

- 00:00:00:58 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** So. I can start with the presentation. Well, hello, everyone, thanks a lot for joining us to a conversation, with Chus Martínez, who I consider one of the most interesting thinkers in our field. I am going to briefly introduce Chus, even though you already received her extended bio via email. Chus Martínez is head of the Art Institute at the FHNW Academy of Arts and Design in Basel, Switzerland. She's also the expedition leader of The Current, a project initiated by TBA 21 Academy. The Current is also the inspiration behind "Art is The Ocean", a series of seminars and conferences held at the Art Institute which examine the role of artists in the conception of a new experience of nature. She's currently leading a research project at the Art Institute supported by Muzeum Susch, operating at the end of 2018 on the role of education in enhancing women's equality in the arts. Also, it's important to mention that Chus is a CCS alumni. I personally think that ideas about interconnectedness, imagination, love and care and practices of collective multidisciplinary thinking are particularly relevant in the conjuncture we are living in today.
- 00:01:37.41 Moreover, I am very interested in knowing how she has responded to the pandemic, both from the institution and academia and as a philosopher and a curator. Before we start the conversation, I wanted to share with you that Chus has decided to donate honorarium for this talk to Movimiento Cosecha, a national immigrant-led movement I have been collaborating with for the past weeks. Cosecha's Undocumented Workers Fund, is redistributing donations directly to immigrant families across the country that are struggling due to the effects of the coronavirus outbreak. If anyone is interested in collaborating with us, please let me know. Well, without further ado, welcome Chus to our CCS Zoom Speaker Series. How are you? And can you tell us a little bit how are you living the quarantine?
- 00:02:33.72 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Oh, thank you so much for inviting me, actually I'm very happy. I have not been to Bard since a long time, so it feels like going back. So it's really nice. Can you all hear me properly? So well, it has been quite hard, I think, at the beginning, like Switzerland was also very hit by the virus, like, not like Italy or or Spain, but it was a really critical moment. And they needed to act very quickly. And for the first time in the history of this country, that knows no wars and no conflicts, even if they have been kind of participating in the Second World War, they were never actively into any country.
- 00:03:15.12 Nothing ever closed because any of the big wars that the last century has experience. And then all of a sudden they were kind of forced to do so for the first time. So I think that for them it has, as I mentioned, that surpasses even that I mentioned that you would have in other countries, I think has been really hard for everyone. But what I mean is that they couldn't believe it. I think they were completely in denial. And then they, they just need to make the decisions. So I have all these teachers coming to my office saying that, that could not happen in Switzerland. And I'm afraid this is not going to make any border difference and that we need to act. And, yeah, it has been a really difficult moment for, to explain to students that they could not access the university. So they closed. I have an intuition that they would close it on Monday. I sent an email on Sunday before, saying please go to the atelier right now.
- 00:04:14.00 They all have marches and so on. It's in the middle of the night, giving people a call. But I have the complete feeling that tomorrow when I go at nine o'clock into a meeting, they are going to say that you cannot access the building anymore and do it right now. So then I call

all the teachers, I call all the students, which is also uncommon. And then we were kind of in the middle of the night taking things out, cameras out, equipment out, computers out. And, and then from that moment, it was another phase, which was a phase of even... yeah, talking, you know, how to go online with an art practice, how you do that? And then it was a beautiful surprise because the university bought all the licenses and all the programs and everything was ready to use. They did it just in case. And that was kind of really easy to switch. But I have fifty four members of the staff. Of them, there is some of them over an age that they never use Zoom or Skype or anything. And it's something that if you are in America, it seems absolutely unthinkable. But for many Swiss people to be a liberal thinker and so on, it still has to do with getting completely disconnected with technology and this type of technology. So to all of a sudden pushing them to go online was like forcing them into a face of capitalism that was like too much. And yeah, it was an incredible moment, I think, of how to do that and then try to adjust.

00:05:50.25 Of those teams I have carpenters, I have people doing with ceramics and all this technicians. So I needed to invent a way of doing technical training online. So the first weeks were just non-stop learning and adjusting. And my big problem or big fear was like perhaps the students got completely, you know, the media are saying that the art world is one of the most affected sectors. They are saying that the whole market is going to collapse. They are saying Art Basel is not going to take place. They are saying the museums may not reopen or be able to do anything that would include younger artists and younger people into all this. So they are completely reckless in just sending all these news without actually knowing that there is people that are reading it and thinking it's me, it's my life, it's my praxis, is everything I have. So, they panic. And yeah, it was you know, it has been quite of a marathon. So it works and, and I'm happy, but people got depressed, but I'm really sad and you need to go one by one and try to choreograph all that. So heavy.

00:07:05.31 Plus all the kids at home. I think. I have a kid which is ten, so he needs to go home schooling. You need to cook because when he comes back from school, is just coming back from the living room and he has one hour to eat and then you need to cook and then just return. So everything has to be timed on that. You cannot buy spontaneously. You need to buy before things. So I need to think, what do, like, all the time. It's an immense amount of washing machines that three people produce in a home. And yeah, it's just, you know, it's just completely a mix of things, which actually I don't mind, but it's much more polluted than any institutional life or there's no way to cut boundaries. People can call me, should call me any time they need because they need to have some reference point. So, yeah, all the boundaries got crossed and I think it's for a good reason, but intense.

00:08:06.42 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yeah, that's a very interesting point. How the professional and the personal are, like, living together in the same space. And in that in that sense, I wanted to ask you how the role of love and care has also been one of your research interests and pragmatic interest. So since the beginning of the confinement, you started a series of short texts titled "Corona Tales" with the goal of writing one per day until the end of the quarantine. So this has been a generous way to stay connected and share with the world, but also, I assume, is a personal coping mechanism. Can you describe this approach as a bi-lateral act of love and how this caring for others reverberates in oneself?

00:09:01.66 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Yeah, I think... Those things, they are called "Corona Tales", and they explain two stories. On the one hand, one day I kind of do a tale, that yeah, that is related to the history of my grandparents. And the next day I do one that is related to the history of my own parents. And it's a mixture between fiction and reality, somehow. I don't even know myself where it

ends, but it has to do with the fact that when I finish studies and when I was kind of in the position of, OK, you are a curator, I was always uncomfortable to a certain level and I never wanted something very defined. And at that time or let's say some 20 years ago or maybe less, but it was very difficult to maintain or to defend that position of wanting things to get into mix. Or, you know, I live it more polluted, like you were a curator independent, or a curator in an institution or a curator of biennials, or a curator at a Kunsthalle or in a museum with a collection. And then, let's put it that way, the museum, like the whole our world was completely full of orders. If a man goes into an art school, they ask them immediately about education, if a woman takes an art school is all about how is your teaching? And it also relates to the fact that you kind of abandoned curating.

00:10:31.86 And I never felt like that. So I do think that if you have a practice, to try to practice it from every corner and every moment of your life with a different perspective, with different tools, with a different language. But then you put the pieces together and it makes sense, and is much more elastic and flexible than we have been trained to think, or at least in my case. So when the whole thing happened, I was very you know, everyone said oh, we need to produce digital content and those things. And I came to the idea that before I do that, I just need to have a reconnection with with my friends. But I don't know exactly how many, where they are. And I thought that the best way, the only thing that I could as a curator, and I thought so, as a curator is to write one tale, fictional tale a day and that the only act that I could present as meaningful, because I could not be active in any of the simple way that fast, was to expose my own life somehow, in a way.

00:11:40.33 And then I started, remember the, like my grandparents, they lost both their parents, like, all of them. So they were orphans by age eight because of the Spanish Gripe. And I never thought about it. They have been telling it to me and to everyone, but it was kind of a tale also inside the family. But it never had any other dimension. So I thought about collecting those memories of that generation and mixing it up with the generation of my parents, deeply affected, of course, by poverty in the sense that they were obliged to migrate from the north of Spain to the big cities. It has never been a problem or a stigma or anything. I think it's just like they embodied the possibility of changing community group, and economic group, in a certain society. So I thought that it would be interesting to just rehearse it in a really banal way, if you want, because it's just everyday, Instagram, around seven, seven thirty. So. But then I thought if I push myself to do that and people start reading it like a "folletín," like the most, you know, an easy way of presenting a series. It's a way of having a drink together or a way of meeting every day because you would meet in the day, but you also know that I just wrote it, like my day was completely crowded. I really don't feel like writing these things right now before that talk, heavy day. And then, I should. Like it's my kind of commitment to that fiction. Yeah. And that's how I thought that is all about opening the space and curating is about opening that space. So of course now we have these tools. But, but also in fiction, you can do it and it's probably like one way of observing what art and culture can do.

00:13:41.68 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. Do you want to start presenting what you prepared and continue a conversation after?

00:13:53.22 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Well, I didn't think of presenting anything, you just asked for visuals. And then I send them and we can see them. I have a really, I've been getting very banal in the last years, like going back to some sort of basics. Like our website, for example, is has no corner. So everything is, normally webs have lots of windows. And one of the teachers, fantastic woman called Esther Hunziger, which is teaching Media in our institute's program. Something that I thought it would be. Do you remember the lava lamps, you know, these things? And **then I told**

her that I would like to have a web that is like a lava lamp and that it's kind of like, everything is a bubble and it goes like, it moves and it's kind of difficult to focus. And then they should also be like the **[INAUDIBLE]**, like depending on the program, then they expand or they reduce and everything is round and bubbly. So that's kind of an idea around technology and softness and questions of gender and question of organicity and questions of how something gives you the impression it's alive and it's breathing by very simple things. Like, you don't need much complication to get an impression of aliveness and things like that. And then we have a very small space for exhibitions, 14 by 14 meters. And it's a white cube. A glass cube, sorry. And we have been producing artworks there, commissions to artists. And then everything is also very simple.

00:15:40.73 All the commissions have to do with understanding a new empathy versus nature and seeing how in understanding nature we are truly understanding very complex ideas of non-binarism. And the non-binary, not only referring to identity or gender, but referring also to the polarity and the ideas of criticality that we inherit from, you know, culture versus nature and the city versus countryside. Like production of industrial goods versus any sort of production, like, for example, artistic production. So we have been totally engaged into those kind of programs. And then we wanted to create three axes in the Art Institute. One dedicated to the development of programs, understanding how education may impact positively or negatively in the position of gender in the art world, like in a quite political way. And then we have been doing all this science and nature seminars dealing with the question of what nature is and its status in philosophy and in practice, and observing it through the eyes of the practice of many artists but also scientists. And now we are starting another big group of activity dealing with with race and questions of exclusion, and xenophobia and all that. And then, yeah, they are very simple, I think. I try not to be very complex, which was one of the problems that I sometimes encounter in myself, so I try to do it like in a super simple way. So that's why the presentation, I think perhaps you can see some images and go through them and you can have a sense of what they are.

00:17:46.57 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yeah, I would like to go back to this idea of the logic of modernism and how it has relied on dichotomies to make sense of the world and to our relationship to it. And now the circumstances we are living today, in the middle of the pandemic, facing crises at different fronts have made evident that the ways in which everything is actually interconnected. So the divisions that seem clear and functional before now pose as limited and obsolete. So with the pandemic has aroused the urgency for holistic approaches to this understanding in order to question everything, more sustainable ways of being in and with the world. So you have argued that, um, well, it's more like a question. What does it mean to locate ourselves after nature? And how does this also mean locating ourselves after culture? And how can one argue that the disaster is behind us?

00:19:01.66 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Well, that's a very complex question that I cannot answer, but it's just actually very interesting that in the whole history of philosophy, that idea of the non-divide, the dialectical divide has been always present, is nothing new. But, of course, let's say that Hegel wins against Nietzsche, for example. Or, you know, Adorno also wins the battle against Deleuze, so to say. So all those that they have been trying to present the complexity of the non-divide, they have less of a power because it's very difficult to describe in words and arguments what that means, because our common sense comes always for. So, you know, you try to relate reality to what you experience, and then it's very difficult that if you have no experience of such a way of connecting and understanding to develop even a language to do it. And therefore, it's very... If you retrace the interests that philosophy had always had in non-binary worlds is humongous. And it goes from, you know, ancient religions to modern philosophy also, in the Western world. But what artists have been trying to say for many decades and in many ways, is that before

words come forward, you even need an experience of what it means, because otherwise, you know, if you don't become a frog, you have no idea of what it is to remain human, becoming a frog, becoming a frog, going back to the human.

00:20:49.32 And that kind of trip seems mystical. I think the whole mystical philosophers, they have been trying to describe it. But that's why, in my opinion, it's so important what artists are trying to provide, which is, let's say, an experiential environment for a new thinking to appear. And into that new thinking, the border is not necessarily the disaster because we are always "menacean". We are trying menace. If you don't stop doing damage, we are going to get extinct soon. You know, we are going to disappear and things like that. So the disaster and the damage is kind of eschatological thinking coming from, yeah, catholicism, but also from very kind of commonsensical ways of thinking is what we need to go, you know, we need to go beyond it. But said it like that, it's an immense, complex argument. But if an artist presents you with the possibility of feeling like a tree or understanding that the ocean is an intelligent entity, you probably are much more keen and much more ready to absorb that without necessarily trying to give it back in words or in ideas. And that's why I think art is so fundamental, it's so necessary right now, because it's really not a question of providing a fringe or providing an object, or providing an idea of taste anymore. But it's providing an intelligence of what the future could look like if we kind of, you know, allow for that to happen. And it's a question, it's a decision. Because you need to allow it. If you don't, then it's not possible. And I think that this crisis, of course, makes it really clear. I think that that's going to be, again, an incredible source of tension. I don't know if it's an answer.

00:23:04.79 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yeah, actually, in this sense, thinking about the ocean as a part of us has been a really generative way to consider non-binary relations of coexistence. But at the same time, we know just a little bit about the ocean. And this is one of the things the project with TBA21 Academy addresses and The Current, and in particular Ocean Archive inform your thinking before and after. How does this work inform your thinking about these ideas? And can you talk a little bit about the new podcast, Corona Under the Sea? The Ocean, sorry.

00:23:49.14 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Yeah. The whole interest about nature actually is very recent for me, I think. I must say that before encountering certain artists, I never really took it really serious. When I was a student, even reading Donna Haraway was kind of something lateral, but everyone was much more hardcore, institutionalist, with all its critique and so on. But at the end, you preferred to do an exhibition in a big, fantastic museum, than in a forest. And it has been only over time and years that I've been kind of transforming my opinion. But the biggest influence for me have been people like Joan Jonas and artists that they they live it out, in a completely different manner. And they and they propose it in a really eloquent way. So it was doing Documenta that I really kind of went much deeper into it with Carolyn. And Carolyn was a complete believer, because she thought that it was revulsive. So she kind of used nature or her idea of embracing nature as a political, a political weapon, like presenting genre, and the questions of genre in a complete different... You know, the questions of how art locates certain important orders. Like she saw in nature, the possibility of disrupting the orders and then trying to be much more informal and much more kind of undisciplined. So that kind of started there. And then, and then little by little, you start making friends and getting in touch with people that have similar interests. And it has been, TBA that came back to me and said, like, since you also seem to be interested in the subjects, we have this program since, by now more than a decade.

00:25:51.96 And they do these trips and they, so they kind of... They commission curator to commission activities and interconnectivity in between science, activism, research and art, contemporary art. And they have like, they organize a trip or an expedition, as they call it. And in this trip, **you**

00:25:47.91 are free to invite certain people that they should relate. And then it's also some sort of exercise thing. And they also have this new space in Venice and they organize things around it. So when I first came in their vicinity, I was not really knowledgeable about the ocean, but it has been through the work in itself that I started learning and getting to know many people and getting really excited about the research. I think that's the fascinating thing, is that now scientists are also very, very interested in what we are doing and what artists are doing because they provide an experience of things that they can also not explain, even if the researchers that they prefer the experience of the research than the data or the information about it.

00:27:07.20 And yes, that's how it works. And then, for example, now these days have been very much in touch with a scientist, which is actually based in New York, called David Gruber. And David just got an incredible research grant to, for the first time, he's going to be able to explore with many technology and they are trying to codify the language of the whales. So it's really, really interesting because that includes so many fields of knowledge and people trying to understand and decodify what they are saying. So it's just fascinating, because on the one hand, they have certain technology that they think can help them to decipher certain codes. And on the other, they are completely terrified to know what they are saying. And that also is touching poetry, you know, he's kind of asking me if we can have meetings with poets and so on, because he fears his team needs to get ready for the beauty of that language if they are going to spend the next decade with this incredible amount of money in a station in the Caribbean doing that. So it's an interesting moment, I think, that is that is happening in many corners. I will not say this is mainstream, even if it's a lot of money invested in it. But it's happening in micro-worlds, that before they were more much more isolated than they are now, I think. Or I have the impression that they are becoming more visible.

00:28:46.35 And the podcast is like, yeah, I don't know about you, but my students have a really heavy tendency not to read, so I just do podcasts so that they just don't feel bad about not reading. And we decided that we did that first, that was called Phenomenal Ocean. And the second one, we started posing similar questions to scientists and cultural historians and marine biologists on how also this crisis may affect research, field research, and even the perception of those problems that may, you know, everyone knows that, of course, because of the way we are with nature, nature acts back. But also the very moment that we can go back to a recovery or adaptive recovery mode, we may forget again about the importance that these issues have. So the first chapter has been released two days ago, I think... No, on Tuesday. And we also have a microsite with movies. And then in one channel you will see small productions by art students and on the other channel are commissioned by international artists.

00:30:07.97 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yeah, actually, now I would like to talk about a little bit about methodologies and how these collective thinking platforms function and what does it mean to work with different disciplines at the same time and how to organize the expectations of collective work? And is it possible or is it necessary to agree on what is at stake for these events?

00:30:38.89 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** I don't think so. I think that the most important thing is exposure or my experience is that you learn or we learn the most if we are exposed to enough difference, plurality, and different ways of approaching similar problems. And then there needs to be enough time for for us to absorb it and then to rehearse, to exercise, like in performance. That you not only need to agree on your mind, but you really need to, to perform it. Like, for example, I've been talking a lot about that with... There is a guy in a very important institute about Science called Alex Jordan, and Alex Jordan discovered that the fish can recognize themselves in the mirror. And by doing this discovery, he has been defying the whole pyramid,

you know. That human brain, like the primates', and then the rest of the animals. So there is a huge epistemological, radical transformation of that way of seeing intelligence and how humans possess it in the first degree and the rest in derivative degrees and so on, because fish can recognize themselves in the mirror and dogs and cats cannot.

00:32:07.05 There is many questions about intelligence in life that we cannot explain wrongly, completely wrong. And then he has been trying to develop methods of combine the, like explaining the impact of his discovery to scientists and to other people, because scientists are also in denial. They try not to give importance to these discoveries. So there is a big debate going on right now in between the scientific etiological community about it. And then he has been developing performances where he would invite all of us to move like fish and would train us to move like sharks or like whales or like cod or like anchovy or whatever, and then would kind of make us understand how these different movements modify the movement of the whole collective group. And you just adapt to that. And then for a week or two, he would just train us as fish. And it's a really, you know, super playful and, if you want, banal exercise. But through all these kind of methods, we have been learning so much about exactly what you are saying, I think. How much can you agree if you are sit or how much you agree if you are dancing together? So it's a different agreement if you dance in a collective group or if you dance with somebody else, only one by one, or if you dance with three or three hundred people. Like you can see it now on the street, you are dancing, avoiding the human, creating a choreography so that you would be stopping the spread of the virus.

00:33:56.45 So the agreements are completely different, but they are also collective and they are not exactly rational, only. They kind of you know, they are not only steady, they change with the decision making processes changing at the same time. So like in fish stores. So I think that we can inherit a very kind of, let's say, model of community and working together, that comes from labor and, the idea is very trade unionist. So there is a group that has a certain power and a certain group that is trying to boycott the power of the other group. And those groups are pretty symmetrical, but they are not really evolving together in a very organic way. And that comes, of course, from the history of how labor and how power and opposition and leadership has been defined. And I've been finding that by looking at all the models like animals and scientific models and just making a much more hybrid of coexistence of those models, it kind of provides a kind of better example for perhaps the future of artistic practices, working together, different types of institutions and institutional models working together, so coexistence becoming something much more complex than just becomes more symmetrical, you know, activism against and in favor, things like that. But you should also do questions no? We should open it to others, perhaps. So difficult to know. I have the impression I'm boring you.

00:35:55.19 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Does anyone has a question? Nobody, so I get to ask another question. And so. I think I would like to talk about the role of art in the intersection of facts and fiction and how imagination plays like a pivotal part in projecting towards new and more sustainable futures. So how can, I mean, you have described some examples, but how do you envision the ways in which art and science will work together in the future?

00:36:51.36 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Very difficult also because. You know, to explain it in a really, in a really, how can I say it? It would be very easy to talk about these things in an abstract way, but every one of us is probably asking how, yeah, what to do in a month or two months or even a year. And I think that the most important thing for me right now is to to be very attentive to many different things that may not have anything directly to do with the practice of contemporary art or contemporary art curating as defined by institutional life, and then try to really create bridges and communities with walls that are very far away from from art, but actually are able to absorb

us. And I think that I also see that in science and in technology, there is a way of decolonizing them, introducing aspects of social transformation and values that may be very important for the future. So, you know, sometimes when you talk about art and science, people think about some sort of knowledge, fantastic fantasy. And then the question remains, how does it affect poverty? How does it affect the access of culture and art to those that have no access to it? And how how can we do it so that does not necessarily need to go through institutional filters and formats? How can you bring it to the places that people are in? And I think that in that sense, the questions of field work and interest versus life that science has in its own questioning may be of use for us, but also science is fucked up in many ways, as we know. So one is to always be very, very cautious because it's only particular questions and particular research, but not science as such. I think the building of science is completely also taken by their own interest and moneymaking, in many ways. So it's a fascinating thing, but it's also our responsibility to just link with parts of it that we think are relevant, not it, as such. There is nothing in science that is good per se or something like that.

00:39:41.67 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Thank you. I really want to encourage people to jump in with questions.

00:39:58.75 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** And can you I think... Are you doing all the classes online?

00:40:03.71 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yeah.

00:40:05.40 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** And can you meet each other? Like those which are upstate, can you meet?

00:40:12.85 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yeah, sometimes we can go for walks together.

00:40:17.30 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** And then the graduation exhibition, how does it look like? Can you do an exhibition?

00:40:23.40 **CAMILA MONTALVO:** We don't know yet. We are waiting for the government to, like, say something about this. I mean, it seems, like, kind of bad because the reopening process, like the last part of the reopening process is art institutions and schools. So, since the Hessel Museum is a museum itself, it would be part of the last phase of the reopening process, which we don't know yet, like the date, or...

00:40:56.18 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** And have you been thinking collectively, if you cannot do an exhibition or exhibitions, what are the things you could do to respond to the situation?

00:41:06.77 **CAMILA MONTALVO:** We have talked about that. I mean, I'm speaking because I think I'm in the second year here, but I mean, there are a lot. But the ones that are speaking. So, yeah, we have talked a lot like, in many classes on these kind of things. But we don't have, like, an answer yet, you know, it's so hard because, for example, some of us already have the installation done. I mean, because we were scheduled in different times for the exhibition itself. For example, in my case, I haven't done anything apart from painting the walls, which is OK. But there are others that they already have it, like, you know, ready, completely ready. So they, I mean, it's so hard to change everything now. And if you already spent all of your budget on what you did before, you know, like none of us have more budget now because we already invested in everything in, like, what we are, we were supposed to do. So, yes, we have talked. For example, like the main piece of mine is a book. And what it did is to upload it online. And it started to, like, circulate it around to send it to like many scholars and curators that I know that can be interested in the topic. So, like, that's an strategy that I like executed, but for everyone is so different. You know, I think that



there are some that may be kind of adapt their projects like to an online platform. In my case, I can't, like apart from the book, which is already done. That's the thing. I mean, we have spoke.

00:42:41.77 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** I have been thinking, for example, in doing a workshop or a collective thing on the transformation that is ahead of us because it's going to be affecting, you know, I've been spending days and nights trying to figure out scenarios. But I do think that right now it would be really we have been talking about science and all that. But what I mean is that, for me would be crucial to spend some time drawing scenarios, you know, almost like film scripting. Like trying to figure out how much we are capable of imagining before it happens. As a true exercise for the mind, as if it was not real, as if it was all a fiction. And then just to analyze all of us, mostly curators, how much are we capable of imagining? That, I think it would be really interesting to do.

00:43:47.20 **CAMILA MONTALVO:** Yeah, we have we have spoken about this, we haven't, like, made conclusions, you know. Because it's like, a conclusion, I think it's impossible right now. But the good thing is that, for example, the second years were supposed to organize a symposium for another class. A symposium, a publication and a performance program for EMPAC, which is a space in upstate, too. So from the very beginning of this project, which was a year ago, we planned to develop everything on our website and on radio platforms. So at the end, like, I don't know if it was like a kind of intuition or something, but it worked out so well because at the end, we are developing this kind of plan which will be online and we are designing it like based on what is happening now, which is like this idea of **[INAUDIBLE]**. You know, like the design itself is going to be like adapted. And at the end, I think that, like, the format didn't change because we talked about this in that format from the beginning, but the topics are changing. Because we are more interested in speaking about what's happening now or, like, doing things that are related even if they are not speaking about that very explicitly. So, yeah, like, there are some things that intuitively like work, I don't know why we plan that from the beginning because of the... Actually the project itself, it was to organize a symposium like on site, I mean at school or like somewhere here in upstate and everything. But we organized that from the beginning... Evan is here now, he's the leader of this project. I don't know if you want to say something.

00:45:28.84 **EVAN CALDER WILLIAMS:** Can you all hear me. Hi Chus, I've been here all along. I was just saving bandwidth, our precious resource. No, it's interesting. Yeah. I mean, what you were just saying and I agree, there's this sort of strange way in which some things become kind of untimely in kind of many ways. And I've been really struck in that case, by the way, in which this project, which we thought about well before any of this kind of became the kind of daily basis and crisis, suddenly kind of took on a different shape. So, yeah, you know, I've been really startled by that and this kind of weird sort of foresight where we had that. But I guess it's something that I wanted to... Chus if I can ask you a question too. I'm thinking back when you, when you mentioned kind of Joan Jonas and I just would to and maybe this is also a question for other people as well, too. But like, I think I'm really struck by and appreciative of how you're thinking about and this appeared in some of the images as well, too, like the sort of relation between kind of concepts, including concepts that refuse sort of binary logic. And on the other hand, something like figures or images of this. And I'm thinking of like the image of even the sort of the people wearing the shell masks, etcetera. So I wanted to hear you say more of it. We also hear from other people about, um, yeah, about about how you've been thinking about this sort of double role between sort of a labor of making concepts thinkable. And on the other hand, these sometimes, much like in Jonas's own work, this kind of whimsical approximations. Right? These sort of provisional stand ins that are not the thing itself, but opens something up.

00:47:04.03 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** I think for me, of course, it has been a completely position of privilege to go

back to an art school because then I could invite them, produce some of those works with the help of some foundations I could team up. But at the beginning, when I kind of left the exhibition space, people were like beating me and saying, oh, why did you abandon them? And then you kind of... And, but it was clear that I wanted to do something that it could not be presented in the in the frame that tourism was pushing the museums to go. So you cannot go and pretend to be successful or pretend that the market is going to help with certain positions, because I never expected that. I thought it was always difficult. It was a moment in history where these things perhaps were possible, but it was very, very clear that the way that big art institutions have been pushed by art policies, not only in the States, but all over Europe, I think. You know, Berlin is just like a tourist thematic park of itself. Barcelona, forget it. Madrid was going in the same direction, London, Paris. So it was impossible to present certain things. So the school truly helped me because I was able, I was surprised by how easy it was to fundraise medium amount of money and then just working collective in small groups that they were absolutely OK with giving a certain amount. I had a certain amount and then produce a fantastic piece by people that they were speculating with something that was patching always something ridiculously naive to be presented as an exhibition. But at the end they made it work. Like Eduardo Navarro with many works, Mathilde Rosier, of course Joan Jonas, but many others.

00:49:08.95 I've been talking extensively the last weeks with Judy Chicago, because of course, all this generation, they have been there, they wanted to be there. And now they see that there is a space that has been created by very few what is there. And they want to address it and talk about it. And as you said, ideas are fundamental, but experiences are before the ideas and before the language. And only artists can do it for us, that's why I'm a curator and not a philosopher, because I do think that the future of philosophy depends on an experience that you need to have and to make it happen. You know, you look at certain artworks... I was yesterday talking about it with Judy. And, yeah, they were considered super stupid and gabbed of non importance, irrelevant, out of culture, beyond the social. But now they're completely having, as I mentioned, as if they are messianic somehow. And they're not. They just are dependent on systems and values that have been always there. But but now they are kind of getting a force. And the same with Joan Jonas, I think is becoming better and better. I think it's really incredible. So, I met her 20 years ago. I bought her for the collection of MACBA and I like it. But it's not the same emotion and love that I feel in the last years with... I think this woman is just developing an incredible body of work that is unprecedented in many ways and... Yeah, that kind of encourages me and it gives me hope that you actually don't need that much. One good part of that crisis is that actually smaller who survives better. So it's OK. And many of the things we like tend to be small. They're not super big. I think. And may I ask you, like, from your position. And, what are the main things that are worrying you right now, like as a group and collectively? Because I do think that that's something different in every perspective. But, I think what are the major worries that you have in mind?

00:51:44.10 **CAMILA MONTALVO:** For me, for example, apart from the economic things, like political ones, and for example, my country, which is like, for countries that don't have like a lot of resources, it's harder. Like all these kind of things, like, worry me a lot. But in like the curatorial field, what worries me and I don't know... yes, what worries me is like, the fact of like, that now, like Internet, like technological tools are necessary. Because, for example, for me, I mean, I'm not interested at all in developing my practice through, like, a website, you know, I'm no like that. That's not the way in which I can think, actually. It's not like the way in which I work or my mind works. So for me is kind of difficult to think about that. I know that it's not going to be like that or whatever. But I do know that many of curators and artists are adapting their practices into these kind of tools. And for me is like something that that is outside my box. I don't know why. So yes...

00:52:46.73 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** But I do think that this is a fantastic example, what you are saying. But on the one hand, it's true. That is outside our boxes almost of a lot of us, because our training and the way that even in our education, those that choose to be curators or art historians or artists, they normally come from a field called "humaniora" or the humanities. And the humanities seem to be in a permanent war with something else, called the technology and the instrumentalization of objects and things like that. That's actually really like nonsensical to think like that. So, I think that on the one hand, nobody wants to be virtual. I really don't want to be on Zoom the rest of my life. But I also think that it would be amazing to be as imaginative with the tools, as we are with the ideas, when they are disembodied. You know what I mean? I think it would be really, really good because our own training is super conservative. We are like we are trained in ideas of expertise and ideas of... Like a French chef. So we cannot get dirty with that technology shit. But it's not that. And there is also an incredible amount of possibilities that now we are not seeing, I think. When people are talking about viewing rooms or they are talking about digital content is just a very old fashioned TV channel or a talking head through the synchronicity of voice with image, I think. We are not touching upon anything fantastic. But I do see lots of possibilities that have not been you know... I see it with with the kids, I must say. So I'm seeing that with homeschooling. I'm not seeing that in the world of curating, but I'm seeing that in the in the homeschooling work. I've been interviewing all the friends of my own kid and asking what they use and how they connect and what do they do half the time. And they are much more interesting than us in the ways that they connect. And and they use it for dancing and they have different technologies for different functions.

00:54:59.92 And I think that we could apply that to re-socialization of art, you know. Just trying to take art to conversations in technology that are not taking place. Like the other day, for example, a student of mine, he's doing an incredible project of very old fashioned portraits of people in Zoom and WebEx. And when he was talking about it, I thought, oh, fuck, he's going to take a picture of the screen. But no, no, he is convincing people to stage themselves as an historical portrait in that moment. And it's working in a fantastic way. And then I said, but what about prostitution? I think now, also prostitution is online. You need to go into all the sectors of the city and so on. And then he said, oh, totally... I need to. You know what I mean? I think, then we were able to connect with a couple of brothels in the city that are closed. And then we were having a conversation with people of a complete, in a complete different practice. And I thought, wow, that's really kind of opening a new dimension to what we call social art, no? Because all of a sudden these doors get open. This person we were talking to, two prostitutes, they were completely fascinated. And one of them asked, like, when you organize something, can you please invite us to see how your conversations go? And I thought, like, wow, I never thought about that. Something that simple, is like joining in a room and that the room could be much more hybrid right now, than in reality, perhaps. And in that sense, I think that we should, you loosen up now. Like now I think doing podcast is completely uninteresting if you want, but they are so fun, but they are really not technological. It's just radio. Any other worries that you would like to share? I'm very curious about how this time is for you too.

00:57:19.67 **CAMILA MONTALVO:** OK, if no one has something, I don't... This is not actually something that I see that is, like, working out and is the fact of the collectiveness. I mean, the collective kind of working that we are kind of like running now. For example, I run a gallery in Bogotá, at the same time in which, I mean, I've been doing that at the same time, in which I am doing this Masters. So I've been traveling all the time and whatever. And now I can't travel, and I stayed upstate. Since all the galleries are closed in Colombia or whatever, we started like, a kind of a group of galleries around the country. And we have meetings every week, like thirty five people every week. Like meetings for four or five hours, like creating ideas of commercialization of exhibitions... These kind of things, in a field which is super competitive.

And I think that it hadn't happened before. If it's not because this is happening, you know, like these kind of things that are happening now that we are kind of mandated to be together, with others and to make plans with, like, people that you... That otherwise you wouldn't have done, you know. So I'm very interested in that because I think that from this moment, like the concept of community and community living and community creation is going to be so important. And I think that this is this is changing the way in which relationships are made, being made.

00:58:59.02 So, yes. But for me, that's not a worry. It's more like an advantage that I'm seeing at this moment from that. And for example, now that I can't travel I feel that I'm more involved in the art field in my country because I can be present even if I'm not there. So, I can be present all the time. And not only the times in which I was traveling, that it was for one week, no more than that because I was studying at the same time. So these kind of things, I really like. I mean, I really like that there are advantages of the things that are happening now and I don't know if it is going to be working like that, like from now, like, for the future or if it's something like for a certain moment. And, you know, because I would like to... I mean, the advantages that it gives you are so good for the future. I think that you can be, like, everywhere and you can be involved, like, in a community, like collective. So, yeah...

01:00:00.86 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** I think that it's a very good question to know how much of these practices may remain, but also in a positive way, not only just to be all over and ubiquitous, just in Internet, which is also creating lots of anxiety. People trying to be in twenty five meetings and families at the same time. But just be specific and try to create a sense of caring for the group that you are working in or the groups that you are working in. And it's a very good question to see how much of it may stay or may produce new bonds among groups that they were disconnected before. I also have the impression that right now people are so afraid, in a way, that they are also much less aggressive or more caring or more precautious. So they are gentle and that's something that they really, truly appreciate. So there is a gentleness among, in the conversation, that is, of course originated by the fact that people would like to know more how this would affect us and what could be done. And the amount of problems are so complex and many that we cannot solve them individually, that much we know already. No matter how good your business were doing or your museum or your organization, we are going to need a collective effort to sustain the system as such. So... And I think we need to get ready for that, because that's going to happen. Any questions for me?

01:01:57.52 **MUHEB ESMAT:** Is it me? Yeah. I think just going back to your talk. The points that everyone is talking about, this whole change to the digital and what the consequences of this could be, I think to me I'm more worried about how do we approach these consequences and how do we historicist them. Because what I see is that a lot of the consequences that we are afraid of in the Western societies that have never seen war or conflict or anything, actually have been real for people for a while, and they have found ways to deal with it. And then those histories are not really there. So, like, the ideas of going digital or the kind of things like how you make communities when you don't have the physical space or these things are new for the West, for places where they haven't had war, they haven't had conflict. But these are things that people have dealt with, like, if you think about **[INAUDIBLE]** being under law for years, they have to have to build the community in different ways or Iraq or Afghanistan or other places. How people have left and they keep in touch with people or how do they build, kind of, like connections through the digital or through other ways. I think there's a lot of things that we need to consider that it doesn't become like that outside or like... How do I say this? Like the Western world, that this...

01:03:26.08 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** No, totally, you are completely right. I've been talking a lot with friends from

countries like Ghana or also with Gaza. And you are completely right. They have the training and they know much more about this community building processes than the Western cultures, for sure. But it's also true, what they are saying is that the problem they have been facing again and again in history is how to sustain what they built, because it gets destroyed also in a regular basis. And and I think that exactly having a conversation about these two elements together could be very, very useful to to learn from who knows more, but also to sustain what we built instead of making it appear and disappear again and again. And there is also an incredible... There's incredible possibilities of really helping them giving through the things that we can do also digitally, I think, that physically are not that possible or they materialize different. So it's a stupid thing. But the very moment that we put certain content of us online and we pay for the rights of certain things, then... I just started to ask my friends in the Middle East and in Africa, the few places I know very well, if they wanted to share the same content with their students.

01:05:03.52 And then I realized, why have I not done that before? And I did. Many things are open, but there is certain other things that you need to pay because otherwise the content does not provide any resource and any money for artists. You need to pay for viewing it and so on. But it has been much easier and actually less expensive and complex than I thought to do so in the right way and producing a viewing situation and sharing situations and then just add networks to the network. It's still not throwing it into the internet, you know what I mean? So, yeah, I'm now sharing it and so on, but there still is another classroom. So, for example, in Senegal, which I am really, really close to what they do and we exchange a lot, a lot, a lot. Or with Gaza, with Emily Jacir and all these people. So but still it remains. So the group is becoming bigger, but it still is a group that is inside a group, you know? It's not just content in internet for everyone, it's still thought for somebody. And then these people feedback and say, why... Do you have something on this or that? And then you can just modify and learn of what is generosity in the side of the many different participants. But yeah, I think you are completely right. I think the Western is not the lead on this on this community building through any digital platform in a meaningful way.

01:06:50.54 **MICHELLE SONG:** Can I ask the next question? This is kind of in response to what you, like, you asked us about like, what we are struggling right now... And I, and in response to what you said about having a practice and having that practice being like, increasingly disembodied. Maybe, I'm a second year, maybe it's just like a result of like having just completed our thesis. I've been trying to locate where my practice is exactly and also going through curatorial school, like, even before the lockdown, I had the feeling that art practice, like us or your students are like already less embodied, let's say, as like an artist who works in the studio. Yeah. So, like. I guess I'm just like... My struggle is living with this anxiety of, like, not knowing where my practice is exactly, like, all this time when I'm staying at home, I feel like I'm just, like consuming a lot of information, reading about people's writing on coronavirus and, also, like.... Like what you said about, collaborative work for me is, like, I don't... I want to be gentle with people, especially now, like, I don't know how much I can ask someone of the commitment to collaborate, if that makes sense.

01:08:36.85 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Totally, I completely understand you. And on the other hand, I think that one of the possible ways out would be to understand that the curatorial is becoming or will become something very choreographical; that we need to be, like, imagining ways of collectively moving together and designing situations. Like not only exhibitions, or not only events, but kind of, acting where a certain moderation and design for a community is needed. And this moderation includes, of course, the artists, but also ourselves in our practice. And I do see an incredible need for curating right now, but not in the same way. And it will take me some hours to explain. But I'm cooking that idea since days in my head. And I think that it has to do with what your colleague before was asking, the idea of designing the quality of the conversation or the

conditions for that quality to appear. So, you know, like, there is going to be many moments that is going to be very needed because of also these technologies, to reimagine new structures, new conditions and so on. And this does have to do with curating and with collaborating with artists on doing so and producing art and culture and doing so. But it's so far away from the ways that we have been introduced to the practice as something that has to do with selection and then rearrangement of a certain knowledge to explain or to argument in a certain way to present.

01:10:34.29 So I just... I think that the presentation part of it for a while will have less relevance because we are presented all the time with everything right now and that we want... In order to regain presence and not presentation, then we need to to define those. Yeah, I hate myself for saying "auratic" conditions, but yes, some sort of atmospheric environmental design and I do think that curators may be very good at it. And and I see that in the in the fields of science, that they are longing for it. I'm seeing it in many fields, so I don't see the praxis just attached to the same institutions as it was attached. And still, dealing perhaps with the same, I think, is not that you need to be super mega crazy inventing anything else, because at the end, I still believe that what solves it is the work with artists, but it is the where and the conditions under which you work with them and the new context, that you can totally discover moments of hope. So, yeah, I think that your way of addressing it is very right. But it... I see, I see possibility. But it would demand this free head of us allowing ourselves to do it. And finding friends, I think. This collaboration right now has really a lot to do with love and friendship because everyone is exhausted, this type of life is really draining. And it can only be based not on mutual interest only, or particular mutual interest because of a particular project. It needs to have a little bit more to it, because otherwise you cannot sustain it for more than a week, it fails.

01:12:42.91 But this is completely my personal opinion. But I think, I've been impressed by school friends of when I was 14, finding me, and then asking if I remember them. So the lockdown does this, it retraces emotions and feelings for people that you don't want to, you don't want them to escape. Otherwise, it's not nostalgia, I think. I don't think these people are searching and thinking, "let's remember. Do you remember the days at school?" No, no, it's not that. Is that the idea that... Do you also remember? Like, you know, do you feel or do you still love me? That's the question. And the answer is fucking, yes! And it's really great. So I kind of totally value that. And I think that curators should act in a similar way, to do that, retracing. And that would be an incredible social and meaningful work to do.

01:13:57.64 **MICHELLE SONG:** Thank you.

01:14:00.06 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Thanks to you. Any other question? Paulina, did I left anything unanswered?

01:14:09.61 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** No, actually, I think you answered most of our thoughts in a really beautiful way. Thank you.

01:14:17.53 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** I'm going to share... I'm going to send books to you that we just collect for you all. And they are going to come in like... We are going to put them, I think, on Monday or so. And then I think next week it comes another podcast that is called Feminism Under Corona. We have been talking with many people that think that also this conflict has been... Yeah, not exactly helping gender equality again. And and yeah, it's really interesting episodes. So everything I have new I'll send it to you and then you distribute... Is that OK?

01:14:58.01 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Yes, perfect. Thank you.

- 01:15:00.00 **CHUS MARTÍNEZ:** Right. Fantastic. It has been lovely talking to you. I'm going to go and cook for my 10 year old, dinnertime, Friday night.
- 01:15:09.34 **PAULINA ASCENCIO FUENTES:** Thank you very much, Chus. It was amazing to have you here. And we hope to see you soon at CCS.