

CREATUALS

=

CREATIVE
RITUALS

CREATUALS 2016



This book is a collaboration of:
Meike Ziegler—Creatuals
Winnie Moltmaker—Book Concept
Yew Kee Chung/Matte—Book Design
Liz Parker / Koos de Wilt—Text
Caro Bonink—Photography

“A RITUAL IS THE ENACTMENT OF A MYTH.
AND, BY PARTICIPATING IN THE RITUAL,
YOU ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE MYTH.

AND SINCE MYTH IS A PROJECTION OF
THE DEPTH OF WISDOM OF THE PSYCHE,
BY PARTICIPATING IN A RITUAL,
PARTICIPATING IN THE MYTH,
YOU ARE BEING, AS IT WERE,
PUT IN ACCORD WITH THAT WISDOM,
WHICH IS THE WISDOM THAT IS INHERENT
WITHIN YOU ANYHOW.

YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS BEING
RE-MINDED OF THE WISDOM OF
YOUR OWN LIFE.”

“I THINK RITUAL IS TERRIBLY IMPORTANT.”

JOSEPH CAMPBELL
MYTHOLOGIST, WRITER AND LECTURER

CONTENTS

- 8 The Creatuals manifesto
- 9 What is a Creatual?
- 15 Founder Meike Ziegler
- 16 'Aesthetic transformation'
Creatuals founder Meike Ziegler
explains the essence of her work

HOW CREATUALS WORK

NEW BEGINNINGS + OPENINGS

- 23 HIGH LIGHT
Human energy transformed
into a miraculous highlight
- 29 RING OF TONES
A symphony of our time
- 33 CARPET BAND
Are we really in sync with
one another?

ENGAGEMENT + CONNECTION

- 39 HUILE DE MARIAGE
Golden oil for marriage
maintenance
- 43 WOOL WORKS
How unwashed wool can stimulate
corporate engagement
- 47 CHALK TALK
Reconnecting with the bones

TRANSFORMATION + CHANGE

- 53 HATCHING HAPPINESS
A personal bearer of happiness
- 59 GOLDEN CIRCLE
Search for paradise
- 63 PINK MILK
Milk with a message

CLOSINGS + GOODBYES

- 69 ROOT SOUP
Soup with a statement
- 73 SOYSAFAI
Sit on your shit
- 77 STRING OF PEARLS
Grandmother's necklace

TEXT BOOK

- 82 1. ART AS AN INGREDIENT
Meike Ziegler discusses the
role of art in creatuals
by Koos de Wilt
- 84 2. NEW AWAKENINGS
Can new rituals wake up and
direct lost souls?
by Hanne Caspersen

- 86 3. OUR NEED FOR RITUALS
What the opinion leaders
have to say
by Koos de Wilt
- 89 4. CREATUALS—A MODERN
ALTERNATIVE TO PROTOCOL?
How new rituals might help us in
our highly individualized age
by Paul Spies
- 92 5. THE ART OF NOTICING OUR
FAILURE TO NOTICE
How to cope with 'wicked'
corporate problems
by Anna Snel
- 95 6. THE MAGIC OF THE RITUAL
IN A SECULAR WORLD
Contemporary rituals without God
by Koos de Wilt
- 98 7. RITUALS, ROUTINES, RUTS
AND THE DISRUPTIVE EVENT
Connecting the heart and
the mind
by Amy Stafford
- 101 8. NEW-STYLE RITUALS FOR A
NEW APPROACH TO WORK
Interview with Jaap Purmer
by Koos de Wilt
- 104 9. A QUEST FOR PARADISE
A study of the mythological
meaning of landscape
by Arita Baaijens

- 106 10. CREATING A TABLE
OF HOPE [I]
What are your hopes and dreams,
for yourself, your community and
for Cape Town?
by William Hewett
- 108 11. CREATING A TABLE
OF HOPE [II]
Re-authoring the world
by Chené Swart

RECIPE BOOK

- 113 BIRTH
Contractions transformed
into sculptures
- 115 MESSAGE COCOONING
Newborn rituals
- 117 WOVEN FRIENDSHIP
Carpet of colourful memories
- 119 PINK MILK
Can you catch a dream?
Distill emotions?
- 121 PEARLS
Staying connected with the
family in heart and mind
- 123 CALLAS
Monument for a dear dog

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- 126 CANDLE LETTER
Express your feelings in
a candle letter
- 128 ART WITH HEART
Let's dance to our collective
heartbeat
- 130 Table of Hope
Starting a worldwide dialogue

CREATUALS—THE COMPANY

- 136 Company information
- 137 Workshops & lectures
- 138 Projects & clients
- 140 Latest projects
- 144 Sources



THE CREATUALS MANIFESTO

We aspire to:

- Enrich traditional events with a meaningful story
- Place history in a new context
- Challenge ourselves to create unexpected solutions
- Create sustainable and responsible products
- Mark moments through expressive concepts
- Convey the essence of a message in the most concise way
- Arouse interest in social aspects
- Involve our clients in the creative process
- Design beyond 2D and 3D
- Break patterns and move minds
- Emphasize that we are all equal human beings

WHAT IS A 'CREATUAL'?

—

'CREATUALS' ARE TAILOR-MADE CONTEMPORARY RITUALS,
INFUSED WITH PERSONAL INPUT AND COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY.

•

A CREATIVE RITUAL DEVELOPED AROUND A PARTICULAR THEME
OR FOR A SPECIFIC OCCASION.
WITHIN A PERSONAL OR CORPORATE CONTEXT.
FOR ANY NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS.

•

AN EXPERIENCE IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP FOR
WHOM THE CREATUAL HAS BEEN DESIGNED
IS INVITED TO COMPLETE A SERIES OF STEPS.

•

DURING THIS PROCESS, THE PARTICIPANT'S MIND IS 'TWISTED'
IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HEIGHTEN THE SENSES.
THE PARTICIPANT TRIES TO RECOGNIZE AND INTERPRET
WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT IS SURPRISED BY AN UNEXPECTED
(SOMETIMES PECULIAR) SENSE OF WONDER WHICH TRIGGERS
NEW INSIGHTS, ENERGY AND CONNECTION.

•

ULTIMATELY, THE CREATUAL RESULTS IN A PROCESS,
A WORK OF ART OR SOME KIND OF CONSTRUCTION.
ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED BY AN
EXTRAORDINARY STORY

•

PARTICIPANTS TAKE AWAY A MEMENTO CHARGED
WITH MEANING.

CREATUALS ARE NOT
CONVENTIONAL
KNOW-IT-ALL
GIMMICKS
THEATRE PLAY
VAGUE
JADED
AVERAGE
HIPPIE
SLICK
THREATENING

CREATUALS ARE
REAL
OPEN-MINDED
WISE
PLAYFUL
INVENTIVE
HONEST
WILD
STYLISH
UNEXPECTED
LIBERATING

‘It’s a delight to work with
associations and metaphors.’

‘I very tentatively invented
my own creatual! Great fun to do.’

‘I discovered a need to do this
kind of thing more often. To allow
myself to be less inhibited by the
‘threshold’ I often experience during this
type of artistic happenings.’

‘I’m especially intrigued by the
circle of giving something and receiving
something in return.’

‘Tangible. Marking moments is
a strength you can develop.’

‘The realisation that a tiny change
can bring about a completely
different effect.’

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT CREATUALS

...

‘The power of doing things on an
emotional level releases a different
kind of energy in me.’

‘Letting go of habitual ways
of thinking.’



CREATUALS' FOUNDER MEIKE ZIEGLER

THE CREATIVE ALCHEMIST

As a child, she lived in an ever-changing world, from which she created her own, equally changing world. Her life was one long lesson in wonderment, which she took with her into her work. Meike the Creative Alchemist wrong-foots us in a gentle and poetic way. Her 'creatuals' have an essential beauty, which take us by the hand and encourage us to explore to deeper levels; levels rooted in people's lives, and in the history of art around us. In essence these are layers created by the participants themselves: small contributions to a greater whole.

AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATION

—
Meike Ziegler explains the
essence of her work

Interview by Koos de Wilt

She was schooled in Florence, London and Utrecht. She went on to work in Amsterdam, London, Barcelona, New York and Berlin. Meike Ziegler’s habitat is the world. “I grew up in a number of different countries. I was born in London and our family moved to Australia for my father’s work as city planner. The Australian heat was conducive to nakedness and games in the cooling mud. Another move to Egypt brought me in contact with children from all walks of life. I feasted my eyes on a colourful palette of people, clothing, cuisine and lifestyles. My education at American schools introduced me to children of 125 different nationalities. My playground was a mixture of both rich and poor. For a child of seven, things are what they are. And that is the basis from which I am fortunate to be able to work, day in, day out. I find it easy to make friends and learned very early on about the concept of farewells. I soon learned that a goodbye is an opportunity for a new start, and for growth. Children growing up in one place are less open to the traditions and rituals of others. Everyone in the world needs rituals. They bond, they bring good. And that’s what new rituals can do too.”

SURPRISE WITH INTENT

With her creatuals, Meike aims to shock us just a little. Why? “It’s not my aim to hurt or offend, but to invite people out of their patterns of expectation, to create space and lend new meaning to known objects and particular moments. I dare to break a pearl necklace of great sentimental value and then have those involved create a new necklace, recharged with all the significance of the old...and more. The shock tactic brings heightened involvement, enables people to reshape their patterns of interaction with one another. I bring about symbolic destruction, from which something new can emerge. Even those with multiple good reasons for prolonging their usual patterns of behaviour may find themselves drawn into the process, becoming so inspired with enthusiasm that they resolve to see or do things differently. Pain, like that of a farewell, is something that touches all of us at some point in our lives, and everyone seeks to transform this pain into something of significance. Traditional rituals can help, but increasingly we feel a need for something new, something that belongs to the here and now,

to the particular situation we experience. We are all confronted with certain moments in our lives when we question who we are and wonder who we could become. With my creatuals I offer tailor-made settings to help this happen.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Besides being modern rites of passage, creatuals are events, they are works of art. They might happen in a personal context, or equally in a corporate one. Creatuals might be used to mark milestones in life like a birth, an official opening, the completion of a change process, a farewell, or an end. The aim is to transform such events into significant moments of beauty. From a “now moment” to a “monument to the now”, a memory is created. Why is it important to involve people actively in these creatuals? Meike Ziegler: “Each participant brings the weight of their own experience to bear on the final outcome of the creatual. The words and phrases spoken by each participant all become part of the collective story. You place your personal fingerprint which becomes part of the collective mark. Your energy combines with that of others to create light. People fill this creation with truly personal meaning. And so they become owners of the complete creation, the separate elements no longer individually distinguishable as such. For example, I once had a piece of music composed from live recordings of the heartbeats of all those present. Everyone contributes their own part, an essential part of the collective end result. Attention and intent are captured for ever. The shape of the ultimate outcome remains uncertain until the end, precisely because everyone present is free to contribute according to their own interpretation. Of course there are always people who would rather not participate. And I understand their reticence. I feel the same when invited to clap to the rhythm at a concert, or dragged out of the audience as a “volunteer”. And that is not at all my approach: everyone is free to choose their role.”

LAYERS OF MEANING

The top layer of each creatual is an aesthetic one, embodying beauty. Then comes the symbolic layer, then the mythological and finally the spiritual one. And are we supposed to drill down through all those layers then? Meike Ziegler: “The first layer is sufficient to achieve an effect. The concept is original, the design feels good, the exterior strikes us. The subsequent layers intensify the experience, providing a lasting notion of change. The experience will still be with us months, perhaps even years later. Some will keep it with them for the rest of their lives. A table is a universal object. People the world over work, eat and discuss life at the table. But you can do more with it. The Table of Hope is a thing of beauty carrying a beautiful message of hope. Something as mundane as a table is injected with new meaning, charged with legend as it takes its shape from pieces of wood laden with the significance of those who build it.

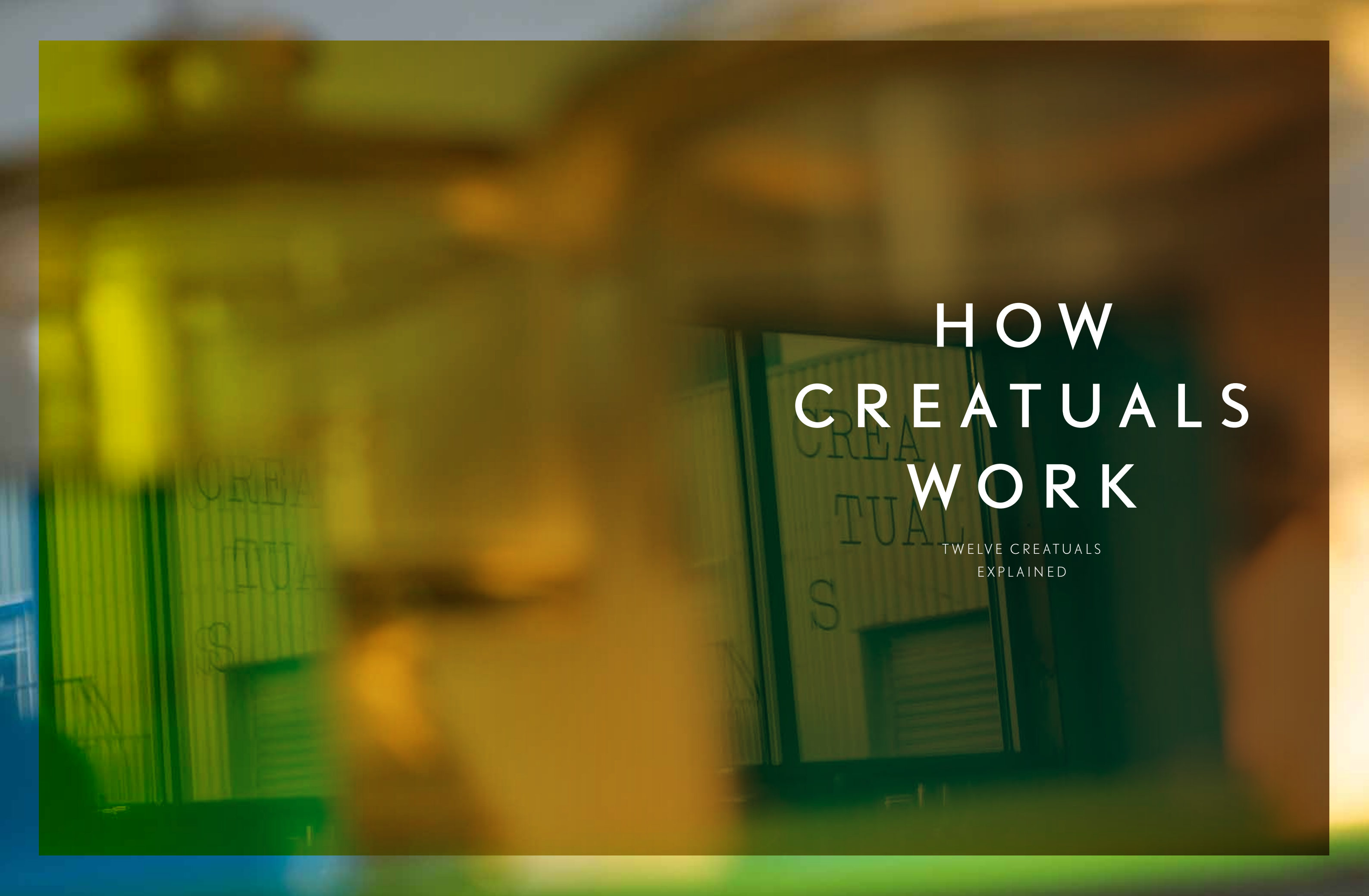
So what’s the point of rituals in a world in which we try to grasp and keep a hold of reality with our statistics, our Excel sheets and our Powerpoint presentations? Meike: “We Westerners have learned to professionalise and to rationalise our working environment, turning it into a soulless world. I sense the need amongst professionals to turn away from the negative, towards the positive, to improve the balance. It is precisely in rational times like these that people feel the need for deeper layers of meaning. I go in search of new purpose, stripped bare of the predictable dogmas and symbolism of times gone by, in search of new meaning, a composition of the numerous intentions of the group of people who have come together at a particular moment to see something magical happen. I try to help people to break their patterns by giving them a name and doing something different with them. In doing so, I make use of the same ingredients these people have always been working with, or the themes with which the moments for commemoration are linked. Think of handcuffs for police offers and mothers’ milk for the Breast Cancer Fund. An opening ceremony demands

the cutting of a ribbon. But has anyone ever stopped to wonder what the meaning of this is? And why should we always do this in exactly the same way? Can we not charge the same event with new energy? I work with the worlds my participants know. For me there is no point having a group of managers going off to bang drums in the desert. Rather, I pinpoint something in their daily surroundings and give it a certain twist.” Alongside the stuff of people’s daily, practical lives—be it home, work or a particular society to which they belong—art is an important ingredient in creatuals. Ziegler takes her inspiration from the wealth of great artists through the ages. Ziegler: “I cherry pick from art history. From the thought processes Bill Viola puts into his videos, the provocation that is the stamp of Damien Hirst and Francis Bacon, Richard Long and Andy Goldsworthy’s land art, the magical worlds conjured up by film makers like Krzysztof Kieslowski, Peter Greenaway and David Lynch and the odes to simplicity by John Cage and John Maeda or Dmitri Sjostakovitsj’s very lively style. All of them provide me with the ingredients for new recipes and new creatuals.”

CREATIVE RITUALS

In a period where we see the declining influence of traditional institutions like the church, we see a need for new meaning, new rituals. Meike Ziegler is the founder and the creator of the phenomenon creatuals. She has created dozens, each one tailor-made, for numerous different situations both at home and abroad. Creatuals are “creative rituals” to mark special moments in both corporate and personal settings. At each event, Creative Alchemist Ziegler seeks the participants’ active involvement. Each Creatual contains an unexpected twist enabling bonding and wonder.

Meike describes creatuals as creative rituals for a special occasion on a particular theme, or to mark a transition. Each time, she invites each participant to contribute something of him- or herself. It might be a story, an intention, a heartbeat or a fingerprint. In this way, the participants become co-owners of the ritual. They become actively involved in the creative process and the object or the moment becomes charged with meaningful input. Meike sees herself as the Creative Alchemist who transforms these moments into a significant experience, a work of art collectively created. This may ultimately take the form of a process, a piece of art or an apparatus.



HOW CREATUALS WORK

TWELVE CREATUALS
EXPLAINED



NEW BEGINNINGS + OPENINGS

Always and everywhere, people have been aware that making a new start, setting up something new, demands a lot from them and their fellow beings. Every journey starts with one step, as the saying goes, but in practice that first step requires a lot of preparation and hard work. To begin with, everyone involved must be convinced that you are serious.

Then all the necessary attitudes and routines must be put in place from scratch. This is why it is essential to mark beginnings, no matter what the specific situation is. Rituals have emerged to accompany these occasions.

So a couple in love promises always to take care of each other and new parents take on the responsibility for their baby. The same is true for companies and organizations in which plans are made to conquer the world, or decisions taken to do things differently from now on. States may solemnly pledge to improve their treatment of the environment or the wellbeing of their citizens. Never an easy thing to do. A deal struck with yourself or between you and others must be solidly anchored.

One way of accomplishing this is by means of a powerful creatural. A solemn and aesthetically expressed commitment by all concerned and a profound message to everyone involved that something significant is about to happen.



HIGH LIGHT

Human energy transformed into a
miraculous highlight

One of the largest power companies in the Netherlands is convinced it's time for radical change. This idea has been around for a while and is finding increasing support in today's world. There's a limit to how much energy we can squeeze out of the earth, without giving something back. The source is the perfect place for change to happen, at the same time enabling us—the consumers—to explore new avenues. The company was one of the first to start looking for new solutions. For years it has been encouraging its customers to

use green and sustainable energy. Many consumers are on board with this. Plenty of reasons, then, to refurbish and reopen a disused power plant that complies with all contemporary requirements for sustainability. The company organizes an event for its employees to pay special tribute to this moment. They ask the Creative Alchemist to think of something that will enable the employees to physically experience the impact of the transition the company is currently undergoing.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation An event for a large power company that wants to stimulate sustainable energy use Context The opening of a new, sustainable power plant Request A creatual that allows employees to experience the impact this will have Participants 400 Creative Alchemist response Huge table banners on which messages are written that emerge from the subconscious. The banners are hoisted up and become part of a gigantic source of light	The guests assemble in the new power plant. They take a seat at one of eight tables positioned like compass points around the central stage. Each table is covered with a seven-metre long tablecloth. There is one percussionist at each of North, South, East and West. One plays on glass, another on wood, one on stone and one on metal. Then a storyteller, dressed in a red cape, appears on stage and transports the visitors to a different world. The visitors receive marker pens and proceed to draw words and symbols on the white canvas in front of them. A hefty metal ring ascends from the stage, pulling the banners that are attached to it up to the top of the tall building where together they form a gigantic lampshade, the High Light. The effect is phenomenal. As a souvenir the visitors receive a small piece of one of the banners, wrapped around a silver torch.

PROTECTING THE EARTH FROM AN INCURABLE ENERGY DRAIN

— THE STORY —

The power company's request got me thinking. How do we humans relate to our own energy? Some things give us energy, but if we don't deal mindfully enough with the energy we have at our disposal, we burn up. The same applies to the earth. This was the thought that led me to develop the creatural High Light.

Energy is all around us, within us and without. The ancient Chinese call their inner power 'chi' and have made an art of cultivating and caring for it. Day in, day out we burn fuel to keep our mind and our body running smoothly. The nervous system is a mass of electric currents. Body heat is generated and now and then we blow off steam where necessary. We talk in terms of 'burn out' or 'energy drain' and, more positively, of 'energy gain.' So what gives you energy? On what do you choose to spend your precious energy? Do you sometimes feel that somewhere you have an energy leak? That it seeps from you uncontrolled and unnoticed...until you are presented with the exhaustion bill? And how do you share your energy with others?

So much for our inner sources of energy: at the same time there is increasing awareness globally that we cannot continue to drain our planet's external energy sources the way we have been doing. Just as with our own bodies, we need to manage supply and demand of external energy wisely and sustainably.

My client, we'll call them 'the power company', was only too well aware of this and had been working for years to encourage the use of green and sustainable energy.

Today we were gathered together to celebrate a highlight in their endeavours: the opening of one of their largest, cleanest and most sophisticated power stations; one built to respond precisely to current energy requirements.

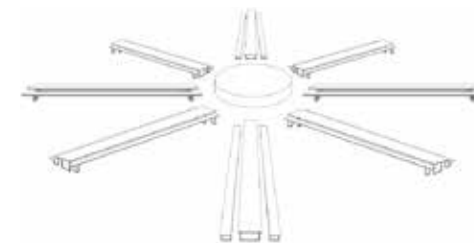
Four hundred guests gather inside the new power station and take their places at eight long tables positioned, like compass points, around a central stage. Seven-metre-long banners serve as tablecloths and at each of the main compass points

a percussionist stands ready; one to play on stone, one on wood, one on glass and one on metal. The storyteller takes the stage, dressed in a red cape and radiating energy to her audience as she transports them into a vibrant world. At North a solid, dependable and pensive rhythm begins to pound on Wood. Stone comes in from the East and the pace becomes lighter, faster, more playful. The storyteller whips the audience into a creative process with her powerful words and movement. People pick up their markers and begin to transfer their personal energy in words and images onto the banners before them. The sound of tinkling glass comes in at South shifting the rhythm to that of a fast-flowing river. Each according to his professional approach, we see appear on the tables flowcharts, haikus, bulleted lists, graphs and charts, words and drawings—all personal expressions of energy. By now an urgent rhythm has picked up in the West, a clanging, metallic, factory-like sound. The sound picture is now complete, all four percussionists play together—feet tap and heads bob with the flow.

A heavy metal ring descends to centre stage on an industrial-strength pulley, the banners are attached to the ring and are hauled to the heights of the building, to form a giant lampshade. At the highest point, the light goes on inside the shade and the High Light is a fact—witnessed by resounding applause from the guests. A toast is proposed and the power station is officially open.

Lunch awaits the guests in a marquee outside. Meanwhile, the banners are torn up into small pieces and each piece wrapped around a silver torch—power packs filled with human energy. Some pieces of the banners are saved and lampshades made to be hung in the meeting rooms as lasting memories of a powerful day.

The guests begin to depart, expressions of surprise and amusement on their faces. They hold tight to their personal power pack gifts, while the traditional goodie bags go virtually unnoticed and are for the most part left behind.



‘At North a solid, dependable and pensive rhythm begins to pound on wood.’



‘The storyteller whips the audience into a creative process with her powerful words and movement.’





RING OF TONES

A symphony of our time

It had been handed down to the older generation as a revolutionary event. With the ‘Radio Kootwijk tower’ the first step was taken on the road to ultra-modern communications. The iconic words were spoken by Queen Emma when she initiated the radio telephone service in 1929: ‘Hello Bandung, can you hear me?’ Telephone contact with friends and relatives living in the Dutch East Indies had become a reality. Initially, the quality of the connection was poor and the price of a telephone conversation was astronomical. At the end of 1998 Radio Kootwijk was decommissioned for good.

The architectural masterpiece with its industrial aura stands in intriguing contrast with its untouched surroundings in the protected nature reserve. In 2009, eighty years after it was opened, the building was transferred to the Forestry Commission which also owns the surrounding nature reserve. Following substantial renovations, the building was to be reopened as a location for special events. A new life for a fantastic building, that called for an extraordinary event and a fitting creatual.

THE SUMMARY

Situation

A former radiotelegraph transmitter is to be used as a location for conferences about sustainability

Context

An event to mark the reopening of a cultural-historical monument

Request

A creatual emphasizing the building’s former and current functions

Participants

175

Creative Alchemist response

A brief moment of unconnectedness followed by to a symphony of ringtones with a hidden message

HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT

While the director gives his speech, a huge metal ring descends from the ceiling. Attached to the ring are hundreds of tiny white bags, creating the illusion of a chandelier. The director takes his mobile phone and places the device in one of the little bags. He calls on the guests to do likewise. For a while, the guests experience once again what it’s like to be disconnected from the rest of the world. They follow the director’s example and then watch the ring with their phones attached disappear towards the ceiling. Suddenly a phone rings, and then another... and another.

A cacophony of ringtones unfolds up on high, interspersed with historical recordings of the very first telephone calls. At the end of the ceremony the guests are asked to decipher a special Morse code message.

HOW IT FEELS TO BE DISCONNECTED FROM THE WORLD FOR A FEW MINUTES

— THE STORY —

With little time in his busy agenda for the details, the director has placed the organisation of the opening ceremony for the former radiotelegraph transmitter in the capable hands of his assistant and her team. Three days before the event, he begins to get curious and asks for a rundown of the planned programme...

The Radio Kootwijk tower: a monument to the Netherlands' first faltering steps into the world of telecommunications. It was built in the early 20th century for telephone contact with family and friends stationed out in the Dutch East Indies, back in the days when a phone call cost 30 guilders per minute and the connection was poor and unreliable.

Redundant in these days of permanent and instantaneous connectivity, the tower now belongs to the Forestry Commission and is about to be re-opened after a complete renovation.

His assistant can hardly contain her excitement as she explains the spectacular plans to the director. He clearly does not share in this excitement, his face darkening with every turn of events she recounts. And then comes the bombshell: he is cancelling the whole event. It is absurd. Visitors can never be expected to take part in such a hocus pocus act. The organisers are devastated as they trail off in search of an innocuous ribbon to span the gate and a large pair of scissors by way of a replacement 'celebration'.

That evening, the director receives a long phone call from the Creative Alchemist, during which he is the one to do most of the listening. He sleeps fitfully that night. The next morning he brusquely informs his assistant that the ribbon can be cancelled and plan A. will go ahead.

The day of the opening dawns. The director stands in front of the crowd of invited guests and begins to speak. 'We all know this building's important history. Here, the very first phone

calls were made to loved ones overseas. The distances were huge and communication poor. People saved up for months and travelled from far and wide to come here and make a one-minute phone call. We simply can't imagine it in these days of 24/7 connectivity all over the world. We don't know we are born. And we take this all absolutely for granted.'

As he speaks, a huge contraption begins to descend from the ceiling. It is a metal ring to which hundreds of little bags are attached. Marching resolutely up to the ring, the director pulls his mobile phone from his pocket and slips it into one of the bags.

Looking around at the audience he continues: 'In honour of this historical building, let's experience once again, just for a moment, how it feels to be disconnected from the world. I would like all of you to take out your phone, look at the date and the time, and then put your phone into one of the bags.'

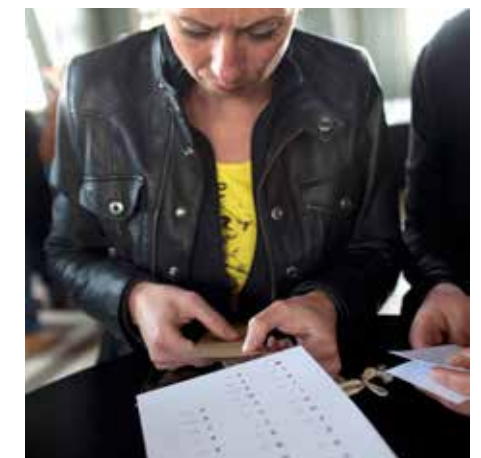
With very serious expressions on their faces, everyone rather nervously does exactly as they are bidden. Once everyone has given up their phone, the ring of bags is hoisted way out of reach. The tension is tangible as people reach instinctively for the empty spaces in their pockets and bags. Then all of a sudden, a cacophony of ring tones, interspersed with crackling snippets of the earliest recorded phone messages begins to sound—a symphony for our time. The tension breaks and laughter ripples around the building.

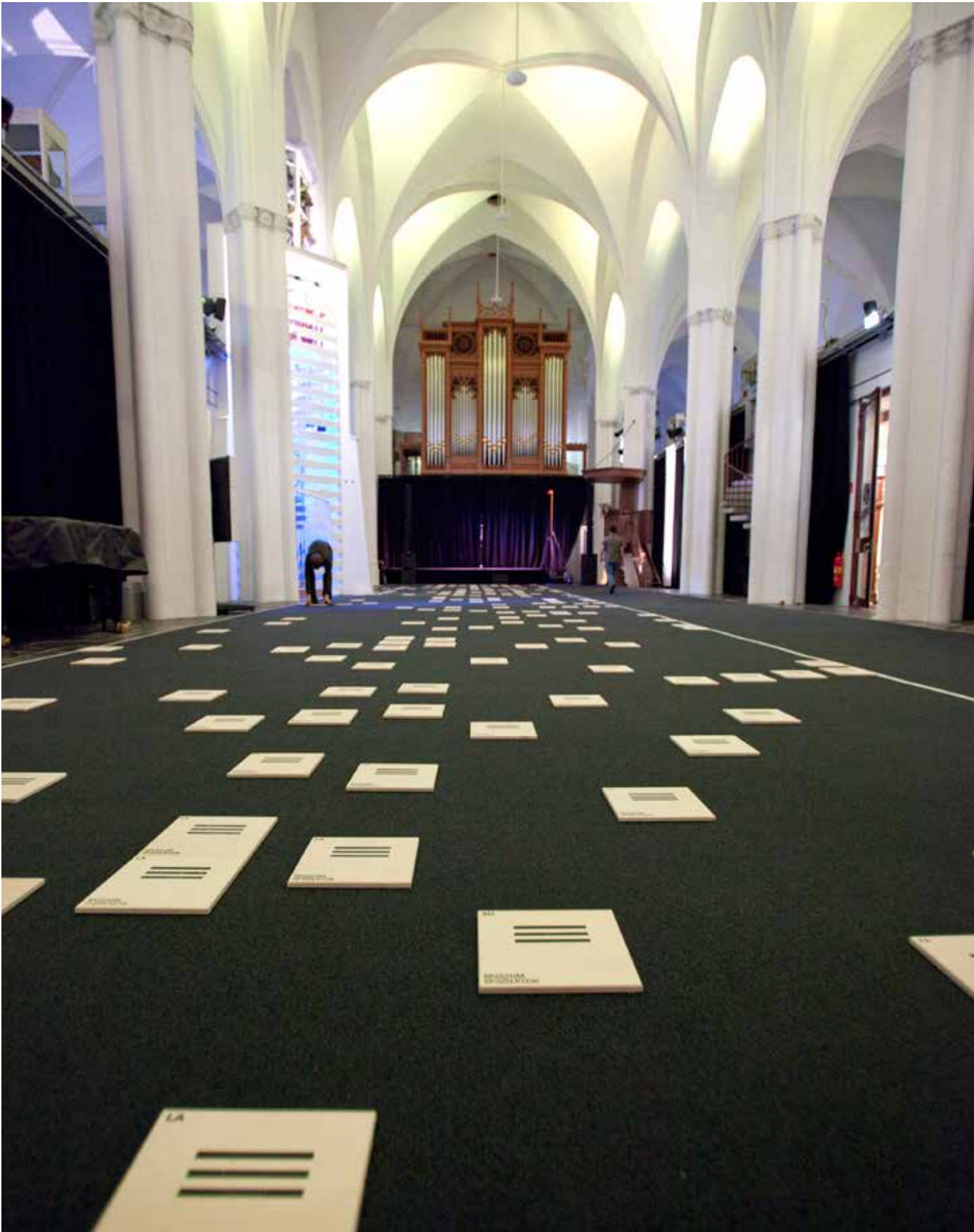
The ceremony ends as people are invited to decipher a message in Morse code which reads: 'Voices spin threads through the atmosphere. We are permanently connected. Dare to drop those threads sometimes, and listen to the world sing.'

The director beams from ear to ear as he accepts compliments for such an original opening ceremony. Meanwhile, his assistant, checking her phone, is equally gratified by the messages she receives.



**'We are permanently connected.
Dare to drop those threads sometimes,
and listen to the world sing.'**





CARPET BAND

Are we really in sync with one another?

Museum Speelklok is the most delightful museum in the Netherlands. In the museum you can see and hear an extensive collection of barrel organs, musical clocks and orchestrions. The collection includes a host of automatic musical instruments, ranging from tiny music boxes to enormous carillon bells. The museum was established in 1954 by ‘de Kring van Draaiorgelvrienden’ (Friends of The Barrel Organ) and ‘Stadsontspanning Utrecht’ (Utrecht Recreational Association). It had already taken two years to track down enough barrel organs and other automatic musical instruments. ‘Stichting Vrienden Museum Speelklok’

(Friends of Museum Speelklok Foundation) began operating at the same time, and today still works to support and expand the museum’s collection. Recently, the Friends Foundation facilitated a major renovation of the museum. A month before the opening, the museum’s director called the Creative Alchemist. She wanted to express the museum’s gratitude to its friends by organising an unforgettable evening for them. Soon afterwards the Creative Alchemist visited the museum. As soon as she saw the huge carillon in the spacious, high-ceilinged hall, she had an idea for a creatual which would be a perfect fit for this museum.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A niche museum wants to thank its friends for facilitating a major renovation Context An exclusive event for friends of the museum Request A memorable creatual that fits the signature of the museum Participants 200 Creative Alchemist response A carillon that is operated at ground level by the guests	During the reception, the door to the central hall opens, revealing a complex pattern of wooden tiles covering the entire floor space. Each tile contains one musical note. In the centre of the hall is a large carillon. Multiple wooden pins have been fixed in the openings on a grid around a large metal drum. The wooden pins can be “read” as the drum rotates. When these pins are read, this activates a system of levers and pulleys, which operates the carillon. Each of the guests is invited to stand upright on one of the tiles. A red laser beam appears in the darkened hall, slowly scanning the position of the guests from the front of the hall to the back. The guests have become the pins on the drum. Together they play the carillon which produces wonderful music.

HOW DOES A HUMAN CARILLON SOUND? — THE STORY —

As the earth turns beneath us, we all make our way amongst others, seeking to live and work harmoniously together, to make the kind of music that we all want to hear. We follow patterns and rhythms to create that harmony. We plan, we position and we organise to ensure the wheels turn smoothly and the rhythm is pleasant. We seek to be in tune, and in sync with one another and when we succeed, we can achieve great things together.

What makes the world go round in a small, highly specialist museum like the Museum Speelklok in Utrecht? Its friends and benefactors of course. A museum with a precious historical collection ranging from church carillons to musical clocks, musical boxes, chimes and much more, relies heavily on the support of enthusiasts and specialists in this niche area.

Thanks to generous donations from the Friends of Museum Speelklok a much-needed renovation of the museum is made possible. The quandary is...how to thank these people?

The evening is to be a memorable one, celebrating the re-opening of the museum after renovation, and thanking the Friends extra specially for their key role in its achievement.

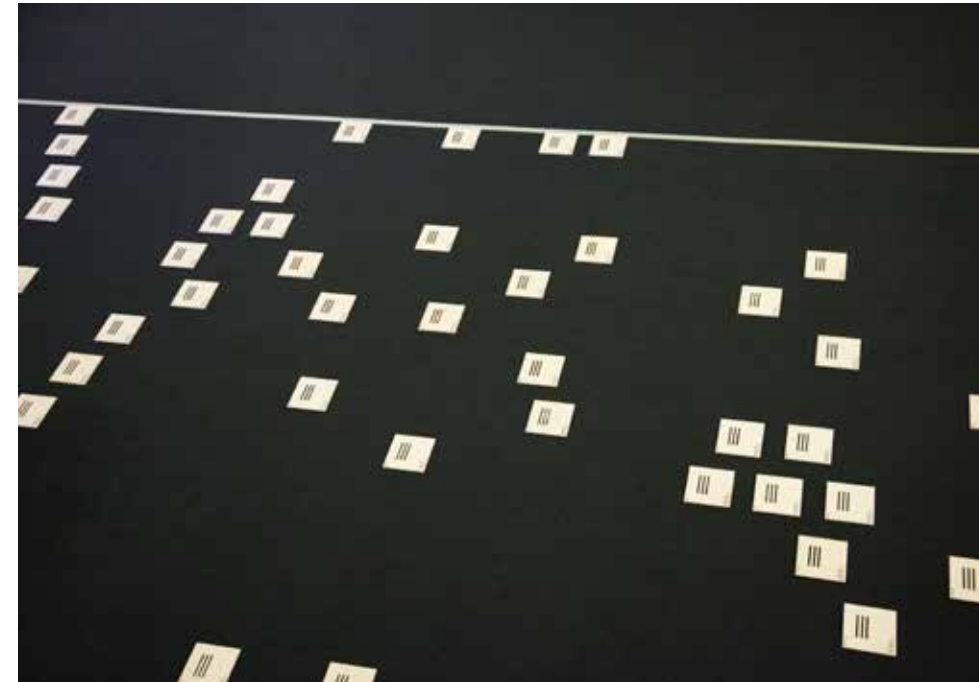
Guests are welcomed with the traditional drinks and snacks and an opening speech from the museum director. Nothing special to be noticed so far. But then...the doors to the main hall -a renovated old church- open. They reveal a complex pattern of wooden tiles laid out on the carpet of the entire floor space. Each tile bears a musical note—do, re, mi etc.

The Centre piece of the hall is the grand carillon. Inside a modern wooden case-tower it reaches high into the magnificent space. At balcony level is the mechanism of this humongous instrument. On a big metal drum, wooden pins are laid out like the notes on sheet music, so that they can be “read” as the drum rotates. As the pins are ‘read’, a system of levers and pulleys is activated and the carillon bells—no fewer than 23 in total—are rung in the order given by the ‘pin music’.

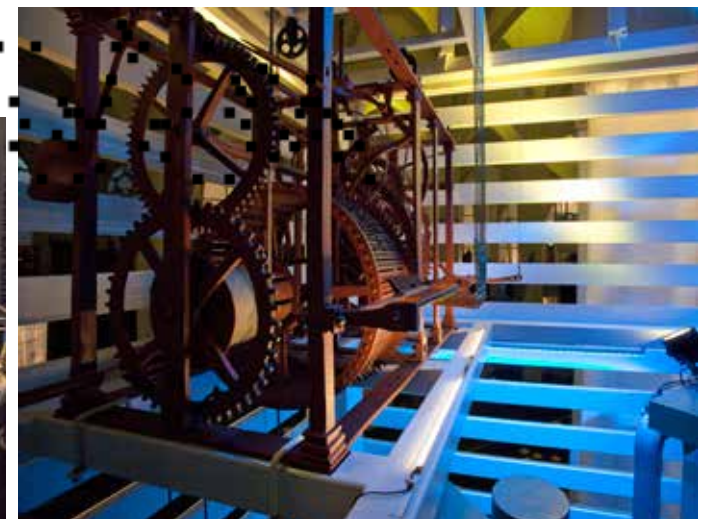
Champagne glasses in hand, the guests are invited to select a tile and stand perfectly still and straight on it. There is a tile for everyone present. In the darkened hall, a red laser beam suddenly appears across the width of the hall and begins to make its way down the hall, over the heads of these human ‘music pins’. The guests have taken on the role of the drum. Having got themselves neatly into position, they now call the tune for the carillon to play. And it is a beautiful one.

The effect is magical. There is a look of wonderment on everyone’s face... ‘Did I really do that?’ it seems to say. The laser beam has hardly made it to the end of its sheet of human music when people step from their positions and seek one another out to laugh and wonder at what they have just created together. The result? As the laser beam starts its return journey down the hall, a total cacophony can be heard as the sheet of human music becomes crumpled and disordered...

What an evening. What a celebration. The friends of the museum will be talking about it for a long time to come.



‘Did I really do that?’





ENGAGEMENT + CONNECTION

Any pact to engage or connect is likely to encounter challenges along the way. Now and then there will be serious doubts—amongst the people who team up, companies that merge and states that promise loyalty to each other. In fairy tales the ending is deceptively simple: everyone lives happily ever after. Reality is much more fickle.

Marriages entered into with the best of intentions may ultimately end in painful divorce; managers fall out over 'future policies' and states enter into violent wars. It takes more than a signature, a well-intentioned nod or a firm handshake to turn an undertaking into a structural commitment. People must realize that a gentle summer breeze can turn into a violent storm and that they must be able to rely on one another when that happens.

In the course of a jointly performed ritual, the participants experience physically what they are agreeing with each other. Later they will look back upon this joint experience, encourage each other and reconnect with what it was they came up with together all that time ago. A profound creatural embodying the significance of the choice can contribute to the success of a long-term commitment.



HUILE DE MARIAGE

Golden oil for marriage maintenance

They are the ideal couple and after more than a year of intensive preparations, their wedding is now just around the corner. She gives relaxing treatments to ‘the happy few’ with her natural oils and he, besides being a gifted storyteller, is an amazing mechanic who can fix anything that has an engine. They both know exactly what they want and they are both perfectionists. They usually see eye to eye, but sometimes, briefly, they don’t. Even though they’re fully convinced they are right for each other, getting married still feels like a major, irreversible step. How will they preserve the quality of their relationship and how can they ensure that in the future they will still be able to solve any differences of opinion harmoniously? He came up with the idea of asking the wedding guests to help them out. But he wasn’t sure exactly how to do this. They contacted the Creative Alchemist.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A couple is about to get married, and although they’re sure of each other, marriage still feels like a big commitment Context A wedding Request A creatual, involving the wedding guests, that ensures the couple will continue to solve potential future differences of opinion harmoniously Participants 200 Creative Alchemist response Personalized golden miracle oil	The wedding invitations include small paper bags. The guests are asked to put something in the bag that symbolizes the bride and bridegroom: something herbal, mechanical or some other item. They can write a message on the bag explaining why they chose this particular item. On the day itself a large table is placed in the sun-drenched garden (covered with a white table cloth). In the middle of the table is a glass bowl full of little odds and ends. At each end of the table there is a pillar with a large, transparent flask on top. One of the flasks is filled with a syrupy substance, the other flask is empty. A large glass funnel containing a giant paper coffee filter rests on top of the empty flask. The Alchemist stands behind the table and addresses the bride and groom shortly before the official ceremony commences, requesting them to mix their own conjugal miracle oil using the ingredients their guests have brought along. Later on, when the guests queue up to congratulate the newlyweds, every couple receives a small phial filled with the golden miracle oil and a recipe, to take home.

A RELATIONSHIP MESSAGE CAN WORK WONDERS

— THE STORY —

All is arranged and ready long before the day. The only thing they cannot agree on is the guest list. Each time they sit down to discuss this sensitive issue, tempers get frayed, voices raised and various objects get thrown around the room. Finally though, they can laugh about it and agree and the list is finalised.

After a year and more of preparations, the wedding day is almost upon them. She brings beauty to the wealthy with her herbal oils and pampering treatments. He is a born teller of fantasy stories and a skilled mechanic who can turn his hand to just about anything, oily or otherwise. They are a beautiful couple who work long and hard at what they do and they are organised and well-prepared for everything... including their wedding day.

The intense discussions about the guest list worries her somewhat: 'What if one day we don't manage to come to an agreement about some issue. This wedding is such a big commitment.' He: 'How about we ask our guests to help a bit then?' And this is the moment at which they decide to add an extra special something to their ceremony.

The invitations go out, accompanied by a little paper bag in which the guests are requested to bring along something—herbal, mechanical or otherwise, which, for them, symbolises the bride and her groom. They are asked to write a message on the bag explaining what they have brought and why.

The day dawns bright and sunny. The garden behind the Swedish Church is a mass of colour, the podium dominated by four enormous glass vases filled with flowers. At the centre, on a large table covered with a white cloth, stand glass bowls filled with small items. At each end of the table, there is a pillar on top of which stands a large, transparent flask. One is filled with a golden, syrupy substance. The other is empty and topped with a large glass funnel lined with an oversized paper coffee filter. The scene is that of a fairy-tale laboratory glinting in the sunlight and watched over by the alchemist of the afternoon.

As the guests make their way to their seats, they pass the podium and hand their paper bags to the alchemist, who puts the contents into the funnel. Seated, everyone falls silent, contemplating the union of these two beautiful people. As the ceremony begins, the Alchemist pours hot water over the colourful mixture in the funnel and the percolated liquid begins to drip into the funnel below.

Just as the official words are about to be spoken, uniting the couple once and for all, the Alchemist takes the stage and speaks to the couple. 'You are on the threshold of your marriage. About to promise one another all sorts of truth, trust, love and respect. But remember, marriage can be tough, it's a machine that needs oiling now and then to prevent it rusting. I ask you, the beautician and the mechanic, each in your own way familiar with the healing properties of oil, now to create your own perfect oil by adding ingredients from these glass bowls to the flask of syrupy 'Golden conjugal oil', telling us as you do so what you are doing.

The groom pops a pea into the flask: 'For you, my princess.' The bride drops in a corn of barley: 'You enjoy a beer, do you not?' He takes a handful of pearls and lets one glide in: 'I'll give you a child.' Erupting into laughter, he drops in another three. She adds two screws: 'Screw you!' He selects a slice of lemon: 'Let's not get too sour.' She retorts with a spoonful of sugar: 'My sweetie.' He goes for the rose petals: 'My love.' She adds a pinch of chocolate powder. He tops it off with a sprig of dill: 'Let's grow.' And lastly, she removes her anklet, kisses it and adds it to the oil: 'Walk with me.'

Meanwhile, the liquid in the other flask has completely filtered through. The funnel and filter are removed. The groom adds a good measure of this elixir prepared by their 200 guests as the final ingredient for the 'Conjugal Oil' he and his bride have just created. The flask is corked and the two are ready to take their official vows.

Afterwards, as the guests file past the bride and groom to congratulate them, each couple is given a little bag containing a phial of freshly tapped oil and a recipe—the golden recipe for marriage maintenance and relationship massage. It will do wonders.

In the home of the newly married couple stands a large flask of oil. When the sunlight strikes it from the right angle, it shimmers with potent magical power. Visitors sometimes ask what it is. The groom grins and maintains the fantasy: 'It is indeed magical stuff.' The bride, both feet on the ground, says breezily 'Oh, sometimes we need some maintenance.'



**He takes a handful of pearls and
lets one glide in: 'I'll give you a child.'**



WOOL WORKS

How unwashed wool can stimulate corporate engagement

Twenty years ago the telecom company had embarked on what seemed like a mission impossible: to dismantle existing monopoly positions within the telecom branch. For many years they had used the image of the black sheep in their communications as a metaphor for their approach. They have been hugely successful in realizing their objectives. By now there are many trustworthy telecommunications service providers. Above all, it's now possible to call almost free of charge to any country in the world.

Mission accomplished? Not by a long shot, the market is still full of issues to be solved. Consumers still often perceive telecom providers as a necessary evil and the company wants to change this. Things can be done better, simpler and cheaper, providing more precisely what each customer wants, for less money. And by constantly improving and always being there for customers. To achieve this however, they need total engagement of their staff. The Creative Alchemist was asked for assistance.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A telecom company wants to improve its employees' engagement Context A two day management meeting Request A creatual that encourages participants to contribute actively to improving engagement with the company Participants 140 Creative Alchemist response Jointly spinning freshly sheared black sheep's wool	As soon as the PowerPoint presentation during the management meeting is over, a short film is shown about the Creative Alchemist helping a farmer to shear a black sheep. Soon after that an enormous bundle of unwashed, black sheep's wool is brought into the meeting room, and each participant is given a wooden spindle with an instruction card. In groups of two or three, the participants spin anything from a few centimetres to several metres of rough thread. As a reward, they receive a designer phone-cover made of black felt, onto which they may attach a self-spun thread with a label. On the label they write their own personal suggestion for improving employee engagement with the company. Brainstorming sessions in groups of ten follow, in which participants first of all dismantle the pins and discs from the spindles and then write their ideas on the discs. Each table chooses their favourite and the disc with this idea is mounted on a large sheet of foam board. In the final plenary session everyone votes for the best disc by sticking their pins in the foam board.

BACK-TO-BASICS REALLY GOT THEM THINKING

— THE STORY —

A pretty, rural scene: the Waterlands of North Holland where the annual sheep shearing is taking place. I had come along to join the locals and watch this countryside pursuit, to enjoy a rustic escape from digital routine, and to take something away with me—a black fleece. We ate and drank and chatted while the farmer deftly sheared his 12-strong flock—including two huge black sheep—in no more than a couple of hours. It was a joy to watch, especially how the newly shorn beasts skipped for joy as they were released, feather-light back into the meadow.

I was just as happy as the sheep, driving home with a malodorous bundle in the boot of my car and some video coverage of the shearing scenes. These were soon to be the temporary tools of my trade.

With knowledge of one traditional pursuit under my belt, I went off to find out about spinning the wool it had yielded. I found a couple: he crafts the spindles, she spins the wool into yarn and weaves it.

Armed with a full set of tools and knowledge, I returned reluctantly to the world of pie charts and power points. In a hotel I met a group of 140 telecom souls united under the black sheep logo (disliked by several), who had been called into a sterile conference room to discuss the topic of ‘corporate engagement.’

My brief? To lubricate the proceedings and lend them a memorable twist.

Tearing folks away from their coffee cups and their keypads I showed them the film of the sheep shearing session.

It was a long time since any of them had seen anything as earthy and back-to-basics. Many were puzzled as to where this was all leading.

As the film came to an end, in came the bundle of black wool the audience had just seen being shorn from the sheep. As each person was handed a spindle, many of them began to look nervously towards the screen in the hope of hiding behind another PowerPoint or two. But that was not to be. It was time for the distraction of some manual work. Along with the spindles, a large handful of greasy, unwashed black wool was handed out and, using the instructions posted up on the wall, they began their first uncertain attempts at spinning. People got together in twosomes to help one another and you really began to see some engagement with each other and, unavoidably because of the nature of their handiwork, with the black sheep. Most people managed to spin enough wool to thread into the little felt, company-branded phone cases they were given to reward their efforts. To that thread, each person was asked to tie a label on which they had written their personal resolutions for engagement with colleagues.

Then followed a session of collective brainstorming. In twelve groups of ten, people were asked to dismantle their spindles and write down on the disc their ideas for better company engagement. Each table then selected their two best and everyone was invited to stick their spindle into their personal favourite from the 24 finalists. ‘Give the issue a name’ received no fewer than 35 hits.

An afternoon of back-to-basics had really got them thinking... and engaging...with the elephant (or was it the black sheep?) in the room.



‘Oh and by the way sir,-
shearing a sheep does not kill it.’





CHALK TALK

Reconnecting with the bones

The Oude Kerk is the oldest building in Amsterdam and is situated in the middle of the Red Light District. It was established in the thirteenth century as a wooden chapel in a hamlet on the River Amstel. Boats could moor right in front of it so sailors could pray for a safe journey home. The tiny chapel grew into an impressive church with stained glass windows, organs and the tombs of people like Saskia van Uylenburgh, Rembrandt's wife. The church's wooden predecessor was built on an artificial mound which served as a cemetery. Later, out of necessity, they had to bury people inside the church too. By now, over 10,000 people are buried there beneath more than 2,500 gravestones. The Oude Kerk still serves as 'Amsterdam's Living Room', a place in which to contemplate and be inspired; where past and present connect. The combination of contemporary art with the rich history of the church attracts lovers of cultural heritage as well as inquisitive city dwellers. The building often hosts solo exhibitions by artists like Tony Oursler. The Creative Alchemist was approached for the opening of the travelling exhibition entitled Memento, or 'The Museum of Broken Relationships'.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A religious monument that connects with contemporary art and culture Context 'Memento', a (travelling) exhibition Request A creatual that resonates with the atmosphere in the church and the exhibition Participants 250 Creative Alchemist response A new piece of 'calcium' in which meaningful memories are stored	The travelling exhibition Memento, or 'The Museum of Broken Relationships', ran for several months at The Oude Kerk. The exhibition consisted of objects that were donated by people from a wide variety of villages and cities in numerous countries. The objects represent what a broken relationship means to these people: a bottle of tears, a cuddly toy, an item of clothing. During the opening ceremony, a large circle is drawn in chalk on the old stone floor. The guests receive a small bag containing a piece of chalk and an instruction card, and they are invited to write their own story of grief, happiness or some other meaningful memory about a broken relationship, inside the circle. The next morning in the empty church, the Creative Alchemist carefully sweeps the chalk in which the messages were written into a small bag. In her studio she transforms this into a new piece of chalk, brimming with personal stories.

HEARTBREAK, JOY, MEMORIES AND HOPE

— THE STORY —

We are the bones. We never sleep. If you listen carefully, you can hear us whispering. They say this church is the oldest building in Amsterdam. We don't keep count. We keep stories as we lie here under the worn stones, inscriptions blurred by countless footsteps. Fifteen generations of them have walked over us.

We hear their stories repeated above us as those feet pass by. Voices read from guidebooks in whispered awe and our history is repeated down the years like a confessional above our heads. 'Where is my daddy? Take me to him.' 'I slaved all my life for her. But it was never enough. And what did I get in return?' 'Please Lord take away my suffering. I cannot bear it any longer.' 'There's this girl I really like. But I think Joe is into her too. What should I do?'

Tonight, our worn stones are trodden by hundreds of feet. There's an intriguing exhibition being opened. People have brought along all kinds of things to mark what broken relationships mean to them. Very personal pieces and all very different, though we have heard that, as this exhibition travels, a pattern is beginning to emerge of the kind of things that people bring along. We hear the visitors above our heads talk about a jar with someone's tears; a soft toy cuddled to shreds; a garment with special meaning. The feet walk and pause, walk and pause. Then we hear how each visitor is handed a piece of chalk...as if they are handed a piece of us. We fall silent, expectant.

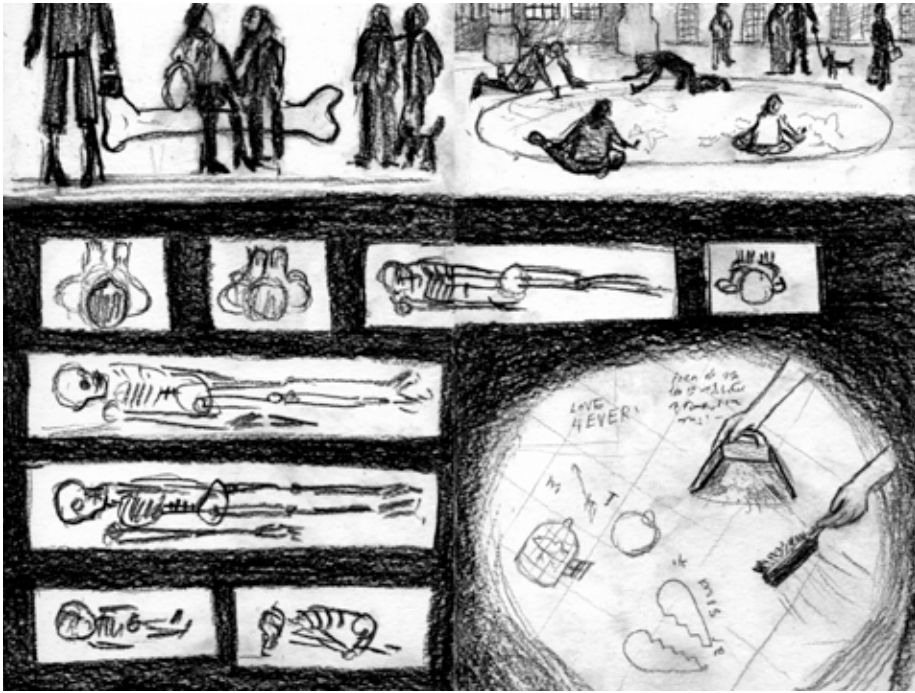
A big chalk circle is drawn on the stones above us and the guests are invited to write their own stories of heartbreak, joy, memories and hope. We feel the letters forming. 'Funny how I miss his irritating cough.' 'Now I am free, I am finally going to travel the world.' 'My first visit here was to get married. Now that's over. And I'm here again with my grandchildren.'

Gradually, the steps die away and we are left in peace with our own stories down below, and the new ones, just above us.

The next morning, there is the soft sound of brushing as the calcium stories are swept together into a bag and taken off to be made into a new piece of chalk, brimming with stories and ready to create those of the next generation.



**'I slaved all my life
for her.'**



**'If you listen carefully,
you can hear the bones whispering.'**



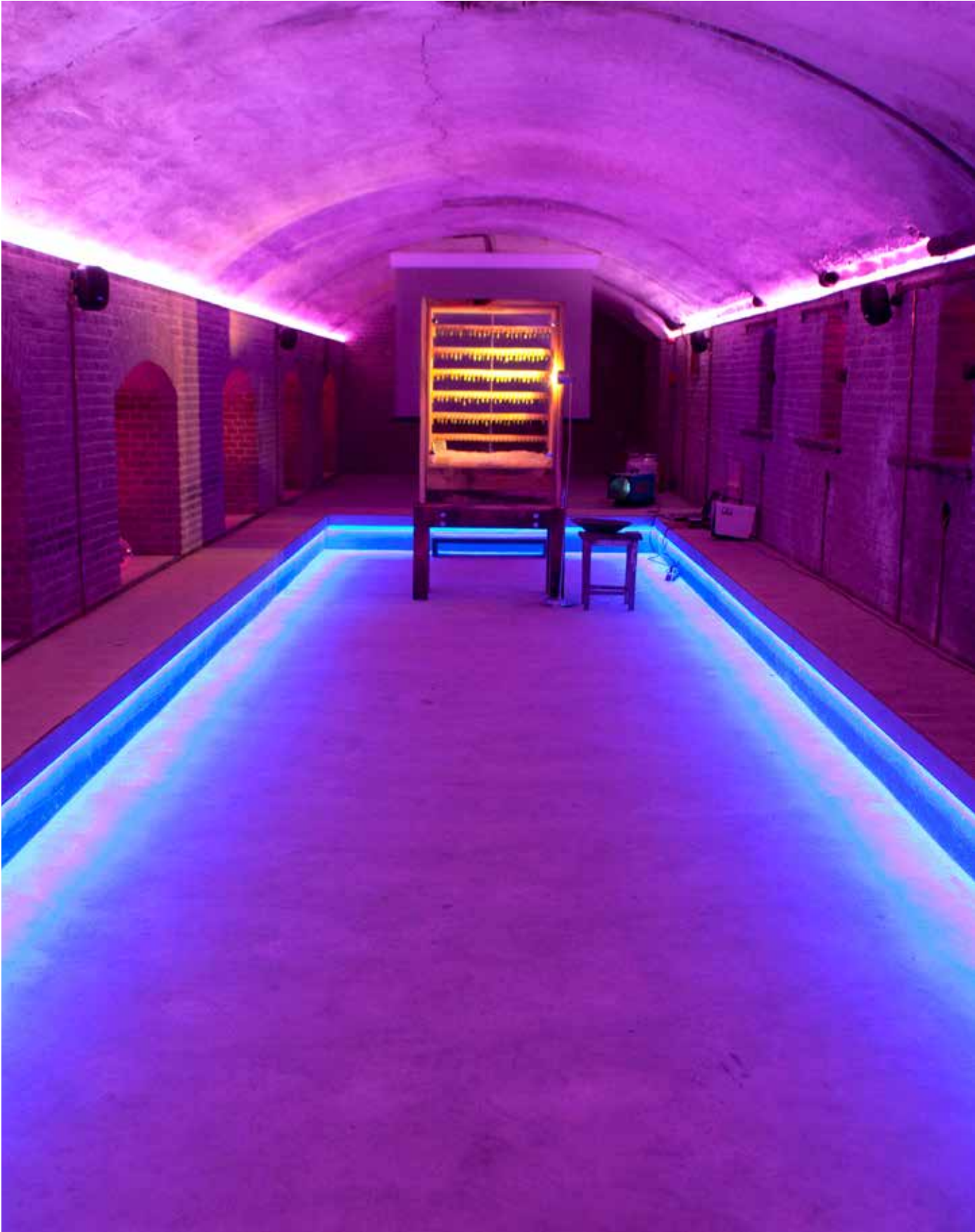


TRANS - FORMATION + CHANGE

People like routine and clarity, they seek a certain level of predictability in their daily lives. But sometimes things have to change; a different course is required: to get more out of life, to work more effectively together or to benefit from new opportunities. In some cases there simply is no other option.

The dearest wish of most of those in a position of leadership is to get everyone on the same page. But how often does that really happen, and does everyone genuinely share the same sense of urgency and commitment? Transformation may well be the hardest task for an individual, an organization or a country. To achieve it requires engaging the hearts and the minds of everyone involved. After the transformation things are significantly different and will never be the same as they were before. There is often no way back. So, for a transformation to succeed, you need the emotional and rational involvement of all participants. A catalyst can facilitate the experience, celebration and implementation of such joint changes of direction. It engenders trust in oneself and in others.

And it encourages people to motivate and support each other throughout the journey.



HATCHING HAPPINESS

A personal bearer of joy

For thirty years now, the agency has aimed to boost the Dutch business community by organizing events for them. They have a track record of over 1,750 events in the Netherlands and abroad. Every year they host a Rosé Party for their clients and business relations, an event full of encounters, inspiration and of course, rosé tasting. This year the director wants a different approach. He challenges the Creative Alchemist to come up with a

'happiness' themed creatual for a select group of clients, that will be both thought-provoking and stimulating for the senses. Above all, it should be an experience they have never had before, a real wake-up call. That's quite a challenge. The Creative Alchemist gets to work. The guests will experience what the director has asked for, a ritual they will never forget.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation An event agency that organizes an annual Rosé Party for its clients and business relations Context This event needs an extra sparkle Request A creatual that gives the guests an experience they have never had before Participants 150 Creative Alchemist response A personal 'happiness chrysalis' that transforms into a beautiful butterfly	On the day of the creatual, the guests arrive by boat on the island fort in the large lake. Every guest receives an mp3 player, a set of headphones and a colourful deckchair. They hear a voice that leads them into a surrealistic world where butterflies are created from an elixir extracted from the rarest species of all: truly happy souls. Afterwards, in the fort, the guests all receive a bamboo pen, some bark ink and a small strip of glossy paper on which to write their own idea of true happiness. Then everyone dips their strip into a test tube filled with rainwater. The words dissolve into the water and a cork with a neck-strap attached to it seals the tube containing the personal elixir. In small groups the guests are led into a magically lit room, where classical music plays and thousands of butterflies in flight are projected on the walls. In the centre of the room the guests approach a cabinet containing 150 living butterfly chrysalides. Taking turns, they use a pipette to sprinkle a few drops of their 'happiness water' onto their very own numbered chrysalis. While the guests dine outside, the butterfly cabinet is closed and carefully transported to a tropically heated greenhouse in the Creative Alchemist's studio. In the course of the next few weeks the participants can follow their own 'bearer of happiness' on a webcam. Everyone receives a personal announcement card with the date and time of their own butterfly's birth.

BEARERS OF HAPPINESS’ TRANSFORM INTO BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES

— THE STORY —

John ‘the Butterfly man’ in England was used to receiving odd reasons for chrysalis requests during his time as a butterfly farmer. Mine was no less strange, but seemed to fascinate him in a way, when I told him my tale. Read on...

Tasked by my client to provide his own select group of clients with food for thought, an experience they had never had before, to trigger their senses and give them that true wake-up call, I set out one afternoon to prove to my captive, but travelled audience in what unexpected places happiness can be found.

The preparations for this creatual were pretty complex. First we put up a greenhouse inside my studio, setting the temperature and the humidity correctly and filling it with lush tropical greenery. One other unusual detail: a webcam was installed.

Meanwhile the carpenter put together a wooden butterfly cabinet ready to house the new arrivals; a shrine for creatures waiting not to die... but to be born.

A trip to the zoo and the botanical gardens had left me feeling pretty knowledgeable about the butterfly chrysalides John had promised to send me. So despite his warning that ‘you can’t predict or control nature, love,’ his promise to do his best had me feeling confident he would get the timing right.

Indeed there’s no predicting nature, we can only hope. I feel that so many people everywhere are chasing a fixed idea of happiness. One that they can control and predict provided they pay enough money for it. It’s difficult not to get caught up in this rat race, which feeds itself and makes us want ever more.

This was the creatual that resulted. A group of 150 business people arrive at my island location on the afternoon in question and are invited to make themselves comfortable in the deck-chairs awaiting them. During the short boat trip across, and as people disembark and make their way to their chairs, a voice leads each person gently into an imaginary and multi-layered world all about a magical factory where magnificent butterflies

are created from an elixir extracted from that rare species—truly happy souls.

Seated in their deckchairs, some people doze off into dreams of their own. Others get up as soon as the story is over, feeling puzzled, inhaling the fresh sea air, and obediently follow the voiced instructions.

Curiosity gets the better of them and these people make their way to an old fort in the middle of the island. Each person receives a bamboo pen, a little ink made from bark and a strip of transparent paper on which to write down their own idea of happiness.

Each person dips their strip of words into a test tube filled with rainwater, which they then take with them on their journey further into the depths of the fort.

The next stop is a large chamber filled with the classical music and a film of thousands of butterflies flying over the walls. The shrine-like object against the far wall is a butterfly cabinet where 150 live butterfly chrysalides await.

Each person takes a pipette and sprinkles a little of the elixir—‘happy water’ from their test tube onto a chrysalis which becomes their own bearer of happiness.

And then the waiting starts: for the metamorphosis to be complete. The guests make their way back out into the sunshine for dinner and the chrysalides are shut away in the dark cabinet and carefully transported to their purpose-built greenhouse at the Creatual Laboratory twenty kilometres away.

Back in their own surroundings, those 150 guests can watch ‘their’ bearer of happiness via the webcam as it gradually transforms from chrysalis to beautiful butterfly. The next few weeks are a flurry of brightly coloured wings and of personally addressed cards to each of the guests announcing the date and time of the birth of their bearer of a happiness which will stay with them long after the wings have folded again for good.

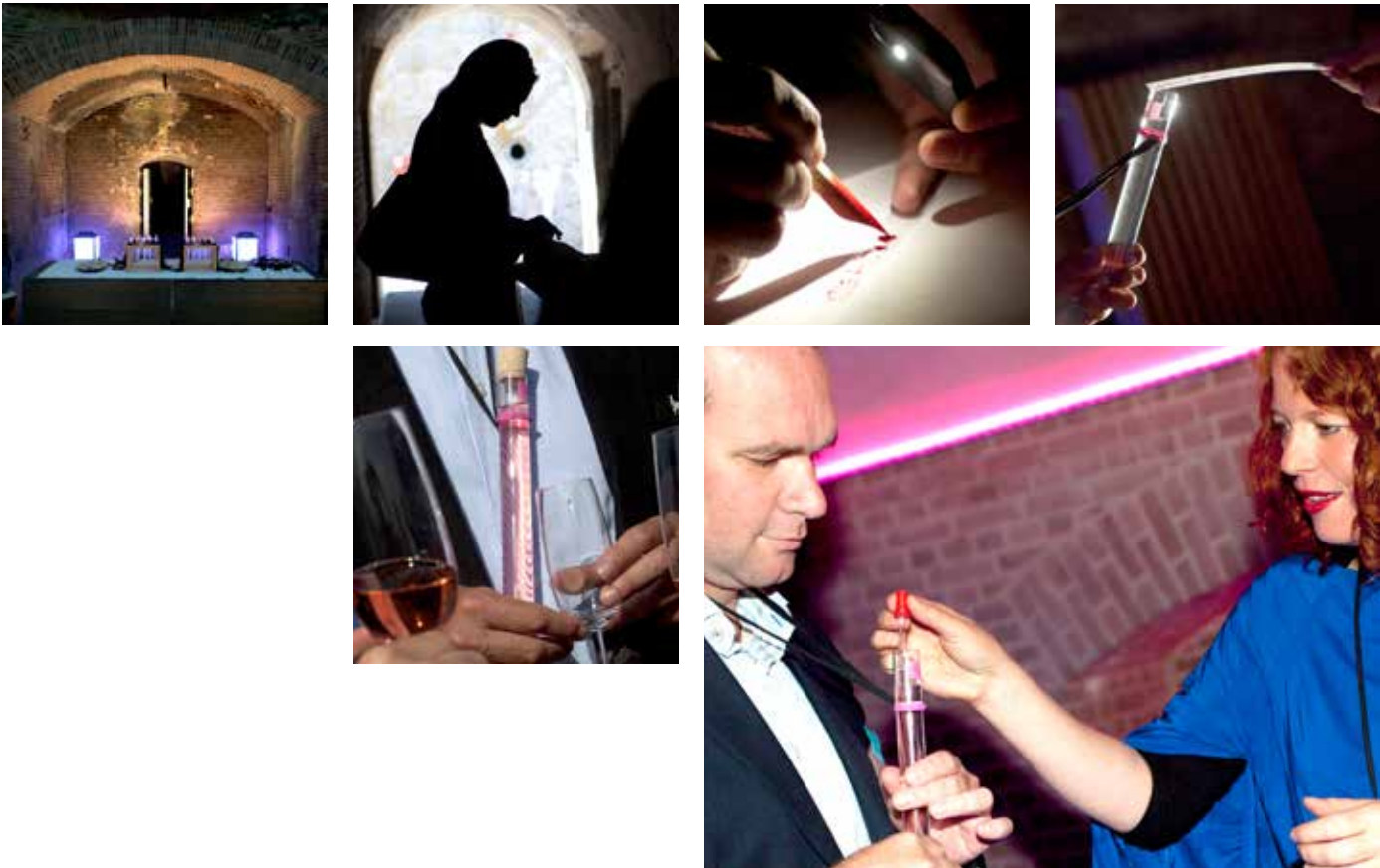
...it was quiet at the other end of the phone for quite some time after I had finished my story. And then John said: ‘I’d love to be a (butter)fly on the wall listening to what all those fancy folks will have to say about your plan. Good luck to you is all I can say. It’s a great idea, if you can pull it off. Send me some photos of their faces will you?’

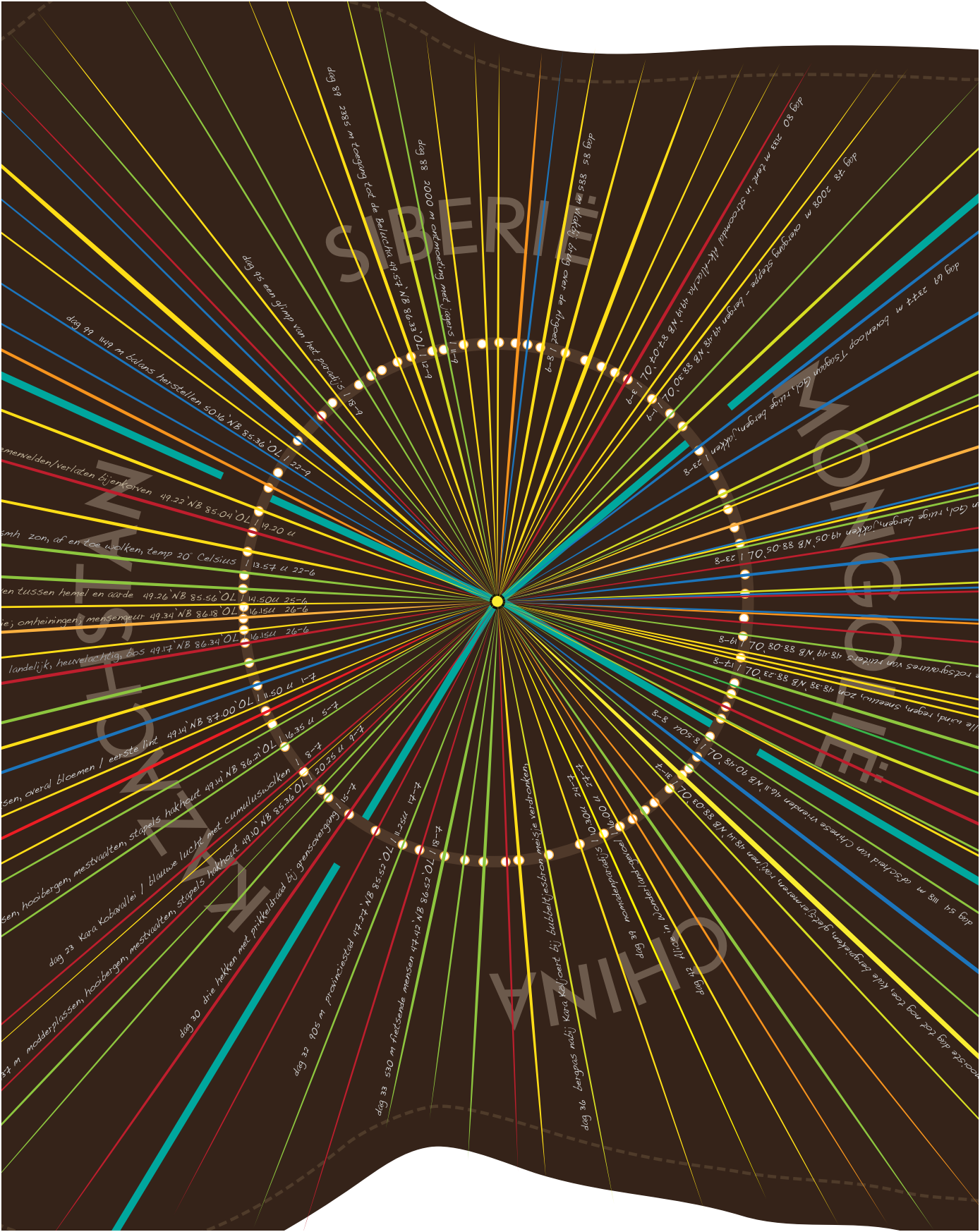
John was probably right. This was likely to be an uphill job. A well-heeled, much-pampered crowd on a luxury day out: probably not the most likely types to want to listen to a fanciful fairy tale and ponder their personal state of happiness. This precisely was my challenge: to entertain these people during their day out and at the same time to surprise them, to set them thinking. Why not?



‘You can’t predict or control nature.’







GOLDEN CIRCLE JOURNEY

Search for paradise

She is a fascinating woman, this explorer, writer, biologist and photographer. She chooses her own way in life. She has travelled for years, living in deserts, far removed from the hectic western world, searching for her own personal paradise. Now she has a new, challenging plan: a four-month trip through the Siberian Altai mountains, entirely on horseback and accompanied by a guide. The journey leads through inhospitable but breath-

taking surroundings to a valley deep inside Asia, where shamanism was born. According to Buddhist legend, this is where the mythical kingdom of Shambhala is, where heaven and earth meet. The woman knows exactly what she wants from the Creative Alchemist: a creative ritual that will bring her into contact with her own Shambhala during the course of her journey.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A personal journey in search of the mythical kingdom of Shambhala	At some point at the start of her journey the traveller will feel the urge to unroll the hide of a horse, prepared for her by a local shaman.
Context A four-month journey on horseback through the Altai mountains in Siberia	The instructions are as follows: the first time, she must mark the centre of the hide using a golden pen. Then using a piece of string, she must draw a large circle around the centre of the hide and a second line following the circumference of the hide. This line represents the journey, the circle represents the traveller and the centre represents the mountain range (Shambhala). Every time she feels the urge, emanating from a deep connection with her surroundings, the traveller draws a line from the circumference to the centre. Along that line she records a fixed set of data: coordinates, time and altitude. Then she writes down a few words that express that 'one' special moment. She is allowed to vary the colour of the lines to suit the atmosphere of the moment. Each of the recorded moments will look different. Some will be light and joyful, others more somber and dark. After four months the parchment will be covered in a mass of lines and experiences that may well lead the traveller to her own personal paradise.
Request A creatual that will connect the traveller with her own personal paradise	
Participants One	
Creative Alchemist response A document made from a sacred hide, on which meaningful moments are recorded to unfold the way to the traveller's paradise	

IN SEARCH OF SHAMBHALA, WHERE HEAVEN AND EARTH MEET

— THE STORY —

Absently she strokes the velvety muzzle of the kudu head that keeps me company in my studio. ‘I love these large animals—camels, horses, kudus. They are wise beyond all expectations and they offer companionship and understanding in times of loneliness or fear.’

This is one fascinating woman. An explorer, writer, biologist and photographer, she has travelled far and wide, choosing the solitude and hardship of the desert and the companionship of camels and horses over the bustle of the West in her search for a personal paradise. On the afternoon we meet, it is clear however from the wise, knowing, but somewhat drawn features that she has yet to find it. She is restless, and fearless, anxious to be off searching again.

Musing through the steam rising from her cup of tea, she tells me, ‘I have learned so much, lived so many different lives and changed my perspective many times. But still I am restless. Still I have not found what I seek: the essence in life and in me. After twenty years in the desert, I’m going to broaden my horizons even further and seek a new challenge in Siberia. I am going to trek the remote Altai Mountains in Russia in search of Shambhala, a mythical kingdom. Buddhist legend has it that this meeting point of heaven and earth can be found in a remote valley somewhere north of the Himalayans. I want desperately to find it.’

Her plan is to circumnavigate the Altai Mountains on horse-back accompanied by a guide: a journey of some 1500 km and four months’ duration through four countries. This journey has not been undertaken for many, many years as it is almost impossible to cross the borders. This mountain range in the heart of Central Asia is a maze of forests, canyons, glaciers and lush valleys. It is a hotspot of biodiversity and an UNESCO World Heritage site. It is the cradle of shamanism, a meeting point of many different languages and cultures, a spiritual homeland to many.

‘So I’m off soon. And I need your help this time,’ she declares abruptly. ‘I want you to prepare me a Creative Ritual as I go in search of my own Shambhala.’

She leaves me at this point, alone in my studio, lost in thought and restless as I ponder how I can help this remarkable woman on her personal pilgrimage. Gradually, my thoughts begin to take shape, and I sit down to write her a letter:

*‘Dear Arita,
Here are my instructions for your journey.
When you arrive at your starting point, find a local shaman for whom the Altai Mountain area is sacred. Ask him to prepare for you the hide of a horse which has lived here and eaten from the sacred ground.*

Pack this hide safely away and carry it with you always.

As your journey begins, you will at a certain point feel the urge to stop, dismount from your horse and unpack the hide. At the foot of the mountains, you will spread out the hide on the ground or a large rock and you will mark the centre in some way: by creating a burn mark from the sun, or with a golden pen. Using the same golden pen, draw a line right around the circumference of the hide, about five centimetres from the edge.

This line represents the journey you are undertaking, from the West, through the South, to the East and North, around the entire mountain range, passing through Kazakhstan to China, Mongolia and Russia. As you travel, listen carefully. Focus your attention on the very heart of those mountains. Again, when the moment seems right, dismount from your horse once again and unroll your hide. This time, draw a line from the circumference to the centre point. Mark your bearings on that line and any words that come to mind at that particular moment.

As you travel on, you will experience many very different moments. Some will be golden, some dark, some of intense union

with nature, some of interaction with others. Each time you feel moved to do so, unpack your hide, draw a line to your centre point and mark these moments using words and colours as you think fit. Don’t force these moments. Let them come to you. Be inspired to record them, or not, as the urge takes you.

After four months, your hide map will be a mass of lines and experiences and who knows, it may just reveal to you your own true paradise, your personal Shambhala.

Go carefully and live that trip.

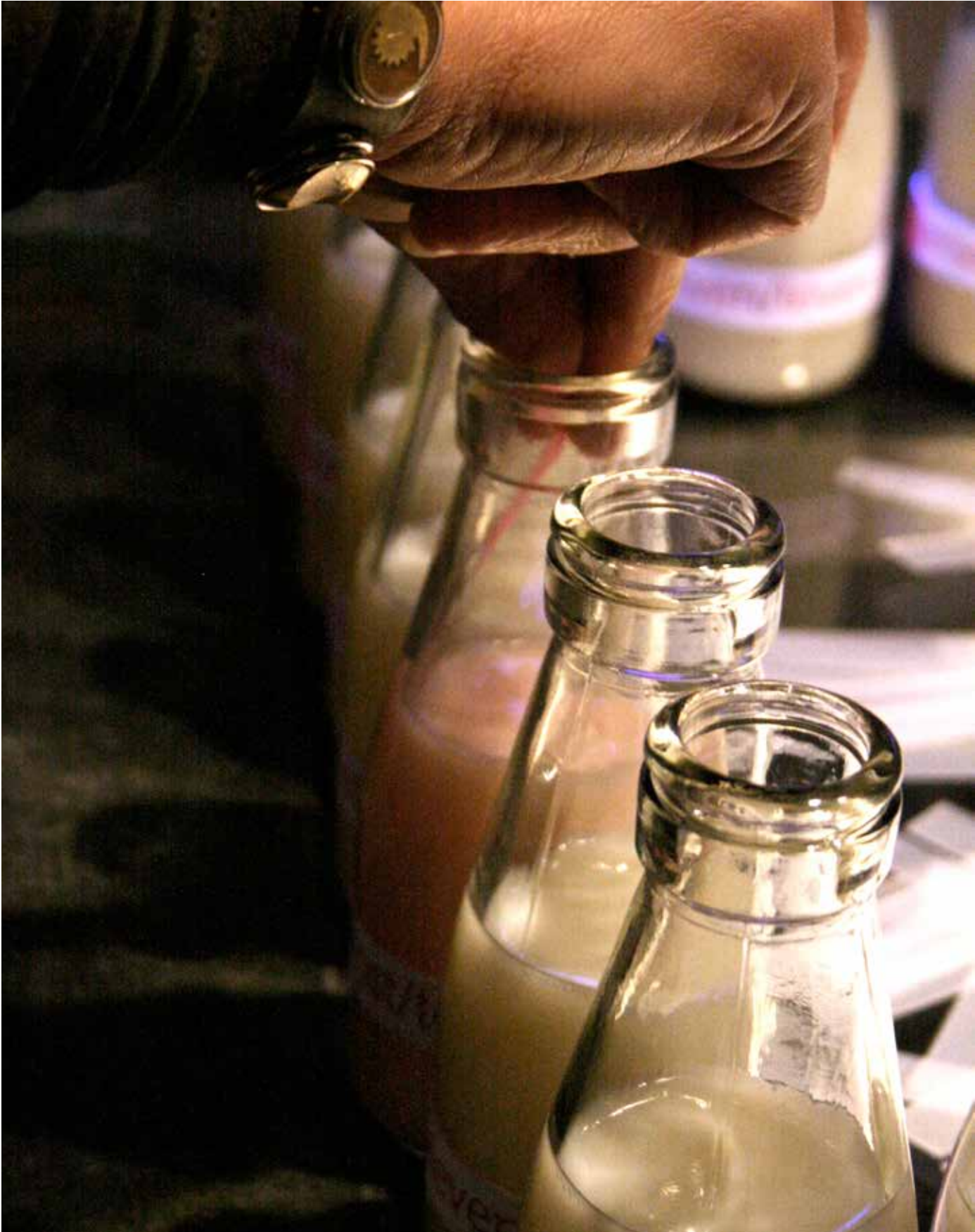
*Best,
The Creative Alchemist’*

During her journey I often stopped to wonder how my intrepid explorer was getting on out there. Where she was. What she was doing. I imagined how her map would gradually be filling with lines of experience. As I stood waiting to cross a busy street one day, it suddenly came to me how we are all, in our own way, doing what the explorer is doing. We are all in search of our own extraordinary paradise...but in very ordinary surroundings.

One day, I received a letter, all the way from Mongolia. ‘I have arrived safely in Paradise,’ it read. ‘With all that folding and unfolding, a hole has formed right at the centre of my map. Whatever I see when I look through that hole defies even my wildest dreams.’



**‘Aren’t we all searching for our own paradise...
but in very different surroundings?’**



PINK MILK

Milk with a message

For years now, the Breast Cancer Foundation has successfully been ensuring high visibility for a disease which represents 25% of cancers in women worldwide. Numerous events are organised to maintain public awareness of the symptoms and risks as well as to raise money for targeted research. October is the designated annual breast cancer awareness month, when confrontational patient documentaries and a dedicated magazine are presented. The color pink plays a central role in the communication of the “brand” and all associated activities. For a special event, attended by women directly affected by the disease, the foundation has requested a creatual. Some of those present are sick, with varying prognoses, others have beaten the disease and are cured. Some bring their partners, others a family member or a friend. In some cases, it will be the bereaved who will attend. The task of the Creative Alchemist is to devise a creatual at which all those present can truly mean something for one another.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation An event for anyone who has ever been touched by breast cancer Context A foundation seeking to place the disease even higher on the agenda Request A creatual for positive bonding of those concerned Participants 300 Creative Alchemist response A pink message in a milk bottle	On a glass table there are over fifty old-fashioned milk bottles, filled with something that looks like milk. Attached to each bottle there is a label, each bearing a single word: love, hope, growth, enjoyment, fear, future and many more. Beside the bottles there are strips of transparent paper, little bottles of red ink and bamboo pens. Each person writes a personal text (a wish, a word, someone’s name) in red ink on one of the strips of paper and then dips it into the bottle with the label of their choosing. The words dissolve in the milk. The bottle most often chosen turns the darkest shade of pink, whilst the milk in the other bottles is a subtler shade, or there might be no change at all. Lets call it a liquid poll.

A BLEND OF ALL THE COLLECTIVE EMOTIONS

— THE STORY —

This was really not his type of thing and he didn't want to go at all. But he couldn't let his wife go alone. Especially not now. This festive event meant a lot to her. And so he went along. Read the story of a critical participant.

We enter the room, along with 300 others, all touched in some way by the same experiences. There's apprehension in the air. But also comprehension, a feeling of solidarity. It's not unpleasant actually.

There's a big table in the centre of the room with lots of those old-fashioned milk bottles all lined up on it. Everyone is drawn to it as if by a magnet. The bottles are filled with a white substance...it couldn't be breast milk, surely? That would be going a bit far, even for an event like this. Each of the bottles bears a label—love, hope, growth, pleasure, fear, future, and about 50 more. Also on the table are strips of transparent paper and little pots of red ink, or whatever that substance is that people go to dip their bamboo pens into.

I step back a bit and watch for a while. An older lady is the first to dip her pen and commit a few personal words to a strip of paper. Hesitating for a moment, she plumps with a smile for the hope bottle, dips her paper strip in there and the red ink washes off into the white milk. Two sisters approach next, and carefully write down a few words for their mother, who is too sick to be with them this evening. Taking a selfie to send home, they then add their words to their selected bottle. The first guy turns up next—young. His contribution is a drawing, which he mixes into the respect bottle.

These bottles are a blend of all the collective emotions.

I'm hesitant and puzzled. I've never experienced anything like it. Is it sorcery? Or is it art? Who is to say? Gradually I relax and move towards the table. I write my wife's name on a strip of paper and dip it diffidently into the love bottle. I'm not the

only one to have made that choice. The love liquid is deep red by now, as are hope and fear. Some bottles are a pale shade of pink and some have hardly changed colour at all.

I realise that these bottles are a blend of all kinds of personal and collective emotions expressed during the course of the evening. I suddenly feel a great weight lifting from my shoulders. I am not alone.

The milk is poured from the bottles into shot glasses and handed around to the guests. My concern that it might be breast milk returns briefly, but I decide to taste it anyway. Here we go. The flavour is sweet pineapple and coconut with an alcoholic twist. Not bad at all and certainly not what I feared.



‘Sorcery? Or art? Who is to say?’





CLOSINGS + FAREWELLS

A farewell can mark a deeply felt sense that things are right like; that everything must end. It can, however, also be the start of an endless grieving process, or it can create a painful scar. At best case an ending marks the beginning of something new. An affectionate farewell can even be a celebration of life's beauty. An unwanted parting might be suppressed to avoid feeling the pain of loss. But this doesn't diminish the experience of the loss. After all, being exists by virtue of not being.

Life exists by virtue of death. A meaningful, loving confrontation with the harshness of reality can be precisely what is needed to find the strength to move on. A creatual does not avoid the pain, but rather looks for the beauty contained within it. A creatual aims to give meaning to the experience of sadness and to provide the motivation to deal with the grieving process. A creatual can help family members, employees, anyone to channel and understand their feelings and thoughts.

It creates a jointly experienced moment of anchoring as emotions evoked by the loss are shared, together with the common intention to build for the future.



ROOT SOUP

Soup with a statement

A colourful Amsterdam neighbourhood where families from a wide range of cultural backgrounds have lived their entire lives. In municipal development plans, this area has been earmarked for 'urban renewal '. Existing housing, full of memories, will be demolished to make room for exclusive apartments for 'the happy few'. What exactly does this mean for the current residents? An official letter announcing that the rental contract will be terminated at short notice. The residents are offered a choice of alternative residential locations and are requested to decide as quickly as possible

where they would prefer to go. Time is of the essence, this major urban renewal project is set to start soon. Additional letters follow, inviting residents to information evenings and meetings with housing consultants. Departure is imminent and definite. The housing corporation wants to do something for the neighbourhood residents and organises a party for them together with Info&Expo Center. To give this farewell special significance, they approach the Creative Alchemist.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A multicultural Amsterdam neighbourhood whose residents are to be rehoused elsewhere Context A farewell party for the residents Request A creatual that marks this farewell Participants 100 Creative Alchemist response Pull your root, leave your mark and eat the carrot soup filled with neighbourhood memories	For the festive evening a long table is set up bearing 100 handmade cotton bags filled with earth from which green leaves sprout. Attached to each bag is an instruction card and a tiny envelope. The scene is illuminated by two large lamps. The residents are full of emotion and anger. They are invited to take a bag, grasp the green leaves and pull them out of the earth including the large root. This causes mixed feelings, violent and satisfying at once. Everyone is now asked to cut their carrot in two pieces. To throw one half in a huge pan to cook the soup they will eat together later on. They cut personalized stamps in the other half of their carrot. They are invited to leave their mark by printing their unique stamp several times in ink, once on the huge canvas banner suspended on the wall and once on their own cotton bag Perhaps on their neighbour's bag as well. It turns out the bag does not only contain earth, but also seeds from which new roots will grow.

RENOVATION FORCES URGENT RE-HOUSING

— THE STORY —

What does this bit say?’ Eleven-year-old Tarub was sitting at the table opposite his father who, after his nightshift driving the taxi, was struggling with the text of an official-looking letter. Tarub took the sheet of paper and scanned with dread over the words ‘renovation project’, ‘urgent re-housing’, ‘removal.’ Reading the whole thing again from the top and anticipating his father’s reaction, he wondered for a moment whether he could change the course of events and stop this happening just by giving his father a different story. Perhaps they could just pretend they had never had the letter. Surely the authorities wouldn’t let the work start if people were still living there?

‘Well?’ his father prompted. Tarub swallowed hard. ‘The renovation project is actually going to happen. And they’re starting with our street. We have to move away, and we won’t be coming back. They’re turning two houses into one, building expensive apartments. The rich lot will be moving in here. I think the letter says they will help us find a new house.’ Tarub’s father flung back his chair with a curse and stormed out to tell Tarub’s mum the dreadful news. She burst into tears. Left alone in the kitchen, Tarub looked around him and could not possibly imagine living anywhere else. He and his sister Meriam were born here. They liked living here.

The doorbell rang. It was the neighbour, brandishing the same letter in a state of considerable shock. ‘What the hell?’ were her only words.

Many more official letters followed. There were information meetings, sessions with relocation counsellors, all the information professionally translated—no need for Tarub here. It was clear they had no choice. Everyone was going to have to say goodbye and move to a different part of town. Three alternative housing options—and that would be it. Tarub would have to go to a new school and travel to see his old friends. But, as time went on, he began to get used to the idea and even began to get curious about a new start. His parents were devastated though. His mum spent all her time in tears.

The final letter came announcing the day their rent contract would end. And shortly after that, a very different, festive-looking envelope arrived from the housing corporation. This time it was Meriam’s turn to translate. ‘Ha, it’s an invitation to a farewell party for all the neighbours. Lame,’ was the 13-year old, world-weary comment. Tarub grabbed the card: ‘There’s free food, and music, and a surprise gift too!’ Dad agreed for once: ‘Well at least there’s a free meal and it will be good for us all to get together one last time.’ Still, he got up abruptly and left the room.

The evening of the party came and everyone sidled rather nervously into the community centre. There was a long table, but far from being set for a festive meal, it was decked with 100 cotton bags, filled with earth and sprouting something green. Two bright lamps illuminated this makeshift field. The tone was agitated, annoyed, cynical even. The loud voice from number 3A was complaining at the top of his voice about how ridiculous it all was. ‘They’re taking the mickey,’ he roared in old Mrs Hansen’s direction. Meriam and her friends were propping up the walls, disinterestedly WhatsApping each other about the stupid party.

Just as the loud voice reached out to grab some foliage from one of the bags, a red-headed woman in a bright green dress took the floor and asked him if he would mind waiting just a little longer. All would be explained.

‘Welcome, everyone,’ she smiled. ‘We are so glad you are here. You may well be wondering what this is all about. We understand how you must all be feeling. You have been going through a great deal of stress and uncertainty. This neighbourhood is earmarked for change. A change in which you are no longer included, as its previous residents. This is hard for you and has a huge impact on your future lives. You have become attached to this neighbourhood. Your roots are here.’

Tarub was beginning to understand the significance of the table setting and his hunch proved correct as the red-haired woman continued with an invitation: ‘Each one of you, go ahead and grab one of those roots out of one of those bags,

take a knife from over there and cut it in half. Put one half in the crock pot and we will make and eat soup together. Whilst it is cooking, take the other half of your root and carve yourself a stamp. It can be whatever you like. Then dip your stamp in the ink and leave your mark on that big blank canvas over there... and on your own canvas ‘grow bag.’ For in those bags is not only earth, but also a little sachet of new carrot seeds. For you to sow and put down new roots, make a new beginning in your new homes.’ The woman pointed to the voice from 3A and invited him to be the first. He hesitated and Tarub, amazed at his own daring, jumped in: ‘I’ll go!’ The red-haired woman gestured for him to come forward and he reached into one of

the bags and pulled. It felt great. People cheered and clapped. Tarub blushed with pride. The ice was broken and the crowd followed Tarub’s example. Some were still not ready to pull up their roots completely. They retreated into a corner with their bag, needing a little more time to reflect.

Stamps were carved and emblems placed on the canvas and on the bags...and even on arms, legs, cheeks. There was mirth and merriment and all the soup was eaten up. Tarub, and many like him, left the evening feeling better about the farewell and a lot more optimistic about their new adventure.



**Tarub could not imagine living anywhere else.
He and his sister Meriam were born here.**



SOYSAFAI

Dealing with your own ‘shit’

The woman has been through a very rough time. She was recently diagnosed with cancer and the prognosis is not good at all. She will not get any support from her husband, who was unable to cope with the intensity of the situation. After the second round of chemotherapy he fell in love with someone else and left. She was on her own with her thirteen-year old son.

Despite all the setbacks—or all the ‘shit’ as she calls it—the woman remains optimistic and strong. She has a great sense of humor and wants to make good use of the time she has left, but not to ignore the problems. Soon she will celebrate her fiftieth birthday with her dear friends who have been so supportive. The Creative Alchemist receives a request to come up with a creatual that suits her circumstances.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation A terminally ill woman celebrates her fiftieth birthday Context A birthday party with friends Request A creatual that transforms the difficult period the woman is going through Participants 55 Creative Alchemist response A piece of toilet paper transforming into a pillowcase in which all shit can be stuffed away and forgotten about. With motto: SOYSAFAI	At the party the birthday girl addresses the guests and talks about the tough time she’s experiencing, acknowledging that everyone has their own ‘shit’ to deal with. She then turns around and reaches out to a giant roll of ‘toilet paper’ hanging from the ceiling. She tears off a sheet of double-stitched cloth and fanatically writes all over it with a brown crayon, until she has got rid of all her shit. Then she turns the white fabric inside-out and takes a red cushion from a pile hidden under the table. The white fabric turns out to be a pillowcase that can safely contain all her misery. She stuffs the cushion into the cover, on the outside of which there is a personal motto, specially devised for her: SOYSAFAI. This stands for: ‘Sit On Your Shit and Forget About It!’ While they eat, drink and dance, the guests are also invited to tear off a piece of toilet paper, to write their own shit on it and to make their own SOYSAFAI cushion, to take home and put on their sofa.

SIT ON YOUR SHIT AND
FORGET ABOUT IT!

— THE STORY —

Life has been pretty shit lately. Most of you here know what I am talking about, but on this special occasion, I want to say it all again. I want to share my story with you and thank you for helping me through it all. You were there for me in so many ways, and for that I am extremely grateful.'

'The worst shit was definitely the cancer which seems to be taking over my body. When the doctor first told me they had bad news about the biopsy, I really thought they meant the test results had gone missing. That's how optimistic I was feeling. When the truth hit me, I was devastated. There was so much misery I felt I couldn't breathe. But I'm still here breathing today.

It is in this room in which we stand today that Mr. X told me he was leaving me, leaving us, I should say.' Helen looks at her son standing proudly beside her. 'He had fallen in love with someone else. My disease scared the shit out of him. He has yet to realise that everyone carries their own portion of shit...there's no escaping it.

So today, on my 50th birthday, I want to give you all something special and unexpected. Indeed life has been shit. But to be honest, I'm rather pleased to realise that I am not the only one. We all have shit to deal with in life. Every one of us. And another person's shit is not my problem. So, let's all face our own shit and do something fun at the same time.

You've probably all been wondering what this contraption is. Well let me show you...'

Helen turns around and reaches for a giant roll of 'toilet paper' hanging from the ceiling. Giggling like a little girl in her bright red party dress, she tears a double sheet from the roll of white cloth and places it in front of her on the table. Taking a brown

crayon, she begins to draw and write all over that sheet of 'paper'. Once she has squeezed every last ounce of shit from her system, she turns the double cloth inside out, grabs a red cushion (her favourite colour is much in evidence this evening) from the big pile under the table and stuffs it into what now turns out to be a cushion cover. All her shit is neatly hidden away inside, and on the outside she proudly presents the acronym for her personal motto: SOYSAFAI, or 'Sit On Your Shit and Forget About It!'

Helen again: 'And now folks, as we eat, drink and party together, I would like each of you, as you feel inspired, to grab a sheet of toilet paper and cover it with your shit. Turn the cushion cover inside out and stuff it with a cushion. Before you leave, come and give me a hug, and don't forget to take all your own shit home with you to sit on there!'

Some people start to laugh, others look rather worried and puzzled—but each and every one ultimately takes great care to commit their shit to this evening's toilet paper.

Two young girls are angry at their parents' divorce; a man is devastated that his son is missing. One woman can finally express how she really feels about losing her job whilst her best friend initially feels guilty about having no shit to write about... until she thinks a little harder and dares, with tears in her eyes, to confront the shit she has been experiencing.

People dance with their cushions, throw them around and sit on them. The conversation is deep.

Three months later, Helen died. People brought their cushions to her graveside and whispered 'Dear Helen, SOYSAFAI.' This time the motto was a little different 'Sleep On Your Shit...'



'I'm rather pleased to realise that I am not the only one. We all have shit to deal with in life. Every one of us.'





STRING OF PEARLS

Grandma’s necklace

She is 96 years old, has three children, five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. She is still immensely proud and genuinely wants to know what you’re up to, whether you are succeeding in your endeavours and what interests you. Everyone is wrapped up in the business of shaping his or her own life. My grandma feels she has a responsibility to hold the family together. She knows everything about everyone and proudly tells you all about your relatives, so that even after a brief visit with

her you’re completely up to date. On each of her sporadic visits, I am intrigued by the string of pearls Grandma almost always wears. The necklace has become part of her. Shortly after one such visit, I hear that Grandma has passed away. How the family will miss this proud woman! And will the family ties remain intact without her? The Creative Alchemist devises a symbolic and intensely personal creatual, which she decides to perform at the funeral.

THE SUMMARY	HOW THE CREATUAL PLAYS OUT
Situation Grandma, who held the family firmly together, has passed away at age 96. Context Her funeral Request A creatual that expresses Grandma’s role in the family. Participants 100 Creative Alchemist response A string of pearls of great emotional value—seperated.	During the funeral the Creative Alchemist steps forward to say a few words. She holds up the string of pearls. ‘This was Grandma,’ she says. The mourners nod in recognition, the necklace is familiar to all of them. ‘Grandma was the thread that held us all together. We were her pearls, the pearls she loved so deeply and was so proud of.’ Then she takes a pair of scissors and cuts the necklace. The pearls tumble into a bowl. The thread and clasp are placed in an organza bag and fixed to the coffin. They will go with Grandma. Each family member receives a pearl to keep and cherish. It represents ‘what you meant’ to Grandma and it holds a promise to maintain the family ties. The pearls can only form an imaginary necklace now.

GRANDMA’S MISSION TO HOLD THE FAMILY TOGETHER

— THE STORY —

‘How lovely to see you. Come on in and get warm, dear. I was just reading an article by Uncle Maro again in the paper. He has such a brilliant mind. Pour yourself a cup of tea, and I want to hear all your news.’

Frail and dwarfed in her Daddy Bear’s chair, Grandma sat back, interested and expectant, eyes rheumy and moist but bright as ever against the carefully rouged and papery skin of her face. Folding her liver-spotted hands in her smart blue crêpe de chine lap, she cocked her head and waited patiently.

‘Oh, sorry Grandma, I was miles away.’ I tore my eyes away from the omnipresent string of pearls rising and falling with every breath.

‘Children fine I’m sure, and that sterling chap of yours hard at work. And your work? I’m so proud of you, dear. Just like your grandfather. So talented, so creative. Such an eye for composition. No wonder the royals loved his work. Did you know that Bernard always kept Grandpa’s portrait of Juliana on his desk? Oh, and did I tell you, Auntie Margret popped in last week? Such a stunning review of her performance. The clipping’s over there somewhere. My eyes are not what they were, I’m afraid. Such a wonderful person.’

Chattering fondly and proudly about all the family and updating me on all their doings, Grandma shuffled to her desk to find me some more clippings about Margret, her only daughter. My eyes wandered to her string of pearls again, and my mind to Grandma’s life. Widowed, with three young children, just before World War II, Grandma picked up the pieces and joined the resistance. She was caught, imprisoned and separated from her children for nearly two whole years. Imagine the grief as her own daughter failed to recognise her when at last they were reunited.

Before long it was time to leave again. My all too infrequent sojourn into Grandma’s haven of peace and joy and family

connection was over. Little did I know that this fond farewell was to be the last.

Grandma died a month later. My feelings were mixed.

Grandma was 96 and ready to go. But I would miss her terribly for who she was and for her role and mission as family connector. With Grandma’s passing, her string of pearls took on a strongly symbolic meaning for me and I was glad to be allowed to have them.

The funeral was well-attended. At last all those she had admired and praised over the years had the chance to get a word in edgeways and say what they felt about her. I hadn’t seen most of these people for years, but Grandma had kept me right up-to-date on their lives.

When it was my turn to say a few words, I stepped up to her coffin, her string of pearls dangling from my hand. I held it up high, and everyone nodded, knowing it well. ‘This was Grandma,’ I said. ‘She always wore these pearls. Grandma was the connecting thread, and we were the pearls in her life. She was so fond of us all. So proud of us all. She was our family keystone.’ I paused. ‘But Grandma has gone.’ I took a pair of scissors and motioned to my daughter to join me with a shallow dish. ‘Grandma has gone,’ I repeated, and I cut the thread. The pearls slid from the thread and bounced into the dish. ‘The thread and the pendant we will give to Grandma on her journey,’ I said as I placed them in a little organza bag and tied it to the handle of her coffin. ‘We were her pearls. Please take one with you and treasure it, with your promise that you will continue to create the family thread. Now it is up to us to keep the family connection.’

The atmosphere was electrifying. Some people were sad, some even a little angry at the destructive gesture. All were touched in some way by the moment. And now, many years later, we all still have our pearls and the precious family connection lives on.



‘I’m so proud of you, dear.’

A collage of various objects including a red pencil, a string of beads, a piece of driftwood, and a piece of paper with a table of numbers.

TEXT BOOK

ELEVEN ESSAYS ABOUT
THE POWER OF RITUALS

— 1 —

ART AS AN INGREDIENT

MEIKE ZIEGLER DISCUSSES THE ROLE OF ART IN CREATUALS

BY KOOS DE WILT

Creative alchemist Meike Ziegler remains true to context in the development of a creatual. The culture, themes and traditions of the setting in which the creatual is to take place are at the basis of each concept. Art is an important one here. What is the role of art in Meike’s work? And which artists inspire her?

Meike Ziegler: “Art in all its forms is there to catch our attention in a different way than our daily routine can. It is direct but need not be clear. Visual art and music, old masters and modern art, films and land art—they fuel our imagination to help us better understand our lives. And these are all ingredients of creatuals.

The work of many artists comes close to the kind of thing I do. The American artist Bill Viola has been an enormous source of inspiration for me over the past 20 years. I feel a strong connection to the way he thinks in concepts and rituals, to the way he plays with the dimensions of time, with the four elements of fire, water, air and earth, with alienation, the impact and the impetus.

I am moved too by the provocative style of Francis Bacon and Damien Hirst. These two artists deal with the themes of suffering and death and how to handle them in a secular world. They lend meaning to the themes in a new way. Their art is challenging, but it transforms the provocation into a form which helps us move on. And I love the way organic art uses the deeper layers of nature. Think of the work of land artists such as Richard Long and Andy Goldsworthy. They create locational sculptures and land art objects which are embedded in their rural surroundings. They use natural materials available at the chosen location. They make temporary as well as permanent sculptures which lend emphasis to their setting.”

‘Art from every period and culture inspires me. From Bill Viola and Andrea della Robbia to the music of Sjostakovitsj’. Meike Ziegler is no stranger to the dream world of Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist. Ziegler: “Just like Pipilotti Rist, I see myself as the woman discovering the world from a playful angle. Rist’s videos are highly individual representations of heavenly beauty and innocence.

The Dutch photographer and film maker Johan van der Keuken was likewise capable of taking the world we think we know and turning it around in such a poetic and aesthetic way as to lend it new value. Christo does the same thing. By wrapping up well-known objects such as bridges and buildings, he makes statements and helps us to see those objects in a different way. In effect, he makes creatuals, but he does not involve his audience in their creation.

I take my inspiration from art from every period and culture. The recipe for the colours of renaissance artist Andrea della Robbia’s blue and white terracotta is fired into the glaze. It’s there, but equally it has disappeared.

In his films, David Lynch distorts ordinary elements of American culture into strange, surreal objects. His films are set in rural American towns or in the murky bowels of the broad expanse of Los Angeles. This is a world that his American audience knows, but approached in a totally unfamiliar way.

Peter Greenaway’s ‘The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover’ is a highly coloured and alarming film redolent of a painting by Jeroen Bosch. It shocks, and at the same time it touches us with its beauty. The honesty and poetry of Polish director Krzysztof Kiésłowski’s films confronts people with their real selves. Mention music and I think immediately of the symphonies of Russian composer Dimitri Sjostakovitsj in which the lives of ordinary people become intertwined with great historical drama. He transforms our lowly existence into beauty.

I am equally fascinated by the work of composer John Cage and the computer science design of John Maeda. Both are great artistic and mathematical wizards, both in search of simplicity, the essence. This strength in art forms an important basis for my creatual concepts. I try to produce a similar effect in the lives of my participants, and at the same time let them contribute to the process and the result. The outcome for everyone is a sense of wonder, of surprise. This forges a bond. Brings transformation.”

‘Art from every period and culture inspires me. From Bill Viola and Andrea della Robbia to the music of Sjostakovitsj’

— 2 —

NEW AWAKENINGS

CAN NEW RITUALS WAKE UP AND RE-DIRECT LOST SOULS?

BY HANNE CASPERSEN

In the post-modern world most of us are de-traditionalized. We have lost our religion: witness the empty churches in Western Europe . We have lost the traditional ways of lending meaning to moments of change and transition. The way we mark important moments in our lives has become mostly shallow and commercial. The way companies mark important moments is mostly informative, filled with figures about growth and achievements. It fails to touch us, it doesn't stay with us. Even the way we collect memorable moments has become ephemeral and immaterial; our pictures are merely snapshots, we share them with the world instantaneously, but hardly ever look back at them (well, OK Facebook has recently introduced the function to share memories, but does it suck?) and do we ever save them for eternity by printing and framing them?

LIVING IN THE 'NOW'

However, the need for meaning, significance and spiritual fulfillment is still there inside us. In many ways we are searching for ways of filling the void. We practice yoga, mindfulness and meditation like never before. Deepak Chopra and Eckhart Tolle are immensely popular, with 2.6 million and 500.000 followers respectively on Twitter and making big business out of our crippled spiritual health. This need seems only to increase as our world becomes more and more digital and connected. Being permanently switched on and in constant conversation is draining. It fragments our attention span and ability to concentrate. Some even say it destroys our ability to think a thought.

The antidote to high-tech is high touch says John Naisbitt, a famous futurist. We respond to permanent connection by digitally detoxing ourselves, slowing down and reflecting on things, with crafting and creativity. The maker movement has a huge following; people spend more time than is economically justifiable on making and creating stuff that could easily be bought. And they hack away to make stuff that can do things just because it's fun. More and more people are discontinuing their career to enterprise into their passion,

which perhaps used to be their hobby. Having worked in Mergers & Acquisitions for a big company, someone now chooses to work for a sustainable bank. A manager is now running a business in sustainable wood and furniture making. People choose to live in 'the now.'

MILLENNIALS WANT UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

What's more? There is a new generation joining adulthood, the 'millennials', and they have different expectations of life and work. A 2015 survey by AON Hewitt found that 30% of millennials said 'fun' was in most need of improvement in their current office. If today's employers and cities want to retain millenials in their workforce and population they have got to offer them experiences. These experiences need to be fun and entertaining. The celebration of annual financial successes or organizational change will need to be marked by unique events with a creative touch to keep millennials contented. Similarly cities will have to connect with the sub-cultural creative elite to come up with unique and memorable family events that connect people.

NEW FORMS OF SPIRITUALITY

In the afterlife too there is a need for new meaning and rituals. In 2008 Nadine Jarvis started to design death and new rituals for the post mortem. One of her most famous pieces is the turning of a lost one's ashes into pencils. 'From an average body of ash 240 pencils can be made. That's a lifetime supply of pencils for those left behind. Each pencil is foil stamped with the name of the deceased. Only one pencil may be removed from the box at a time, it is then sharpened back into the box causing the sharpenings to occupy the space of the used pencils. Over time the pencil box fills with sharpenings—a new ash, transforming the box into an urn. The window acts as a timeline, showing you the amount of pencils left as time goes by.' Nadine's work is provocative. It challenges us to think about death and the afterlife in new ways. She designs rituals that trespass on existing notions and morals.

New forms of business and education are being created to fulfill the new spiritual need. The Monument started educating Ritual-companions in 2003 and there are now 500

of these people filling the void that the church has left behind, accompanying the terminally ill, infusing funerals with rituals in remembrance of the deceased and even marking the transition to adulthood. (de Volkskrant, November 2, 2014)

So in a way we are lost souls in need, with our spiritual anchor gone. We are searching for meaning. We need to find new ways to reflect on important moments and change. We look for lasting memorabilia to capture moments and thoughts so that we can keep them with us. Most of all we need someone to help us invent new forms of spirituality that will work for our lives as we live them today. The world needs more modern alchemists and shamans to help us find meaning, to create meaning; to create memorable moments and symbolic meaning.

Can you design a memory? Can you catch a dream? Can you distill an emotion? Yes! You can accomplish the seemingly impossible; create new meaning out of the mundane and materialize the ephemeral. It's magic.

‘The antidote to high-tech is high touch’

— 3 —

OUR NEED FOR RITUALS

WHAT THE OPINION LEADERS HAVE TO SAY

BY KOOS DE WILT

Rituals are important for us. In fact they are as essential as food. They connect us with a deeper layer of our existence. Research shows that it is effective to integrate rituals into our lives: they reduce anxiety and increase our confidence. How does that work? In what kind of contexts can we use rituals? And is there a difference between routine and ritual?

RITUALS ARE AS ESSENTIAL AS FOOD

Rituals are real, essential and as raw as our need for food, shelter and love. And they are every bit as crucial to our survival in the view of Donna Henes, urban shaman, eco-ceremonialist, ritual expert and consultant. She argues in The Huffington Post that the need for ritual is a basic human instinct. In her words it is 'a compelling urge to merge with the infinite; ritual reminds us of a larger, archetypal reality and invokes in us a visceral understanding of such universal paradigms as unity, continuity, connectivity, reverence and awe. Like sex, ceremony -solitary or shared—offers us a way to relate intimately with the primordial universal force and allows us to embrace that sacred power that informs and fuels all existence. Ritual is our lifeline to the divine.'

For many of us traditionally instituted ritual forms and encoded liturgies no longer serve all of the complex contemporary circumstances of our modern lives. Henes is of the opinion that the absence of significant ceremony in our lives has left us feeling disconnected, confused, alone and bereft. 'We dangle, stranded in an enormously complex universe without a spiritual safety net to save us', she explains. What she sees around her is that many modern seekers turn to science, others to ancient lost civilizations or indigenous primal peoples and others join an established religious organization. According to Henes we can free ourselves from traditional observances and religious recipes. Henes: 'We each have within us the resources based on our own unique life experiences to create an eloquent ceremonial order to our own existence. We have everything we need to mold our

meaningful moments into our own psychic support system. I always say that I practice my religion precisely the way my forbears did 50,000 years ago. I make it up as I go along.'

But how do we know what to do in a ritual? According to the urban shaman we can begin to nurture our creativity and consciously strive to liberate our spontaneity. We should encourage our inner voice by listening to our dreams, start to pay more attention to our intuitions, our instincts and our impulses. By doing so we can develop our own symbolic vocabulary. Henes: 'In this way, we are able to constantly re-invent an individual ritual language, which can charge our special events as well as our common dailies with clarity, energy, meaning and grace. Ceremonial observance adds lucid layers—depth, dimension, drama and distinction—to our lives, making the ordinary seem special, and the special, extraordinary.' Through the practice of ritual we are privileged to experience ourselves as prepared, present, passionate, principled and potent. When we set aside the quality time and claim the psychic space for ceremony, when we assume the authority to do so, we are able to transform our perceptions, our perspectives, our experiences, and in the process, our reality.'

RITUAL VERSUS ROUTINE

How could we change our life in this direction? What is the difference between the routine and ritual? According to Brainpickings-blogger Maria Popova they seem to be different sides of the same coin. 'While routine aims to make the chaos of everyday life more containable and

controllable, ritual aims to imbue the mundane with an element of the magical. The structure of routine comforts us, and the specialness of ritual vitalizes us. A full life calls for both—too much control, and we become mummified; too little excitement and pleasurable discombobulating, and we become numb. After all, to be overly lobulated is to be dead inside—to doom oneself to a life devoid of the glorious and ennobling messiness of the human experience.' In her book In Stitches: A Handbook on Meaning, Hope and Repair the novelist Anne Lamott declares her love of ritual and repetition. Without them, she would be a balloon with a slow leak. Lamott sees it as the true secret of life. 'More than a pleasurable rhythm for everyday life, rituals cast an anchor of stability during turbulent times. Daily rituals, especially walks, even forced marches around the neighborhood, and schedules, whether work or meals with non-awful people, can be the knots you hold on to when you've run out of rope. You have to keep taking the next necessary stitch, and the next one, and the next. Without stitches, you just have rags. And we are not rags.'

Blogger Maria Popova agrees on that: 'The true purpose of discipline—for this is the practice at the heart of routine—is to make room for the magical in the mundane. Paradoxically enough, it is an act of liberation rather than submission—routine grants us the stable platform within, from which we can begin not only to tolerate but perhaps even to enjoy the shaky messiness without.'

RITUALS AND FLOW

According to Jesse Jacobs in The Huffington Post you can say that things get better by decreasing their speed: 'slow is good.' Jacobs is Professor of Politics and Public Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University: 'Rituals slow us down and connect us to this moment here and now.' Simple actions that connect us to ourselves, our place, and the present moment allow us to both forget ourselves and our worries, and to escape into the present moment. Jacobs: 'They allow us to enter flow—the state of being where we're actually not thinking, not aware of any single thing other than the act of what we are doing.' Rituals slow us down, and get us present, both of which make life better. If we're present we can do more of the experiencing, and, also we can be more effective.

Jesse Jacobs argues that if we know what we are doing, we can choose to do what we want. 'When we're not present-minded (which is most of the time!) then we're autopilot, just going with impulses in our usual, habitual, and often unproductive ways. Unconsciously. Going through life unconsciously means we're not making choices. Compulsions toss us around like the wind. If we get present just a smidgeon—then suddenly choices blossom and we have options. Options are like freedom. No options is like no freedom. Who wants no freedom? Rituals are great training grounds for achieving presence.'

RITUALS MARK SPECIAL MOMENTS

What makes ritual different from any other kind of human behavior? Barbara Myerhoff (1935—1985) was an American anthropologist and filmmaker, and founder of the Center for Visual Anthropology at the University of Southern California. In the book Secular Ritual (1977) The anthropologist explains what sets 'rituals' apart from the ordinary in her seminal work on secular rituals. Myerhoff: 'It is about marking out special moments, that have meaning, and in which the people involved are aware of something special going on.' The most salient characteristic of ritual is its function as a frame, the anthropologist continues: 'It is a deliberate and artificial demarcation.'

How does that work? Myerhoff: 'In ritual, a bit of behavior or interaction, an aspect of social life, a moment in time is selected, stopped, remarked upon. Something of note has occurred to those involved.' And: 'They have taken the activity out of the ordinary flow of habit and routine, and performed the gesture to arouse in themselves a particular attitude, demonstrating that those actions mean more than they seem.'

RITUALS AND SPORTS

The power of rituals is to create a shared identity, stimulate emotions, reduce anxiety, build networks, and reinforce the desired behavior, Professor of Marketing at the Università Bocconi in Milaan Paolo Guenzi thinks. The professor writes in the Harvard Business Review about the powers of ritual, taking examples from the world of sports, bringing them to leaders of other organizations. Guenzi: 'In the sports context, we found that creating or reviving club rituals was almost the first thing that a new coach would do—

‘Going through life unconsciously means we’re not making choices.’

especially in a team turnaround situation.’ Guenzi mentions the legendary Haka, a Maori posture dance performed by the New Zealand rugby team before their matches. This example of ritual as stimulus in sport expresses the team’s pride in their heritage and teammates. Guenzi: ‘Neuro-scientific research shows that rituals like the Haka trigger feelings of connectivity, timelessness, and meaning, which stimulate mental flow states. These, in turn, reduce anxiety and increase energy and focus.’

Rituals create a shared identity. Successful sports coaches typically use rituals to build social bonds between team members. Guenzi mentions Gianluca Vialli, former player and head coach of Premier League’s Chelsea. He told him once: “At Chelsea we had an ‘initiation ritual’ for newcomers. During the training camp at the beginning of the season, the new players had to get up on a table, in front of all their teammates, and sing a song that represented their country. For example, Roberto di Matteo and I sang ‘Volare’. It was a way to get players who came from different cultures to come together. After getting over the natural initial sense of embarrassment, we felt accepted, and truly became a part of the group.”

RITUALS AND BUSINESS

Rituals are important in getting a grip on our personal life. It is important to perform something extraordinary in sports, but also during our working day it can help us. ‘Rituals are about paying attention. They’re about stopping for a moment and noticing what you’re about to do, what you’ve just done, or both. They’re about making the most of a particular moment. And that’s something we could use a lot more of in the business world.’ Peter Bregman is a strategic advisor to CEOs and their leadership teams. He is the author of 18 Minutes: Find Your Focus, Master Distraction and Get the Right Things Done and Point B: A Short Guide To Leading a Big Change. Bregman also is a regular contributor to Harvard Business Review, Fast Company, Forbes and CNN. Bregman sees a lot of potential in rituals in business: ‘Imagine if we started each meeting with a recognition of the power of bringing a group of people together to collaborate and an intention

to dedicate ourselves, without distraction, to achieving the goals of the meeting. Perhaps even an acknowledgement that each person’s views, goals, and priorities are important and need to be heard.’ Attention is all that matters. Bregman: ‘Each time we pause, notice, and offer respect for an activity, it reminds us to appreciate and focus on what we’re about to do. And by elevating each activity, we’ll take it more seriously. We’ll get more pleasure from it. The people with whom we work will feel more respected. And we’ll feel more self-respect. Which means we’ll work better with each other. And produce better results.’

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RITUALS

Recent research suggests that rituals may be more rational than they appear, as Francesca Gino and Michael I. Norton, both professors of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School state. Why? Gino is clear about that: ‘Because even simple rituals can be extremely effective. Rituals performed after experiencing losses—from loved ones to lotteries—do alleviate grief, and rituals performed before high-pressure tasks—like singing in public—do in fact reduce anxiety and increase people’s confidence. What’s more, rituals appear to benefit even people who claim not to believe that rituals work. While anthropologists have documented rituals across cultures, this earlier research has been primarily observational. Recently, a series of investigations by psychologists has revealed intriguing new results demonstrating that rituals can have a causal impact on people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.’

The observation that we have said farewell to our traditional rituals seems valid. Indeed, lots of modern people quit religious observances and the sacred words from old books. But at the same time we actively reinvented the power of rituals in a more personal and creative way. In reality, new rituals can play a very important role in our daily lives. They can help us regain control of our personal life stories. They can be effective in playing a more meaningful role during our working days. And rituals can transform the moments in our life that we consider the most important, in our personal and professional life.

‘Rituals remind us of a larger, archetypal reality’

— 4 —
CREATUALS—A MODERN ALTERNATIVE
TO PROTOCOL?

HOW NEW RITUALS MIGHT HELP US IN OUR
HIGHLY INDIVIDUALISED AGE

BY PAUL SPIES

Protocol is a term we tend to associate with the complex noble behaviour of times gone by. Adopted by the nouveau riche of the Dutch Golden Age, it mirrored the courtly behaviour of Louis IV in France, offering these parvenus a safe system of routines and rituals to dictate their comportment and ensure they were doing the right thing. A blatant love of art in all its forms belonged to these behaviour patterns. Protocol and all it signifies is something we appear to have outgrown these days. Individualised and globalised society requires that ‘anything goes’ in our patterns of behaviour. And yet, there is a hunkering for the comfort of ritual. The question is then: how new and creative rituals might help us in this highly individual and global age?

NO COINCIDENCE

As a student of Art History, and in my very early professional life I made a study of court life in the late 17th and early 18th century under William III and Queen Mary, king and queen of Great Britain and Ireland. My studies resulted in the book ‘The Royal Progress of William and Mary’, which took a close look at the palaces and stately homes—their decoration, furnishings, the art selected for display—of the court circle in the Netherlands and Great Britain. It soon became clear that there were numerous similarities in all the residences. It was apparent that amongst all that pomp and circumstance, nothing was there by coincidence. Everything in those houses was placed there by design and had a specific ceremonial function or significance. It was all about covert storytelling. About lineage—showing aristocratic status; about ambitions—showing power play; about virtues—putting the owner-inhabitant in a good light; about belief—in God and about loyalty—to the king. The houses were there to receive visitors and those crossing the thresholds knew exactly how to interpret the allegory all around them. Likewise, they were fully versed in how to behave in

these same surroundings. Protocol, or etiquette, was the order of the day and behaviour towards one another in strict accordance with the rules was expected.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF
THE FRENCH ARISTOCRACY

During my research on William and Mary I found a handwritten document in the royal archives giving precise instructions for the handling of the Prussian ambassador’s visit to Windsor Castle in 1695. The document describes in minute detail the movements of the ambassador and his entourage. The document suggests that every object in every room was to be presented for its specific function.

The contents of this document show striking similarities to Norbert Elias’ description of the culture at the court of Sun King Louis XIV. (‘The Court Society’, 1969). Elias describes the many daily ceremonies at royal palaces such as Versailles. There was the ‘lever’ (the royal rising) and the ‘coucher’ (the royal retirement to bed). The ceremonies were attended by the king and queen’s favourites, who were

privileged to be handed an item of royal clothing during the event. These were odd rituals, with no practical application, and which were totally false. The king and queen did not actually sleep in the state bedchambers but in much smaller chambers at the end of their respective private apartments, each apartment being identical to the other as the protocol of a diplomatic marriage commanded. This in turn explains the symmetry of the royal palaces—two identical wings stretching away from a communal centre and culminating in the apartment with a cabinet and a wardrobe. This classical style was widely adopted by rich and important subjects and can be admired in many formal homes from that period.

PARVENUS AND PROTOCOL

Later in my career I was commissioned to write books about the Amsterdam canal houses from the same—17th century—period. These houses were the domain of the merchant class—wealthy parvenus and first or second generation entrepreneurs. Close examination of the houses showed a style very similar to that of the Dutch (copied from the French) aristocracy. What moved this class of wealthy ‘democrats’ to adopt a style so similar to that of the ruling class they despised? Again, the use of a highly symbolic and denotational protocol was an effective way to express power, influence and wealth. And so we find numerous highly decorative canal houses with painted ceilings, many denoting Aurora, or dawn, a popular bedroom theme. Whilst it is hard to imagine Calvinistic Dutch merchants going as far as to observe the rituals of ‘lever’ and ‘coucher’, their imitation of the aristocratic way of life will certainly have given them delusions of aristocratic grandeur. Court culture would be familiar to them through their merchant dealings with powerful foreign aristocracy, some of them being ambassadors at the international courts.

FUNCTIONAL ART

A most effective—if indeed not the most effective instrument of protocol was art. Art in the broadest sense of the term: architecture, painting, sculpture, applied art, park and garden design, to name but a few. Even music and theatre played their role. Protocol was embellished by art productions of the highest quality. It is interesting to note that though the precise details of a ceremony have been lost in the course of time, the ‘hardware’ of protocol survives in great quantities. We can still visit numerous stately homes and formal houses and admire the often well-preserved or finely restored decoration and furnishings. Here lies the power of art. The beauty (and the value) of these objects has ensured their preservation and survival through the ages. If, in addition, we know the maker, the story and the back-

ground, the value of these relics increases further because we know the history and the meaning of the object.

In the Amsterdam of the Golden Age, one of the most effective instruments of protocol was art. Interestingly enough, many of the ‘official’ ceremonies from protocol of times gone by continue to exist in our modern and far less formal society. We all know such traditions as the daily changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, the annual Trooping of the Colour and the State Opening of Parliament. Most of us are unaware of the true significance of such happenings, but because they fascinate they attract attention—particularly that of tourists.

Ceremonies survive on a much more lowly scale too. What about the ribbon cutting ceremony to open a new building; the baptising of a ship with the smashing of a champagne bottle against its side; the arch of family and friends to welcome the newly-wedded couple out of the church. But who nowadays knows exactly what the ribbon, the champagne or the arch stand for?

Though fascinated by historical protocol, my free-thinking and unconventional Dutch nature means I do not practice it at all. I am more of a curious observer, ever-critical of the function of protocol. And I am not alone in that. Many question the function of ceremonies, the true meaning of which has been lost in the mists of time. It would seem that even protocol specialists are at times critical of traditional protocol, particularly in the Netherlands, where the newly founded School of Protocol is seeking to modernise the profession. Perhaps this is thanks to the influence of our king, Willem Alexander, who years ago stated in an interview that he is not ‘a protocol fetishist’. Apparently he too questions the relevance of ‘the way it has always been done’ if that relevance is lost on people. So if our highest authority is beginning to question things now, is there any real reason to continue with protocol? Well, even as a critical observer of these conservative traditions, I can think of a number of reasons why we might:

1. Protocol helps with the logistics of ceremonial moments. The word protocol originates from the Greek ‘protokollon’ meaning ‘the first page’. Protocol is the first page of the scenario for an important meeting or event. It provides the rules of the game. This is very important, especially where many people are involved. Clear rules are needed to ensure the event runs smoothly and that its aims are achieved within the timeframe available.

2. Protocol ensures the safety of high-ranking people at public events.

Employing strict sets of rules, protocol ensures that every act and every movement of every person present is pre-planned such that any departure from the planning is quickly and easily detected.

3. Protocol brings democracy to public ceremonies. Protocol determines exactly how people are to behave in a given ceremonial situation. If you stick to the official rules then there will be no risk of offence through improper behaviour. Protocol is a leveller, just like British school uniform.

4. Protocol as immaterial heritage attracts tourist interest As the world shrinks and we all become global citizens, ceremonies begin to be regarded as important elements of national identity and social coherence. Whilst the popularity of institutions such as the church and the family unit is on the decline, that of national ceremonies is on the increase. Quaint protocol with, for many, incomprehensible rites and routines, has a mystical value and hence public appeal. This immaterial heritage is greatly valued, not least for its comical entertainment value.

5. Protocol can lend (symbolic) meaning and value to important moments Protocol is of course not (only) comical. Much of what it contains still has meaning to a greater or lesser extent. Much of that carried out in the name of protocol represents timeless values which, if correctly understood, lend an extra symbolic value to the ceremony. The meaning may remain hidden and yet still be understood in an abstract way, through a feeling of togetherness, for example.

And this point—the meaning and value of protocol—brings me gradually to my concluding remarks about the ‘modernisation of protocol.’ The central focus should be on ‘meaningfulness’ or ‘functionality’ if you like.

BACK TO TOGETHERNESS

We have for decades now been living in a highly individualistic society. Gradually, we are beginning to see the downsides of this shift. We lose contact with others, we are alone on an ever-broadening playing field and with an ever fuller life to manage. There is no ‘togetherness’ in which to reflect on our own lives and to mirror ourselves in others. Coping with life alone is hard work. Many burn out. Our longing for a sense of community increases. But community in its previous form does not suit—it is outdated and irrelevant. We seek new, more specific, even tailor-made routes to a community far more relevant to our modern selves.

And there are people already working to achieve this for us. Take Meike Ziegler. She came up with a modern concept for protocol. Creatuals or ‘creative rituals’ are specially developed for all manner of important moments in life: the opening of an event, a company merger, a jubilee, marriage, birth, death, etc. Meike, the founder of the company Creatuals, is an artist who develops tailor-made ceremonies for clients, who participate in the production of the event itself. There is always a tangible result, a piece of (communal) art, which the client takes away from the event as a lasting embodiment of the creatual.

This magazine is full of examples of creatuals with a pronounced ceremonial content and meaning.

‘But who nowadays knows exactly what the ribbon, the champagne or the arch stand for?’

— 5 —

THE ART OF NOTICING OUR
FAILURE TO NOTICE

HOW TO COPE WITH ‘WICKED’ CORPORATE PROBLEMS

BY ANNA SNEL

People in any corporate setting are confronted with complex situations every day. What distinguishes these complex situations from more ‘simple’ problems? They are hard to define. Various stakeholders are involved and all have different interests. There are no predefined sets of tools or theories we can apply. They can be symptomatic of even more complex problems. And they have consequences you can’t foresee. In short: they are ‘messy’ and ‘wicked.’

Wicked problems are difficult to solve. Usually these issues have been around for a long time. They have become entangled with different habits, assumptions, patterns, routines and rituals within the organization. We often notice their symptoms and try to fix these. But this is like taking an aspirin when someone is hitting you on the head with a hammer. The aspirin may work temporarily but in the long run it’s more effective to deal with the guy with the hammer. Standard checklists and methodologies don’t work for these messy problems, so let’s try to approach them in different way.

EMPATHY

We are so used to sitting at our desks reading long, often boring, policy and strategy reports and checking excruciatingly detailed Excel sheets, that we may have forgotten that there exists a reality underneath all this data. To understand wickedness we have to get in touch with the experience of the people with the problems. It’s remarkable how skilled we have become in avoiding true contact with people nowadays. Yes, it’s safe and comfortable to sit behind a computer screen, but wickedness lies not in the binary world of ones and zeroes, it lies in that messy reality outside. Computers and data don’t cause wicked problems, people do. By what they think, what they have become used to, their assumptions, habits, patterns of behavior, routines and rituals.

To find out about these things you will need to get out of your office and find people to speak to, to observe, to join or imitate, to see what it’s like to walk a mile in their shoes. Only by submerging ourselves in their reality do we stand a chance of finding out what is going on. We need empathy and an anthropological approach because these people are the experts of their own situation, not us. We need to get to know them in order—at the very least—to be able to ask the right questions.

LEAVING OUR COMFORT ZONE

The next obstacle is the departure from our mental comfort zone. Often we think we know what’s going on, and no longer question our own opinions. Being unaware of other perspectives is risky, denying other perspectives is dangerous. Wicked problems have usually been around for a long time and the fact that they still exist means that our traditional ways of dealing with them haven’t worked. So we have to explore other ideas for solving them, outside of our perspectives, our professions, our disciplines. We have to invent new ways to reframe the problem and invent out-of-the-ordinary insights and ideas that—hopefully—will work better than our old ideas.

FEEDBACK

Of course crazy ideas are not everything. In the end we have to do something to improve the situation. But in times of change and transience, there is a chance that by the time we start to implement our ideas the world has changed again and no longer fits our ideas. Our habits of jumping to conclusions and solutions and acting as fast as possible on them don’t work in a transient world. We have to find ways to make our ideas tangible so we can communicate them and find out what people think. Will they work in their reality? Why or why not? How can we improve them? What new problems will emerge if we implement them? Questions and answers that were clear yesterday may already be outdated today. It’s only by getting feedback that we may find out. Our ideas need iterative testing and we must learn from the feedback we get.

ENGAGING OTHERS

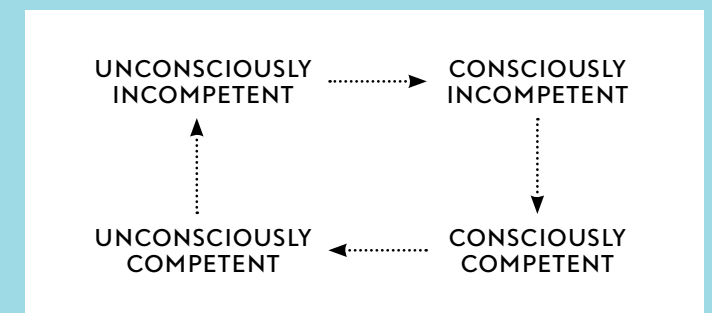
Even when we have really empathized with the problem owners, have looked outside our comfort zone, gathered feedback on our plans and integrated this in our own ideas, we still need to engage others. People are swamped with information daily and our message has to compete for their attention. We cannot solve the wicked problems on our own so we need other people to understand what the problem is and what has to be done. Instead of sending a one-size-fits-all message to an audience which we presume will absorb it uncritically, we need to communicate it in a way that makes them feel engaged, to embed the message in their personal experience. And of course our actions will have impacted the situation so we need to re-empathize and re-explore. The process is cyclical.

LEARNING PROCESS

This development requires a learning process that enables people to let go of their traditional checklists and straightforward methodologies. A learning process that shows where we get stranded with our habits, assumptions, patterns, routines and rituals, resulting in wicked problems. One view on such a learning process is Robinson’s (1974). In the beginning we are Unconsciously Incompetent. There may be thousands of problems in the world around us but as long as we don’t notice them, we’re fine and dandy.

A simple example: you don’t speak Italian but you don’t know any Italians so who cares? Things change when you become aware that you have a problem, that there is some gap between what you want and how things are and that at this moment you don’t know how to close that gap. You may have taken a job at an Italian company where all your colleagues are Italian. Now you become Conscious of your Incompetence. If you want to do something about this feeling of incompetence, you have to learn new knowledge and skills and become Consciously Competent. In this simple example you would sign up for an Italian language course and perhaps even go to Italy for a while to learn about their culture and habits. By applying your new competence, this may become routinized, automatic, tacit, and you become Unconsciously Competent. Your Italian is fluent and you can speak with your colleagues without having to think about it anymore. You even act like them without noticing it: you speak in a more melodious way, gesticulating to reinforce your words.

FIGURE 1

**UNCONSCIOUSLY COMPETENT**

It is during this last step, from being Consciously Competent to being Unconsciously Competent that we again recognize the workings of assumptions, patterns, routines and rituals. Things have disappeared from our direct awareness, faded into the background. Now we just act without need for conscious attention. However, problems emerge when something changes in our environment, which makes our hard-earned competence inconsistent with the new situation. Let’s say your Italian company has merged with a German company and gradually your Italian co-workers

**‘It’s people who create wicked problems.
They can’t be solved behind
a computer screen.’**

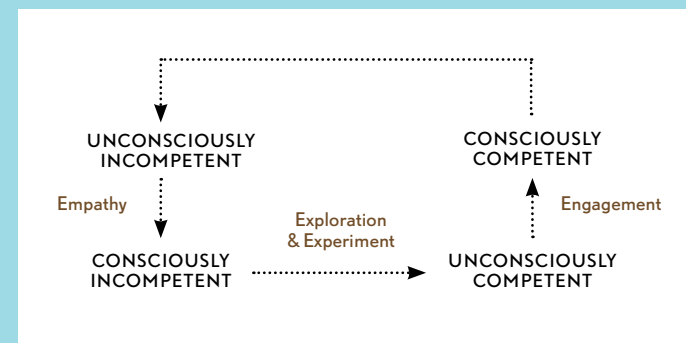
are replaced by Germans. You become Unconsciously Incompetent again. You continue to speak Italian all day long but in time your new German colleagues will wonder what the heck is wrong with you. As long as you fail to notice the effect of having routinized and ritualized your actions you may fail to notice the inconsistency between your actions and your environment. In the words of R.D. Laing, in such situations we fail to notice that we fail to notice.

REFRAMING

Wicked problems may have this double failure to notice at their core. Our habits and rituals have taken us hostage. They have ceased to be helpful in the process of saving us the immense effort of noticing everything and anything and instead locked us up in a conservative mode of 'this is how we do things around here', while the 'here' may have changed into something completely different.

However, rituals can also help us to get out of our rut and to tackle wicked problems. On the topic of empathy, a nice example is the creatual 'Ring of Tones', during which everyone was required to hand over their phone, which was then hung in a giant chandelier and hoisted into the air. This is a great way to have people experience their own attachment to (or dare I say dependence on?) their mobile phone. By experiencing feelings of reluctance to hand over their phone, they may learn to empathize with people who have communication problems or who lack technology.

FIGURE 2



**‘Being unaware of other perspectives is risky,
denying other perspectives is dangerous.’**

The often metaphorical nature of rituals can help to reframe issues and explore different avenues for tackling them. Take for example the 'Hatching Happiness' creatual, during which people were asked to sprinkle some happiness serum on a living cocoon. Each person received a picture of their butterfly when it hatched. In a fast-paced, hurrying world in which results are expected now rather than later, this metaphor helps us to look at things in a different way. Some valuable things just cannot be speeded up. They take time and perhaps it is precisely the waiting involved that makes them valuable. Metaphors like these can bring different and insightful ideas.

Experiments can take the shape of a ritual by inviting different stakeholders to try out and play around with a prototype. But rituals can also take the shape of tangible feedback collectors. People write their thoughts on a strip of paper, dip them into a liquid which makes the ink dissolve, giving the liquid a deeper color as more strips are dipped into it (see the Pink Milk creatual). By choosing appropriate labels for the different bottles of liquid one can see at a glance what people think about the prototype they have been invited to test.

Finally, rituals can be used to engage people. Rituals communicate. They communicate to those who participate in the ritual that they have something in common, at least during the ritual but possibly even after it ends. This social bonding aspect makes many rituals very valuable for engaging people. However this may also lead to those wicked problems (see figure), as we fail to notice that our ways of seeing, thinking and acting no longer fit with our reality. And here perhaps lies the greatest value of rituals: by iteratively keeping us in a state of empathy with those for whom we work, in a state of exploration of new ways of seeing and thinking, in a state of experimentation and learning from feedback on our ideas and a state of engaging the people around us, we remain aware of changes. We continue to notice when we fail to notice.

— 6 — THE MAGIC OF THE RITUAL IN A SECULAR WORLD

CONTEMPORARY RITUALS WITHOUT GOD

BY KOOS DE WILT

In the modern Western world we have turned our backs on traditional forms of religion. They seem no longer to fit with our outlook on life. At the same time we are regularly confronted with terror—in the name of belief. With this shift, the ritual seems likewise to have been abandoned. Indeed, what do we want with something which seems only to provide a breeding ground for violence of the most dreadful kind? Does this then indicate that we no longer have any need for meaning in our lives?

RITUALS WITHOUT GOD

Why do we do what we do? To put it histrionically, what is the meaning of our lives? Once, we had the Roman Catholic Church mass with all its prescribed texts, the blessing of the bread and the drinking of the wine from a chalice. And until recently, the Netherlands knew various strains of the Protestant belief. Each had its own prayers, hymns and sermons and its own ideas about christening, wedding and funeral ceremonies. But for many people, these safe rituals defined by the church just don't work anymore.

Since many turned their back on God, the bottom has fallen out of the rituals. But still we feel the same need to lend significance to important life events: to lend a little colour to the official moment of a legal marriage; to make the earthly departure of a loved one just a little more bearable. This need for rituals, and preferably ones with a strong personal touch, has never been more clearly felt. Where once the verger knew exactly when to start pouring the coffee and cutting the cake after the funeral mass, mass being the operative word as one style fitted the mass of deceased, nowadays people tend to seek their own personal ritual. There might be champagne corks popping at a funeral and the deceased's favourite snack served as David Bowie is turned up full volume. We choose to celebrate the final farewell with a final, tailor-made ritual. No God.

What use is religion if we no longer believe in a traditional God? It's like playing football without a ball. In his book Religion for atheists: a non-believers' guide to the uses of religion (2011) writer and philosopher Alain de Botton (1969) states that by pronouncing God dead in our West European culture, we may well have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. For him religion can play a useful role even for the non-believers amongst us. In his popular books, De Botton is in constant search of modern ways we mortals might enjoy a better life if only we were to listen to what the great artists and thinkers had to say in the past. De Botton is of the opinion that religion with all its wonderful rituals provides us with useful tools to help us deal with the darker sides of our existence. With the toolkit of our belief we are better able to cope with our loneliness and our mortality. It can provide us solace and compassion. That's all very well, but we've gone and blanked out those churchly rituals and habits which were so useful to us for support and even enrichment in our lives. Alain De Botton proposes that we distil out of all the various religions everything that is 'useful, interesting and comforting' and incorporate them back into our lives. This should bring forth a kind of user guide for modern humanistic people in need of ethical guidance.

De Botton provides us with a few examples. In a bid for better awareness of our modest role in world history, he

suggests we build a ‘Temple of Perspective’, a tower some 50 metres high depicting the age of the earth. Right down at the very bottom a line one just millimetre thick would denote the period during which man has been around on earth. This would make us a little more humble and a little more realistic. An artistic deed. He also proposes a drastic restructuring of, say the Tate Museum. There would be themed rooms dealing with suffering, compassion, fear and love for example. The very top floor would turn its attention to self-knowledge. Not only would this prompt modern man to do good, it would also encourage social development. Art can function as a ritual, particularly the type of art in which we become involved together as a group. We all need to feel we belong to a group in order to be happy. Lately we tend to overestimate our capacities as an individual. Our life, our welfare and our happiness have all become our own personal responsibility. Fine on the one hand, but it’s quite a task for us alone, particularly if things don’t quite go according to our personal plan. What do we do with this ‘self-navigating’ individual? A church service for non-believers with some good stories and collective singing can be enormously comforting. We have also come to miss the sense of direction that regular repetition of a ritual can provide. According to De Botton, in the modern, atheist vision the human spirit has become a kind of pit into which something is dropped only to remain there for ever. But in reality even if we are moved by a poem we read or a piece of music we hear, often we have forgotten it the very next day. And the same goes for our sense of moral values. We know that it is better to be kind to our neighbour, it’s just that we forget it so readily. And this is the power of repetition in religion. Art can serve as a reminder. It can play an important role in the ritual, bringing us together and lending meaning and life to an act.

A SENSE OF PURPOSE THROUGH EARTHLY ACTS

It is not only the simple souls of this earth who miss the handhold of belief. Ger Groot (1954), professor of Philosophy and Literature at the Radboud University, Nijmegen wrote in 2014 in the daily newspaper Trouw an article entitled Atheism, rituals and the good soul. He explains that he was pretty much done with religion as a young boy. But during his philosophy studies he regularly came across God again. He noted how the issue of belief

in relation to increasing scientific interest became important over the course of time. The battle between God and Science would appear to have been fought and, for now, the rational thinking of science has won. But that is not to say that the role of belief has disappeared. Groot tried, from his own atheist point of view, to understand religion without assuming the existence of an afterlife. He gradually discovered that the life of a believer may appear to be rooted in all kinds of dogmatic convictions, but that acting through those convictions is just as important. Groot states: ‘The body must experience what the mind then provides the opportunity to think. From meaningless time meaning is created...’ Religion is not only, and indeed not primarily a matter of ideals but rather exists in the practical and earthly reality of the ritual and everything that involves. Beliefs and its dogmas, which might appear to form the basis of this, are in fact only an outcome. The figure of God manifests itself out of the rite, and not the other way around. The weekly visit to church breaks the sequence of days, is Groot’s theory, and brings to this sequence a rhythm in which, after 7 days, a fresh new week begins. Time is lent structure in a pattern, which is physically created. Meaningless time gains meaning through ritual. The world is transformed from sober indifference to a reality of fulfilment in which it finds its niche. This is the function of ritual.

But what in fact is a ritual? The most salient characteristic of ritual is its function as a frame you could probably say. It is a deliberate and artificial demarcation. In ritual, a bit of behaviour or interaction, an aspect of social life, a moment in time is selected, stopped, remarked upon. During a ritual, actions are carried out in a certain order and in a certain place. However diverse the outward elements of a ritual may be, the basis of ritual practices would appear to be universal. They are characterised by an emphasis on the form whereby the precise performance of an act is of importance and repetition and symbolism play a significant role. They are mainly the issue of a local religious and cultural context. Though the most well-known rituals do indeed stem from church services, a ritual is not by definition religious in nature. Non-believers also have their rituals. We see them in the corporate world, when someone celebrates an anniversary or a ribbon is cut. Equally our own personal lives know small events, which lend them meaning—think of an annual family dinner.

‘Our life, our welfare and our happiness have all become our own personal responsibility.’

**‘There’s no digging out of old dogmas here,
nor any search for something godly’**

WHERE THE EARTHLY AND TRANSCENDENTAL MEET

The famous modern Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1942) is a great proponent of rituals. In his view we not only need the spiritual element, but in fact it is an important part of our lives. Agamben sees in the ritual a gesture during which the transcendental and the earthly come together. This need not necessarily take place in a religious context: it could for example take the form of a promise made. Rituals are around us everywhere and always. The act of making a solemn promise to a close friend or family member can be more than just the uttering of a few words. We commit to those words. We raise two fingers, spit a little and lo, we have lent form to the ritual of an agreement. As we do this, the promise becomes sacredly charged. ‘A promise, a vow, whatever the ritual is, it brings these two worlds together in one single act, one single moment,’ as Agamben writes in his book The Sacrament of Language: An Archaeology of the Oath (2008). Agamben rejects the axiom that an oath or a ritual has its origins in religion. In his view it is precisely the opposite: the oath and the ritual facilitate the origins of both religion and law.

And here lies the strength of creative alchemist Meike Ziegler’s creatuals. People wish to give depth of meaning to a particular moment—a collaborative project, a begin-

ning or an end. We want to serve the common good—and we want to do it together. We are in search of new ways of lending meaning to things, ways through which words have more than just their basic legal or official significance. We mortals need that company reshuffle, the set-up of a new organisation, the closure of another not just to be a piece of efficient management but to have deeper significance. And art can help here. In times gone by this was much simpler as art was dedicated to the depiction of religious doctrine. Followers of the Roman Catholic faith were convinced of the effects of conveying a message through music, painting, architecture and rituals. Almost all forms of art had this as their single aim. And this worked fine for centuries. Through a creatual art is once more used for the creation of a meaningful happening. Religious and secular art, ancient and modern art, painting, sculpture, land art, conceptual art, film, photography and music. There’s no digging out of old dogmas here, nor any search for something godly. Rather, meaning is sought in our daily environment, there where we meet and mingle. During a creatual, each participant contributes to something which becomes more than just the sum of all those contributions. Each word becomes a story and each personal heartbeat is transformed into a symphony of life. A creatual is a one-off ritual, rooted in day-to-day life and in art, lending meaning to our rationalised world.

— 7 —

RITUALS, ROUTINES, RUTS AND THE DISRUPTIVE EVENT

CONNECTING THE HEART AND THE MIND TO ACCESS COLLECTIVE RESONANCE

BY AMY STAFFORD

Wake up. Open eyes. Allow them to focus. Grab smartphone. Check only weather, horoscope and online sales stats. Maybe Pinterest. Get out of bed. Shuffle to the bathroom. Pee. Go to the kitchen. Fill kettle, place on stove and set heat to high. Wash dishes left from the night before. Grind 3 scoops of coffee beans to the count of 10-one-thousand. Slowly invert the entire grinder and tap the housing firmly to loosen the grounds into the lid. Pour the coffee into the french press. By now the water should be boiling. Pour gently over the grounds to just below the spout and jiggle gently. Wait two minutes. Press the grounds to the bottom of the pot and pour into an over-sized white mug. Add cream and three drops of stevia. Drink.

ROUTINE VERSUS ATTENTION

Fast forward 24 hours and the old guy in the apartment across the street, the one who prefers the company of young Asian men, once again witnesses my carefully choreographed steps, performed with near clockwork precision, every fucking morning.

Perhaps your morning routine includes tasks like preparing two nut-free, organic school lunches before you drink your coffee. Or, maybe your habit is to check emails before even firing up the Nespresso, then going for a run following one of three routes around the neighborhood. No matter what your situation, if you look closely, you'll recognize your own series of "best practices", refined over time to create a routine.

Any aspect of one's day can be framed in a series of patterns or routines that may, or may not, actually make life easier. For some, these practices are considered deeply personal

rituals allowing them to enter a flow from which creativity or calm can bubble forth. It is following the practice with full attention that brings one's awareness back to the present—to this one singular moment, pregnant with potential. For my friend Micah, a former pastor, the rituals of her faith allow her to take control of the structure of time and space. By stripping away the complexity of every day life, ritual clears a path to reach God—and in this experience she finds there's a calm simplicity that allows us into the holy.

Having experienced Micah's Christmas service a couple of years ago, I can attest to her exquisite talent for holding open a space that simply resonates with holy, heart filled love—with enough intensity to reduce this decidedly non-religious girl to a puddle of tears all over the third pew. Such a sense of warm, lucid calm filled the modest church as Micah preached of vacuum cleaners, messy homes and God's patient support in getting it all done during the holidays. While there was sweetness in the gentle words

she spoke, my soggy eyed reaction was not to her story or its star player, but to its palpable resonance—to the sense of communion I felt in that moment. It was so far outside the norm of the daily urban churn, that much to my own surprise, it rendered me a blubbery mess of hot, untamed tears. Is this what it feels like to be wholly present?

CREATING A SHARED FREQUENCY

According to the Heart Math Institute (HMI), a research center developing scientifically based tools to bridge the connection between heart and mind, this warm sense of resonance I was feeling from Micah's sermon is common in a state of heart coherence. The HMI research has documented that when one's heart and brain are synchronized it's possible to reach a more energized and aware state. Data also indicates that humans are apparently 'linked together and synchronizing at a deep level to an external signal in Earth's magnetic field environment'. This collective synchronization has been demonstrated, with recorded spikes of emotional coherence during emotionally charged global events including the funeral of Princess Diana and the fall of the twin towers on September 11th.

Researchers for the Global Consciousness Initiative at HMI postulate 'as increasing numbers of people add coherent energy to the global field, it helps strengthen and stabilize mutually beneficial feedback loops among human beings and with the earth itself.'

HMI is not just talking here about the effects of a handful of hippies singing Cat Stevens songs around a bonfire on a California beach. Their scientists are suggesting we consider a scale of complexity grand enough to intertwine everything from major global events like the terrorist attacks on Paris, to the mood of the passengers on a plane headed to Vegas, to those hippies on the beach all the way down to two people simply sitting in each other's presence. In each instance a shared frequency is created and it interacts with the earth. What do you want yours to feel like?

Given the insights from HMI, the question emerges: How can we create ways of accessing this coherent resonance in our daily lives, when our attention is so fragmented by the distractions of the digital age? So much of our modern world is designed to keep us connected, while simultaneously eroding our collectivity and our beloved rituals have become deeply personal coping devices, who's actual effectiveness at bringing us into heart coherence is worn pretty thin. One of the challenges with ritual is staying genuinely present in the process. This is the key to keeping the sacred from turning into another mindless routine. While there's benefit to routine—providing slipstreams of efficiency in people's daily lives, for example—there's also a big risk that without attention, as we mindlessly repeat these actions, these routines become well-worn ruts.

POSITIVE DISRUPTION

By foreclosing on our own ability to choose differently, we opt for the ruts of a default life—nose buried in our smart phones and basking in the warm boozy glow of byte sized gratification. For many of us, it takes a strong series of swift kicks to the gut by a stern universe to jolt us into change. Health crisis, financial crisis, mid-life crisis—these cruel friends call us out of the dark ruts we haven't even dared admit to ourselves that we trudge. What's needed today is positive disruption, not crisis, to crash through the safe enthrallment of unconsciousness.

In his game-changing book 'The Society of the Spectacle' of 1967, Guy Debord sowed the seeds for 70's punk, culture jamming and today's adbusters. In it he proposes to 'wake up the spectator who has been drugged by various spectacular images' by staging 'situations'- deliberately constructed, collective moments of radical action. Like a bracing cold shower revives a drunk—the 'situation' was intended to shock people out of their own hypnotic state and create 'a sense of self-consciousness of existence... bring(ing) a revolutionary reordering of life, politics and art.' By bringing people together in a collective, directly lived experience, authentic

‘It is all about dropping the bullshit, being truly present and connecting collectively on a heart level.’

feeling and creative possibility can emerge. While his approach is decidedly more subversive, the intended result is not too far off from what HMI is working towards as well. At the end of the day both are talking about dropping the bullshit, being truly present and connecting collectively on a heart level.

Much like Debord’s situations, the creatual provides a context for loosening people from the iron-fisted grip of routine mindlessness—offering an artfully crafted vehicle for experiencing connection and transformation. Instead of the intellectual pranksterism of Debord’s situation, however, the creatual weaves heart-based meaning with tactile, elemental poetry in a ceremony of personal design. The aim being to break new ground, both individual and collective, while shaking free old ways of experiencing the world; instead creating opportunities for authentic coherence between participants. Due to their intrinsic patterning, ruts, routines and even rituals provide little space for fresh options to emerge. It takes a great disruptor, like Debord’s situation-as-trickster or the creatual-as-communion to shake us free from the deep tracks of a well-worn rut and into fresh spaces for our hearts, our minds and our lives.

COUNTERACTING THE SELF SERVING CORPORATES

The 1st world’s growing demand for authentic connection is evidenced by today’s swelling market for mindfulness coloring books and personal growth retreats. This rise in the culture of consciousness consumers keeps steady pace

with its unconscious counterparts, heralded by anti-social media, semi-naked pop stars and gun-toting, prescription SSRI zombies. Like a consciousness arms race, each camp outdoes the other in an escalating battle of energetic weaponry. So, does what you engage with feed you, or deplete you? Answer that and you know which camp is winning (hint: it’s different for each of us and we can choose).

At this point in history, it’s tough to decouple the heartfelt earnestness of transformational businesses from the cynicism of capitalistic market trends. Transformational hucksters come a dime-a-dozen, as do authentically motivated change-makers. One can hope that as the level of mindlessness enveloping our world rises to an all-time high, so too do the heart-based businesses, who genuinely aim at counteracting the siren of self-serving corporate interest.

Would Debord approve of the hijacking (détournement) of his prescribed ‘situations’ by businesses today? Could he swallow a collective disruption that’s been co-opted for corporate gain? Doubtful. Yet the teeth of his late capitalist ’68-revolution have since been bleached white to better appeal to a market hungry for artfully packaged tastes of subversion and transcendence, delivered via push technology. We’ll never know for sure if he could at least appreciate the irony, as Debord died in ’94—not long before the internet transformed the world with its infinite streams of on-demand spectacle, his life snuffed out by a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the heart.

‘For many of us, it takes a strong series of swift kicks to the gut by a stern universe to jolt us into change.’

— 8 —
NEW-STYLE RITUALS FOR A NEW
APPROACH TO WORK

INTERVIEW WITH JAAP PURMER
BY KOOS DE WILT

For some 40 years, organisational consultant Jaap Purmer has been studying how corporate structures can best realise their staff potential. Purmer looks for a shift from management by power and rank towards getting the job done according to who we are as people. How, exactly? By turning the pyramid upside down and placing responsibility and power at the bottom of the organisation. This has proved a highly visionary approach as we see today’s young professionals acting in the spirit of themes such as trust, freedom and responsibility. New-style rituals can facilitate this new approach to work. The organisational consultant with a mission tells us how.

FEELING SECURE IN AN ORGANISATION

“Anyone whose ambition is to see their dreams realised is well-advised to believe they will succeed. If you yourself do not believe you will succeed then you very likely won’t. Though belief is not a guarantee for success, it is still one of the most important requirements.” From a farming background, Jaap Purmer was taught: study, work hard and be socially committed. In the 1970s he studied Business Management. “I opted early on for the combination of the professional and the personal with a job in Human Relations and Organisation at Ahold. As a young employee I regularly encountered founders Gerrit and Albert Heijn. They were no longer on the board of directors but were still very much involved with the business. For them, the “customer” was the prompter of every decision taken. A few years later I took on HR & Organisation and Management Development for Ahold worldwide. For many years, Ahold was a company in which people felt secure. It was a safe place for quality to develop. Market success was due to a considerable degree to the quality of the staff. In the 1990s the corporate culture changed with the arrival of Cees van der Hoeven and Jan Andrae at the top. There was a clear shift towards shareholder value, at the expense of the quality of the organisation. I sat it out for a while and finally decided to leave after

almost 25 years. Roel van den Berg and I set up Access to Quality, a company looking at strategy development and change processes in many different areas of industry.”

RELATIONSHIPS ARE CHANGING

What is organisational change for Jaap Purmer? “The essence is a shift in basic business relationship types. Exchange relationships are less and less determined by respect based on hierarchical inequality. Increasingly they are voluntary and democratic in nature and determined by high levels of interdependency. Relationships such as these can be seen for example in the increasingly popular ‘communities of practice’—informal knowledge- and social networks. These groups use a common platform to develop targeted activities. Intra-organisational relationships are likewise undergoing marked change. There is growing interest in leadership by coaching, employee engagement and an increase in individual autonomy.

Research shows that informal networks in which staff work together on a voluntary basis, setting targets, structures and processes in mutual collaboration, are far less dependent on top-down instruction. There is trust in mutual feedback and these networks are far better equipped to collate and

share relevant information. Equally people are more ready to consider and accept points of view from other areas of expertise. Purmer: “Informal groupings such as these are perceived as safe settings enabling those involved to bring newcomers more easily and quickly up to speed, to identify competencies, to address customer issues and develop innovative ideas and products.”

SUCCESS IS NOT ACHIEVED IN THE TOP ECHELONS

Over the past decades, the sense of a common culture has been crumbling. Lately however we see a renewed need to share experiences. Purmer observes how many organisations are still run according to outdated ideas of leadership, with terms like control, hierarchy and power still ruling the roost. “I am convinced that these terms are not going to win us the race. And this is clear from studies of successful companies. The success of an organisation is not dependent upon who is at the top, but precisely on those at work in the lower echelons. Put your money on that part of an organisation, is my advice. And only then need you turn your attention to putting the right people in at the top. This may mean some changes and more often than not you will see one management level disappear completely. This can be a painful process, but people will ultimately realise that there is no joy in being a manager in an organisation with seven hierarchical levels. In every case, the crux of the matter is making sure you have people doing what they are good at. In the past, organograms were the order of the day. But experience now shows there is absolutely no need for them if you simply empower the people themselves. In many cases there is not even any need for a boss. It strikes me that young people have totally different ideas about what they want out of their work. They don’t want interminable meetings, a Collective Labour Agreement or leave day planning set in concrete. But how does one organise such freedom, such creativity? Well, it will keep me in work for the next 20 years!”

‘Exchange relationships are less and less determined by respect based on hierarchical inequality’

PURPOSE IN WORK

Jaap Purmer recognises how ideas about work have changed over the past few decades. “The successful companies of today are those which have learned to let go of the concept of management, to think in a more democratic way and to take a more interactive approach. Key terms here are equality, freedom, responsibility and trust.” But how does such an organisation make it clear to those who work there that these are its true operating intentions? And what might be the role of rituals in this? Purmer: “Rituals are important to establish who you are and who your colleagues are. In the old days at Albert Heijn, personal thanks and praise were dealt out during anniversary celebrations marking years of service. The speaker made clear who you were and what you were doing for the organisation. But all that was stopped. The culture of shared rituals fell apart and farewell events became unbearably impersonal. It regularly happened that groups of 30 staff found themselves out on the street with nothing but a bag of money for thanks. The message was clear: ‘you’re on your own now’. That’s not the way young people want to work these days. They seek purpose and meaning in their work. There is less ambition to get as far as possible up the career ladder and more interest in getting the work-life balance right. I truly believe that an attitude such as this can lead to a better world.”

THE STARTING POINT IS SELF CONFIDENCE

Purmer is convinced of the importance of trust in work and in life in general. But how does one reach that state of trust? Purmer: “It all starts by having confidence in yourself, becoming aware of who you really are, acknowledging both the attractive and the less attractive sides to yourself. Lack of self-confidence destroys interpersonal relationships and ends up destroying the people themselves. Only once you have found self-confidence can you have confidence in others. Confidence is not something you can agree upon, it is something one must experience, and earn. It is possible to make organisational processes transparent, enable people to say what they think and feel, but without damaging others. The approach should be: “say what you do; do what you say.” The extent to which this is successful depends upon the level of leadership, both at the top and at the very basis of

‘The success of change depends to a great extent on the attitude of those leading the process.’

the organisation. This entails a shift of awareness. The success of change depends to a great extent on the attitude of those leading the process. Self-awareness, self-confidence and insight in personal strengths and weaknesses determine the quality of a leader. One must have an open heart, a clear head and a firm hand. The current climate calls for hands-on leadership.”

Rituals can play an important role in building confidence in an organisation. Purmer: “Each employee plays their own personal part in bringing about change, regardless of the formal position they have in the organisation. More and more, people are inspired by the intrinsic values of purpose and personal growth. One important ritual might be taking a little time each day to think how you can be valuable for your surroundings. This aids mindful living, leadership and leisure. The rituals an organisation observes belie its culture. Steeper learning curves can be achieved by encouraging people out of their comfort zones—a simple trip to the Ardennes will do. I create other rituals too. For example, I open the weekly meeting by asking everyone what is on their minds. Or I start off with a moment’s silence. This gives everyone the freedom for reflection. It might be positive; it might be negative; personal or job-related. By giving space, you create trust. The creation of a culture in which people suspend their judgement can have very positive effects. In an age where everyone is free to speak their mind, it can be good, every now and then, to keep one’s thoughts to oneself. There is no single truth in life. Of course decisions must

be made, but very often the answer to a question develops over time and through a process. Listening without judgement and without entering into discussion about what “the truth” might be, creates trust and promotes joint success. I work with a lot of people who have reached a personal impasse. For these people it can help to ask them what inspires them, what moves them. Taking a moment for oneself is often a ritual in itself. Inviting artists and philosophers into the equation teaches one to look at people in a different way. We invited Meike Ziegler to come up with a creatual suited to our Access to Quality conference.”

All participants were asked to think what quality meant to them. Each guest then etched his or her personal response to this question into a bar of chocolate which, during the conference, was melted down and poured into a new form where it set once more. Each visitor was presented with a piece of 100% chocolate, wrapped in paper on which all the various definitions of quality were written. Purmer: “It was marvellous to see how people really stopped to think about something as rudimentary as quality. By asking that question, Meike confronted the guests with other essential questions about who we are, what we want and what we can and cannot achieve. Which ripples will my stone create in the pool of life? And these are precisely the same issues that I target.”

A QUEST FOR PARADISE

A STUDY OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL MEANING
OF LANDSCAPE

BY ARITA BAAIJENS

The cold breath of approaching winter bites my cheeks in the late autumn afternoon. I am in southern Siberia in search of the legendary Shambhala, a mythical kingdom for the pure in spirit, which is said to lie here in the Altai mountains. Finding Shambhala is tantamount to achieving an advanced state of spiritual development.

Personally I don't believe in the existence of some mysterious valley where people enjoy eternal life. The fact that I have come in search of it at all is indicative of the complete mess my life is in right now. An eternity ago I gave up a career as environmental biologist and went off like a modern-day Alexandrine Tinne to explore the Sahara. And there I found my paradise. But all of a sudden the fairy tale bubble burst—witness my irritated reaction to sandstorms and the slow gait of my camel. The desert no longer enchanted me and if there had been a potion that would turn me into a plant I would have drunk it in a heartbeat. How could I possibly contemplate a life without drive or sacred fire?

After three years of gloom I could see only one way out: finding a new obsession. And that's what brought me to Siberia, where I learned of the Shambhala legend. I was not in the least fazed by the minute chance of finding the place or the virtual absence of leads. On the contrary—the more impossible the mission, the longer I would be occupied and the greater the chance the sacred fire would ignite in me once more.

Strange things happened during my horseback journey. Strange for rational thinkers like me who dismiss as myths anything for which there is no scientific explanation. For example, there was a shaman there who, by carrying out a complex ritual involving all the villagers, could make it rain. Deluges lasting a week after years of drought. I classified these happenings under 'coincidence'. Science is my bible and I place my blind trust in scientists to explain the world

and all its phenomena. But does science really have the monopoly on truth? Is a researcher not simply trying to interpret reality as best he or she can? And if science is unable to prove something which is reality to humanity, as in the Altai mountains, then is it the method or is it man who is failing?

As the light fades my horse and I pull up at a shepherd's hut with a boarded up window on the banks of a glacial lake on the Siberian plateau. In the evening there will be the banja, the Russian sauna, which makes the cruel winters bearable. It belongs to the shepherd's hut and stands a little way off. The fire roars and the water hisses on the hot stones. An hour later, clean again and warmly dressed, I step out of the steamy hut and into the freezing cold. All around there is infinity, silence, a razor sharp wind. Above me the Milky Way, a vortex of millions of stars, gases and comets. A feeling of intense joy permeates from my toes to the top of my head. Lightning strikes and in one instant shatters all the years of misery. There on the lonely tundra I am the stars and the earth and I realise: I am in love again, not with a man, but with a place.

With renewed energy I resume my quest for Shambhala, but now with a different aim. I am no longer in search of paradise from a position of desperation, but out of curiosity, and that makes all the difference. I still have no idea exactly what I expect to find, but the questions which accompany me in my search are clear and they come to mind of their own accord. What great longing, what sense of want is behind the

Shambhala myth? Why is the dream paradise of so many right here in the Altai? And might I too be able to sense the unique powers which so many others attribute to the Altai?

A TREASURE MAP OF SHAMBHALA

My meeting with Meike Ziegler belongs in the category 'wonders of the world'. I had been wrestling for a while with the quandary as to how during my next Shambhala expedition I could make the intangible at least visible. Paradise was not going to escape me this time. I would circle the complete Altai mountain range on horseback even if it meant crossing the borders of the four powerful neighbouring countries. But how would I recognise paradise? My sceptical mind was my stumbling block here, for while others were feeling the special powers in the Altai, it remained strikingly quiet in my mind. Mountains so sacred that one may not even look straight at them, shamans who claimed that here the line between the earthly and the spiritual was wafer-thin, modern-day prophets who came here to recharge their spiritual batteries. I took all these stories on board with a pinch of salt...because I was feeling nothing. It was only several years later that I began to wonder if it wasn't perhaps me who was the complicating factor. It was quite possible that my spirit was experiencing things which my intellect refused to accept and was consequently filtering out. How could I test this? Was there an experiment that could examine in a fun but irrefutable way the workings of this landscape on my mind?

"You should speak to Meike Ziegler," Eva, a colleague suggested. Two meetings later, Meike presents her concept 'The Golden Circle Journey' in the form of a Shambhala treasure map. I'm not ashamed to say that tears were shed.

Tears of relief, emotion and incredulity. How could it be that someone, after only a couple of hours' conversation could present to me a concept which not only elevated the purpose of my expedition to a higher plain but also lent my professional life a whole new impetus? These are big words and I do not use them lightly. For me there is a time before, and a time after Creatuals.

The Shambhala creatual artfully connects the topography of my spirit with that of the physical location. This produces an intriguing treasure map that shows how my spirit picks up more than I initially thought. A landscape stores memories which I am at times able to observe. The local people's belief in nature's soul influences that observation.

I presented the results to a critical audience of scientists and geographers at the Explorers' Club in New York. It was a watertight story. They were impressed by the unconventional method for measuring the influence of landscape—witness two international prizes I was awarded for the study of the meaning of landscape. The Creatual makes it possible to interpret at different levels the meaning in a landscape, without omitting the mythological or spiritual level. If I had based my claims on purely scientific research, then the discussion would have stopped at 'true vs. not true.' The creatual enables me to appeal to people's imagination, just as geologist Harry Hess did when presenting his theory on plate tectonics as an Essay in Geopoetry. He was aware that his colleagues would otherwise dismiss his visionary theory for which there was as yet no proof. In the same way a creatual leaves space for speculation, for imagination, for carefree tossing and playing with ideas, ideas which sometimes even turn out to be true.

**‘How would I recognise paradise?
Was it perhaps me who was the complicating factor?’**

— 10 —

CREATING A TABLE OF HOPE [I]

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS, FOR YOURSELF,
YOUR COMMUNITY AND FOR CAPE TOWN?

BY WILLIAM HEWETT

The Table of Hope is a special creatual project for the people of Cape Town in South Africa. It's a real table and at the same time a symbolic statement of hope for peace and stability, a metaphor encompassing the idea that we should all sit at the same table, partake of life together and listen to one another. Read the experience of William Hewitt, who was closely involved with the making of the first table.

My name is William Hewett, and I have been a learner and educator for most of my professional life. I am passionate about people and thus the interest in learning. Currently I am a team leader on a tertiary level education program in Business and Social Innovation, called Kaospilot in Denmark, with a sister school in Switzerland. This is a three year course with a focus on the development and self-awareness of the individual as much as the relevant theories in leadership, social business innovation, process- and project work and a good dollop of creativity.

In 2012, during a three-month travel experience with Kaospilot students, during their fourth semester, we were privileged to meet and work with Meike Ziegler and her company Creatuals. A project named Table of Hope was offered to the students during their 'Outpost' as we call the learning journey, in Cape Town 2014.

The concept, developed and facilitated by Meike, for Table of Hope was born from a deep desire to offer a gift to South Africa, more specifically to Cape Town.

Table of Hope came as a beautiful gift, wrapped in a ritual including needs such as collaboration, understanding, enquiry, making sense and creating meaning for all parties involved: all concepts straight up the Kaospilot-alley of a learning journey about the new city they were learning with and from at the time.

In the creation of the ritual was the simple, but important reflective question: 'What are your hopes and dreams, for yourself, your community and for Cape Town?'

Students hit the streets of Cape Town and surrounding areas, armed with the question and curious about what they would find. What they found was a beautifully diverse collection of responses...diverse as one can only find in abundance in South Africa.

People's answers were handwritten on old wood, cut to a specific size and dimension. Hundreds of different hopes and dreams became part of the wood that was then glued together, the messages hidden, embracing and forever harboring the hopes and dreams of the people of the city, to become a table...a 'Table of Hope'.

The table was given legs and a sturdy frame and now proudly stands in a part of the District Six Museum, aptly called, The Homecoming Centre.

Here the table can now host conversations, dinners and more dreams for any people who want to sit down and enjoy it. The beauty of this creative ritual has afforded the students much invaluable learning from and about the people of the city. More importantly it gave the individuals, who were asked the question the opportunity to voice their opinions and manifest their dreams and hopes forever in a practi-

cal and beautiful table. The process of meeting the people, talking with them, harvesting their stories and creating the table was the essence of this project. The collaboration, the making sense and creating meaning for all involved was what made this ritual so wondrous and filled with learning. The students came away from this project with a rich understanding of the country and its people, their dreams and hopes for the future of the city they call home.

This project and all the planning, co-ordination and facilitation by Meike and the students was an unexpected but beautifully respectful way of making sense of a foreign and rather complex culture. Meike's sense of humility, her respect for the content and her way of dealing with people were extra fruits harvested from being part of her ritual.

For me this was an important reminder of the value and impact of a ritual: its inclusion and deep meaning for the participants, as well as the playful yet serious way of learning about the unknown of new cultures.

Let us not forget the rituals in our lives and the value they may add when we participate in them with others... or by ourselves.

Thank you for the inspiration and possibilities you have created with this experience...it changed lives. May our rituals be a way to a deeper understanding of who we are in relation to others, ourselves and the planet we call our home.

**‘It gave people of the city the opportunity
to voice their opinions and manifest
their hopes and dreams’**

— 10 —

CREATING A TABLE OF HOPE [II]

RE-AUTHORING THE WORLD

BY CHENÉ SWART

The first Table of Hope resulted from a meeting with Meike Ziegler and Chené Swart which was initiated by Kaospilot students. As a re-authoring coach, rituals are deeply important to Chené, as they invite us to pause and reflect on important moments in our lives. In fact creatuals can be of great help in re-authoring our own narratives.

Greetings from the African continent! My name is Chené Swart and I live in South Africa, a beautiful country that is 20 years into its fragile democracy, a place where the joy and the grief are close companions in our daily living. A place where our human aliveness always beckons us to see ourselves and one another through the eyes of the other. A place where ritual grows from this ground, as communities still pause and honour traditions of transition in a profound way. Where 'moving through' is mostly a way of life...

As I have grown from this ground I am therefore passionate about the re-authoring of our world, about taking back the pen in the writing of this planet for the common good, about narratives that can transport us to this re-authoring and about practices that would be the magical carpet in taking us there. I am currently journeying with organisations and communities on various continents as coach, facilitator and consultant to come alongside the exotic knowledge of participants who dare to re-author their world, one narrative at a time!

In my work as a re-authoring practitioner, ritual matters to me deeply.

There are moments in our narratives where we need to pause, say hello or goodbye or simply say 'I do not know for now.' These moments beckon us for a ritual that will carry the embodiment, sigh, tear and laughter, but most people are disconnected from these ancient practices in a world that values 'moving on', success, speed and efficiency.

I met Meike through the Danish KaosPilot School for innovative leaders about two years ago in a little Dutch town called Breukelen. Two of the Kaospilot students insisted that I met this wise magical woman and they both felt we would complement each other in our work. And so we drank coffee, drove to Amsterdam and sat outside the front door overlooking the canal in Northern Amsterdam conspiring to find a way to do some work together.

After our magical meeting we decided to venture on doing something together in Cape Town where the second year KaosPilot group meets every year. Creatuals had an inspiring initiative to capture the stories of freedom and hope on pieces of wood from shipwrecks and then to combine them into a table of hope for the City of Cape Town, also called the Cape of Good Hope. Walking through the streets of Cape Town with Meike and listening to the narratives being offered as headlines on a piece of wood showed me the multiplicity of the stories of this rainbow nation, where we hold the hope for change and the sometimes overwhelming slow pace of the change in a collective table of hope.

The space that Creatuals create welcomes all of our humanity and all of what we wildly hope for and dream about expressed through creative rituals. What intrigues me about Creatuals is the beautiful enabling practice that invites people back into the primary authorship of their lives through co-constructing rituals to celebrate these important choices and steps. It is so important that we again take back this ancient ritual practice into our lives as a passage that would

transport us in the transitioning, in the making of choices and in the departure from narratives.

Re-authoring work and Creatuals hold hands in the embodiment of our stories through creative rituals. Some of the narratives that we journey with sometimes do not even have the language to hold them. In my work I have always suggested that participants consider rituals to help them experience the transition of a narrative in their body with a community.

Creatuals brings a platform, a bridge between so many worlds, for us to transition, celebrate and grieve the particularities of individual and communal life. It co-creates modern day rituals that can transport us to exotic ways of being beyond the domestications of our lives, beyond the world of speed, into the slow pace of nature that does not frown upon the unfolding in its own time and way.

I dream of a day when we will co-construct creative rituals that celebrate the movement of this planet towards the common good for all as we re-author our world and celebrate it through creative rituals!

‘but most people are disconnected from these ancient practices in a world that values ‘moving on’, success, speed and efficiency.’



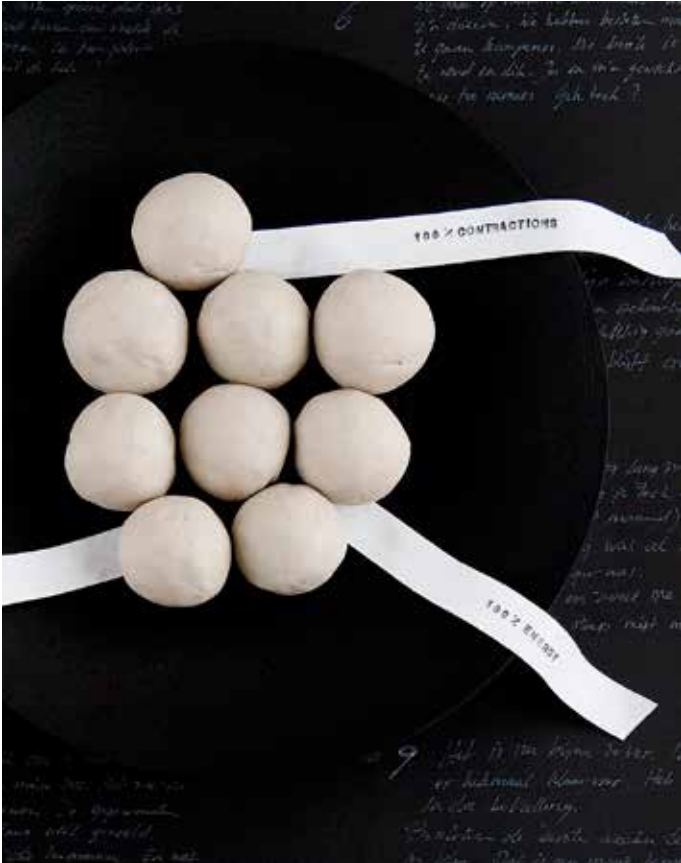
RECIPE BOOK

SIX DO-IT-YOURSELF CREATUALS

Bring creatuals into your own life. Experience the wealth of their meaning as you create them. Use these 'creatual recipes' to merge your aims and wishes, moments of happiness, joy, sadness and pain into unexpected solutions that bring new energy.

Photography: Jeannine Govaers

Styling: Bertien Minnigh



Birth

Contractions transformed into sculptures

OCCASION

Birth (during contractions)

SHARING

Pain transformation, expressing joy

PARTICIPANTS

Husband, baby and you

INGREDIENTS

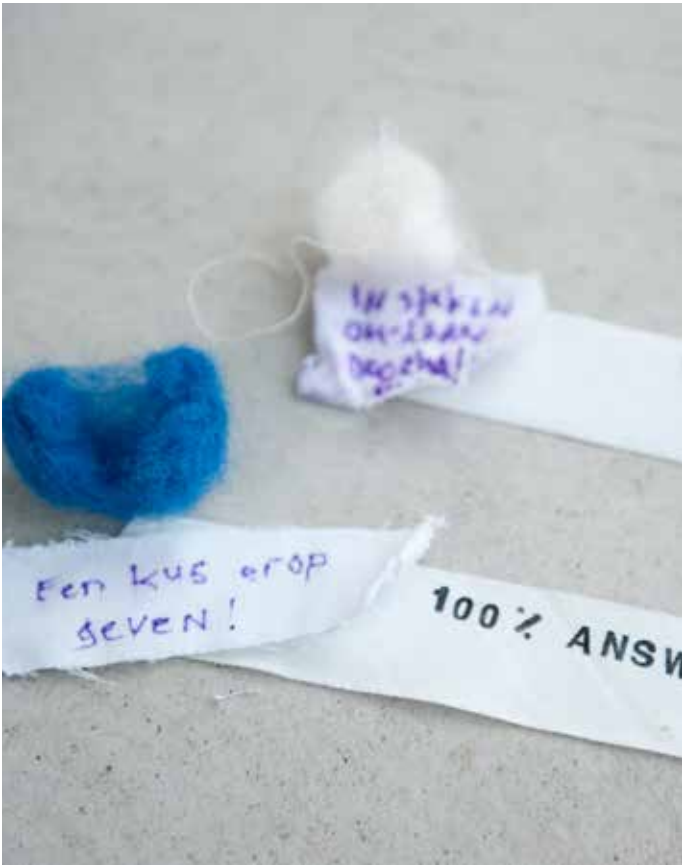
- TWO WOODEN BOBBINS
- WIRE
- A BLOCK OF CLAY
- A DAMP CLOTH
- A DISH

METHOD

Prepare everything one week before your due date. Attach the two ends of the wire to the two bobbins and use this to cut a block of clay into nine equal slices. Knead the clay thoroughly until all the air bubbles are removed. Roll each lump into a ball and place these in a damp cloth on a dish. Put the dish somewhere easily accessible and keep the towel damp.

When the contractions begin and you are sure the birthing process has started, take one of the clay balls from the towel and squeeze your next contraction into it with both hands. Focus on the pain but also experience the excitement and joy. Don't worry about the shape of the clay. It will take on its own form. When the contraction subsides, place the shaped clay in the towel. When the next contraction starts take a new clay ball and form it into whatever shape arises.

A few days after the birth you can refine the shapes a bit more. Leave them to dry for a few weeks. Then take them to a potter to have them fired and possibly glazed.



Message Cocooning

New born rituals

OCCASION

Festival or café

SHARING

Focusing on rituals

PARTICIPANTS

Variable, maximum 150

INGREDIENTS

TWO LARGE, EMPTY
TRANSPARENT JARS
(E.G. FOR BIRD SEED
OR BUBBLE GUM)

WHITE AND BLUE WOOL

A BALL OF STRING

STRIPS OF FABRIC
(AT LEAST TWO PER
PARTICIPANT)

WATERPROOF PENS

A BOWL OF SOAPY
WATER

METHOD

The participants are going to make two different coloured cocoon balls out of felt. They will put a question inside the white cocoon and the answer to that question in the blue one. This is how it works. Ask the participants to think about a typical custom or ritual they perform in their own lives. Then ask them to formulate a question and an answer relating to that ritual.

An example of a question might be: 'What do you do when you see a shooting star?' In this case the answer might be: 'I make a wish.'

For each ritual the question is written on one strip of fabric and the answer on another. The strips are folded up separately and tied in string. The question strip is then wrapped in white wool and the answer strip in blue wool.

As the participants rub each of the balls separately between their hands with soapy water, they create felt cocoons. They put these into the two large transparent jars: all the white cocoons in one jar and all the blue ones in the other.

Every participant who donates a 'pair' of cocoons may pull out another pair and open first the white one and then the blue. The resulting combinations of questions and answers are surprising, intriguing and sometimes hilarious.



Woven Friendship

Carpet of colourful memories

OCCASION
Birthday party
SHARING
Memories

PARTICIPANTS
Variable, maximum 50

INGREDIENTS

- PIECES OF FABRIC OR RIBBONS (TO BE BROUGHT BY PARTICIPANTS)
- LEATHER LABELS (ONE FOR EACH PARTICIPANT)
- PENS
- A WOODEN SPOON WITH A HOLE IN THE HEAD
- THREAD
- A FRAME FOR A PAINTING
- HAMMER AND NAILS

METHOD

Their invitations ask the guests to bring along a ribbon, a piece of thread or a strip of fabric that has a story attached or is of emotional significance. Everyone is invited to choose a moment during the party to attach their ribbon or thread to the wooden spoon and weave it between the threads which have been strung in the frame. Each person writes his or her name on a leather label and attaches this to their thread or fabric.

At the end of the evening a beautifully framed, colourful tapestry of woven friendship will have been created and people will have met and chatted with one another while weaving. The result is an unforgettable evening and a wonderful gift in the form of a lasting memory of friendships from different stages of life.



Pink Milk

Can you catch a dream? Distil emotions?
Or even drink an elixir saturated with
a collective state of mind?

OCCASION

Reflecting on breast cancer

SHARING

Grief and solace

PARTICIPANTS

Variable

INGREDIENTS

- 250ML MILK BOTTLES
(ONE BOTTLE FOR EVERY
3-5 PARTICIPANTS)
- PIÑA COLADA OR MILK
- LABELS FOR THEMATIC
DESCRIPTIONS
- STRIPS OF TRANSPARENT
PAPER (ONE FOR EVERY
PARTICIPANT)
- PINK STICKERS
- BAMBOO CALLIGRAPHY
PENS
- 50 ML CHERRY INK
- ONE SMALL GLASS
OR STRAW FOR EACH
PARTICIPANT

METHOD

Have the group write or print thematic descriptions on the labels and stick them onto the milk bottles. Fill the bottles with piña colada or milk. Hand a strip of transparent paper to each person. Ask them to write a wish, a thought or a word on the strip, using the bamboo calligraphy pen and the cherry ink. Then the participants choose the themed bottle that most resonates with them and dip their strip in it until the ink has dissolved. They may choose several bottles.

Dry the strip which is now blank again and fix it around the participant's wrist using a pink sticker.

After a while, the white substance in the glass bottles will have turned pink. The shade will be darker in some than others. Pour the "wish cocktails" into glasses and offer them to the participants. If you are using milk, you can give the participants straws so they can sip wordshakes from a bottle.



Pearls

Staying connected with the family—in heart and mind

CREATUAL

Pearl ritual

OCCASION

Funeral

SHARING

The memory of a beloved person

PARTICIPANTS

Variable

INGREDIENTS

- A SMALL BOX
- A PENDANT
- A STRING OF PEARLS
- SCISSORS
- A BOWL
- A SMALL BAG

METHOD

This creatual was performed at the funeral of the Creative Alchemist’s 96-year old grandmother. This proud old lady was mother of three, grandmother of five and great-grandmother of nine. Caring, interested and curious by nature, she kept right up to date with everything about her family and friends even though they were dotted all over the country. She kept everyone briefed about everyone else and in that way she held them together. The string of pearls she always wore was the perfect symbol of her role as the family connector.

The speaker at the funeral cuts the necklace the pearls tumble into a large bowl and are handed around to the mourners. The thread and pendant are placed in a decorative little bag which is attached to the coffin to be committed to the earth. Grandmother is symbolized by the thread. The mourners are the pearls.

The mourners can treasure their single pearl and remain connected with each other in a new way, despite the absence of their connecting factor.



Callas

Monument for a dear dog

OCCASION
Spreading the ashes of a beloved pet

SHARING
Grief

PARTICIPANTS
Variable, family members

ORIGIN
The passing away of Callas, the Creative Alchemist's beloved dog of 11,5 years

INGREDIENTS

THE PET'S ASHES
TWELVE PAPER BAGS
A DISH
PLASTER
A MOULD IN THE SHAPE
OF THE ANIMAL
WATER

METHOD

Weigh the ashes. Divide them into twelve equal parts, place each into a separate paper bag and place these on the dish. Every day for 12 days, mix together in a plastic bowl the ashes from one of the bags with three tablespoons of plaster and a little water. Pour the contents of the bowl into a small silicon mould in the shape of the pet. Let the plaster dry for an hour and then remove the mould. On the bottom of the statue, write the date and number of the statue and put it in a safe place to continue drying. The next day, make another mixture of ashes, plaster and water and pour the next dog (or other pet) into the same mould.

Twelve days later you will have a row of twelve little dogs (or other pets). This is a beautiful memento and a work of art that literally contains your pet. Put them on a shelf on the wall or in an elegant glass cabinet. Be careful though, they are fragile!



SPECIAL PROJECTS

ON-GOING CREATUALS

In some cases creatuals take their own form, which exceed a one-time-experience. These special projects can be either intimate and personal, or include many people.

In one case even a global movement has been started about initiating a conversation and listening to each other's hopes and dreams.

The Candle Letter is a kitchen table project, you can do it on your own.

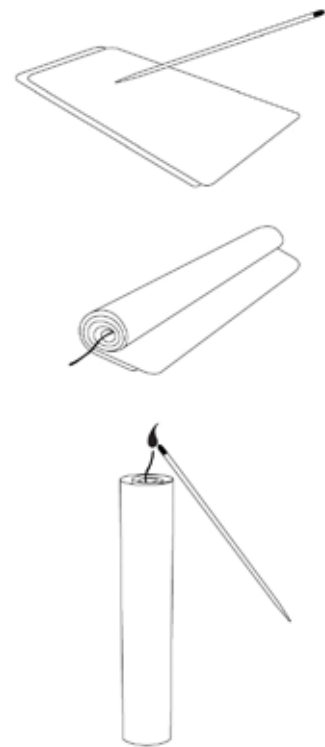
The Art with Heart project allows you to dance to your collective heartbeats, with friends or others. The Table of Hope is a global movement started in Cape Town, aimed at initiating a worldwide conversation about what really connects us.

CANDLE LETTER

A 'kitchen table ritual'

Have you ever felt like writing a letter to express your feelings, but not wanting to send it? Because you love someone or something, have something to celebrate or share, or because you feel angry, jealous or sad... Don't keep your feelings bottled up – write a candle letter!

INSTRUCTIONS



There are things we are proud of, sad or happy about, but we don't say them out loud. Some of these things we want to remember, and some we want to forget. With this candle letter you can share your story with the elements. Your words will merge and melt into light, heat and energy...

STEP 1: WRITE

Using the sharp point of the match, etch your message into the wax sheets. (No need to press hard)

STEP 2: ROLL

Warm the single sheets between your flat hands to make them soft. Take the string and roll the wax sheets on the short side -one by one- around it to create your special candle.

STEP 3: LIGHT

Cut the string 5mm above the top side of the candle. Place the candle on a small plate or candlestick and light it with the tall match. Live the moment!



ART WITH HEART

Let’s dance to our collective heartbeat

The Art with Heart creatual is modern, musical and innovative. It runs like a leitmotif through an event. The crowd at Sagafest in Iceland danced to their own heartbeats which sound designer Jesse Koolhaas had woven into a soundtrack composed specially for the event.

METHOD

The Creatuals team conducts short, “truth chats” with guests at the event about a particular topic which really moves them. They then let these people listen to the sound of their own heartbeat and experience what discussing their topic has done to them. This is a moment for people to stop and reconnect with themselves.

With the interviewees’ permission, the individual heartbeats are recorded and mixed on the spot into a spectacular collective heartbeat soundtrack, composed by Creatual sound designer Jesse Koolhaas from Mystic Brew.

As the grande finale the collective heartbeat track is played together with an improvisational musician. Guests are given a digital copy of the tune as a memento of the gathering at which their sound and energy was captured.

PRACTICAL INFO

OCCASION

Dinners, parties, conferences, festivals

TEAM

- Creative Alchemist
- Moderators
- Sound designer
- Musician
- Project leader

REQUIREMENTS

- A minimum of 75 participants
- Stage with sound equipment

‘SOUNDCLOUD’ TRACKS

PWC Conference ‘Moments that Matter’, November 2014:
<https://soundcloud.com/creatuals/art-with-heart-day-1>

Sagafest IJsland ‘SagaSound’, May 2015:
<https://soundcloud.com/creatuals/saga-fest-soundscape-short>



TABLE OF HOPE

Starting a worldwide dialogue

The first Table of Hope has been created in 2014 in Cape Town during a 3-day creative ritual. This project can be seen as the ultimate metaphor encompassing the idea that we should all sit at the same table, partake of life together and listen to one another. The second table will be created in Ghana, and the third stop is foreseen in Amsterdam. The goal is to create Tables of Hope all over the world with and for people of all countries. Let's share words of hope through the wood of the trees we breath from... and stir up good... and stir up good dialogue worldwide!

WHAT IS IT?

The Table of Hope is a co-created art piece that becomes a moving table for dialogues of hope. It brings topics to the surface and then seals them again, forever. One table, one place at a time, one movement will start to fuel good dialogue worldwide.

It is a real table made from strips of wood glued together and at the same time it serves as a symbolic statement of hope for peace and stability. The table is made up of handwritten hopes, dreams and thoughts of everyday people, notched on each of the strips of wood that form the table.

THE REASON WHY

The meaningful, physical table serves as a conversation starter for the city to open hearts, to touch people and to get to the core of what is alive today based on the past with hope for the future. Thanks to the captured collective thoughts, statements and dreams within the table's wooden heart, it also acts as a monument (shrine) of and for the city to connect around.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The first table, which actually was the kick-off of the Table of Hope movement, has been created in 2014 for and with the people of Cape Town in South Africa. The project was a col-

laboration between Creatuals, twenty-five KaosPilot students (from Denmark and Switzerland) and a group of locals. They traveled in four groups to the North, South, East, West of the city, Khyelitsha, Gugulethu, Companies Garden, and Central Station. At those places they started conversations with willing participants passing by and invited them to write their thoughts, dreams and hopes on old wood from broken floors and sunken ships. From these harvested stories and thoughts a Table of Good Hope was built. Two local carpenters glued the pieces of wood, all filled with words, together into a four meter long tabletop, supported by a steal frame and steel trestles. The stories are hidden and will hold the collective dreams forever sealed in this table.

STARTING A MOVEMENT

One piece of wood from the Capetown table has been taken off to serve as a relay race baton to connect with another city. This way we aim to take over one city at a time to spread the word of dialogue, and to make a statement of human connection before moving on to the next city. By doing this, a movement of worldwide dialogue is created.

NEXT STOP IN GHANA

The next step is a Table of Hope in Ghana for the opening of the Adomie Bridge near Atimpoku. This creative ritual will

take place during a 3-day festival at the two ends of the bridge. The idea is to build the table on the roundabout leading to the bridge. This monument, in the form of two arches will be built by and for the people of Ghana. It will have the theme of 'connecting with the other side' in the broadest sense: the river, the world or your ancestors.

THIRD DESTINATION IS AMSTERDAM

Amsterdam, the Netherlands, is planned as the third destination. Our wish is to build a Table of Hope on the Marine Etablissement. An amazing location where once the VOC ships were built to sail passed the Ivory Coast (Ghana), via the Cape of Good Hope to our East India Colonies.

The table will serve as a monument for the city. It will be built from hopes and questions concerning Europe versus the rest of the world, resulting from discussions at the North, West, East and South of the city, between people of all cultural backgrounds.

The Table of Hope Amsterdam will be in the shape of a cross, based on the St. Andrews cross, which is the symbol of Amsterdam. In this case, from all four ends of the table a piece of wood will be taken and sent into the world, to become a table of its own in another city.

MESSAGE TO THE CAPETOWNIANS

This is about YOU, your community and your city, Cape Town. This Friday you are invited to contribute to a monument for CT. Let's build a table of Hope! Of Good Hope. What will it look like? What stories will it hold?

We invite you to write on old wood from broken floors and sunken ships—that will be crafted to bring together our stories. We have captured inputs and stories through words, thoughts, emotions, images by people from all parts of the city—but we would also like you to add YOUR contribution.

Come and share! And build!

What would YOU want to bring to the Table? Let's stir up a good conversation. Come help create an unforgettable day!

When the work is done and the night has fallen—we will celebrate and 'ship the table off into the Open!'

Our intention is that this co-created art piece becomes a moving table for dialogues of GOOD HOPE.

Bring your self, your friends. And your elders.





#TABLE OF HOPE

A co-created art piece that becomes a moving table for dialogues of good hope. It brings topics to the surface and then seals them again forever. One table, one place at a time, one movement will start to stir up good dialogue worldwide.

THE TABLE OF HOPE is a project started in 2014 by Creatuals for the people of Cape Town in South Africa. It is a real table made from strips of wood glued together and at the same time it serves as a symbolic statement of hope for peace and stability. Consider it a metaphor encompassing the idea that we should all sit at the same table, partake of life together and listen to one another.

The table is made up of handwritten hopes, dreams and thoughts of everyday people of Cape Town, notched on each of the strips of wood that form the table.

WORLD / 2017-18-19





CREA TUAL S

COMPANY INFORMATION

CREATUALS — THE COMPANY

The company Creatuals was founded in 2010 by Meike Ziegler, designer and Creative Alchemist. Creatuals are innovative, original concepts to mark special moments. They can work at any stage of life, offering a ‘mind twist’ and creating a bond. Creatuals appeal to feelings and intuition. In the corporate world creatuals are used to launch new products or for events—openings, symposia, anniversary celebrations. Creatuals also runs group projects both in the Netherlands and abroad.

Come in and discover creatuals. Be baffled and amazed. Creatuals are modern, creative rituals for a personal or a corporate setting. Though the ingredients are familiar, their mix is inventive and surprising. And you (and your team) are the most important ingredient of all: you and your memories, your emotions, your passions and your aversions.

CREATUALS — COMPANY MISSION

There is an increasing need nowadays to lend extra value to special events, moments and celebrations. Meaningful rituals are few and far between in modern society and increasingly secular in nature. The notion of transience is however no less powerfully present. Creatuals provide a contemporary outlet for our urge to add meaning and value to our lives. They are designed to transform a special occasion into a memorable and meaningful experience and enable you to record that moment in a tangible memory, a work of art created in a collective process. Each creatual permeates to the core and connects people. Creatuals break patterns and move minds.

CV MEIKE ZIEGLER

Born in 1969 (London), Meike studied Art History and Italian in 1989/1990 at the Universita per Stranieri in Florence. This was followed by studies in Graphic Design from 1990 to 1995 at the HKU, School for the Arts in Utrecht. Additional studies included Media Production at the London College of Communication.

From 1992—2002 Meike worked for design and multi-media companies in Amsterdam, London, Barcelona and New York. In New York she led design teams at USweb/CKS and at MarchFIRST, co-ordinating projects together with Harley Davidson, Audi USA and Estée Lauder, developing, amongst other things, a creative method for analytical brainstorming sessions with clients.

Since 2002, Meike has had her own design studio in Amsterdam. She creates concepts and (mind twist) products, designs identities and multimedia, she sculpts, runs workshops, brainstorming sessions and generally provides creative inspiration in a number of areas. In 2009 Meike drafted her “New Wonderland” concept for a creative meeting place www.nieuwwonderland.nl, launching it to her audience on the Prinsengracht in Amsterdam in collaboration with Matte and DUS-Architects.

In 2010 she changed her focus and developed a new product line called Creatuals. Today she successfully runs a Creatual Lab in Amsterdam and Berlin, where she concentrates on the design of Creatuals: tailor-made, original, modern rituals brimming with communal creativity. Meike brings different worlds together: people, situations, locations and objects. She listens, feels and creates both intuitively and interactively. In Creatuals, Meike’s profession, passions and interests merge together and fall into place. She calls herself the ‘Creative Alchemist’.

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

Creatuals develops customised creatuals for special events in personal as well as professional contexts. Creatuals gives made-to-measure lectures at home and abroad describing the essence of the creative ritual. The ‘Creatuals Lab’ is available to rent for meetings, brainstorming sessions and inspirational gatherings. Workshops are conducted to help you develop your own ‘creative ritual’.

CUSTOMISED WORKSHOPS

There are three themed workshops:
Experience, Create and ‘Break Patterns.’

1. MARK THE MOMENT Lend new meaning to your experience.

Birth, growth, change, bond, departure. Periods and moments we all encounter in our lives. Moments to mark and acknowledge.

This workshop helps you turn a ‘moment’ into a ‘monument’. See shifts and changes to the meaning of the here, as we live a creatual together and take away with us the wonder of a lasting memory.

2. CREATE A CREATUAL Design Creatuals to mark special moments.

Wetting the baby’s head, launching a ship with champagne—great tried and tested traditions. But it’s time for something new. Creatuals offer old traditions in a new guise. They are original and innovative, they get to the heart of what moves you and those around you.

This workshop helps you to design your own Creatuals. As you work with others and their own particular life issues, a whole series of creatuals will develop for you to take with you on your journey into the future.

3. BREAK WITH IT ... Unwrap and re-package. Use creatuals to know yourself and grow yourself.

You feel blocked at many a turn. Sound familiar? Then it’s time for a different outlook, for new ideas, new meaning, a new bond or new energy. Creatuals offer a powerful way of breaking the patterns of life and work, allowing new and positive meaning to flow.

The creatuals in this workshop will mess with your mind, tidy it up again and give you a new take on yourself, your values and your motives. Take home new energy and ideas for your personal growth.

Creatuals offers these and other tailor-made workshops at the Creatuals studios or on location.

PROJECTS & CLIENTS

PROJECTS / 2010—2016

2014—2016

FRAME OPENING
Pinacothek Munich /
Opening of Frans Hals Room

MINDSCAPE MEETS LANDSCAPE
Arita Baajens / New Guinea Expedition

SPIES LINE
Amsterdam Museum /
Director’s Farewell

NICE & COOL Nice Fruit Ice Cream
Amsterdam / Anniversary Product Gift

GOLD FINGERPRINT
Police Department Limburg NL /
Police Chief Team Day

SOUL PAD
Witte de With, Centre for Contemporary
Art, Rotterdam / Land Art Excursion

LIME-ONCELLO
On-Lime / Anniversary Product Gift

HOOKED FOR LIFE
Asch van Wijck / Wedding

ART WITH HEART
Saga Fest, Ice Land / Festival

100% QUALITY
Access to Quality (A2Q) /
Symposium, Compagnie Theater

SOUL UP
Vrumona marketing (Heineken) /
Team Building Journey

STOP/GO
Marine Institute / Gateway Opening

MOMENTS THAT MATTER
PWC / Symposium

OP GROND VAN OOI
T College Park Ezinge /
Opening New School Building

MOOD LAB
Maak het Mee / ‘Change’ Event

MIND THE GAP
KPMG-RC Summer School / Workshop

WOOLWORKS
TELE 2 / Team Building Journey

TABLE OF HOPE
Cape Town SA / Social Design

SMART BULB
Westergasfabriek Smart Park / Event

SYNTENS CITY
Syntens / Company Farewell

MIDWINTER TAPESTRY
Municipality Almere / Midwinter Event

2010—2013

BEAD THE FUTURE
Creative Industry (Syntens) / Goodbye

DUTCH WITH A GLOBAL TOUCH
Eversheds Amsterdam /
Opening New Location

CHALK TALK
The Old Church, Amsterdam /
Museum Exhibit

VALUABLE COMPOST
PKF Wallast / Autumn Event

SOYSAFAI
Ellen (Cancer Patient) /
Birthday Celebration

ART WITH HEART
Branding a Better World /
Company Event

GOLDEN CIRCLE JOURNEY
Arita Baajens /
Altai Mountain Expedition

HUILE DE MARIAGE
Amber & Björn / Wedding

ROOT SOUP
Kijkruimte Foundation / Farewell Event

CARPET BAND
Museum Speelklok / Exhibition Opening

INTO THE VOID
De Veer Foundation / Symposium

HIGH LIGHT
Essent / Opening Power Plant

HATCHING HAPPINESS
Dechesne & Boertje / Client Event /
Award: ‘Golden Giraffe’ Live Communi-
cation Award 2013 (Category ‘Creative’)

RING OF TONES
Radio Kootwijk / Opening

FAMILY SPINE
Van Seumeren /
Silver Wedding Anniversary

BRAIN LAB Achmea / Conference

AMSTERDAM DNA
Amsterdam Museum /
Exhibition Opening

RECYCLING CREATIVITY
Kunst Liefde / Gallery Opening

WINGNUT
Municipality Amsterdam Noord /
Tree-cutting Event

LOGO LAB
Amsterdam Museum / Identity Launch

GOLDEN GLOVES
Department of Social Development,
Amsterdam

PINK MILK
Pink Ribbon / Charity Event

WORKSHOPS

KaosPilot School /
Creative Leadership Program, Arhus DK

PUC University, Rio de Janeiro

Heineken / &Samhoud, Utrecht

Humanist Alliance /
Beeld&Geluid, Hilversum

Ons Plek / Girls Orphanage,
Cape Town

Dialysis Unit, Groningen

ABN AMRO / Crisis Management
Department, Amsterdam

I&M / Information & Management
Course, Amsterdam

LECTURES

Picnic Festival / Eye. Amsterdam

KaosPilot School / Creative Leadership
Program Arhus, Denmark

Puci University / Rio de Janeiro

Great Industrial Club / Amsterdam

Templo / Co-Workspaces, Rio de Janeiro

THNK School of Creative leadership
and Innovation / Amsterdam

Berlin School of Creative Leadership /
Berlin

Lava Studios / Amsterdam

TABLE OF HOPE PROJECT

TABLE OF HOPE [I]
Cape Town, South Africa

2014—2015

TABLE OF HOPE [I]
Atimpocu, Ghana 2016

TABLE OF HOPE [II]
Amsterdam, Netherlands 2016

KITCHEN TABLE PRODUCTS

Candle Letter

Water Diary

Breath Wish

Broodschap/Bread Letter

LATEST PROJECTS (2015—2016)

Clockwise > I'll know when I'm **done**, I can **almost** feel it now / Being in **flux**, I found my **home** / Standing solidly **grounded**, my hands are **open** / The ship is unmoored and **moving**, the harbour of **belonging** calls out / Giving myself the gift of **gratitude** / Carried by the **un known**, I taste the **now** in my breath / Will it hold or crumble, I'm **not sure yet** / **Transition** is afoot / Pacing **back and forth**, facing **forwards** / Got my toes wet in the **ocean**, will leave my footprints on **land** / My feet know the way, my eyes are focussed on the **horizon** / I am **connected** and **strength** is coming through the wire / Every traveler is in me when I think of **home** / **Halfway** on the journey, I carry everything I need for **independence** / Today is a **new beginning**, the **horizon** broadens as I approach / **Comfortably in the middle**, but reaching out for a **bit more** / When everything is **coming together**, I feel the **earth** move under my feet / Nothing fazes me, I am walking in **balance** / In **transition**, looking for the right **spot** to arrive at.



Soul Pad 13.11/15

WITTE DE WITH
CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
ROTTERDAM

LAND-ART EXCURSION

TODAY LET'S TAKE A WALK ON THE 'SOUL PAD'

let your toes trace the outline of a broken circle
travel through nature and absorb it all
stand firmly on the ground, then let the earth carry you on

climb on top of the stone soul of history
let the woods feed your feet with their impressions
then let the earth turn you around the next corner

see how you shape the land and the land shapes you
feel your souls touch ground and lift off again

CREATUALS.COM / BREAKING PATTERNS. MOVING MINDS.

CREA
TUAL
S



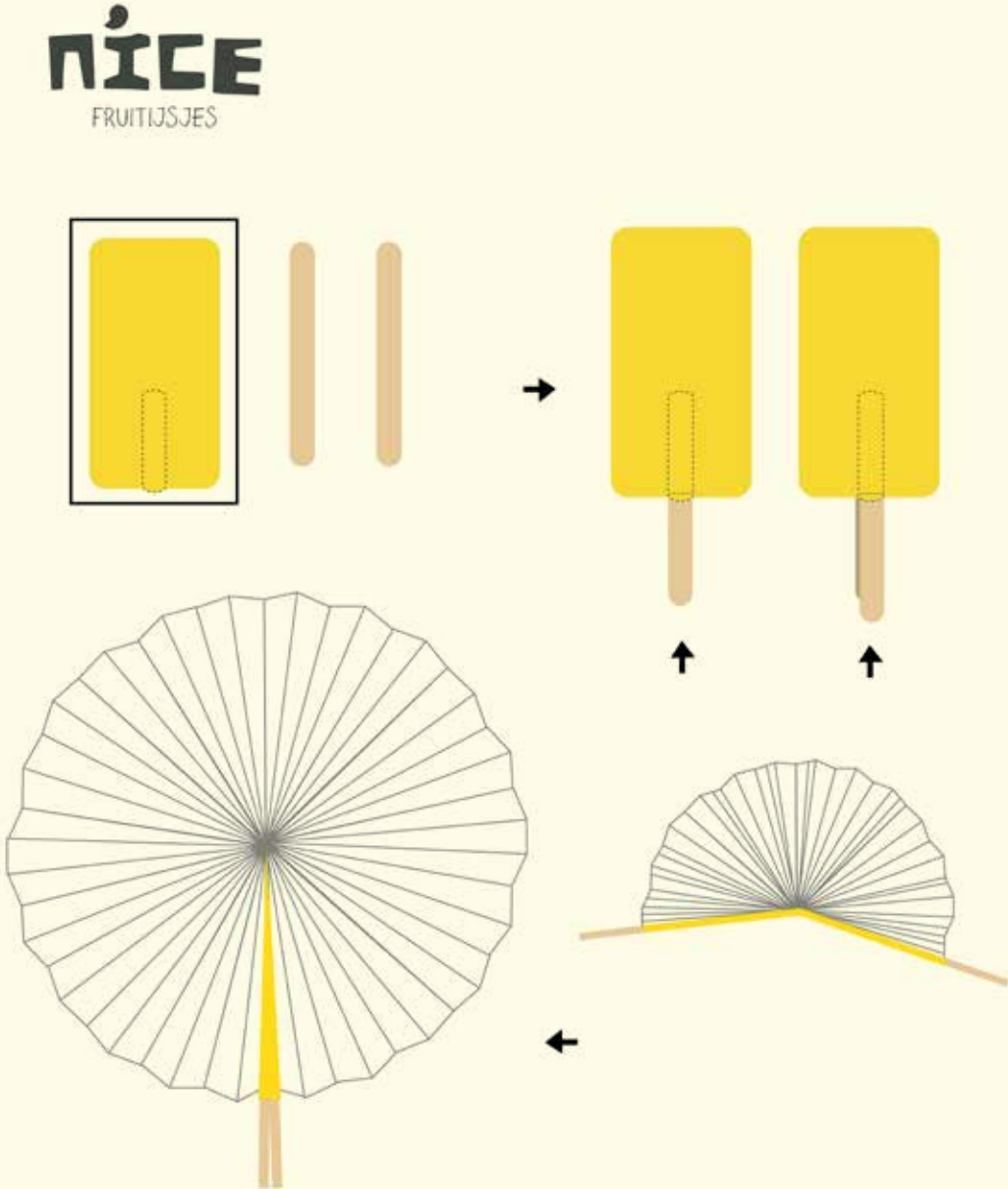
Gold Fingerprint

14.12/15

POLICE CHEFS
COLLECTIVE FINGERPRINT
POLICE CORPS LIMBURG /NL
TEAM MEETING

CREATUALS.COM / BREAKING PATTERNS. MOVING MINDS.

CREA
TUAL
S



Nice&Cool

Spring 2016

NICE Fruitijsjes
CAMPAIGN 'THANK YOU FOR BEING NICE'
CLIENT GIFT

CREATUALS.COM / BREAKING PATTERNS. MOVING MINDS.

CREA
TUAL
S

SOURCES

Giorgio Agamben, *The Sacrament of Language*

An Archaeology of the Oath
(Stanford University Press, 2008)

Arita Baaijens, *Zoektocht naar het paradijs*

(Atlas Contact, 2015)

Alain de Botton, *Religion for Atheists*

A non believer's guide to the uses of religion
(Penguin, 2012)

Peter Bregman, *18 Minutes*

Find Your Focus, Master Distraction,
(Business Plus, 2012)

Noel Burch, *Four Stages for Learning Any New Skill*,

Gordon Training International

Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*

(Anchor, 1991)

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

(AK Press, 2005)

Sally Falk Moore, Barbara Myerhoff, *Secular Ritual*

(Van Gorcum Ltd, 1977)

Francesca Gino, Michael I. Norton, *Why Rituals Work*,

(The Scientific American, May 14, 2013)

Ger Groot, *Wel goed maar niet God*

(Trouw, August 30, 2014)

Paolo Guenzi, *How Ritual Delivers Performance*

(Harvard Business Review, February 25, 2013)

Donna Henes, *Why We Need Rituals in Our Lives*

(The Huffington Post July 17, 2013)

Jesse Jacobs, *Why Rituals Matter*

(Huffington Post, October 10, 2011)

Anne Lamott, *Stitches: A Handbook on Meaning, Hope and Repair* (Riverhead Books, 2013)

Rollin McCraty, Ph.D., *The Energetic Heart:*

Bio Electromagnetic Interactions Within and Between
People (Scientific Monograph)

John Naisbitt, Nana Naisbitt, Douglas Philips, *High Tech,*

High Touch: Technology and Our Search for Meaning
(Broadway, 1999)

Maria Popova, *The Difference Between Routine and Ritual*,
www.brainpickings.org

W.W.J. Rittel & M.M. Webber, *Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning* (Policy Sciences, Elsevier, 1973)

Sir Ken Robinson, *Out of Our Minds*

(Outskirts Press, 2011)