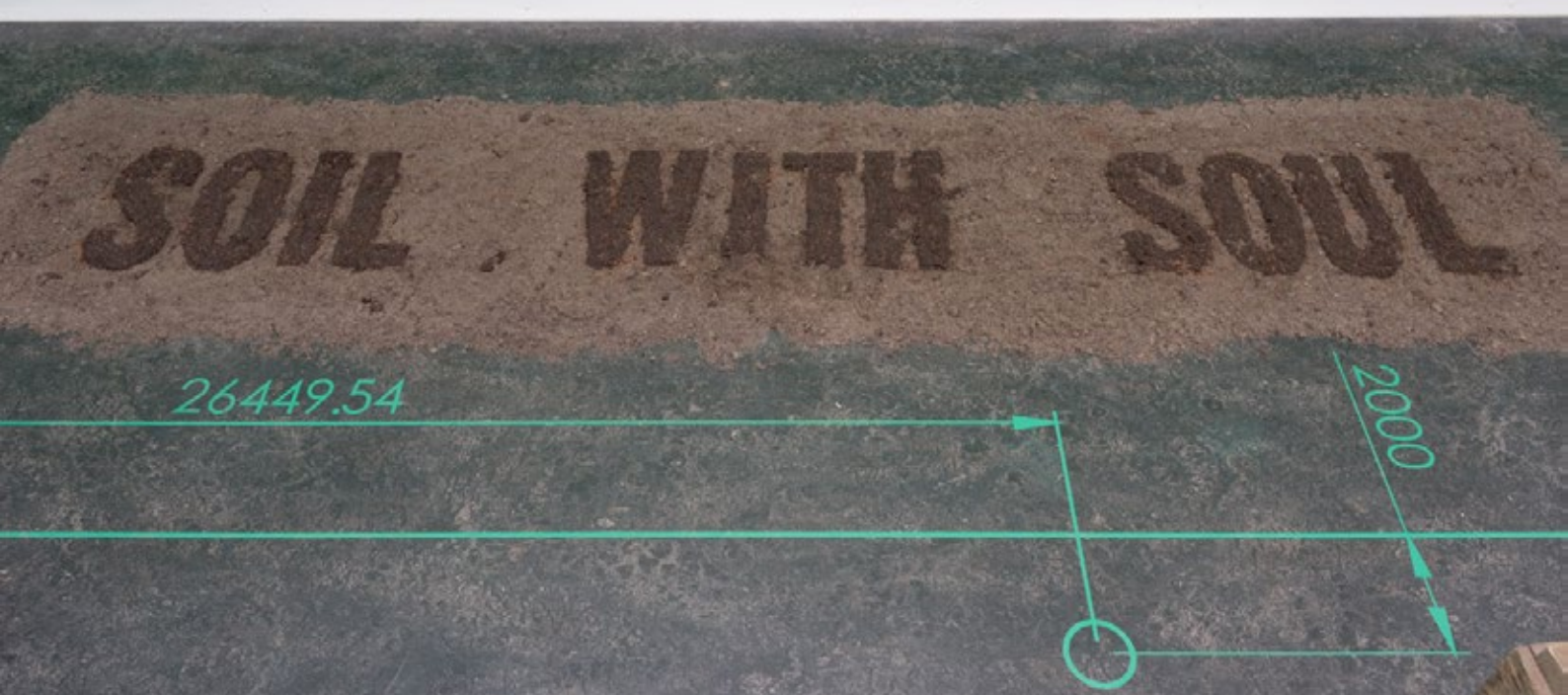
Symbat Satybaldieva (Kyrgyzstan)

Yoyo Yogasmana (Indonesia)

The fellows worked with students from the Design Academy, companies such as DSM, BAM and Tomatoworld, Studio NL, Masha Ru and the foodbank in Eindhoven.



Sari Dennise, researched food distribution systems, *Age of Wonderland* 2015.



Roots and wings

For **Ahad Katera**, his *Age of Wonderland* residency brought new insights into waste collection, separation and composting systems. His idea was to solve the waste problem in his hometown Dar es Salaam by collecting organic waste and turning it into fertiliser —using low tech solutions — in collaboration with the local community and the authorities. This resulted in creating his own company ‘Guavay’. During his visit to The Netherlands, he started to research how to improve the technique for recycling organic waste, together with Dr. Kor Zwart (Wageningen University), Jacobine Das Gupta (DSM), Super Local design studio and Marnix van Holland (Hivos). Currently, ‘Guavay’ manufactures up to 100bags/month of fertiliser, which are sold to gardeners and are expanding to international businesses like BAM. In return, Katera brought to the Dutch community grass roots experience, a deep understanding of local issues prompting the best possible solutions suiting the local situation and positively contributing to the lives of all people involved. His project can be seen as a blueprint for other cities dealing with waste and energy. In fact, in spring 2017, Katera was ‘creative in residence’ at the Energy Lab of Dutch energy network operator Enexis, called Enpuls. Several articles appeared about Katera, for example on the [Hivos website](#) and [magazine](#). He was also on Dutch [television](#).

Reviving traditions

Yoyo Yogasmana is an artist but also a personal advisor to the king and queen of the Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community which is situated in the Western Java Mountains. In Yoyo’s community, rice is venerated for its power to give life. In fact, rice is sacred, and even has its own ceremonies, is cultivated and harvested only by hand and can never be sold. During DDW 2015, Yoyo cooked a rice meal for visitors while presenting the details of his community’s ancestral and ecologically sound traditions in food production and consumption. By sharing this ecological intelligence, which the community has maintained from ancient times to the present day, he gave people concrete evidence of how their method continues to work.

To seal the beginning of the Next Nature Movement, director Koert van Mensvoort awarded the first symbolic ECO coin – a currency for nature ecology value – to Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community for their work in Indonesia, preserving more than 130 existing rice varieties without any use of insecticides.

(Re)connecting with our soils

Another charming and astute project was the one of **Arie Syarifuddin**, from the Jatiwangi Art Factory in the city of Jatiwangi in West Java, Indonesia. His project

THERE IS
ALWAYS
ENOUGH

Yoyo Yogasmana

‘Claynialism’ aimed to use the humble and readily available clay found in the soil of his home town to realise nutritious and delicious food products. Together with designer Lonny van Ryswyck and artist Masha Ru, Arie experimented with various types of edible clay and classified them according to their taste and material qualities. The goal was to explore clay as both a cooking ingredient and a material that can be used to make objects that can be eaten instead of being discarded. By making the visitors eat something they associate with dirt, Syarifuddin invited them to (re)connect with our soils. Read more about the projects of Arie and Masha.

Active learning through collaboration

The second edition pointed out the relevance of the process of horizontal collaborative learning within socially engaged practices and the risk of having ideas stolen when the artists don’t become part of the communities. Both Arie Syarifuddin and Yoyo Yogasmana stressed the importance of the local understanding and the current use or misuse of traditional knowledge without analysing its implicit value for our contemporary society. Instead of looking for a continuous process of innovation, the practice of

these artists is based in the analysis of a concrete local context, its heritage and the popular wisdom as the origin of re-interpretations of our reality in conjunction with technological developments. The projects of most fellows were creating prototypes or models of social innovation working in close collaboration with local communities, cultural institutions and companies. In this process, artists become catalysts, bringing questions that normally are not possible within a business environment, challenging companies and institutions, paving the way for social issues and urgencies. Katera, Yogasmana and Syarifuddin were linked to students of Design Academy Eindhoven. As a result, students who might normally prefer to go to big art and design capitals chose to go to more authentic community-based places for their internships, as a follow up to the collaboration they had with the *Age of Wonderland* fellows.



Masha Ru and Arie Syarifuddin's edible clay project, Age of Wonderland 2015.

2016

DATA IN A NEW CONTEXT

In 2016, *Age of Wonderland* interrogated the politics and future of big data. The ‘Big DATA. Big DADA?’ programme focused on the virtues and risks of smart systems embedding our public and private domains. The fellows and their Dutch counterparts pondered over issues like: How can virtual reality help to create empathy? Can a mobile radio station function as a databank for anticipating natural disasters? Is big data an effective tool for improving the infrastructure and social cohesion in a city? How can ancient Mayan knowledge be unlocked digitally? A subject as big

data shows how politically coloured design is, as explained by Arne Hendriks: “Many policy decisions are not made based on experience in the field, but of ones and zeros. Big data are mainly owned by large companies that can afford the computer capacity to collect information on a large scale, and are interested in a limited number of subjects and a narrow audience. Knowledge is power, but it also means that anything that is not measured remains unknown.” You can read the whole article with Arne Hendriks [here](#).

Fellows 2016

[Ali Eslami](#) (Iran)

[Branly López](#) (Guatemala)

[Budi Prakosa](#) (Indonesia)

[Iman Abdurrahman](#) (Indonesia)

[Ngwinula ‘Unu’ Kingamkono](#) (Tanzania)

[Paz Bernaldo](#) (Chile)

Some of the counter fellows were:
Louwrien Wijers, Masha Ru, Marta Sierra Garcia,
Isis Boot and Joris de Groot.



Iman Abdurrahman and Joris de Groot developed Backpack Radio, Age of Wonderland 2016.

Disaster data

Indonesian designer **Iman Abdurrahman** focused on a blind spot of big data: the thousands of Indonesian islands that are not connected to the Internet or telephone networks. Abdurrahman developed a radio system with which isolated islanders can warn each other. Together with Dutch designer Joris de Groot, he developed the Backpack Radio Station. The backpack is made out of lightweight waterproof and fireproof materials and powered by long-lasting batteries and mini solar panels, contains a mini radio station as well as a database that makes accessible the data necessary to predict upcoming disasters. At the *What Design Can Do* conference in 2017, the project won a Climate Action Challenge award, including a production budget and an acceleration programme that will assist designers in developing their proposals into prototypes.

(Virtual) Reality behind the numbers

Information about disasters that have already taken place, however, is often too cold and emotionless, in the opinion of **Ali Eslami**, media designer from Iran. He developed a virtual reality application that brings you closer to the victims of terrorist attacks, bombings

and humanitarian disasters than the news ever will: DeathTolls Experience.

With DeathTolls Experience, Eslami is seeking to ‘resensitise’ the general public to the reality behind the abstract statistics on the hundreds of thousands of deaths in the Middle East.

Eslami investigated of how virtual reality can not only restore empathy, but also provide a context for news reports in which the numbers of victims can be counted but not comprehended. In 2016, DeathTolls Experience was awarded the Scenic IDFA DocLab Award for Immersive Non-Fiction. The piece became available in 2018, to download on HTC's Viveport store. Read more about the project on [The Creators Project](#).

Open public data

Paz Bernaldo explored whether open data is a potential tool for social innovation that aims to fight inequality and exclusion, and does so in relation to a current grassroots initiative to transform an urban hill into a truly open public space in the city of Melipilla. She found out that in no way was she going to access big data, create it or manage it. Big data related to the



VR experience by Ali Eslami during the Big DATA. Big DATA? exhibition in Natlab.

“We have trouble understanding and accepting mass deaths. For example, numbers like 1; 2; 14; 20; 50, are all quantities that we encounter quite frequently and therefore we’re able to rationalise them with a representative mind model. But then we get to numbers like 1,000; 10,000; 20,000. These numbers become increasingly difficult to conceptualise. But we can still grasp the general meaning of such numbers using visual models of large scale things we encounter often in our little realities.”

— Ali Eslami, Media designer from Iran

communities surrounding this urban hill is either non-existent, or is in the hands of companies. So, the step back was to ask what type of data there was, or had to be collected. And the answer was *thick data*, context-rich data, qualitative data. Data that was highly needed to understand the systems and actors that could allow or block the plans to create a park. Packed with the outcomes of her research in Eindhoven, with support from human geographer/urban designer Isis Boot, and designer Marta Sierra García, she continued her project. Read more about her ongoing project on Medium, [here](#) and [here](#).

Less data and more interpreters

The exhibition of *Age of Wonderland* showed six non-Western applications of big data —constructive and activist. “Data is pretty meaningless without interpretation”, said Lorenzo Gerbi, who was the counterpart of fellow Unu Kingamkono. “It’s just the first step in the understanding process (from data to information, to knowledge, to wisdom, to action) but

it looks like all the attention now is focused on it. This is simply because data is more and more available. But its increased availability doesn’t mean that we are automatically getting a greater knowledge: on the contrary, in many cases the data overload slows the understanding process, because of the incapability to process and interpret it. We would need less data and more interpreters; probably in this way we would acquire more meaningful knowledge to base our actions on.”



Paz Bernaldo explaining her work in the Age of Wonderland exhibition 2016 in Natlab.


2017 100 DAYS OF LEARNING, AND MORE TO COME...

During the previous three years, *Age of Wonderland* learned the importance of face-to-face learning experiences, of sharing success as well as failure, of connecting on a personal level, and of raising awareness amongst the public of the necessity to include knowledge from all corners of the world. The **2017 and final edition** of *Age of Wonderland* was all about developing methods, tools and ideas for knowledge transfer, based on commonalities rather than potential differences.

What set this 2017 edition apart from previous years is that we were not constrained by time and space. Instead we invited artists, researchers, front-runners, social entrepreneurs and designers to take part in **100 Days of Learning**, executing their contribution within their own city, country or somewhere else, at any time throughout the whole year. For the **kick-off** of the project, Arne Hendriks and Christine Wagner flew to East Africa for two days in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and two days in Nairobi (Kenya). Their mission: Exploring how *Age of Wonderland* can share knowledge and experiences of different people and show us new ways of learning and engaging in global social innovation.

Over the course of 2017, 100 Days of Learning really took place all over the globe, also through the four Hivos regional offices in Nairobi, Harare, Costa Rica and Jakarta. In their local communities, people from all kinds of nations, backgrounds, races and gender shared personal stories, ideas, and practices, not to be found in textbooks or taught at school. Also, former fellows were more than happy to make their contribution.

The pinnacle of 100 Days of Learning took place during the first edition of World Design Event (WDE). We offered workshops and lectures on different topics: from Earthworms, DIY time travel, to nomadic living, exploring eating clay and storytelling. Here we also invited the public to participate and engage them in thinking about what knowledge is of value for their surroundings or even organise a day of Learning themselves. And we welcomed some old familiar faces, like **Sandra Suubi**, **Masha Ru**, **Arie Syarifuddin**, **Branly López** and **Andreas Siagian**.



LET THE TEACHING BEGIN!

100 Days of Learning pilot 2017 in
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Let the teaching begin!

100 Days of Learning encouraged us to embrace different types of knowledge by looking at the many ways we learn and obtain knowledge. It was also about *not* knowing, about un-learning what you (think you) already know. So, the focus was less on sharing ‘educational knowledge’ which is taught at schools and universities, but rather on the knowledge and experiences that have had significant impact on daily or personal lives in a positive way and have given tools to connect in a better way to others and our planet. By learning together, teachers will be students and students will be teachers. We are sure this distributed learning will evolve to grow new, strong global networks, contributing to social innovation worldwide. This means that only after 100 Days of Learning will the teaching truly begin!

WELCOME TO THIS DAY OF LEARNING

A MANIFESTO: 100 DAYS OF LEARNING

Arne Hendriks
wrote a manifest
to invite you to share
the aim of 100 Days
of Learning!

We asked people across the world, people like you, what they felt we needed to learn to make the world a better place. To avoid getting stuck in big talk with very little practical output, we invited them to look within themselves and to find things they wanted to express and share: lessons learned through experience and personal interests, not via books or lectures. Often, we think of change as a big, complicated process, and it is, but this often makes it difficult to believe in the power of our individual actions. Yet during and beyond 100 Days of Learning, these actions are precisely what matters. We believe that real transformation comes from within the individual. It is only when the people embrace the new ideas and apply them within their own lives, that the bigger process of societal change happens. Not the other way around.

100 Days of Learning is about taking responsibility and getting involved. Especially with those small things that are important to us, and that can easily be embraced by others if shared. 100 Days of Learning invites YOU to teach and to learn. There is not a single person alive that doesn't have something to offer from which we can learn. Unfortunately, most people keep their thoughts and experiences to themselves, while the challenges we face continue to increase.

100 Days of Learning is about opening up and asking questions: What can I learn to make this world a better place? What could I teach others from my own personal experiences and ideals? What small transformation within myself helps to a positive change? Can we promise each other to try and do something new and differently after today?

100 Days of Learning is about starting somewhere, in your home, under a tree, in the office or a café, to talk about the things we would like to learn with others. Sharing our knowledge is not just about speaking to

the many, but to those around us willing to listen. A whisper might yet turn into a roar, as others join in and our voice gains confidence.

100 Days of Learning is about building a network of whisperers: 100 whisperers for change, with 100 different voices, and 100 different personal interests. From 100 different locations around the globe we are starting to speak about what matters to us as citizens of the world. We believe real global change can only come from changing and broadening perspectives, on both sides of the equator. 100 Days of Learning includes at least as many voices from the global south as the north.

100 Days of Learning is about proximity, simplicity and equality. And it is about innovation, not of systems or technology, but innovation from within ourselves. You are here with others, to learn from each other, to listen to each other and hopefully to speak up yourself. Real change doesn't come from outside, but from within. If we transform, the world transforms with us.

100 DAYS OF LEARNING

In order to rediscover new ways of thinking and challenge our beliefs, the exchange of life experiences with others is key. To make the world a better place, we need to embrace change on an individual level, and inspire others to do the same. The knowledge, experiences and documentation of these days is collected in real life and on a living online platform. Please go to medium.com/100-days-of-learning.

MEET THE TEAM

THE FOUNDERS OF AGE OF WONDERLAND ARE STILL BELIEVERS!

Teddy Tops interviewed
Arne Hendriks, Iris van den Boezem
did the same with Christine Wagner
and Renée Roukens chatted with
Olga Mink.

Of course behind the wonderful idea of starting *Age of Wonderland* are its people. Arne Hendriks, Olga Mink and Christine Wagner found each other in this joint action for a greener and fairer world, and against growing social inequality. They found that, in order to face the reality of today and tomorrow, we need other kinds of collaborations; such as knowledge exchange between non-western and western countries as well as collaborations linking professions and skills. Under the name of *Age of Wonderland*, it was people who invited makers, thinkers and doers from Latin America, Africa and Asia to work on challenges where scarcity and ingenuity go hand in hand.

MEET CHRISTINE WAGNER

“INNOVATION CAN ONLY ORIGINATE FROM CREATIVITY”

By Iris van den Boezem

ABOUT

Christine Wagner initiated Age of Wonderland for Hivos (Humanistic Institute of Development Cooperation), linking it to businesses and partners inside and outside the cultural sector. Wagner studied art history, theatre science and philosophy at the universities of Vienna and Cologne. She worked at the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (Royal Art Academy) and the Prince Claus Fund before continuing as a freelancer for several cultural projects, which link (performing) artists, designers and other creatives from Africa, Asia and Latin America to The Netherlands/Europe.



“In a world where social inequality is growing,” *Age of Wonderland* programme manager Christine Wagner (Hivos) says, “we need other kinds of collaborations, including knowledge exchange between creatives from countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.” So how does she feel about how the four years of *Age of Wonderland* turned out?

On a drizzly Thursday afternoon in October 2017, Christine Wagner and I meet in the café of the Van Abbemuseum, after having just attended a Day of Learning at the World Design Event in which Chinara Seidakhmatova from Kyrgyzstan shared her



knowledge on nomadic culture in her home country. Our tea is served with fortune cookies, and to be honest, the fortune that I pull out suits Wagner much better than it does me. It says: *Your aim is to reorganize and reshape space. It will change the way that people relate to their environment.* (Paula Arntzen). Together with Hivos, Baltan Laboratories and Dutch Design Foundation, Wagner has truly triggered a shift in the way people relate to their environment, for both fellows of *Age of Wonderland* as well as for visitors of *Age of Wonderland* activities.

According to Wagner, reorganizing and reshaping space – for instance, addressing practical or ideological problems – will have the best chance of success if the start is from the grass roots. There can be no change within the world without a change taking place inside yourself. Or, as it is written on one of the *Age of Wonderland* information cards: No Change without Exchange.

Working bottom-up instead of top-down is one of the main principles of *Age of Wonderland*. Why?

“Well, if you ask me, the world of today is at a turning point. There are big problems, smaller problems. Figuratively speaking, in some countries the world even seems to be upside down. In order to create long-lasting solutions, I’m convinced that conquering problems can only happen by taking a step into another direction, *away* from the reason the problem arose in the first place. In order to make this work, we need to collaborate with artists and creative thinkers, as they often approach challenges from a different angle using creativity. And we especially need to include designers from Africa, Asia and Latin America in our work as they deal with problems on a daily basis. So, they often come up with fitting answers more easily.”

In what way did *Age of Wonderland* add value to finding solutions?

“Four years ago, when we started out, our main goal was to boost the projects and research our fellows came up with. We wanted to do this together with designers from The Netherlands. In partners like Baltan Laboratories and the Dutch Design Foundation in Eindhoven, we found two steady partners in the Dutch creative industries. After one pilot year the co-operation between Hivos, the Dutch Design Foundation and Baltan turned out to be a success for our fellows and for ourselves. We received some funding and decided to prolong *Age of Wonderland* for three more years.”



Why do you think connecting Dutch artists to their colleagues in Africa, Asia and Latin-America is so important?

“Because only when we share our realities and knowledge worldwide we can shift our viewpoints and come up with new solutions. To illustrate my answer, let’s look at two of the fellows we worked with in the last four years. Yoyo Yogasmana, for instance, who is an artist and lives in the Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community in the remote area of Mount Halimun in West Java, where he serves as a personal advisor to the local king and queen. In 2015, he visited Eindhoven and he cooked beautiful meals using the sacred rice of his community. In Ciptagelar rice is holy; the locals sing, pray and dance for their rice and it is not permitted to sell the rice, as it is holy. Now, worldwide about 50% of food production is wasted. If we considered our food as holy, we probably would value food much more. Yoyo Yogasmana shared his traditions with the visitors of the Dutch Design Week – and in a way he challenged visitors to question the way we treat food in western society. Through *Age of Wonderland*, Yogasmana also opened the doors of Ciptagelar Kasepuhan to the world. Later on, two students of the Design Academy Eindhoven visited him in Indonesia and worked with him. It was a life changing experience – as much for the students as it was for Yogasmana and his community. Also, the Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community received the first ECO Coin from designer Koert van Mensvoort, for the sustainable cultivation of rice.

In 2016, *Age of Wonderland* connected to another Indonesian artist – Budi Prakosa. His goal was to develop user-friendly software that enables people with no knowledge of programming to develop their own database system. Via *Age of Wonderland* he got in touch with the Design Academy Eindhoven and Malaysian designer Xue Jing Lim. While Budi mainly focused on developing software, Xue Jing supported him with visualising the content of his platform. By combining their knowledge, they were able to create something bigger, something better than they ever could have done if they had worked alone.”

Why are you personally so passionate about *Age of Wonderland*?

“In my opinion wealth – both in material ways as well as in terms of knowledge and wisdom – is distributed very unevenly throughout the world. That is, between continents, between countries, but also *within* countries. My own world view shifted significantly when I took part in an exchange programme. I grew up in a mostly white,



German, industrial, ‘car city’, Wolfsburg, and I was placed at a high school in Los Angeles. There I encountered a variety of different nationalities and cultures for the very first time, and it definitely changed my view of the world and the way I live today.

Through my experience in LA, the seed of my own life mission was planted. It’s my personal goal to facilitate and stimulate dialogues between different (sub)cultures in our world. Of course, I’m aware of the fact that ‘everyone understanding everyone’ is an illusion, but – oh – if we could only just listen to each other a bit more without prejudice! In this way, maybe we can start opening up and supporting each other, finding answers for problems would be so much easier in our everyday lives.”

Earlier on you told me *Age of Wonderland* inspired incorporating collaboration with creative thinkers in the DNA of Hivos.

“That’s right: *Age of Wonderland* inspired several colleagues at Hivos, including the directors, to come up with such a plan for Hivos. The main point is involving creative thinkers and artists in programmess of Hivos right from the start.

Courage is needed for an organisational switch-over like this. You’d have to have confidence that working together this way will end up in something great. But above all, confidence shouldn’t be a problem as illustrated by four years of *Age of Wonderland* and the resulting potential of co-operation with artists.”

Some of your curious Hivos colleagues had already started working together with creative thinkers. In one of the daily talks, Willy Douma from Hivos talked about integrating designers to her ‘Open Source Seed Systems’- programme. She said: “Designers are creative, so I’m convinced they can support us with these challenges we’re facing. But it’s new, I’ve never done this before. Let’s just see what happens!”

“That’s great, isn’t it? That’s exactly the kind of curiosity I’m talking about, the courage we need at Hivos to bring some of our programmes and research to an even higher level. By working together with creatives, I’m convinced we can make the world a better place step by step. Innovation alone can never originate without creativity.”

MEET ARNE HENDRIKS

DAYS OF
LEARNING WITH
ARNE HENDRIKS

By Teddy Tops

ABOUT

Arne Hendriks is the curator of Age of Wonderland and an artist specialised in speculative research, open design and education. He co-created the [Instructables Restaurant](#) (an open-source restaurant), Hacking IKEA, and the Repair Manifesto. His current projects include Fatberg (an island of fat), which he is working on with British designer Mike Thompson. Arne teaches at Design Academy Eindhoven, the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and the Academy of Architecture and the Sandberg Instituut (both in Amsterdam).



A few months after the event Arne Hendriks looks back with fondness – and not with exhaustion! – at ten full days of *Age of Wonderland* during Dutch Design Week 2017. On the last day he was still brimming with bags of energy, that's how he recalls it. Yes, he started each day as facilitator of the Daily Talks, attended by the people who had given workshops that day. Every day there was one hour where knowledge gained was shared with the audience and learnings unfolded. Afterwards everyone went on his or her own merry way and shared his or her lesson with their group. How on earth was Arne *not* tired?

“Whenever a day was over, I absorbed what I had learnt. I got on the train home during that week and saw a woman with an Efteling bag get on board. For the entire 90 minute train ride I shared all sorts of personal stories with her. That's what 100 Days of Learning does to you. I was more open to people. The *Age of Wonderland* project *gave* me energy.



Brickologue by Volunteers Design Collab during 100 Days of Learning, World Design Event 2017, Eindhoven.

Learning environment

“I learnt that you just have to create a learning environment or learning setting. Like the workshop ‘Bricknick’, where we baked both food and bricks. No one had registered but it was still a raging success. People turned up spontaneously, participated, gave feedback. If you create the right setting, you don’t have to be the teacher as such – you can take a step back. That’s what I did on day two in Eindhoven; once I took a back seat on the Daily Talks, I became more engaged in the conversation instead of being the quintessential white male storyteller. The scene was set and from there, all sorts of things could come forth. Fortunately, I realised this on just the second day.

“We also noticed that at the ‘The Ripple Effect’ workshop: ‘to emerge’ mainly means to offer a setting, rather than to teach someone something. You present a sphere, a space, a foundation, so that things can arise. That’s what we talked about on the first day, and it seemed to stick. Just like a chemical reaction, something emerges that you never would have thought of before. I hope that that’s what has happened with these 100 Days of Learning: that learning dissolves into reality, takes on another form and continues to sprout.

Learning moments

“We have to celebrate that we are autonomous and can learn and share, just like we celebrate our birthdays.”

“What I have personally learnt from this project is that people are absolutely prepared to listen and learn. Not as passive consumers, but out of curiosity and hunger to make the world a better place. Making the switch from a consumer to a maker – someone who is prepared to take personal responsibility – that is the link we are looking for.

“The best teachers just do it. They don’t have the idea that they’re the best at doing something. They share what they know from a place of passion and conviction. Who are the real heroes we know? Are they the Mandelas of this world? No, they are just very “human” people, and the lessons that you learn from true teachers come from a place of real humility.



Exercise of Empathic Movements by Vivien Tauchmann during 100 Days of Learning, World Design Event 2017, Eindhoven.

“Everyone is an artist, I really believe that. Not everyone will be a successful one, but that doesn’t matter, as it’s not the definition. That’s why I give bad performances - because I’m not really a performer at all. I just want to show that anyone can do it! Like your 4-year-old little brother. And I really hope that he will too, and that he dares to show what he’s made of, and express himself and develop. That’s always better than presenting yourself passively and then being used by companies who know how to use it to their advantage. So that you consume whether you’re happy or sad. Bearing that in mind, we should make sure we don’t go *fracking*. John O’Shea was at one of the Talks, and said that *fracking*, a very unfriendly way of digging for oil, is what Facebook does with us, for example. It sucks us empty and uses only one part of us to drive us to consumption: they think, hm, which diamond can I get out of this person?”

Learning movement

“During one of the gatherings there was a woman, a teacher and a mother, who said she had given up teaching and that she had learnt to listen and that it had more impact than giving direction. I think that’s wonderful, that someone has a take-out like that and then passes it on. That’s how a movement begins.

“I think that we have to keep on learning, being curious. But we also have to take responsibility for sharing knowledge.”

“The workshop entitled ‘Exercise of Empathic Movements’ by Vivien Tauchmann was definitely a highlight: this was about *embodiment*. We made movements that are made by people every day, by people stuck in an unpleasant situation, for example, those who withstand unbearable working conditions in clothing sweatshops. While you are physically busy you learn to put yourself in someone else’s shoes ... I found that remarkable.

“I was also quite charmed by another teacher., Ephrem Whingwiri (Zimbabwe) and his obsession with a particular creature: in this case, the earthworm. With this one invertebrate he could touch everything. In his Day of Learning at the start of the World Design Event, he preached that we could improve the world a tiny bit by just listening to earthworms. He was talking about big problems and small solutions. Like how we can neutralise water, reuse waste and make medicine – all of that just through the lens of that earthworm. I think that’s what the lesson is: polish your own lens.”

THE MAJOR
PROBLEMS IN
THE WORLD ARE
THE RESULT OF
THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN HOW
NATURE WORKS
AND THE WAY
PEOPLE THINK

Gregory Bateson

MEET OLGA MINK

“SHIFTING TOWARDS NEW PARADIGMS”

By Renée Roukens

ABOUT

Olga Mink is a co-founder of *Age of Wonderland* and the director of Baltan Laboratories in Eindhoven, which initiates, mediates and shares innovative research and development at the intersection of art, design and technological culture. She holds a MFA from the Sandberg Institute. Taking an early interest in digital technology, Olga majored in digital art and was one of the inaugural drivers in the early age of digital video performance. Her previous work ranges from curating media festivals and educational consultancy. Currently she is chairing Trudo Lab, for housing corporation St Trudo.



Months have passed since the grand finale of *Age of Wonderland* during World Design Event / Dutch Design Week 2017. We meet with Olga while she is working on the programme for Baltan's 10th anniversary. It's the perfect time to reflect on four years of *Age of Wonderland*.

Why did you initiate *Age of Wonderland*?

Age of Wonderland started from the curiosity to collaborate with creatives from regions that are not easily accessible to get in touch with while working from The Netherlands. Here, we have a western focus, and I was fully aware that. To get out of your very own bubble, you need to break through these language boundaries and networks. By opening up to completely different perspectives *Age of Wonderland* aimed to build a bridge between ideas and people —globally. Especially the last edition, 100 Days of Learning, we succeeded in transgressing these boundaries and established new connections. *Age of Wonderland* commissioned one hundred individuals across the globe to organise local events, to share ideas and knowledge.



Through an international online platform we created an even wider global network. We deployed an existing blog-platform, Medium, where everyone involved reported their events and shared their personal experiences.”

The programme is built upon interdisciplinary design research and facilitates co-development between creative makers and thinkers. Can you give an outline of which type of artists and designers joined the programme, and explain how you worked with them?

“Our definition of artists and designers is very broad. For example, Ahad Katera, a social entrepreneur from Tanzania was interested in deploying creative strategies for his bio-fertiliser. He was invited for the 2015 edition to develop his project on sustainability in food waste. *Age of Wonderland* likes to bring different domains together, to explore how these domains become more intrinsically connected. Instead of producing more knowledge, we like to experiment how knowledge can arise by connecting different values and methods. It is precisely this intrinsic connection that we believe is important nowadays. It is about the new cross-fertilisation between people and ideas and domains. With the *Age of Wonderland* programme, we developed a range of projects with creatives from a large variety of contexts and backgrounds. We connected them with local organisations and individuals, to collectively explore the urgent challenges of today. This crossover mentality, in which learning from each other is at the core, is a key element for finding alternative roadmaps for the future.

Working towards Dutch Design Week was challenging at times. In The Netherlands we are very straightforward with our communication, for example. This exposed some cultural differences along the process. The *Age of Wonderland* team didn’t want to steer the ideas of the fellows too much, being convinced that if you really want to



get on a new track, you have to experiment and embrace the unknown. In order to facilitate an open dialogue, it was important to bring in multiple actors and ideas. Personally, I believe that a basis of trust and mutual inspiration is the foundation of any successful collaboration. Letting go of your own bias is something that can only happen when there is a mutual understanding.”

***Age of Wonderland* is about transcultural collaboration. How has this objective shaped Baltan’s modus operandi?**

“Baltan provided a space for new insights by looking how technology transforms society and affects our lives. With *Age of Wonderland*, we facilitated knowledge exchange and supported projects that otherwise would not have taken place. I believe that we should rid ourselves of the idea that the western world is more developed in terms of discourse and cultural knowledge. We are accustomed to prioritising an idea by taking ownership and putting the emphasis on authenticity and originality. Companies have made lots of money this way, but I think it’s a rather poor and outdated system. Instead I believe that what matters is the whole context in which an idea emerges; that is, the way something is approached, the input from people who work on the project, and how this is implemented into the local community.

In some cases, the projects developed within *Age or Wonderland* already existed. For example, *The Happy Feet* project in which people in Africa with deformed feet caused by an infection were helped with customised printed shoes made from recycled material. This in itself was not new. However, there was clearly an urgency which could be tackled by using new insights with available technologies. These circumstances also define the process and how ideas can be implemented into the local community. *Age of Wonderland* explored these real-world challenges by addressing them through co-creation. By appropriating art and design in this broader spectrum, it can become a useful a tool for social innovation.”

Design Academy Eindhoven is one of the partners of *Age of Wonderland*. In what way are their students connected to the programme?

“As part of 100 Days of Learning, we developed a minor for their Social Design Masters programme. Students started their process with a research question: ‘*What do you feel we need to learn in order to make the world a better place?*’. Based on this

concept, they started with defining key moments in their own lives. During these weekly iterations, they managed to make ideas tangible and thoroughly disseminated what those key moments actually taught them. In the final process, the students were asked to translate their findings into transferrable knowledge, something which they could share with others, their peers. And voilà, a day of learning was born! Some students also organised a day of learning during the programme at Dutch Design Week, 2017. A nice side effect was that this process strengthened group dynamics, as they got to know each other much better in this pressure-cooker process. The project functioned as a catalyst for the students and helped them to identify their intrinsic motivations, which turned out to be valuable asset in their research.



What lessons do you take from the programme?

One of the main conclusions I take away from this programme is that we need to critically reflect on the systems we have become intrinsically part of. By embracing the so called wicked challenges in a more systemic way, we should explore how art and design can create a positive impact and can guide us towards a less fragmented society. For this we need to open up ourselves to other perspectives. Only then we can meet the Other and learn about ourselves, through the Other.

A FINE SELECTION OF FELLOWS

Over the years we welcomed fellows from all over the world. Here you find a 'fine selection' of them!



HOW IS 2015 AGE OF WONDERLAND FELLOW AND WINNER OF THE FIRST ECO COIN AWARD DOING?

An interview with fellow
Yoyo Yogasmana, artist from
the Indonesian Ciptagelar
Kasepuhan community

NEXT NATURE NETWORK CAUGHT UP WITH YOYO YOGASMANA

By Ruben Baart

Editor-in-Chief Next Nature Network

ABOUT

Yoyo Yogasmana (1970, Indonesia) is an artist who holds a degree from the Fine Art Department of the Institute of Knowledge and Education in Bandung. He's a member of the Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community and lives in the remote area of Mount Halimun in West Java, where he serves as a personal advisor to the local king and queen. Until now, residents in Kasepuhan Citagelar still adhere to the customs and traditions of a culture that relies on farming, especially rice plants. Rice is venerated for its power to give life. In fact, rice is so sacred, it has its own ceremonies, is cultivated and harvested only by hand and can never be sold. Have a look on [YouTube](#) for an impression.



In 2015 Next Nature Network handed their first ECO Coin Award to *Age of Wonderland* fellow Yoyo Yogasmana — on behalf of the Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community — for his work in Indonesia to preserve more than 130 existing rice varieties without any use of insecticides and transferring his knowledge to the digital domain. More than two years have passed, reason enough to catch up with former fellow Yogasmana and talk about the Kasepuhan community, global food networks and receiving the ECO Coin Award from DDW ambassador and designer Koert van Mensvoort.

In his acceptance speech on the occasion of the award, Yogasmana modestly referred to the Ciptagelar Kasepuhan community by thanking them for their generous contribution to the project. “The community was very pleased to receive the Award”, Yogasmana says. “This was an important token of appreciation that presented our work

Next Nature Network

Next Nature Network is an international, future-driven nature organisation that positions itself between traditional players such as WWF and Greenpeace. With various design projects, the non-profit organisation opens the public debate on our future—in which nature and technology are fusing. Projects include a speculative restaurant to explore the potential of synthetic meat, a fictional company that offers personalised sneakers crafted from genetically modified stingray leather and a smartphone app allowing you to hear WiFi.



Yoyo Yogasmana having his workshop during Age of Wonderland 2015.

to a large audience around the world. Our community performs a far-reaching body of work to conserve nature and culture, and strives to balance and harmonise our relationship with all living creatures.”

The Kasepuhan community is a traditional Sundanese community that counts around 5,300 people living in the foggy mountains of West Java, Indonesia. Its name comes from the Sundanese word *sepuh*, which means ‘old’ and refers to a way of living based on ancestral traditions. Such traditions laid the foundation of the local community, whose main subsistence depends on the cultivation of rice.

In 2015 Yogasmana was among the *Age of Wonderland* fellows. That year the second edition addressed the complex issues ingrained in our global food system together with the local community of Eindhoven. “What we did was introduce our local wisdom and ancestral value to the project”, Yogasmana explains. “This led our community to live consciously, take care of nature and taught us how to live in togetherness.”

Yogasmana was invited on behalf of Next Nature Network fellow Arne Hendriks, who curated *Age of Wonderland 2015: Balancing Green and Fair Food*. “Food is the primary medium through which we express our humanity. Food production,

In Yoyo's community, rice is venerated for its power to give life.



its distribution and preparation, and its symbolic strength in times of crisis as well as abundance, is the main influence on how we experience and give shape to our culture”, elaborates Arne.

Yogasmana believes that the introduction of more co-operative fair trade concepts will lead to a more equally spread food system. In this case, local food production would benefit both local communities and agricultural producers, as it would benefit consumers on a global scale. During his stay in The Netherlands, Yogasmana realised there are only few Dutch communities whose concern is to protect and preserve their own nature and culture, and this should change. One way to do this is to “develop kinship with nature by empowering people with their own strengths, potencies and networks”, as Yogasmana puts it.

Keeping in mind the ECO Coin has a symbolic value (so far), Yogasmana would pass the baton to support local communities who keep living by their tribal heritage. “I will hand the ECO coin to people or communities who respect and practice their ancestral value. It is important that nature, culture and traditions are transmitted to successive generations.”

[This article](#) was published in spring 2017.

HOW FELLOWS BECOME WORKING FRIENDS

An interview with fellows Arie Syarifuddin, artist from Indonesia and Masha Ru, artist from The Netherlands

CONNECTING LIKE-MINDS

By Iris van den Boezem

ABOUT

Over the years, *Age of Wonderland* has connected people from all over the world — creative thinkers and artists addressing problems and researching them to come up with inventive ideas and solutions. By working together, great resolutions are within reach, and this way a few self-contained ideas make a composition of great concepts that will eventually lead to a better world. Arie Syarifuddin and Masha Ru are great examples of this approach. While we already got to know them in 2015, both of them returned in 2017 with interesting new projects and follow-ups.



Eating clay and drinking Javanese coffee was the done thing when participating in Arie Syarifuddin's and Masha Ru's workshops during the 100 Days of Learning programme at the Dutch Design Week 2017. Sounds interesting, doesn't it? Arie and Masha met during *Age of Wonderland* 2015, and have been working together ever since.

At the 100 Days of Learning, artist **Masha Ru** (Russia/The Netherlands) presented her **Museum of Edible Earth**, while artist Arie Syarifuddin (Indonesia) unfolded **The Untold History of Javanese Bamboo Coffee**. Arie and Masha were introduced to each other in 2015 by Christine Wagner, one of the founders of *Age of Wonderland*. Together with the Eindhoven-based design studio Atelier NL, they investigated clay flavours from different parts of The Netherlands, along with the Indonesian clay from **Jatiwangi Art Factory**, where Arie is a member. By questioning the edibility of clay, they addressed the issues around our global food system.

Clay: colonialism and identification

"For me, eating clay reminds me of my grandmother," Arie says. "While playing at the Jatiwangi roof tile factory when I was a kid, my neighbours and my friends often ate roasted clay with coffee or tea while the workers made tiles. For this memory, I keep a special corner in my heart that I sometimes visit."



Clay became a part of the people's identity and a way of living in Jatiwangi. It is not just the fact that Jatiwangi has economically and culturally thrived on the export and production of ceramic roof tiles. There is a deeper historic fact, as it was the Dutch who introduced this industry during the colonial era. "My [Claynialism](#) project is an effort to redesign 'clay', with all its particularities, as the cool yet humble identity of the district, especially for the youth," Arie explains. "One of my intentions was to flip the perspective on colonialism. Make people consider and think about this topic in another way."

Arie's current project about Javanese Bamboo Coffee (Cur) also addresses both identification as well as colonialism. Besides spices, coffee was one of the things that brought colonialists to Indonesia. "Up until recently, most Indonesians didn't drink the good, high quality coffee they grow themselves," Arie says. "We'd drink bad, instant coffee — even worse, coffee mixed with corn. We felt like we didn't have a choice — coffee is exported to western countries." But for about three years, things are starting to change. Nowadays young Indonesians grow and cultivate high quality coffee for local consumption. "Besides colonialism, my project 'Cur' is about bringing back the dignity of coffee while keeping in mind its historical background."

Into each other's art practice

In September 2016 Masha Ru visited Jatiwangi Art Factory in Indonesia, where Arie Syarifuddin coordinates, curates, designs and is an artist. "It was very special to work with Arie," Masha says. Arie adds: "Yes, it was fun to meet people with the same interests and beliefs. After the project *Claynialism* during *Age of Wonderland*, Masha and I worked together on several projects." Masha reminisces: "Arie has a very different approach to doing things, of looking at things. Because of that I got other insights into clay and soil, things I didn't think of before."



Meanwhile, Masha Ru was also working with Guatemalan *Age of Wonderland* fellow and artist **Branly López**. Having trained as a mathematician, Masha supported Branly to design a data visualisation of the Mayan calendar. While deepening and broadening this project, the pair also involved Tjitse Boersma (Oravante Coaching and Tzolkin calendar expert), Louwrien Wijers (artist and writer) and film maker and astrologer Jeanette Groenendaal. López also invited the Serbian scientist Vojkan Mihajlovic (from Holst Centre/IMEC, Eindhoven) to research brain activity during meditation.

What will the future bring?

With the last edition of *Age of Wonderland* behind us, we're very curious how our fellows Masha and Arie will go on in the future. "I'm also curious what will happen in the future," Arie says, smiling. "Sometimes I don't realise it at first, that unconsciously a past project or experience for me is always related to a future project. I hope we have another connection through *Age of Wonderland*, as we did before." Masha adds: "*Age of Wonderland* brought me new insights, inspirations and motivations. Through the programme I met really special people, like Arie and Branly, as well as other fellows and team members. It was an interesting coincidence — if there is such a thing as coincidence. Isn't it something that the two ongoing topics in my work — of the eating of soil and the Mayan Calendar — precisely coincided with themes of two *Age of Wonderland* fellows?"

Masha concludes that *Age of Wonderland* definitely did influence her future plans: "I continue working with Branly and am getting engaged with his community. At the same time, I hope to still work together in future with Arie and Jatiwangi Art Factory."

By the time this article was published, Masha already went to Guatemala to work together with Branly. Furthermore, she did get more **exciting news**: she is now NIAS' new artist-in-residence, exploring the eating of soil, chalk and clay. The fellowship is co-sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). NIAS is one of its institutes.

SHARE SHARE SHARE

An interview with fellow
Andreas Siagian, civil
engineer/artist from
Yogyakarta Indonesia

“WE HAVE TO LEARN
AND TEACH MORE
INSTEAD OF HAND
PEOPLE READY
MADE PRODUCTS”

By Teddy Tops



When Andreas Siagian (Indonesia) first participated in Age of Wonderland in 2014, he planted the seed for 100 Days of Learning, and came back to World Design Event (WDE) 2017 to give a Day of Learning of his own. Over the nine days of WDE, different artists, performers, engineers from all over the world came to share their lesson, their own way to make this world a better place: by thinking differently and encouraging participation and giving people agency.

In 2012 Andreas Siagian started the art collective Lifepatch in Yogyakarta, in the heart of Java. “Collectives only started in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto in 1998, because before that we weren’t allowed to assemble with more than 4 people at once.



If we did, we had to get a permit. Also, travelling for us is very expensive. We have to pay a government tax of 100 euro each time we get on a flight. Flying is only for the richest, which means it's very difficult for Indonesian people to see their hometown from a distance: to look at the problems from a different perspective."

"It's very difficult to solve problems without a distance or different perspective."

"The first time I came to Age of Wonderland was in 2014, when Arne Hendriks asked me to do a presentation / workshop to share my life and work experiences. I created a lab-in-lab situation in Eindhoven, where we, together with participants, could create and share. This is to me very important, because by giving these workshops or presentations and looking at challenges from different perspectives I can start new projects back home as well. In our collective 'Lifepatch' we have a microbiologist, a programmer, a businessman, environmental activists, scientists, artists and recyclers. I find that all these different backgrounds compliment the work we deliver, always looking for the most creative way to solve issues that come from within the community. Together, we work on all sorts of programmes."

Learning and teaching

"I trained as a civil engineer, so I learned how to be a problem solver, how to 'make' things. Once, I was invited by a French programming/creative collective and I wanted to learn how to programme myself — to make visual art and music. I was very bad at it, but at the same time I was their only student. They spent a lot of time trying to teach me everything. I thought that was weird: why spend so much energy on someone that's really not that good? But they said: it's better to have one student who's enthusiastic than to have a room full of disinterested people. That's when I realised the importance of one-on-one meetings. You can share so much more. In Indonesia, we still learn that

The Lifepatch collective

‘Lifepatch’ is a citizen initiative in art, science and technology, a community-based cross-disciplinary organisation that formed on March 26, 2012. On the initiative of citizens in art, science and technology, ‘Lifepatch’ invites members and anyone involved in its activities to research, explore, and develop the presence of technology, natural resources, and human resources in the surrounding area. Citizen initiatives are chosen to provide a wider space for the diversity of member practices and spur the creativity of each member to play a role in a collaborative activity. Do It Yourself and Do It With Others are the passion that ‘Lifepatch’ holds in practice to spur the emergence of a new and straightforward pattern and system of individual and community creative processes, as well as interaction between individuals in the community work series.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

- a website where you can find all the street art made in Yogyakarta on a map and everybody who finds a new tag can add it with the name of the artist. The map keeps growing!
- a water filter built together with the people living next to a river, to prevent water-borne disease and water pollution
- a workshop on making home-made wine properly and safely, because alcohol is expensive to buy. People often make their own alcohol but sometimes with disastrous outcomes, with people becoming ill and dying from the methanol found in home-made brews.

Find more information on the [‘Lifepatch’ website](#).

way, we have ‘mentors’ who have only one student they teach everything they know. The teacher hopes his student will eventually be better than him: that’s always the goal. In my own work, I find these meetings can sprout into other meetings, and so cause a ripple effect: a change. We have to learn and teach more instead of hand people ready made products.”

Share information and build things together

“The importance of meetings like the Days of Learning is that in a lot of places I’ve been, governments have projects that last until things break down. Then the community doesn’t know how to fix it. This means we have to share: share information and build things together. Just so we can teach each other how to create things and how to (re)build. Projects like Age of Wonderland help me learn what is important, like what part of whatever it is I’m doing has which impact. And it’s important to see how people from all over the world have their own new view on this. It’s like travelling: the distance creates a new perspective, like different people can change your perspective as well. I think I know more of what I’m doing, by sharing.”

ARTIST SANDRA SUUBI IS, ABOVE ALL, A DREAM FACILITATOR

An interview with fellow Sandra Suubi, eco-artist from Uganda

“TO ME IT IS SUPER IMPORTANT THAT KIDS LEARN THAT THEY CAN MAKE THEIR DREAM COME TRUE”

By Teddy Tops



Dozens of red braids drape off her shoulders. An epic vibe surrounds her. You simply cannot miss Sandra Suubi (a Luganda word meaning ‘hope’). Besides being a well-known and talented Ugandan singer/musician, she is also an eco-artist turning trash into art, inviting people to join her. In October 2017, she was in Eindhoven for the second time, to give her workshop called Dream Lab, just as she did back in 2014.

The first time Sandra Suubi was an Age of Wonderland fellow, she invited people to think about their own dreams, about how dreams work and how to make them come true — with only what you already have around you.



In Suubi's 2017 workshop was an extension of the 2014 version. Participants wrote down their dreams and after reading them out loud ('being happy' was a favourite), they designed their own dream-symbol from collected waste. Together they figured out what kind of symbols they could make to combine the dreams they had, and what materials they could use.

Go do what you do!

"Four years ago I was asked to come to Holland for the first Age of Wonderland edition. I don't think they gave me any specific questions or assignments. They just said: 'Can you come do what you do?' So, I asked my dean, because I had just been accepted at Public Art School to do a Masters, which I was super excited about. I actually can't understand that he let me go but he also said: 'Go do what you do!' I didn't know what it is that I did really, so this was a true opportunity to go and figure it out."

**"Everything you need is
already around you."**

"At this point I thought: if anything, I have to do the Dream Lab. Somehow this project had been on my mind for a while. I always work with waste, so now I made a connection with people through that waste.

To be able to really bond over a bunch of stuff we just throw out is something very special to me." For her Dream Lab in 2014 Suubi made a dome shaped incubation space for dreams out of waste and bulbs made from plastic water bottles. She interviewed kids from all over the world, in their own languages, about their personal dreams, and put the recorded voices inside these bulbs — so people could put their head in there and listen to the kids' dreams. "To me it's super important that kids learn that they can dream, that their hopes are valid and they can make their wishes come true, with the things surrounding them."



From fluid to solid

“The first time I became part of Age of Wonderland, this idea of a dreamland was still fluid. It could be anything, really. The project became also my own learning process, by talking to people and listening to their ideas and dreams — by working together with a lot of people I’m still in touch with. I found the differences between countries and people, but also the similarities, all on one trip to Eindhoven. It is about listening to various people, sharing knowledge and shifting your perspective.”

“Your waste is incredible! I’ve never seen anything like it!”

“I think the biggest difference between Uganda and Holland is that in Uganda we take at least two whole days to create a symbol, whereas here we were done within two hours. Many people here may have already thought about what they want for themselves in life. They know their dream. In Uganda, it’s more of a therapeutic process where I really have to tell the participants not to think what do ‘we’ want or dream, but what do ‘you’, as an individual, want for yourself. Back home we are used to thinking for and with our family. Here it’s very individual. Also, your waste is incredibly clean! That’s so *dope*. You even have different bins for different waste. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Personal dream

“My personal dream is to get young people to be aware of who they are, to realise *what I think or dream is valid, it counts*. When a young person gets so specific on her dream, and tells her mom exactly how to cut the material, it brings the parents to tears. All of those moms and dads are really grateful for the experience, they say they never knew that this had been on their kids’ minds for all that time. That’s why it’s so important to me to be able to do this, and to even get invited back to Eindhoven to do this workshop. It has been very humbling.” Suubi swallows back a tear: “I once heard a girl say her dream was to become a doctor. When I asked her why do you want to become a doctor? She answered: I want to touch people’s hearts.”

[Read more on Sandra Suubi’s Dream Lab at Dutch Design Week 2017.](#)

LOOKING AT FAMILIAR THINGS WITH DIFFERENT EYES

THE MIRRORS OF MODERN AND ANCIENTS WORLDS

By Iris van den Boezem




Ancient nomadic culture is all about energies, symbols, circles; life is circular and everything is connected together in some way. For this year's edition of *Age of Wonderland*, Kyrgyz expert Chinara Seidakhmatova visited The Netherlands to talk about the heritage that her family has been fostering from one generation to the next, in a quiet echo of how she initially got connected to *Age of Wonderland*. And in a beautiful balance of how differently things can turn out; what we focus on becomes intenser, clearer and more meaningful, what we give is what we take away, and the world reflects back what we have been projecting quietly all along.

Some time has passed since the first time *Age of Wonderland* made its links to the Central-Asian country Kyrgyzstan. It started when fellow [Symbat Satybaldieva](#) researched food waste through the TOI dinner hack in 2015. Then for the 2017 edition of *Age of Wonderland*, Satybaldieva organised a Day of Learning: a [Silent Journey](#)

crossing her home country. The title ‘silent’ should not be taken literally, but rather be interpreted in a more deep and holistic way. To connect with the nomadic lifestyle, we should open our eyes and hearts and learn from their culture and traditions. To become more balanced with nature. Because of the multitude of publications on ancient nomadic culture attached to Chinara Seidakhmatova, it was fitting to Satybaldieva that Seidakhmatova join the trip as a Day 100 of Learning teacher.

Looking into the past for answers for today

Seidakhmatova trained as an economist, yet has never lived as a nomad herself. Still, she’s earned her title as expert of this ancient culture fair and square in what began with the study of patterns — a sort of hobby interest in traditional knowledge in 2005. This eventually deepened into something far more substantial and since 2008 she has been co-operating with the cultural research centre ‘Aigine’, where she is project expert. ‘Aigine’ is devoted to the study of traditional knowledge of Kyrgyz people in various spheres of life, from the socio-political system of communication, to the healing knowledge of ancient ancestors. Seidakhmatova is a modern-day economist turned ancient nomadic cultural expert.



“The overwhelming nature of Kyrgyzstan is still imprinted on the back of my eyelids. I deliberately try to hold on to this wonderful afterglow yielding images of endless horizons, snow-capped mountain peaks, herds of sheep and wild horses wandering through barren landscapes inhabited by friendly people living in yurts. I am in nomad land. A place where both abundance and shortage don’t seem to exist. Where the native people, carrying an age-old history, are surrounded by high-altitude beauty and where the landscape hasn’t changed for thousands of years.” ”

— One of the participants

Silent Journey in 2017, 100 Days of Learning in Kyrgyzstan.

She is a charismatic Russian-speaking woman, dressed in beautiful colours to complement her grounded personality. Chinara tells us how she was hesitant towards nomadic traditional culture at a younger age. She started appreciating and learning the traditions only when she was years older. During the Silent Journey, she shares her wealth of knowledge and guides us through the main topics of traditional nomadic culture.

Let fear go so energy flows

Well then, in order to make the world a better place today, what can we learn from ancient nomadic culture? In her role as 100 Days of Learning ‘teacher’ Seidakhmatova gave a series of lectures, where she described the culture of her ancestors and suggested we could rethink the inequalities we hold so important in our fragmented society. According the Kyrgyz people there’s something else, something bigger, knotting all and everything together. Energy. After opening up to this energy, a real dialogue — with yourself and with others around you — is never really far away. Referring to the different levels of energy that were so important to her ancestors, Seidakhmatova explained that the fear we have come to experience in contemporary western society may truly be harmful, as fear blocks positive vigour: the mission of the heart should always lead one’s life so as to let go of fear and allow energy to flow.

Look at familiar things with different eyes

What did Seidakhmatova learn herself, during the 100 Days of Learning? She mentions Symbat’s Silent Journey as having a lasting impact. Even though the breathtaking Kyrgyz views, colossal mountains and the sharply diverse natural phenomena have been familiar to her since she was a child, it was foreign travellers who made her look at her country from a different point of view. For instance, one of the Dutch women told Seidakhmatova in detail about how she experienced horseback-riding in the mountains, from the stunning strength of the horse and of the exhilarating feeling of the wind in her hair. Seidakhmatova appreciated this level of sharing: “Her story brought me back to my childhood when I went horseback-riding with my grandfather. Sometimes you can only really see what you’ve got when you look through someone else’s eyes. The trip made me look at my own country with different eyes.”

It’s that adage – what goes around comes around. If we open up to other energies and ways of thinking, we unleash positivity and love in the Other. Love begets love, and it vanquishes fear ... while fear only begets fear and nothing else. An open heart opens our hearts and minds; it is a mirror, and can be a conduit between worlds, and a link for modern and ancient times.

ALI ESLAMI'S AWARD-WINNING IMMERSIVE SIMULATION VISUALIZES THE HORRORS OF MASS DEATH

THE POWER OF DATA

By Coralie den Adel



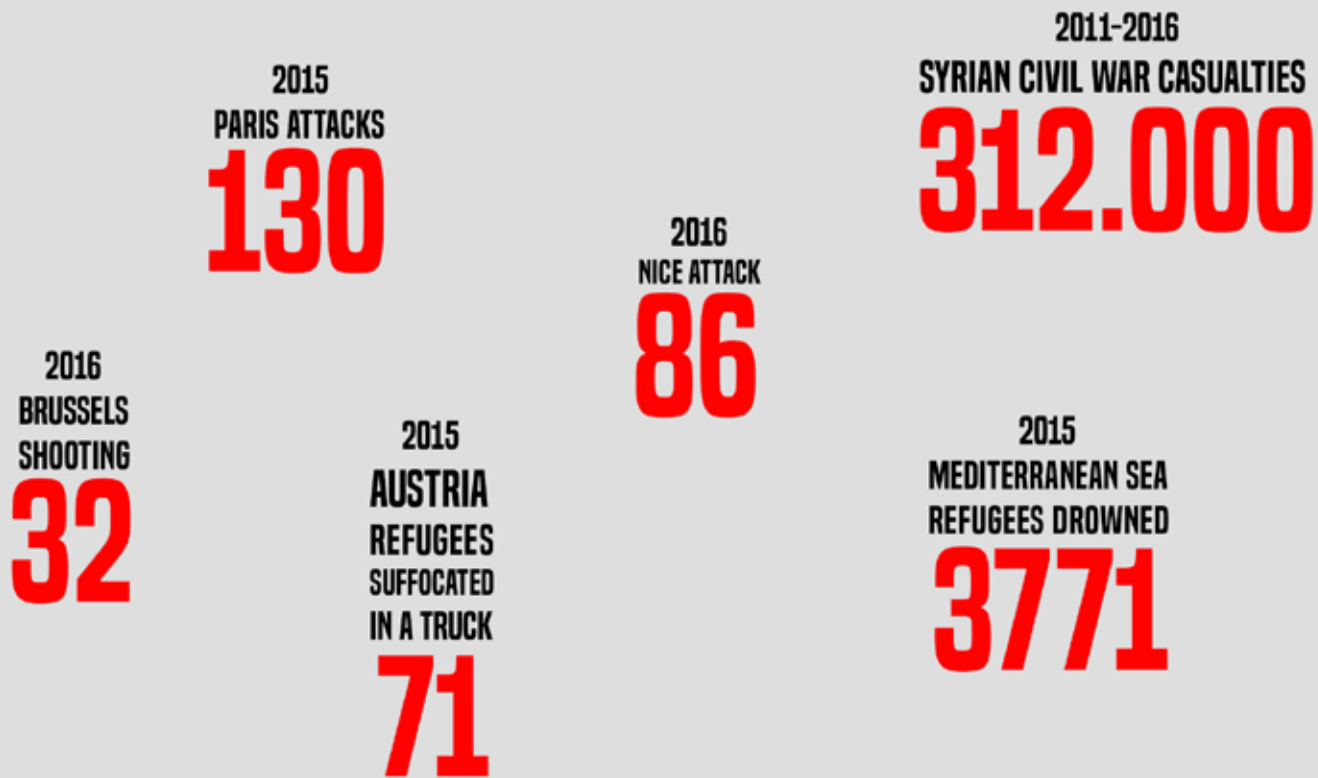
DeathTolls Experience by Ali Eslami 2017.

Sterile numbers can easily obscure the human lives behind reported death tolls from war, drone strikes, and terrorism. Iranian virtual reality artist Ali Eslami, worked since his Age of Wonderland residency in 2016 to change that with his *DeathTolls Experience*.

The experience, [previewed here](#), which won the DocLab Immersive Non-Fiction Award at the **IDFA Festival** 2016 in Amsterdam, places the user in virtual reality amongst body bags which populate six environments, representing six mass death events spanning from Europe to the Middle East. Drawing on his background in data visualization and research on cognitive science, Eslami says *DeathTolls* explores new pathways in the perception of data, creating a vehicle for empathy in processing otherwise meaningless datasets. He hopes to break down the mental filters that are formed from overexposure to massive amounts of death happening around the world.

The perception of data

“As a practitioner, I did lots of research on human perception and cognitive science and was quite interested in exploring new pathways in the perception of data. I found VR the greatest tool to mess around with this idea and started prototyping representing data in VR which I call it ‘Data Experience’. Firstly, I think ‘death toll’ is a data-set that we approach 9/10 times when we hear the news. The chance of hearing a count of dead and wounded people in the news is quite high, but the point is, do we have any idea about these numbers that we encounter daily? I believe not ... because



DeathTolls Experience wall in exhibition,
Age of Wonderland 2016.

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

once something gets over-perceived (i.e. dead numbers) our mind basically ignores it and most likely it won't find a way through our consciousness. which means we are not aware of these data that's basically the consequence of our own actions on earth!"

An [earlier version](#) of the *DeathTolls Experience* uses a video game-style interface, presenting photos and statistics in popup windows as the user "plays" through the scene. After getting a VR headset in 2015, Eslami redesigned the entire project based on that medium, partly during Age of Wonderland 2016. Stitching the datasets together across continents, the experience moves from mass shootings in Europe to refugee drownings in the Mediterranean Sea, ending with civilian casualties of the Syrian civil war beginning in 2011. As the user makes the journey southeast, the death tolls visibly increase and the environments become more sprawling.

Visual model of huge numbers

"What I tried to achieve with this project is enhancing the perception of these data, because I think it's necessary to be aware of our surroundings and actions. It somehow shows a visual model of huge numbers, like 310,000 death tolls in Syria. That gives the user a vision to eventually have a more accurate idea of the numbers they'll confront next time in the news. I have the passion for creating something that can lead to a better awareness of our surrounding and push away the interfaces that disconnect us from our own actions in this reality. What makes me excited about it is the potential impact on the people who try it and memories it creates. The gradually growing numbers help people make more sense out of the staggering amount of death. For some this is so mind-blowing, people at times are crying inside the headset."

Eslami has submitted *DeathTolls Experience* to several festivals including SXSW (Austin, US), DocMontevideo (Uruguay), Bergen Film Festival (Norway) and Festival Du Nouveau Cinema (Montreal, Canada). This year the experience was released for [Vive](#).

This article is based on Ali Eslami's website and an article of Creators Project by Kelsey Lannin.

HOW AGE OF WONDERLAND TEACHERS CONTRIBUTED BLOGPOSTS
CENTRED ON THEIR DAY OF LEARNING

100 DAYS OF LEARNING: A COLOURFUL GATHERING OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE

By Yvonne Grootenboer





It takes a few moments to explain what the 100 Days of Learning edition of *Age of Wonderland* involves. A quick glance at the images illustrating the 100 reports online show a colourful gathering of interactions between people. Indoors, outdoors, the young and old, in listening mode or using handwork to craft something. Although I'm describing only a digital representation (leaving out smells, temperatures and insights into the way people move and talk), it's clear that the 100 Days of Learning are all about the *offline* reality. There was a dynamic response to the open call that *Age of Wonderland* spread in the spring of 2017, asking "What do you feel we need to learn to make the world a better place?" Incredibly, every one of the 'teachers' agreed on one thing: we want to learn together by meeting one another and encounter each other with all the sensory levels you can only find on location.

The 100 Days of Learning are represented in online reports made by the teachers themselves, and in some cases by participants, collated on the online platform, Medium. *Age of Wonderland* asked workshop leaders to produce a story to illustrate the intentions of 'the lesson' and the resulting experiences. There was some practical support, but limited editorial interference.

The blog offered the 'teachers' a medium to formulate a solid description — with images, diagrams or links — as it is sometimes hard to describe certain things in just words. It also created the possibility to analyse ideas, outline the process and outcome, or show aspects that supplement the live moment of that particular Day of Learning.



100 Days of Learning in India (Himalaya): Practice Breath Awareness From an Early Age For a Healthy Mind by Rajbir Kaur.

The blog now forms an archive that the teachers, partners, participants, a larger audience, related organisation and involved sponsors can use as a source of information. The 100 Days of Learning is an explosive experiment. It raises as many questions as the immediate smiles and results it generated. It intentionally got out of hand, but it's still interesting to examine what actually happened and to attempt to collect the valuable and constructive, unintended and intended lessons and mistakes to learn from. It will be impossible to get an overview of what the ripple effect is of the project. But for the time being Medium offers a solid base to come back and to grow from. To globally connect so easily is truly wonderful and the internet is ideal for anyone interested in connecting in this way. If you want to respond to someone's story, just get in touch. We hope that the teachers, partners, participants and a larger audience feel compelled to follow the example, and start a Day of Learning themselves.

Find all the reports gathered on [the blog](#) that *Age of Wonderland* set up on Medium.

A DAY OF LEARNING WITH A REAL DEAN

By Teddy Tops

Harry Starren is the dean of De Nederlandse School (The Dutch School): a graduate school for teachers. He's also a writer and the former director of the Baak, which is linked to the VNO-NCW, a training and knowledge institute in the field of leadership and entrepreneurship. Starren is the ambassador of the Age of Wonderland.

“At the Baak, personal development and effectivity in leadership is highly valued. At its core, that's what we strive for at De Nederlandse School too, but instead of managers we target teachers. The most important thing is for education to develop. On top of working with these values, I've been ambassador for Age of Wonderland since the very beginning. Age of Wonderland and Days of Learning are in essence two very simple ideas. You get the point immediately: it's to learn from/with each other. From other cultures and



different habits. Age of Wonderland is an illustration of education. That is, informal learning, the ability to meet other people and cherish curiosity towards different thoughts and perspectives. Truly, it's a source of inspiration."

The growth of educational systems

"In education it's not only about the knowledge of the subject, but also about personal growth. It's essential that the teacher is on top of this. The relationship between a tutor and a student is a determining factor for the quality of schooling. What design can mean for educational systems is a way to think further about different ways of getting the intended effects you want to realise. To get there, you need to be able to see affairs and their interrelationships, which is something designers and creators are eminently able to do."

Inspiration at Age of Wonderland

"One Age of Wonderland story I'll never forget was about an area in Indonesia (Ciptagelar Kasepuhan in West Java -red.). In this area they harvested rice, the most important crop they have, and an essential life source for the inhabitants. Although you find big shortages of rice crops in other parts, in this specific region that wasn't a problem at all. The reason was, in this particular place, people weren't allowed to trade this rice. It's too valuable and too essential. The deference for this rice had created a culture in which a wide range of varieties were planted and harvested. Surpluses were carefully saved and because trafficking rice was impossible, nothing was lost. Everyone always

Nederlandse school: three main tasks

The Nederlandse School takes the teacher as a starting point, and focuses on the job of being a tutor without actually handling the discipline or subject he or she teaches. Teachers should dare to take the following three tasks or principles seriously. First: self-knowledge. Who are you? What are your motives, what is your background, your story? Second: the way forward. Innovation of the subject by connecting it with art and design. Implementing gaming is another creative approach. And third: the way out. Connecting with worlds outside of education. Age of Wonderland is one of those worlds.

has enough. This deeply touched me, I can remember. Because when something is genuinely this essential to existence and survival, it should be literally priceless. Because it's too costly to trade. Think about it: what if we looked at healthcare and education in the same way?"

Read the [article](#) Harry Starren wrote for the 2015 edition.

YOU
ARE ME
AND
I AM
YOU

Branly López

Colophon

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