

tion was at the time of the birth of a child; the death of a miner; the discovery of a new vein of mineral or the exhaustion of another. The marks on the wall produced a surrealist picture, overlapping the timeline of the lives of the miners and a geological timeline depicted by the different strata evident of the gallery. Are these two timelines only connected by purely economic relations?

My own event inside the galley happened years ago, yet it was only until recently that I started to ask this question. The fossil beds in the mine are telling not only of its geological history but also of many different scales and manifestations of the carbon cycle, some of them, the byproduct of metabolic process of carbon-based entities. For all its discursive and physical variations, I find carbon difficult to place: It serves as a metaphor but to use it as such brings about “real-life” consequences and connections that are directly connected to our experiences as human beings.

Care

I'm submitting this as me, Mia van den Bos. But when I use 'we' I am speaking from my perspective of being part of the All about my Mother study group, which was: Saskia Burggraaf, Dayna Casey, Emma de Filippo, Litchi Friedrich, Jiatu Gu, Csilla Klenyanszki, Flávia Palladino, Anakin Xersonsky, Sepake Angiama and Nina bell F. (in this instance Staci Bu Shea, Binna Choi, and Yolande Zola Zoli van der Heide). Guest tutors included Mari Pitkänen, Georgia Lucas-Going, Clare Butcher, Ying Que, Annette Krauss, Aziza Harmel, Elyes Lariani, with contributions by Anastasia

McCammon and Pitchaya Ngamcharoen.



'To practice a politics of dedication and recognise an indebtedness to the other as the condition of your own ability to perform means to acknowledge the importance of care. You perform because you care for someone or some- thing. This care gives you the strength to act, not least because to not act is out of the question when someone or something you really care for or about requires that you should act. In conversation Annika Eriksson summed this point up by describing the experience that, as a mother, (when your child is in need of you) "there is no no." This unconditional demand forces you to realise that you can even if you thought you couldn't. By definition, then, the I Care implies the potential of an unconditional I Can. The decisive difference between this mode of unconditional potentiality and the illusion of inexhaustible potency, however, lies in the fact that the experience of unconditional care is one that comes to us both from and through the other.'

- Jan Verwoert

Over the last year I was part of Casco's study group 'All about my Mother' at the Dutch Art Institute, in which we rethought the art institution through matriarchal practices of care and commoning, through the use of unbridled cooking metaphors. We instituted care into our working

processes; we took regular check-ins, breaks for movement and breath, we communicated our needs to step back so others could step up, we laughed together and focused on the integrity of our process over the outcome. As a person who has often found group-work overwhelming, these seemingly small habits and attitudinal recalibration shifted that for me. I found that any stress or conflict that did arise suddenly had space to be within the structure we had built and collectively held, and instead of a road-block, it became another factor moving us forward, together. In the quote above, Verwoert differentiates between the 'winning' productive capacities demanded of the individual within capitalism, with the inner resources that are uncovered through a relation of care. Both conditions demand something of us, but only in the latter do we feel compelled to act due to something greater than ourselves, our commitment to each other and what we are building together.

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When the pandemic first hit the Netherlands, we were in the picturesque blue and white seaside town of Sidi Bou Said, in northern Tunisia. We had set off on the two-week study trip on the fourth of March, each holding different levels of anxiety about the risks of our travel and excitement to be together once again. Things changed quickly. By the end of the first week of our trip, Italy had quarantined in its Northern regions, and students and tutors began to leave. On the first day of our second week, March 11, which was the first day of our All About My Mother study group meeting, the World Health Organisation declared a pandemic. Our tutors Y and S checked in with us, how is everyone feeling? What should we do? Panic swirled at the collective dining hall,

flights being cancelled, and the fear of borders closing. But once we were there, in our small group in the sun room of El Palazzino, we gathered ourselves and decided to continue. I visualise care as space, an expansive space that can hold everything and everyone. A home where all emotions and experiences are accepted and held collectively. Care does not mean that everything is okay or acceptable all the time, but that issues are dealt with and taken responsibility for together. That no one is alone. Care, in that moment, looked like making a decision together. With the gift of hindsight maybe we should have left, but I feel confident that if the majority of our group felt uneasy about remaining, we would have used our time to plan an early departure. Over the next few days as other study groups fell apart, we brought others into our activities who had to remain but had nowhere to go. We introduced ourselves to the group as our mothers, telling their stories with our voice. We helped to the chef E. to cook dinner while reading 'Toward a Black Feminist Poethics' by Denise Ferreira da Silva. On our last day we gathered on the blue-tiled bottom of the empty pool at the Sidi Bou Said Hotel, as if laying in the giant belly of a whale. We had been eaten, but we were together, and I think that's what care feels like.