

What is the (Art)Work of Care?

Close-Reading the Artistic Labour of Institutional Transformation in the Work of Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard

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Caroline Woolard and Marina Naprushkina are praxis-oriented artists whose (art)works are often categorised as socially engaged art. Both collaborate with and establish institutions as part of their artistic practices. In this article, we situate their approaches within the broader context of collaborative dynamics between academic institutions and artistic practices and reflect on our own practical experiences of collaborating with these artists. In doing so, we address how collaborative practices are reshaping conceptions of artistic labour, (art)work, and institutional forms. Drawing on work conducted with both artists in the framework of two academic projects—the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) *Intervening Arts* and *The Future of European Independent Art Spaces in a Time of Socially Engaged Art* (FEIN-ART)—this article examines different artistic modes of care-informed organising and their implications for labour practices within institutional contexts.

Keywords: Care, institutional critique, para-institution, socially engaged art, collaboration, institutional possibility.

Blank, blank white walls were all of a sudden filled with colorful circles revealing the life behind the institutional context: gardening and other personal stories. Strange but appealing juxtaposition of the worlds.¹

People started to move around the space—exploring distances between each other and between the objects that confined the imaginary ‘stage.’ The room became filled with smiles and abrupt giggles. It was visible that trust was slowly building between those who most probably hadn’t met or interacted with each other before. They were now coming closer, leaning towards each other, entrusting each other while playfully assembling choreographic forms together. They were having each other’s backs.²

In the past two decades, artistic practice has, in many contexts, evolved in a direction that art historian Verónica Tello characterises as a “fourth wave” of institutional critique.³ As described by art theorist Gerald Raunig, the first wave, in the 1970s, involved artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, and Hans Haacke critiquing institutions from a position of distance.⁴ In the late 1980s and 1990s, in what is now termed the second wave, artists like Andrea Fraser implicated themselves in relation to institutions—“we are the institution”⁵—while still maintaining a distanced and deconstructive approach. The third wave, emerging in the early 2000s, emphasised engagement and intervention, combining critical disruption with intensified self-reflection. The fourth wave marked a politically driven refocusing: artists no longer critiqued mainstream art institutions directly but instead worked with and through social movements to pose critique.

- 1 Notes taken by Lena Pozdnyakova during the workshop “Institutional Possibility: Protocols for Caring Institutions” led by Caroline Woolard, April 28, 2023, part of the Collaborative Research Center’s programme.
- 2 Notes taken by Lena Pozdnyakova after “Marina Naprushkina and the Neue Nachbarschaft,” December 7, 2022, part of the Collaborative Research Center’s programme.
- 3 Verónica Tello, “What Is Contemporary about Institutional Critique? Or, Instituting the Contemporary: A Study of The Silent University,” *Third Text* 34, no. 6 (2020): 636, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2020.1841409>.
- 4 Gerald Raunig, “Instituent Practice: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming,” in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, ed. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (MayFly, 2009), 3–12.
- 5 Andrea Fraser, “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,” *Artforum International* 44, no. 1 (2005): 283.

This shift includes an increasing focus on socially engaged art, which directs attention away from major art institutions toward transversal and extra-disciplinary practices.⁶ As Tello argues, referring to a statement from artist Tania Bruguera, this moment marks a shift from the aesthetic to the ethical in art.⁷ It also involves the artist-led creation of socially engaged institutions that address or directly intervene in contemporary socio-political concerns.

This evolvement aligns with broader democratic and participatory values in cultural policy within the European and North American contexts. Particularly since the mid-1990s, this development has been described by art theorist Anthony Gardner as the “aesthetic of democratization” in art.⁸ This approach supports the ongoing rise in artistic practices emphasising inclusivity, process-based inquiry, and (often radical) gestures that challenge traditional boundaries of art and knowledge. As part of this shift, institutions are reimagined not merely as sites for display but as “platforms and social spaces, as living archives, as co-learning environments,”⁹ facilitating dialogue and collective engagement in ways that disrupt unilinear, hierarchical knowledge models.

In art-historical discourse variously referred to as para-institutions (Lütticken), mock institutes (Sholette), or pata-institutes (Szreder),¹⁰ these artistic practices and organisational forms not only critique existing

- 6 Tello references the art theorist Gerald Raunig in this context: Tello, “What Is Contemporary about Institutional Critique?,” 636.
- 7 Tello, “What Is Contemporary about Institutional Critique?,” 636. Another important reference for this argument is the work of art historian Claire Bishop. Since the early 2000s, Bishop’s research on participation in contemporary art has focused on art’s antagonistic stance toward an existing reality. For an overview of Bishop’s theoretical argument and research on participatory artistic practices, see Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (Verso Books, 2012).
- 8 Anthony Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art against Democracy* (MIT Press, 2015), 10.
- 9 Vera Hofmann, Johannes Euler, Linus Zurmühlen, and Silke Helfrich, *Commoning Art – Die transformativen Potenziale von Commons in der Kunst* (transcript Verlag, 2022), 23. [Quote translated by the authors.]
- 10 Sven Lütticken, “Social Media: Practices of (In)Visibility in Contemporary Art,” *Afterall* 40 (2015): 4–19, <https://doi.org/10.1086/684212>; Gregory Sholette, “Five Glossary Definitions from The Art & Social Justice Working Group,” *Vera List Center for Art and Politics*, n.d., accessed December 15, 2024, https://www.gregorysholette.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Sholette_Devilish-Definitions.pdf; Kuba Szreder, “Patainstitutional Research: On Thought Sustaining Environments,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, Special Patainstitutional online issue (2021), <https://joaap.org/patainstitutional/kuba.htm>.

institutions but also prefigure new institutional roles by enacting a change in the kind of labour understood to be artistic and the forms of collaboration considered integral to socially engaged practice. This, in turn, poses a challenge to the discipline of art history: historically developed with the methodological tools of material analysis, visual study, and contextualisation, artistic practices that complicate not only the *what* of art but also its *when* blur conventional distinctions of artist-artwork-audience and artwork in institutions.¹¹ Instead, as artworks take on instituting roles, and artists work with others as a mode of practice, it becomes necessary to borrow approaches from anthropology and sociology, amongst related fields, in order to engage with the artist as an embedded collaborator with a range of working responsibilities within a project.¹² Grant Kester, a theorist who is a key proponent of an expanded approach to socially engaged art, argues for a cross-disciplinary perspective that moves beyond the traditional boundaries of art history by integrating methods from anthropology, sociology, and ethnography. He proposes a “pragmatic analysis”¹³ to better understand the relationship between performative practices and the social sphere. This approach is particularly well suited to the transdisciplinary nature of socially engaged art, where the value of the work often lies not in aesthetic autonomy, but in its embeddedness within specific communities, contexts, and lived experiences.

From the perspective of cultural analysis, we observe an increasing tendency towards collaboration between the arts and academia, often manifesting in interdisciplinary projects that seek to address shared societal concerns. These alliances aim not only to confront pressing issues but also to explore and challenge the boundaries between their respective fields. Central to this endeavour is the potential to harness the specific strengths and epistemologies of each domain—artistic as well as academic—to generate new forms of knowledge, modes of expression, and critical reflection. Such

11 The art historical discipline’s claim to objectivity is critiqued by Donald Preziosi in much of his work. See, for instance, Donald Preziosi, *The Art of Art History* (Oxford University Press, 1998). Claire Bishop calls for different methodologies to analyse participatory art. See Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 7.

12 Sophie Mak-Schram, “Pedagogies of the Art-Proximate” (PhD diss., Zeppelin University, 2024): 37–38.

13 Grant Kester, “Editorial Introduction,” *FIELD: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism* 1 (2015), <https://field-journal.com/issue-1/kester/>.

synergies hope to offer possibilities for mutual enrichment, enabling both artists and researchers to engage with alternative perspectives that inform and transform their own practices. These concurrent impulses require close reading in order to reflect on how they shift the potential and positionality of institutional imagining, prefiguration, and critique. Given that these impulses are rooted in the positionalities of both artists and the institutions who engage or commission them, they can only be meaningfully studied from an embedded position. Maintaining a neutral art-historical distance is not possible when close-reading practices that prioritise relationality and collaboration over object making or singularly authored interventions.

Drawing on two presentations from the conference *Art–Labour Relationships in Contemporary Art*, organised by the Vilnius Academy of Arts and the Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius in May 2024, this article builds upon our collaborations with artists Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard, undertaken within the frameworks of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) *Intervening Arts* in Berlin and *The Future of European Independent Art Spaces in a Time of Socially Engaged Art* (FEINART).

The first collaboration that will be analysed took place in April 2023, when three of the contributors, in their roles as PhD researchers at the CRC, organised a workshop led by Woolard. The workshop was built around the question of how to bring about major structural change within the CRC as an institution. Participants documented concrete structural conditions and issues and drew on their personal and professional skills to address existing problems within the institution.

The second collaboration analysed in this article involved working with artist Marina Naprushkina in December 2022 and ongoing conversations as part of a project in August and September 2024. The December event was part of a series co-organised by two of the contributors, who invited CRC members and the broader public to explore Marina Naprushkina's practice through the lens of *Neue Nachbarschaft / Moabit (NNM)*. Naprushkina's workshop included a presentation, craft-making and storytelling, the reading of a political manifesto, and a participatory movement session. The subsequent collaboration involved the exhibiting of

NNM—alongside two related projects—as part of *Blueprints for Studies*, a year-long exhibition and learning site co-organised by one of the contributors in relation to their FEINART research.¹⁴

Woolard and Naprushkina are both recognised for their praxis-oriented art practices, which employ diverse means, methods, and artistic strategies to foster innovative approaches to collaboration and collective work. Operating in distinct local contexts—Woolard in New York City and Naprushkina in Berlin¹⁵—their work responds to the specific needs and conditions of these environments, aiming to establish, preserve, or transform local structures towards greater community or collaboration. Through practices that emphasise process and refuse to separate care work, management, or organising strategies from the artwork and its making, Naprushkina's and Woolard's (art)works inflect and affect those they collaborate with, including academic and institutional partners. Both the CRC and FEINART invited these artists to work collaboratively within their academic institutional contexts in order to address possibilities for structural and social change within their institutions through creative and experimental means.

In this article, we argue that Naprushkina and Woolard each operate in specific ways within and in response to existing art and educational institutions, and that their practices challenge conventional distinctions between the roles of artist, organiser, facilitator, or caregiver. We situate their approaches in the broader context of socially engaged art, as well as within the field of collaborative dynamics between academic institutions and artistic practices. In doing so, we aim to reflect on our own practical experiences of working with these artists in relation to how artistic labour is conceived, and how it is renegotiated in collaborative practices. Focusing primarily on two moments of collaboration with the CRC, as well as insights drawn from our collaboration with FEINART, we critically explore these artistic practices and the questions they raise about labour, organisational structures, and the role of academic institutional spaces in facilitating collaborative projects and public engagement.

14 Zeppelin University, exhibition co-curated by Rahel Spöhrer and Sophie Mak-Schram, *Blueprints for Studies: Archive*, March 18–December 1, 2024, <https://www.zeppelin-university.com/university/artsprogram/blueprints-for-studies.php>.

15 Woolard was based in Berlin from 2020–2022, including during the time of the workshop with the CRC.

Central to our inquiry is the role of the artist within a broader constellation of academic and artistic research—an issue intricately woven into both our research questions and our cultural-analytical methodological approaches. This leads to the convergence of multiple positionalities within such formats, including participants with personal experience, audiences, communities, and institutions, as well as artists acting as organisers, facilitators or caregivers. These roles extend beyond traditional artistic boundaries, inviting artists to engage with communities in ways that foster co-learning and mutual influence. Through such collaborations, the arts become not only reflective but also transformative, prompting academic institutions to reconceive knowledge as a collective, experimental process embedded in both historical and contemporary social contexts.

In this article, we bring together perspectives from cultural anthropology, art history, and artistic practices. The close readings of the collaborations are informed by collaborative ethnography, combining modes of participant observation with interviews conducted with the artists and participants. The theoretical and historical framework in which we situate both artists' practices of (care) work is shaped by art historical discourses of institutional critique and social practice. The term *work* in this article refers either to artworks or to the specific actions undertaken by the artists discussed. We use *artwork*, rather than *art piece* or simply *art*, to highlight this integration of working and artwork in both Naprushkina's and Woolard's practices. *Labour*, meanwhile, refers to forms of collective work or structural engagements with the socio-political conditions of working for survival. While closely linked to *work*, we consider *labour* here as a meta-level of analysis, connected to concepts of affective labour and related concerns.

The artist as an instigator of critical change? Caroline Woolard as a facilitator

Initial considerations of artistic strategies for institutional change and a conversation with artist Caroline Woolard led to the idea of grounding the workshop *Institutional Possibility: Protocols for Caring Institutions* organised in 2023 in the concrete practices of researchers working within



1. Key question by Woolard, “How would you make a major structural change to your institution?,” workshop “Institutional Possibility: Protocols for Caring Institutions,” photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, April 28, 2023

Pagrindinis Woolard klausimas: „Kaip atliktumei esminį struktūrinį pokytį savo institucijoje?“, dirbtuvės „Institucinė galimybė: protokolai rūpestingoms institucijoms“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2023 m. balandžio 28 d.



2. Notes from the “building” and “resisting” task, workshop “Institutional Possibility: Protocols for Caring Institutions,” photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, April 28, 2023

„Kūrimo“ ir „pasipriešinimo“ užduoties užrašai, dirbtuvės „Institucinė galimybė: protokolai rūpestingoms institucijoms“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2023 m. balandžio 28 d.

the *CRC Intervening Arts*, the institution with which three of the contributors are affiliated. Drawing on the research of Janette Helm—one of the authors of this article—who examines collaborative practices between the arts and the humanities from an embedded and reflexive perspective, the initiative sought to critically engage with the structural conditions of the CRC, its relationship to various publics, and the potential for institutional transformation within this specific context. Ahead of the workshop, an anonymous questionnaire was sent to all CRC members, asking them to identify desired changes within their institutional context. More than

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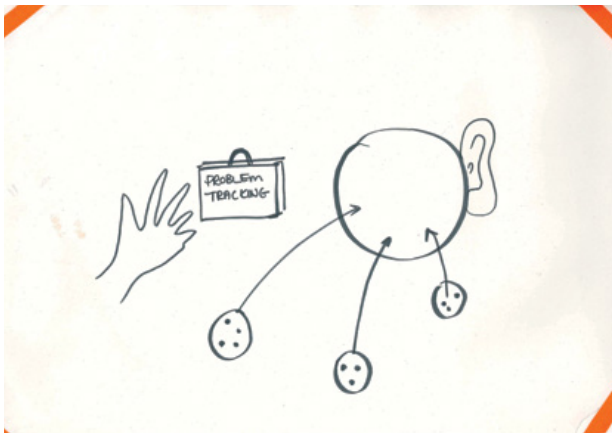
twenty colleagues from various professional roles attended the workshop, engaging in an open discussion and collaborative process centred on a key question posed by Woolard: how can one effect major structural change within an institution like the CRC? [Fig. 1]

To begin addressing Woolard's question, participants were first invited to document their personal "building" and "resisting" skills. [Fig. 2] They were asked to note experiences and skills that helped them resist oppressive systems and those that had supported community-building, both personally and professionally. Participants then shared these skills and experiences first in pairs, and subsequently in groups of four. In the discussion that followed, these groups mapped concrete challenges and structural opacities within the CRC and connected them to the personal building and resisting skills. [Figs. 3, 4] When Woolard gathered everyone at the end of the workshop to ask what would be needed to continue working toward institutional transformation, several social and political concerns as well as specific structural issues of the CRC were discussed and documented. Woolard's approach fostered an atmosphere of vulnerability and trust among participants, challenging the habitual ways of collaboration and interaction with colleagues within the CRC.

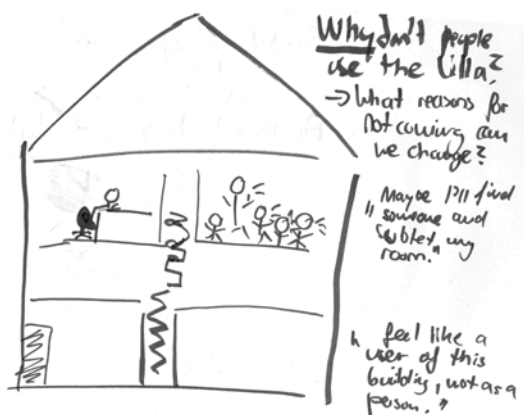
Woolard's practice encompasses long-term, infrastructural initiatives that often respond to the socio-economic landscape of the United States. Her work critically examines economic systems and their influence on institutional governance in the art field, drawing on strategies developed by artists like Andrea Fraser in the 1990s. Yet Woolard's work on *Institutional Possibility*, which focuses on enhancing the personal skills of institutional members, emphasises the role of individual action in enacting change, while also acknowledging that each individual internalises the structures they seek to transform.¹⁶ In this sense, Woolard seeks to uncover the integration of cultural and academic institutions into capitalist systems by addressing financial disparities these systems exacerbate, while simultaneously searching for ways individuals within these structures might begin to unlearn them. Against this background, Woolard's strategy of reclaiming transparency is also part of her efforts toward broader structural

16 Alison Burstein, "Institutional Possibility," in Caroline Woolard, *Art, Engagement, Economy: The Working Practice of Caroline Woolard* (Onomatopoe, 2020), 136–37.

3A



3B



4



3, 4. Mapping of concrete problems and structural opacities in small groups, workshop "Institutional Possibility Protocols for Caring Institutions," photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, April 28, 2023

Konkrečių problemų ir struktūrinių nesklaidumų žymėjimas mažose grupėse, dirbtuvės „Institucinė galimybė: protokolai rūpestingoms institucijoms“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2023 m. balandžio 28 d.

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transformation. Central to this approach is her work on more egalitarian financial management systems, oriented toward a solidarity economy in response to the broader labour conditions in the contemporary U.S. society—especially those affecting art workers.¹⁷

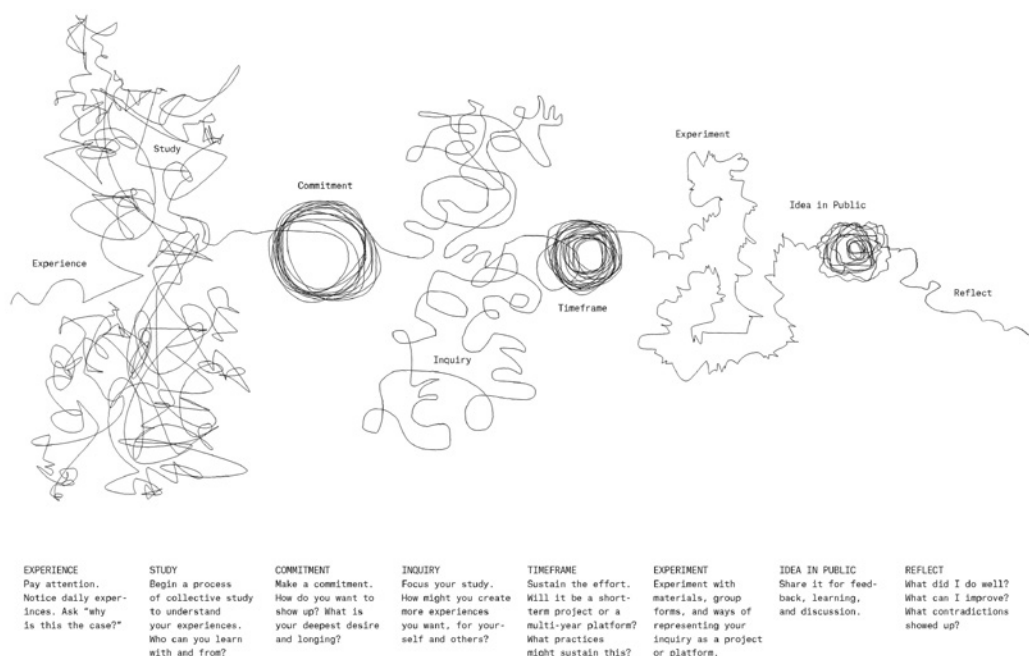
Woolard's practice does not revolve around the production of objects to be interpreted or designated as art. Within a wider context of socially engaged art—where the creation of material artworks is increasingly not the central focus or outcome—Woolard's work specifically involves the skillset and activities normally associated with facilitation in its educational or collaborative sense. Facilitation, or the work of a facilitator, in its etymological sense, refers to making a process easier. It is used to describe a set of approaches through which an individual supports a group's work by guiding processes, setting a tone, offering care, and fostering ways of working together.

Much socially engaged art involves working with others, but not all such practices derive from intentional, developed facilitation. Woolard's workshops—like those of other artists who work pedagogically or collectively—are not separate from her artistic work but form an integral part of it. In Woolard's case, the nexus between the macro- and micro-levels of facilitation is particularly significant. What she aims to achieve on a macro-level through her long-term projects is also enacted on a micro-level in the ways she organises, acts within, and facilitates small-scale group processes. In the co-organised workshop, as will be shown later, Woolard assumed differently positioned roles for the collaborative dynamics among participants.

From a methodological standpoint, this moment manifested the potential of collaborative working methods. In order to understand the specific dynamics of the fields¹⁸ of art and academia and to ground our

17 Woolard situates reflections on a possible future solidarity economy within the conditions of artistic labour, understood as one form of reproductive labour, and proposes strategies such as mutual aid, lending and informal exchange as an economic system for valorising this labour. The solidarity economy, as an alternative structure that attributes value to artistic production as reproductive labour, is crucial for sustaining artistic practice within a capitalist system. See Woolard, *Art, Engagement, Economy*, 32–36.

18 See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford University Press, 1996). In numerous works, Bourdieu develops his field theory, which conceptualizes social fields as relatively autonomous spaces structured by struggles over various forms of capital and power. *The Rules of Art* offers a detailed analysis of the nineteenth-century literary field as a prime example.



5. Process diagram, Caroline Woolard, from *Art, Engagement, Economy: The Working Practice of Caroline Woolard*, pp. 14–15

Proceso diagrama, Caroline Woolard, in *Art, Engagement, Economy: The Working Practice of Caroline Woolard*, p. 14–15

collaboration with Woolard in analysis, it was crucial to adopt both cultural-anthropological and art-theoretical perspectives. Gathering initial insights from CRC members through a qualitative survey was essential not only for Woolard's research process, allowing her to address concrete needs, desires, and questions during the workshop, but also for analysing them in relation to structural, field-specific, and wider issues.

One of the central research tools in Woolard's strategy of facilitation is documented in a "process diagram,"¹⁹ [Fig. 5] which provides insights into the working process of *Institutional Possibility*. By asking participants to consider concrete possibilities for structural change, the diagram guided both individual and collective reflection on the issues addressed in the pre-workshop questionnaire. Participants went through various phases of critical engagement with an initial situation, a phase of study and commitment, and ultimately sharing and reflecting in a public context.

19 Woolard, *Art, Engagement, Economy*, 14–15.

Woolard invited participants to document their personal “building” and “resisting” skills. Participants were asked to list experiences and skills that had supported them in the past in resisting oppressive structures and systems. Examples shared ranged from participating in petitions and demonstrations to organising neighbourhood actions against corporate landlords. On a second sheet, participants documented various community-building skills developed in their personal and professional lives, including launching research initiatives, forming music bands, and organising community dinners.

Woolard facilitated communication and fostered new relationships between colleagues through this assignment of one-to-one encounters, creating an informal atmosphere in an otherwise normatively institutionalised context. She also facilitated individual agency by guiding participants through critical questions about institutional structures through different stages of inquiry, study, and reflection on concrete examples.²⁰

As part of the workshop, Woolard’s facilitation also focused on establishing transparency within an institutional framework and bringing attention to critical issues faced by various groups. One approach involved mapping the roles and infrastructures that influence current policies and procedures. The workshop revealed conditions in which participants felt constrained by the system and lacked decision-making agency. Although it is not directly addressed in the core argument of this article, from a cultural-analytical perspective these insights shed light on the relationship between interdisciplinary collaboration and organisational structures within research centres, as well as the strategies for navigating these dynamics in daily work routines. As part of a collective exercise, participants were invited to voice their ideas and propose steps toward addressing and solving the identified issues. Discussions centred on envisioning an *Institutional Possibility* in which institutional structures are more participatory, community-driven, and open to diverse forms of caregiving.

For some participants, the exercise showed opacities and imbalances, revealing that decision-making is shaped not only by individual choices

20 Woolard has developed numerous facilitation strategies for group processes and collaboration. A central reference is the workbook she co-authored with Susan Jahoda. See Susan Jahoda and Caroline Woolard, *Making & Being: Embodiment, Collaboration, and Circulation in the Visual Arts, a Workbook* (Pioneer Works Press, 2020).

of those in power but also by long-standing governance traditions within the German university system. The exercise aimed to provide space and time to address specific structural issues, such as administrative barriers limiting childcare accessibility for academic employees. With Woolard's support, participants not only learned to critically examine institutional structures and forms of governance but also explored and tested the contexts in which these systems might allow space for individual agency. In fact, Woolard's organisation of the gathering made it possible both to reveal these possibilities and to establish initial encounters and relationships among participants, potentially paving the way for further collective self-organisation within the CRC. A key tool in this approach was an accumulative sharing process, where gradually expanding discussion groups enabled concerns and ideas to deepen and connect. This created intimate moments of connection that could either be repeated in larger constellations or brought into further dialogue with a wider range of perspectives.

Another strategy for fostering meaningful interpersonal relationships in collectively addressing institutional structures was the subsequent discussion. It connected the two ends of the workshop by linking participants' community-building and resisting skills to the previously identified issues, while exploring what would be needed for the community to challenge and expand existing institutional frameworks. A shared commitment to transforming these conditions within the CRC, along with the advantages of having an external facilitator like Woolard, were among the aspects mentioned. [Fig. 6]

The workshop with Woolard took place in the kitchen of the CRC's working space—a location that itself underscored the centrality of space in fostering institutional transformation. The choice of the kitchen, a communal and functional area, highlighted space not only as a backdrop, but as an active constituent in shaping interactions and discussions. This dynamic was reflected in conversations addressing how the CRC's space could become more accessible to external participants and how its configuration might better support collaborative thinking and working. These discussions highlighted the potential of spatial design as a catalyst for institutional



6. Closing gathering, workshop “Institutional Possibility: Protocols for Caring Institutions,” photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, April 28, 2023

Pabaigos sueiga, dirbtuvės „Institucinė galimybė: protokolai rūpestingoms institucijoms“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2023 m. balandžio 28 d.

openness and collective creativity, making space both a marker and a driver of change. On a spatial level, Woolard’s workshop emphasised the importance of appropriating space and utilising existing infrastructure. At the start of the gathering, the participants collectively rearranged tables and chairs in the kitchen area of the building, where most of the CRC members’ offices are located. Later, many participants expressed a desire to appropriate the common areas in the building, such as the kitchen, as shared places for gathering. Woolard’s rearranging and altering the physical conditions of space pointed to the underlying aesthetic regimes of institutions: by creating a more informal and comfortable environment, the naturalised formality and discomfort of the existing spatial layout became more apparent.

Woolard states: “My work celebrates collective capacities for care and critique.”²¹ With this dual emphasis on care and critique, her working practice toward a solidarity economy navigates institutional change on two levels. Firstly, through critical and analytical work within cultural institutions, and secondly, through collaborative efforts to build alternative infrastructures. Woolard often combines long-term, self-organised initiatives with short-term institutional invitations. As Leigh Claire La Berge observes, Woolard’s practice considers *Institutions as Art*. Building long-term organisational structures

21 Caroline Woolard, quoted in Patricia C. Phillips, “Foreword,” in Woolard, *Art, Engagement, Economy*.

is thus integral to her practice and serves as a means to sustain alternatives to the capitalist system that resist institutional rigidity and hierarchies often associated with institutionalisation.²² Woolard's direct work as facilitator, along with the role played by the institutions she has founded in fostering alternatives, can be understood as a care-informed facilitation of structural development. The workshop discussed here demonstrated the interconnect- edness of these two levels as an invitation to voice institutional and struc- tural critique and to cultivate individual agency for structural change.²³

The role of the (socially engaged) artist? Marina Naprushkina as organiser

In the second workshop discussed in this article, the contributors invited CRC members and the broader public to explore Marina Naprushkina's practice through the lens of *Neue Nachbarschaft / Moabit* (NNM), a project co-founded by Naprushkina in 2013. Originally launched as art classes for Chechen mothers, NNM has since evolved into a *Verein* (an as- sociation or non-profit organisation) with its own dedicated space, which aims to address community needs through practices that foster reciprocity rather than one-sided service. By the mid-2010s, NNM had grown to more than 500 active members and offered a daily program of events, all run on a volunteer basis.²⁴

Naprushkina's workshop in December 2022 included a presentation, craft-making and storytelling, the reading of a political manifesto, and a par- ticipatory movement session. The event was characterised by an atmosphere of cooperation, collaboration, and group work. It began with an informal introduction session, creating a friendly atmosphere for participants to accli- mate to the environment. The workshop space featured a large assembly of tables arranged in the centre, designed to serve as a collective "workstation." Tactile materials—such as zines produced by NNM and Naprushkina, along with packages of flour and salt—were made available for participants to in- teract with before, during, and after the workshop. [Figs. 7, 8]

22 Leigh Claire La Berge, *Wages Against Artwork* (Duke University Press, 2019), 81.

23 See also how Woolard describes her working process in Woolard, *Art, Engagement, Economy*, 12–13.

24 "About," Moabit Mountain College, accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.moabit-mountain-college.com/about>.



7. Working with dough as part of an informal environment, workshop “Interventionsraum – Marina Naprushkina und die Neue Nachbarschaft,” photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, December 7, 2022

Darbas su tešla neformalioje aplinkoje, dirbtuvės „Intervencijos erdvė – Marina Naprushkina ir naujoji kaimynystė“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2022 m. gruodžio 7 d.



8. “Workstation” with zines, workshop “Interventionsraum – Marina Naprushkina und die Neue Nachbarschaft,” photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, December 7, 2022

Darbo vieta su ziniais, dirbtuvės „Intervencijos erdvė – Marina Naprushkina ir naujoji kaimynystė“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2022 m. gruodžio 7 d.



9. Naprushkina presenting the initiative’s evolution, workshop “Interventionsraum – Marina Naprushkina und die Neue Nachbarschaft,” photo by Lena Pozdnyakova, December 7, 2022

Napruškina pristato iniciatyvos raidą, dirbtuvės „Intervencijos erdvė – Marina Naprushkina ir naujoji kaimynystė“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos nuotrauka, 2022 m. gruodžio 7 d.

Naprushkina had prepared a presentation as an introduction to the workshop, providing insights into her activism in Belarus and her early years as a politically engaged citizen and artist. She discussed her foundational work in Berlin under precarious conditions as an immigrant artist and explained that she established NNM nearly ten years ago in response to emerging community needs. She detailed the initiative's evolution during the so-called refugee crisis in Germany in the mid-2010s and its significance as a mutual-aid network under these conditions. [Fig. 9] The workshop's second phase was led by Maddi Fuente Ubani—an artist, dancer, and NNM community member known for her workshops with refugee children and caregivers—and focused on the themes of caretaking, feminism, and the creation of safe spaces. During the movement session, Ubani guided participants through improvisational movements designed to foster trust and embodied presence, facilitating a shift from individual to collective engagement. [Figs. 10, 11] Ubani's artistic approach emphasised trust-building and bodily vulnerability in relation to others in a shared space, challenging traditional formats and exploring institutional critique through participatory, performative action.

Naprushkina's exhibition of NNM as part of *Blueprints for Studies*—a year-long rotating archive of learning practices that counter or offer alternatives to traditional university teaching and learning, co-curated by one of this article's contributors—alongside Naprushkina's contributions to the FEINART project, including workshops within the framework of a training programme for eleven Early Career Researchers, demonstrates how she combines different methods and resists categorising her work strictly as art or herself solely as artist. NNM was exhibited alongside two other ongoing projects that Naprushkina was central in founding: Moabit Mountain College and Strandbad Tegelsee/Zentrum für Kultur und Erholung. For Naprushkina, these projects are not led by her “as” an artist, but rather involve creative and cultural practices that shape their form, funding, and approach. As Naprushkina states: “The New Neighborhood/Moabit initiative results from my work as an artist. It was necessary to found this initiative... The founding of the initiative also arose from my frustration with the art business. We created a monster with the art system.”²⁵

25 Marina Naprushkina and Nataša Ilić, “No Time For Art. A Conversation,” *Secondary Archive*, (2022), <https://secondaryarchive.org/artists/marina-naprushkina/>.



10, 11. Movement session with Ubani, workshop
 „Interventionsraum – Marina Naprushkina
 und die Neue Nachbarschaft,” photo by Lena
 Pozdnyakova, December 7, 2022

Judesio sesija su Ubani, dirbtuvės
 „Intervencijos erdvė – Marina Naprushkina
 ir naujoji kaimynystė“, Lenos Pozdnyakovos
 nuotrauka, 2022 m. gruodžio 7 d.

Yet this emergence from her work as an artist is not the same as NNM being an artwork. In reviewing NNM's catalogue for *Blueprints for Studies*, Naprushkina was careful to articulate this distinction, resisting the idea of becoming the sole author of collective forms of instituting and community practices. NNM exemplifies an alternative institution where Naprushkina's role as an organiser introduces new forms of artistic and social engagement alongside alternative ways of caregiving. Distinct from Woolard's workshop settings within the CRC's headquarters, Naprushkina's session, held at NNM, drew on the organisation's everyday practices of prioritising comfort, ease, and collaboration, including a commitment to creating welcoming conditions.

On the day of the workshop, the participating academics and NNM community members gathered on the ground floor of the residential building at Beusselstr. 26, Berlin. With apartments located directly above NNM, the ground-floor windows—adorned with artistic posters and political slogans—offered subtle hints of NNM's artistic and political aims. What stood out was how this seemingly anonymous ground-floor space had been transformed into a welcoming community hub. During the evening, participants engaged with the same interior settings used by the community during their regular activities. Watching academics play with salty dough and move improvisationally across the space was an unusual sight for an academic institutional event. The chairs shared by workshop participants—worn and stencilled with colourful patterns—had been painted by children during Saturday kids' days and used regularly by the community throughout the week. The desks were arranged in the centre of the room as they often are for artist workshops at NNM, with materials such as salt, flour, and water placed in the middle of the table, soon to be transformed by participants into sculptural objects. Naprushkina invited participants to reimagine their physical engagement with the world by crafting new, imagined limbs from this simple mixture.

NNM is registered as an association that specialises in multi-generational, educational, cultural, and expressive arts programming for immigrants, refugees affected by displacement, and Berlin residents. Its

emergence as a political initiative responded, in part, to the needs of Moabit's migrant-rich district, where Naprushkina lives with her family.²⁶ Founded shortly before the refugee crisis of the mid-2010s, NNM developed community engagement approaches that proved essential in addressing the needs of incoming refugee communities from 2013—and especially from 2015 onwards—when state support failed short. Naprushkina's alternative institution bridged institutional shortfalls in supporting this part of the population by providing assistance with integration and skill building within a safe, welcoming environment.

With a steady flow of politically and socially engaged artists—including exiles and war refugees—NNM's programming is facilitated and planned in an open, community-engaged manner. Naprushkina's familiarity with the institutionalised systems inherited from Soviet-era Belarus—and their transformation into corrupt, dictatorship-driven structures under the guise of law and order—influenced both her artistic practice and the formation of NNM. Much of her work is politically grounded, highlighting the critical situation in Belarus, where political repression has intensified. Through her practice, Naprushkina aims to create an alternative to existing structures during critical times. Her background informs her approach to maintenance and para-institutional approaches. Alternative infrastructures such as NNM provide more flexible and egalitarian spaces for people that can respond faster to specific societal needs than established institutions. Activist forms of artistic expression—such as banner making, political organising through manifestos, and reading groups—have become integral to NNM. To consider NNM as a social support institution (in both the legal and everyday sense of the word) also implies that Naprushkina's work blurs the boundaries between artistic and organisational strategies. The artistic approaches to instituting and the artistic contributions embedded in NNM's programming are inseparable from the wider work of running and sustaining the organisation. The emphasis on community, along with “thinking out of the space” of Moabit with its specific social, economic, and political circumstances, rejects any separation between the work of an artist and that of an organiser.²⁷

26 Szymon Marcińczak and Matthias Bernt, “Immigration, Segregation and Neighborhood Change in Berlin,” *Cities* 119 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103417>.

27 Marina Naprushkina, quoted in *Blueprints for Studies 4: Moabit Mountain College*, exhibition catalogue (September 2024).

As noted by Gregory Sholette, a para-institution—or “mock institution”—is defined by its informally organised nature that mimics the functions of established institutional entities.²⁸ He states: “While a prefix ‘mock-’²⁹ suggests a jeering imitation, Rosie Hermon’s take on another, more ambiguous ‘para-’³⁰ prefix to hold the potential to destabilise established notions, in this case, taken-for-granted institutions.”³¹ According to Hermon, on the other hand, alternative institutions organised and run by cultural workers occupy a liminal space of tensions—where refusal is possible and a productive ground for change can emerge.

In line with Hermon’s theoretical position, we underline mutability as a defining criterion for alternative institutions. This mutability is the foundational aspect of resiliency and spontaneity, which together provide institutional possibility—as practiced by both artists through their work as facilitators. The same qualities of mutability and spontaneity also become key to understanding organising as practiced by artists and cultural practitioners who merge affective labour, institutional critique, community service, and various forms of organising. The resiliency and spontaneity exemplified by NNM open up an institutional possibility where both participants and organisers assume different levels of agency and engagement with the space and its programming.

Sholette’s key critique of the para-institutional framework is that when it operates over a prolonged period, it often risks becoming an institutional authority itself, effectively entering the institutional domain through the “back door” due to practical logistical necessities.³² NNM aims to resist this risk by operating as an umbrella initiative that comprises multiple sub-components, each led by different communities. This long-term, community-driven initiative is built on collaboration among the three

28 Sholette, “Five Glossary Definitions.”

29 Several definitions given by the Oxford English Dictionary connect the word “mock” to parody or jeering imitation.

30 On the prefix “para-” in para-institutional contexts, Hermon notes that it posits the space both “beside and beyond, it is at once close by and out of reach.” Rosie Hermon, “Enmeshed in the Borders: The Para-Institutional Practices of Alternative Arts Education Online,” *A Peer-Reviewed Journal About* 10 (2021): 58–69, <https://doi.org/10.7146/aprja.v10i1.128187>.

31 Hermon, “Enmeshed in the Borders.”

32 Sholette, “Five Glossary Definitions.”

major sub-components: Neue Nachbarschaft / Moabit, Moabit Mountain College, and Strandbad Tegelsee/Zentrum für Kultur und Erholung. Participants engage across various programs, fostering interconnectedness and collaboration within this broader framework. Research conducted within the NNM community by Lena Pozdnyakova revealed that some volunteers who were involved in creating a nourishing environment at NNM were themselves students at local Berlin universities. This dynamic was partly enabled by Naprushkina's affiliation with **foundationClass*—a foundation year at the Weissensee School of Art—and the Universität der Künste (UDK) in Berlin, where she taught socially oriented art. Through this, Naprushkina engaged students with the forms of community building and organising that her practice involves.

Hermon further connects the notion of the para-institution to alternative educational formats proposed by artists in the mid-20th century. Indeed, as Tom Finkelpearl and Claire Bishop argue, socially engaged art emerges in relation to a lineage of radical pedagogy and non-conventional forms of learning and teaching.³³ As Sophie Mak-Schram—one of the authors of this article—has argued elsewhere, socially engaged art overall can be understood as a productive, critical engagement with art's implicit relationship to pedagogies. It makes explicit, through its positionalities, that artistic practice involves forms of learning and teaching across space and time.³⁴

For Naprushkina, the relationship between community building and pedagogical spaces is a close one. Alongside the direct educational support offered at NNM—such as language classes and other skill-building workshops—its sub-component, Moabit Mountain College, more directly aligns itself with a canonical example in the existing art historical lineage of “alternative” art schools: Black Mountain College.³⁵ Moabit Mountain College's pedagogical approach draws on Naprushkina's understanding of Black Mountain College as an educational space where the modes and sites

33 Gregory Sholette, “Dewey, Beuys, Cage and the Vulnerable yet Utterly Unremarkable Heresy of Socially Engaged Art Education (SEAE),” in *Art and Social Practice: An Introduction to the Principles and Practices of Teaching Social Practice*, ed. Gregory Sholette et al. (Skyhorse Press, 2018), 4.

34 Mak-Schram, “Pedagogies of the Art-Proximate.”

35 As mentioned by Naprushkina during her presentation at the CRC workshop, Black Mountain College holds particular importance for Moabit Mountain College, a project embedded within NNM.

of knowledge acquisition were questioned and experimented with.³⁶ She also emphasised the significance of the mountain metaphor, noting that it underscored the poetic and imaginative role of arts, especially given that there are no natural mountains in Berlin.

Moabit Mountain College has a separate website, which, in contrast to NNM, is entirely in English. Its introductory text frames the College as a platform to “break down barriers to participation,” bringing together various practitioners from diverse educational and life backgrounds to enable social engagement within a rich mosaic of educational and cultural contexts. Like NNM, the College directly engages the public sphere—not as a mere conceptual idea but as a free, multilingual, and open-for-all educational space within NNM’s broader instituting work.

Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard: towards care-informed organising

Through their practices, Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard critically engage in transforming the social sphere. While formally recognised as artists, their practices also emphasise facilitation and organising within or towards institutional forms. Woolard’s workshop focused how institutions can better meet the needs of the communities they serve, enabling institutional members to actively participate in reshaping institutional structures or developing informal, alternative frameworks. Gaining agency within institutions, in this case, includes both working with physical infrastructure and engaging with organisational systems. Similarly, Naprushkina’s workshop and wider practice focuses on building and sustaining institutions capable of supporting the emergent needs of communities. During both workshops, the artists created conditions inviting participants to inhabit and reconfigure the space in participatory and non-hierarchical ways.

During the second part of Woolard’s workshop, participant discussions highlighted issues of reproductive labour and the role of institutions in providing essential infrastructure, resources, and support for CRC members and their families. The demands of full-time work outside home often conflict with childcare responsibilities, particularly for mothers who frequently

36 Marina Naprushkina, “Future for Everyone,” in *Moabit Mountain College Magazine*, no. 1 (2019).

bear primary caregiving roles. Conversations about structural changes and childcare revealed power imbalances and a need for greater agency in childcare-related decision-making for employees. These concerns connect to broader systemic issues across German academia. The discussions also emphasised the importance of mutual aid systems, suggesting that enhanced community agency and participation could foster deeper understanding and solidarity around local childcare needs. However, systemic support and resilient infrastructure remain essential to effectively address these needs.

Our example—the issues within the institutionalised childcare system revealed during Woolard’s workshop—highlights a core, timely, and pressing concern. It illustrates how, despite efforts to address needs within the public domain, institutionalised systems often fail to accommodate the daycare choices of working mothers. For Woolard, this necessity for structural change regarding the remuneration and valorisation of reproductive labour confirms her role as an instigator of critical change—one linked as much to the care-informed atmosphere of the workshop as to alliances it fostered among colleagues.

Caregiving and affective labour are central themes in Naprushkina’s work. Her multifaceted approach to community building highlights the political nature of communal activities and offers an alternative to the rigid role divisions common in traditional institutions. Art theorist Sven Lütticken emphasises the relevance of the organisational process in artistic practice as an analytical category, which transcends the divide between institutional critique and social practice. Indeed, Lütticken considers the organisational form as a central aspect that not only shapes the artistic process but also functions as an artistic medium in its own right.³⁷ This perspective supports a reading of Naprushkina’s work that aligns with NNM’s complex practices and support structures. Naprushkina’s roles within NNM cover maintenance, caretaking, administration, organisation, as well as artistic and curatorial duties—reflecting her comprehensive engagement with communities through space, pedagogy, and art production.

NNM, operating within a para-institutional framework, offers marginalised groups (immigrants, refugees, and other precarious citizens) a format

37 Sven Lütticken, “Organizational Aesthetics: On Certain Practices and Genealogies,” *October* 183 (2023): 28, http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/octo_a_00475.

in which inclusion, informality, and improvisation are the norm. This environment is particularly important for children from disadvantaged communities, who, upon arrival, face the challenge of integrating into new and often more structured, yet foreign school and kindergarten settings. Research has demonstrated that keeping children connected to their communities is vital for communication and socialisation.³⁸ Within NNM, particular attention is given to bilingual forms of communication, enabling children to bridge linguistic barriers while also maintaining the comfort of a familiar language for self-expression. In the context of the so-called refugee crisis in Germany and the resulting demand for social care, the welfare state often leaves individuals in highly vulnerable positions, exposing the systemic flaws in caregiving roles. Projects like Naprushkina's step in to temporarily bridge these gaps.

However, critics argue that these initiatives based on individual effort cannot provide permanent solutions to systemic issues.³⁹ This critique highlights the need to address these systemic failures more directly. In this setting, the artist's role is both practical and performative, encompassing both caregiving labour and an artistic duty to illuminate the tensions inherent in the existing systems.

This performative role of the artist, however, is distinct from actually performing labour justice. A common critique of socially engaged art practices is that while the initiating practitioner is remunerated—often through institutional grants—the contributions of the “engaged community” remain unpaid, relying on voluntary labour that is symbolically compensated through notions of empowerment and well-being. While NNM does not resolve systemic problems, it offers several ways to address such asymmetries. These include leveraging Naprushkina's position in the art world, as well as practices rooted in commons and collective funding models used in wider activism and community organising. In recent years, NNM has introduced financial compensation (“Aufwandsentschädigung”⁴⁰) for volunteer

38 Elizabeth Chapman De Sousa, “Five Tips for Engaging Multilingual Children in Conversation,” *Young Children* 74, no. 2 (2019), <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/five-tips-engaging-multilingual-children>.

39 As widely discussed, for instance, in Claire Bishop's seminal book *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, artistic initiatives cannot solve societal issues on their own.

40 According to the Glossary of the German Foundation for Engagement and Volunteering, *Aufwandsentschädigung* refers to an expense allowance granted in recognition of a com-

contributions where legally permissible, and fostered long-standing, reciprocal collaborations with cultural workers from within the community itself. This founding of Strandbad Tegelsee / Zentrum für Kultur und Erholung as part of NNM's work is significant in this regard: it not only expands NNM's programming but also creates opportunities for income generation and employment for those facing barriers in the labour market. Additional incentives include opportunities for public exposure through collaborative projects, which frequently serve as platforms for artistic development and career advancement. A compelling instance is the presentation of work by long-time NNM participants Cẩm-Anh Lương and Edoardo Micheli,⁴¹ exemplifying how community-rooted practices can extend into high-profile cultural contexts, potentially benefiting artists' careers.

NNM also provides its space to community members free of charge, enabling cultural workers to host sessions and earn income. One example is Maddi Fuente Ubani's donation-based weekly somatic sessions for FLINTA⁴² communities. When NNM secures institutional funding, volunteer artists are often incorporated into the grant framework as workshop leaders and remunerated with professional artist fees. This model repositions community involvement not as auxiliary, but as integral to the institution's cultural production and sustainability.

In contrast, Woolard's workshop involved individuals employed by an academic institution, thereby sidestepping the issue of who remains unwaged in socially engaged projects. Woolard's (care) work can be understood as providing facilitation of organisational and affective processes that enable

mitment to undertake voluntary work. It may take the form of a lump-sum reimbursement, with a maximum of up to €840 per person annually, or up to €3,000 for roles such as training supervisors. See Deutsche Stiftung für Engagement und Ehrenamt, "Glossar," accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.deutsche-stiftung-engagement-und-ehrenamt.de/glossar/>.

41 Cẩm-Anh Lương, *JARDIN D[H]IVERS*, a proposal by visual artist Cẩm-Anh Lương, musician Edoardo Micheli, and members of Neue Nachbarschaft Moabit, referencing EU representative Josep Borrell's statement: "Europe is a garden, the rest of the world is a jungle," accessed April 11, 2025, <https://camanh.xyz/>; see also Transmediale Vorspiele, participating project by the NNM community, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://vorspiel.berlin/spaces/neue-nachbarschaft-moabit-e-v>.

42 FLINTA stands for "Female, Lesbian, Intersex, Non-binary, Trans, and Agender" individuals. It is a term used to encompass marginalized gender identities and experiences. It emphasizes inclusivity and the recognition of diverse gender expressions beyond the binary framework.

new work forms and ways of organising within already-existing institutions. While both Naprushkina and Woolard critically engage with communities, Woolard's workshop primarily focused on the role of institutions in meeting community needs and the capacity of institution members to actively participate in changing institutional structures or developing informal and alternative frameworks. By seeking possibilities for major structural change through a collaborative workshop format, Woolard not only exposed power imbalances but also encouraged the participants to self-learn and gain agency, fostering understanding and solidarity among colleagues.

Organisational processes and forms are decisive in shaping the situations and projects that Woolard and Naprushkina create. It is therefore important to highlight the points of connection between both artists in relation to the organisational forms of their projects. As a para-institutional initiative, NNM develops alternative protocols that enable diverse forms of childcare, learning, and social relations. The political and artistic project of creating these alternatives is conditioned by the organisational structure of the initiative. Relatively autonomous from established institutions, NNM enjoys a certain flexibility that allows it to cultivate non-hierarchical relations and collaborative forms that question existing power structures and hierarchies, enabling intersections with political and social organisations. Woolard's work similarly fosters new forms of organising relations within workplace contexts, but from an inverse position: by entering existing institutions to identify and collaborate on desires and capacities for transformation.

As emphasised in the section "The artist as an instigator of critical change?," Woolard facilitated agency, relationality, and flexibility by organising the workshop format in a non-hierarchical, affective, and spatially improvised way. The organisational form Woolard creates transcends a simple horizontal-vertical dichotomy: she creates flexibility in institutional roles, enabling affective work and caregiving interactions to enter rigid institutional frameworks.⁴³ In contrast, Naprushkina's approach is both artistic and community-driven, and features a horizontal organisation of space and facilitation. This stands in stark opposition to the rigid social systems and hierarchical models of daycare prevalent in Germany and Belarus. We

43 Nunes emphasizes the necessity to overcome the vertical-horizontal dichotomy in his analysis of organizational forms: Rodrigo Nunes, *Neither Vertical nor Horizontal: A Theory of Political Organisation* (Verso, 2021).

argue that Naprushkina's approach diverges significantly from the institutionalised childcare systems by adopting non-conformist artistic formats to provide alternatives to institutional infrastructures. In doing so, she enters into art discourse that values informal spaces as crucial sites for developing alternative solutions.

Although Woolard and Naprushkina operate within different cultural paradigms, their labour extends beyond mere facilitation and organisation to actively fostering the recognition and enactment of affective labour. As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt suggest, affective labour can provide an alternative to capitalist activity. Hardt and Negri define affective labour as "labour that produces or manipulates affects such as feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion."⁴⁴ Both artists can be understood as enacting affective labour through their practices of instituting. Furthermore, their approaches can be contextualised within the framework of broader materialist feminist discourses, wherein care and maintenance work function as frameworks for highlighting issues around reproductive labour.

Within recent art discourse—particularly in socially engaged and participatory practices—the notion of care has emerged as a vital lens for understanding the ethics and aesthetics of artistic labour.⁴⁵ Drawing on feminist care ethics and thinkers, care is framed not merely as a thematic concern but as a methodology embedded in the affective, relational, and temporal dimensions of artistic practices. This includes invisible maintenance work (Krasny), shared vulnerability (Butler), and co-created responsibility, with care conceptualised as a new public sphere (Lorey) that often challenges neoliberal cultural economies' emphasis on autonomy, productivity, and spectacle.⁴⁶ Silvia Federici's longstanding argument about the dual nature of reproductive labour—both sustaining life and fuelling resistance against

44 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Penguin Press, 2004), 108–9.

45 Jacqueline Millner and Gretchen Coombs, "Care Ethics and Contemporary Art: Imagining and Practising Care," *Journal of Sociology* (2024), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/07255136241284659>.

46 Elke Krasny, "On Care as Practice," interview by Ian Erickson, *Pavilion of Turkey at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia*, published August 23, 2021, <https://pavilionofturkey21.iksv.org/en/conversations/on-care-as-practice-a-conversation-with-elke-krasny>; Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012), 148; Isabell Lorey, *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* (Verso, 2015).

its reduction to mere labour power—functions as a base for understanding these practices as vital sites of institutional critique and potential transformation.⁴⁷ Viewed through an interdisciplinary lens that brings together art history, cultural anthropology, and ethnography, care becomes legible as a political and aesthetic strategy—one that opens space for alternative social relations and the emergence of new institutional forms.

Conclusion

On a methodological level, this paper has aimed for a layered structure of argumentation to integrate perspectives from cultural anthropology, art history, and artistic practices. By foregrounding experience as a primary site of meaning production, this methodology underscores the significance of situated knowledge and participatory formats of engagement. As Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen states, “the practice of criticism must not only follow the work into the field but must also be transformed by it.”⁴⁸ In this light, socially engaged art criticism requires methodologies that remain responsive to the social dynamics, ethical entanglements, and relational complexities intrinsic to the work itself. This convergence of art history and cultural anthropology opens space for ethnographic methods to serve both as research tools and interpretive frameworks. This orientation allows for the study of artistic projects through direct engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders—collaborators, colleagues, students, and community members—whose voices are central to the work’s formation and reception. Ethnographic fieldwork is not to be understood merely as a mode of documentation but a method for tracing distributed authorship and understanding the social impact of the artistic process. Through our multi-layered collaborations with Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard, we have developed a situated and experimental enquiry—both methodologically

47 Silvia Federici has extensively discussed reproductive labour’s role in sustaining life and the workforce, as well as its potential for resistance and transformation, in interviews and in her book: Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (PM Press, 2012). See also Silvia Federici, “Interview with Silvia Federici”, interview by Rachel Andrews, *The White Review*, January 2022, <https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-with-silvia-federici/>.

48 Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen, “A Note on Socially Engaged Art Criticism,” *FIELD: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism* 6 (2017), <https://field-journal.com/issue-6/a-note-on-socially-engaged-art-criticism/>.

and formally—by working interdisciplinarily and employing a polyphonic analysis realised through four-way collaborative writing.

The close reading of the collaborations with Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard, alongside the translation of these engagements into an academic paper, allowed us to connect their practices to the genealogies of institutional critique and pre-established relationships of art and labour within art historical discourse. Our analysis revealed how Woolard's facilitation work enables and fosters institutional possibility within neoliberal and capitalist systems operating across Europe and North America. Her facilitation strategies during the workshop are connected to her long-term projects in the U.S., demonstrating how—on both the direct level of facilitation and the broader structural, organisational level—she cultivates care-informed, flexible modes of collaboration. In contrast, Naprushkina's practice is informed by her lived experience of socialist Belarus and her work within the German context, engaging with alternative institutions that reflect her socio-political background and her role as an organiser across these distinct milieus.

While the specificity of their respective contexts clearly shapes their approaches, both artists share an organisational impulse that reconfigures prevailing definitions of artistic labour and the “work” of art. Woolard's facilitation strategies and Naprushkina's instituting practices both perform vital roles in collaborative, care-informed work, especially within the Berlin context, where structural needs intersect with an emphasis on affective labour. In analysing Naprushkina's and Woolard's roles as organisers, facilitators, and caregivers, we argued that their practices embody a specific form of (art)work informed by affective labour. This working method is based on structural awareness and the active acknowledgement of reproductive work, embedded within non-hierarchical forms of collaboration. Through this process, their work is both real and performatively effective in producing institutional change. To fully grasp the socio-political complexities of their practices, both artists must be understood as facilitators and multipliers of affective strategies. Their shared focus on care as an organising principle ties their work to a broader institutional critique, functioning within the neoliberal paradigms of their socio-political context.

To conclude, both Marina Naprushkina and Caroline Woolard can be situated within what Tello terms the fourth wave of institutional critique, each broadening the art-historical understandings of these movements in specific ways. Woolard's role as facilitator, operating across both micro and macro scales, enables a transversal collective practice of building alliances within institutions, while Naprushkina establishes a para-institutional framework that acts as a practical, living alternative to pedagogical and educational institutions in Berlin. Both artistic practices are prefigurative, offering pathways for reimagining how art and care work can challenge and transform labour relations shaped by art and educational institutions. From a cultural-anthropological perspective, we examined how diverse artistic structures seek to disrupt institutional norms, fostering equitable and sustainable models that resist capitalist constraints while nurturing collective care and agency. Further research could expand on these intersections, particularly by broadening the scope to include Eastern European perspectives on art-labour relations and by interrogating the socio-political positioning of affective labour within artistic practices in relation to academic conceptions of artistic labour.

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Kas yra (meno) kūrinys, kuriam rūpi? Žvilgsnis į meninę veiklą institucinės transformacijos kontekste: Marinos Napruškinos ir Caroline Woolard kūrybos atvejis

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Reikšminiai žodžiai: rūpestis, institucinė kritika, parainstitucija, socialiai įtraukus menas, bendradarbiavimas, institucinės galimybės.

Caroline Woolard ir Marina Naprushkina yra praktika besiremiančios menininkės, kurių kūryba dažnai priskiriama socialiai įtraukaus meno sričiai, pabrėžiant bendradarbiavimą ir institucines inovacijas. Svarbi jų meninių metodikų dalis – institucijų steigimas ar bendradarbiavimas su jomis. Šiame straipsnyje Woolard ir Naprushkinos požiūriai nagrinėjami platesniame diskurse apie meninių praktikų ir akademiinių institucijų bendradarbiavimo dinamiką. Be to, reflektuojama pačių straipsnio autorių patirtis dirbant su šiomis menininkėmis ir tyrinėjant, kaip jų praktikos veikia besikeičiančias meninės veiklos, (meno) kūrinio ir institucinių struktūrų sampratas.

Remiantis dviem Bendradarbiavimo tyrimų centro (CRC) vystomais akademinių projektai – „Intervenciniai menai“ ir „Europos nepriklausomų meno erdvių ateitis socialiai įtraukaus meno kontekste“ (FEINART), straipsnyje nagrinėjamos rūpesčiu grindžiamos organizavimo praktikos kaip meninės ir institucinės veiklos forma. Atsižvelgiant į daugiakryptį bendradarbiavimą su Naprushkina ir Woolard, situacinis ir eksperimentinis tyrimas straipsnyje konstruojamas tiek metodologiniu, tiek formaliu lygmeniu: dirbant tarpdiscipliniškai ir plėtojant polifoninę analizę per keturių autorių bendradarbiavimą.

Woolard ir Naprushkinos metodai suteikia įžvalgų apie tai, kaip socialiai įtraukus menas perbraižo ribas tarp individualaus kūrybiškumo ir kolektyvinių veiksmų, mesdamas iššūkį tradicinėms meninės produkcijos ir institucinės valdžios struktūroms. Analizuojant rūpesčio, darbo ir institucinės formos sąveikas, straipsnyje atskleidžiama, kaip šių menininkių veikla institucinės transformacijos kontekste gali būti suprantama kaip rūpesčiu grįsta (meninė) veikla. Taip pat nagrinėjama, kaip socialiai įtraukus

meninės praktikos gali skatinti naujas organizavimo ir sąveikos formas tiek meninėse, tiek akademinėse aplinkose, pertvarkant darbo praktikas ir įkvepiant labiau įtraukius, jautresnius institucinius modelius. Ši analizė galiausiai atskleidžia socialiai įtraukaus meno transformacinį potencialą, keičiant meno ir institucijų paradigmas, susijusias su institucinės kritikos meno istorijos genealogijomis ir platesniu kultūrinės antropologijos kontekstu.