

LUMINOUS GREEN

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Luminous Green is a series of gatherings about possible futures; about a human world, that is enlightened, imaginative, electrified and most importantly – living in a fertile symbiosis with the planet. Luminous Green encourages transdisciplinary discussions and collaborations between people from all walks of life, including artists, designers, academics, activists, social entrepreneurs, economists and policy-makers. The objective is to spawn inspiring conversations, contacts and propositions using holistic methods for looking beyond (and beneath) conservation and sustainability. Everyone who becomes involved in these gatherings is interested in making their work and life an example of resilience, innovation and inspiration.

Present Continuous

Current local, translocal and global communication patterns seem to be reflecting the turbulent conditions of our ecological, economic and social habitats. The media, in their myriad shapes and forms, provide variously coloured lenses through which to watch this turbulence. Mass media, with their focus on easily digestible sound bites of information, often oversimplify the interrelatedness between issues in an attempt at clarity. Information found on the internet can be rich and varied, often requiring a healthy dose of scepticism concerning the tangled paths of interpretation and translation from (original) sources. Social media can provide a diversity of opinions, experiments and other

curiosities. Plenty of consumption, plenty of communication and plenty of action, adding additional strange attractors to existing chaotic situations. A leitmotif throughout the various communication channels is a (quite legitimate) sense of urgency. Frequently the responses to this urgency take the form of the fallacy 'We must do something. This is something. Therefore, we must do it'. It is not clear how much (if any) thought goes into considering the wide range of answers to the more involved questions such as – what can be done; what can be done now; what can be done now that is relevant; what can be done now that will set the foundation for future improvements; and most importantly, what can be done that won't end up making things worse?

Much of the current thinking about the sustainability of our lifestyles is predominantly future focused – in 2020, by 2050, in 5, 15 or 50 years – things will change for the better (according to neo-liberal optimism), or for the worse (according to some scientific projections, or deep green pessimism). In the mean time, the future has arrived and begun to unravel into the past, quietly and unnoticed. In the rush to predict or change the future, we all too easily neglect the present, the only time in which we can actually influence and exercise our possible futures. By becoming more consciously present in the 'here-and-now', we can begin to discern a continuous string of present moments stretching into the mythical 'long term'. We cannot sacrifice the present for an unattainable future, yet we cannot retreat into an 'innocent' past which spawned our present problems. So, the question becomes; what can we do to live more fully in the present, work toward a more luminous future, while drawing inspiration from the past?

Capitalism and technological optimism

Our present is technologically driven and thus we will need to address cultural, political and environmental issues through a technological lens. However, technology itself is not enough. It is a blunt object, an undirected automaton without human will, desire or interest. Any technological lens needs to be focused by 'enlightened' intention, and that intention illuminated by an understanding that humanity is an integral part of the natural world we inhabit. We have nowhere to go if we leave our 'blue ball-of-a-home' (Horvitz 2002). Futuristic, technological progress alone cannot save

us from natural disasters, or lead towards a sustainable future.

Another lens, frequently used to examine contemporary issues is that of the market economy. The optimism that market-based approaches will solve our environmental and social problems has been dampened somewhat by the financial crisis of 2008, but it still strongly colours the view. The financial crisis demonstrated in devastatingly unpredictable fashion that global systemic failures can occur even in the heart of the sector that is built as a market 'on its own terms'. This should provide a double-edged warning about global markets, for both those who are quick to defend and those who are even quicker to denounce. On one hand, we cannot let something essential to our survival, something so uniquely precious as our only life support system be driven by market forces, which are barely understood and frequently exploited. A worrying aspect of applying economic models to the environment, or society at large, is that these models often ignore parts of an exchange that are difficult to measure or directly quantify as 'externalities', things existing outside of a transaction. In a closed system, such as our self-regulating, self-sufficient biosphere, there can be no externalities. On the other hand, the financial crisis also demonstrated how interconnected, interdependent and global our technological systems for valuing and allocating resources have become. It would be folly to dismantle such a system hastily, especially if the alternative is to replace it with something even more feudal (protectionist cartels, local warlords or robber barons for example). Global capitalism, if it is to survive (which is a big 'if' for some) must evolve in the face of complexity, assume redundancy and resilience rather than efficiency, scarcity and fragility (Taleb 2007).

Ecology of Solutions

If there were simple technological or market 'solutions' to these various crises, we would, no doubt, have instigated them already. However, the political and social systems that are struggling to confront long-term, systemic, life threatening problems appear as unconcerned as the metaphorical frog, not noticing itself boiling to death. Any 'solutions' still left available to us collectively, are going to be complex (but not necessarily complicated) and messy. We may not have the luxury to make incremental changes any longer, but that should not paralyse us. There are many, many small reciprocally connected changes that can work in synergy (in the Fuller sense) to form larger, longer-term systemic and cultural shifts. What distinguishes such changes from individual incremental 'fixes' is an illuminated understanding of connectedness and interdependence between them. Developing an ecology of imperfect, complimentary solutions, rather than striving to perfect a single one which might work in some indefinite future. Thereby we not only spread the risk, but also open up possibilities to unexpected and previously unimagined outcomes.

Permaculture (Holmgren 2002) provides a compelling example of how to successfully apply an 'ecology of solutions' to growing food and increasing biodiversity. In its simplest form, permaculture provides a method of gardening that focuses not only on the desired crop, but nourishes the eco-system on which it depends. The resulting gardens (also known as 'food forests') develop into robust self-sustaining systems, able to provide an abundance of food for humans, animals and plants, while requiring a minimum of inputs over the long term. While there is ongoing discussion over how

widely these principles can be applied (Holmgren 2002), the Permaculture design principles¹ that guide this type of farming are a recurring inspiration to people from all walks of life, interested in approaching today's challenges from a 'whole systems' perspective. Using permaculture principles, we can approach design (or any other human endeavour) as a whole system, where each element contributes to the whole. The role of humans in this system is to continually observe the whole (from within, since we are a part of the system ourselves) and consider our actions, which influence individual elements, while contributing to a global dynamic balance. In the words of the natural farmer and former microbiologist, Masanobu Fukuoka, 'the ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops but the cultivation and perfection of human beings' (Fukuoka 1978).

Culture and Cultivation

The term cultivation² is at the root of the word 'culture' in many Indo-European languages. Culturing still refers to the growing crops or cultivating biological materials (bacteria, yeasts or tissues) in artificial conditions, but most commonly when we talk about culture, we talk about the cultivation of human beings – our thoughts, behaviours, actions, communities and ultimately our (collective) consciousness. The arts, sciences and spiritual traditions, can all be considered technologies of cultivation, fuelled by collaboration between different people. In permaculture (as well as other holistic approaches to the world) cultivation of the environment and transformation of culture are active and continuous, interrelated processes within the same system. Undoubtedly, the cultivation of envi-

ronments and cultures will contain a diversity of (sometimes contradictory) approaches – a concoction of technological, economic, environmental and cultural ingredients in various measures. Bringing together a plethora of diverse approaches will require compromises to be made, vested interests divested, opinions changed, lifestyles restyled and new, 'unholy' alliances will need to be formed (and, if we play our cards right, a phoenix may rise from the ashes).

'A problem cannot be solved by people who are concerned with only one or another of its parts. To the extent that the consciousness of everyone is not fundamentally transformed, pollution will not cease' (Fukuoka 1978). (see Colour plate xxv, Fig. D)

Another important lesson from permaculture is that cultivation begins with the immediate surroundings of the human dwelling – starting in the kitchen, with the herbs on the windowsill, spreading into mixed patches where vegetables, fruit and 'weeds' are grown in guilds (Holmgren 2002). From the edges of these patches, larger trees grow to form full-blown forests, in whose protective shade a variety of shrubs, creepers and herbaceous plants can find a home. Even though cultivation of the whole forest is the goal, the first 'zone' (the home) in which humans spend most of their time and effort is the zone the closest to our everyday life. Similarly, for most people global turbulence only becomes apparent when it adversely affects our daily lives – whether it is ongoing droughts, flooded basements, xenophobia, credit crunch, heat waves, unemployment, or food insecurity.

Guild Culturing

While the complexity and the vastness of global issues may remain as abstract figures and threats, with occasional news reports of disasters in far-off lands, we remain collectively paralysed (or simply apathetic). In order to make necessary changes, cultivating a more illuminated culture, the various crises need to be dealt with simultaneously on a global (ecological) and a human (personal) scale. Changing cultures requires finding appropriate levels at which individual contributions can be most effective. To further the comparison with permaculture, we need to find social and cultural equivalents of guild gardening – where, while sustaining our individual selves, each of us performs functions that also contribute to the development of the guild as a whole.

We need complimentary, and often redundant actions on all levels. For example, people focused on global policy are involved in negotiating treaties, such as the Kyoto and Copenhagen Protocols; simultaneously, computer enthusiasts are putting together initiatives such as AMEE, DIY Kyoto or pachube; philanthropists are organising global initiatives to co-ordinate green energy investments and social entrepreneurship; designers are reinventing products as sustainable services; industrial manufacturers are sharing information about their supply chain, using methods inspired by Open Source. While all of these are laudable pursuits, not one could succeed in isolation. Across cultures and disciplines, we learn and borrow from each other, refine, adapt and transform solutions as required. We can then apply them in domains that are close to us, that we experience on a daily basis and that we can work with on a scale that is most appropriate to our own situation. In other words, they



Fig. 1: Moderated World Cafe session. Luminous Green, Singapore 2008

become living and lived solutions. They are reused, reduced and recycled through direct human experiences, becoming more robust and resilient through each iteration.

Luminous Green

Could it be that the seeds for a more 'illuminated' culture can already be found in existing human undertakings, but that the 'medium' (culture, society, technology, etc.) in which these seeds can grow needs to be better developed? Starting with this premise, FoAM initiated a series of gatherings under the name 'Luminous Green'. We decided to seek out motivated, curious and open-minded people and bring them together with equally motivated people from other fields and cultures. People who care about the world as a whole, who are keen to play an active part in its evolution, are open to constructive criticism, curious about new perspectives and willing to share their knowledge and resources. Luminous Green brings these people together in an environment where they are first



Fig. 2: On Non-Human Agency. Luminous Green, Singapore 2008

and foremost required to be themselves – inspiring and inspired individuals, with a multitude of stories and experiences. The gatherings are non-hierarchical, participatory situations that are designed to bring about unexpected connections, between people who may otherwise never come in contact with each other.

By leaving the culturally assigned 'roles' behind, it is important that the Luminous Green participants meet without preconceptions, institutional, or political affiliations – that they meet each other as fellow human beings, carrying a mixed bag of opinions, taboos, habits and other curiosities. We believe that personal dialogues, engaged one-on-one conversations (leading to many-on-many conversation) can inform a wider, clearer understanding of the complexities within which we live. Through various sessions and experiments, we want to encourage the participants to share their stories, inspirations and goals, find common (and uncommon) ground, challenge stereotypes and presumptions. Writers, activists, politicians, economists, inventors, investors, scientists, designers, artists, beekeepers, farmers,



Fig.3: Props used to visualise the state of the world in 2050. Luminous Green, Singapore, 2008.

mycologists, bureaucrats and other enthusiasts are welcome to question, confront and support each other, in a polyphony of voices. For example, an enlightening discussion arose when four people (an artist, biologist, policy maker and an activist) touched on the topic of GM crops. In the beginning of the conversation, they assumed they would agree with each other, but as they touched upon specific cases and their complexities, the discussion brought up several opposing views which didn't fit neatly into their exiting understandings. Because they had already established a warm relationship with each other during the previous evening, everyone was more willing to listen and postpone judgement. Thus the conversation enabled them each to learn something new. By seeing the topic in a different light (from other people's perspective), having a much richer understanding, not just of GM crops, but of topics they had previously thought unimportant for their own practices, such as trade relations, controlled experiments, weather patterns or bio-art.



Fig.4: Proposing session topics. Luminous Green, Belgium, 2007.

Imagining, greening and illuminating possible worlds

The Luminous Green philosophy is grounded in the belief that the world as a whole and all its parts can become more luminous – illuminated, electrified and imaginative, while nourishing a lush, fertile, green environment. We refute the nihilistic and fatalistic view of deep ecology, or that of religious rupture preaching passivity because it's all out of our hands anyway. We disagree with the 'hairshirt' green polar opposition of consumerism that legitimises suffering, denial and sacrifice, yet neither accept the short sighted capitalist approach of continuing 'business as usual'. Such business as usual will create a future for those who can afford it, while continuing the relentless consumption of natural resources for disposable, wasteful lifestyles. However, Luminous Green can find interesting seeds in all of these approaches, so rather than siding with one or another dogma, it seeks to form 'unholy alliances' between the elements that are most vibrant and potentially life-giving. We believe that the communities best



Fig. 5: Shojin Ryori lunch session hosted by Enso Kitchen. Luminous Green workshop, Singapore, 2008.

equipped to deal with current instabilities will be founded through unexpected couplings of people with divergent interests (that may have temporarily converged), able to work as equal partners, regardless of their specific cultural, professional or social backgrounds. Luminous Green is one of the places in which we hope such connections can be formed. At previous gatherings, an environmental activist and a liberal economist found new perspectives on disparate issues, while chatting about their common passion for mountain climbing; an artist and an engineer exchanged approaches to child rearing; a scientist and a farmer compared notes on tissue culturing. Each of these people took their new insights away with them, to foster and share further.

In order to encourage these connections to be formed in a gathering of limited duration, we are continuously experimenting with different forms of participatory learning and sharing. We began by drawing on 'Open Space Technology'³, enriching the dry 'market place' planning with active storytelling techniques from alternate reality gaming, engaged dialogues from appreciative inquiry, vis-

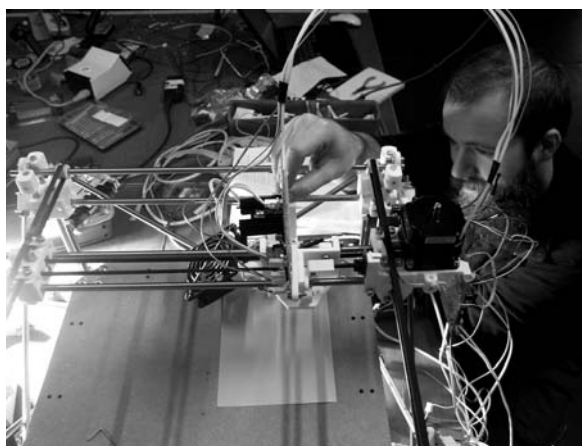


Fig. 6: Constructing the RepRap – A Self Replicating Rapid Prototyper, FoAM, 2007.

ualisation methods from graph theory and most importantly remembering to be welcoming hosts. The most important condition of the Luminous Green events is that everyone feels that they are the right people at the right place and that whatever happens, each of them are responsible for making it happen. We want to move the groups and the events from passive consumption of pre-existing knowledge, to active participation in its creation and reflection. If this condition is fulfilled, all those involved create an environment where the 'agenda' is open enough to bring burning issues to the fore, in productive discussions, exercises, or experiments. Social and aesthetic aspects of the gathering are crucial parts of the programme, to help tensions and arguments to be dissipated. We have striven to make Luminous Green a non-confrontational environment that enables encouraging difference and conflicting opinions to coexist, while dissent and play are encouraged to avoid the traps of 'group-think'. Sharing meals is as important as sharing ideas. Dancing, doing hand-stands or offering massages can be interspersed with hands-

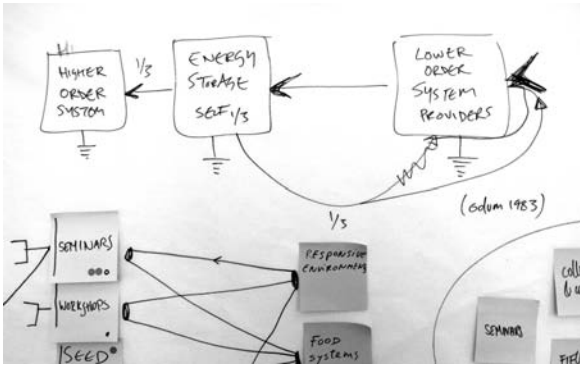


Fig. 7: Designing processes from a whole systems perspective, using permaculture principles. FoAM, 2008.

on tutorials about DIY photovoltaics or theoretical sessions on topic ranging from Biomimicry (Benyus 1997) and *Carbon trading* to Frugality. (see Colour plate xxv, Fig. C)

A Luminous Green gathering is neither a radical environmentalist camp, nor a glitzy, self-congratulatory, green-gold business event. It is an edge habitat – like a coastline where marine and land-based eco-systems meet - a fertile and diverse, yet often contradictory space of inconsistencies; an entangled, productive chaos, designed as such to provoke discussions and questions that otherwise rarely get raised. The selected participants rarely mix in their daily lives and we don't expect everyone to agree with each other, but a respectful questioning of each other's practices and beliefs is a healthy thing to do – it can dissolve arrogance, isolationism and xenophobia.

During the Luminous Green gatherings, we aspire to grasp what kinds of behaviours and cultures can be brought forth from a fertile chaos, without a predefined schedule or outcome. We count on the inventiveness of the participants to translate the discussions and experiments into



Fig. 8: Sociometric exercise. Luminous Green, Belgium, 2007.

workable conclusions for their own contexts. In order to put these conclusions into practice, the participants are always a mixture of people from the creative sector, academia, policy and business. While the latter are engaged in many debates about environmental and social instabilities, it is rare that artists and designers are invited to contribute to the 'serious' solutions (although this is slowly changing). At FoAM, we found it unacceptable that the very people who are able to influence culture are often overlooked as a part of the solution. The creative sector shapes public spaces and events, designs materials, processes, systems and situations, within academia, industry and civil society. People working in creative fields are used to tackling complex issues that are often difficult to measure and quantify – cultural values, creative processes, or human experience. Such issues can not be easily reduced to statistics, or easily mapped to equations in a carbon calculator, however, they must be considered in order to incite necessary changes in human behaviour. During Luminous Green we recognised that there are at least three important things that the creative sector can contribute to possible solutions: an integrated

approach to unwieldy problems, experience with participatory processes that can bring forth unexpected outcomes and the ability to make beautiful things (see Colour plate xxiv, Fig. A).

Integrated approach to complex issues

We would argue that it is not possible to tackle any one of the currently critical issues in isolation - they all form part of the same larger problem - that we have created an existentially unstable, fragile system. This problem can be tackled more effectively if we approach it from multiple perspectives, simultaneously and systematically, using integrated, holistic approaches. To paraphrase Einstein, we cannot solve a problem using the same kind of thinking that caused it. What we need are not individual remedies for only the most urgent issues, but fundamental behavioural and cultural changes, across the board - through all social structures and economic strata. On a daily basis, there are many issues that require our immediate attention, such as providing conditions for a dignified life for everyone in a global society; the distribution of food, fuel and other natural resources; ensuring a physical, social and psychological well-being of our communities; restoring and maintaining an ecological balance, and so on. These challenges cannot be solved using analytical methods alone. They require creative leaps, heuristic trial and error (along with other methods used in design research), as well as solid public experiments to ensure the feasibility and durability of the proposals. All these techniques form part of the creative process and are practised by artists, designers, architects and others on a daily basis.

Applying methods and techniques from creative processes to any currently critical issue can help us 'think out of the box' and perhaps find solutions where they are least expected. Design advocates such as Tim Brown, Bruce Mau, John Thackara, Olafur Eliasson, or Bruce Sterling are working with industry and policy-makers in this ongoing search. Their works have already proven the value of involving designers in rethinking the supply chain processes (including whole life-cycle analysis), rapid prototyping, iterative development, etc. Creative practitioners are not usually paralysed by complex problems - they are seen as inspirations, opportunities for positive change. By working with complexity, we may surprise ourselves and solve multiple problems, produce work with multiple benefits - for example, by designing one specific 'sustainable' touristic experience, we necessarily touch on transport and travel, food production and distribution, preservation of natural beauty and cultural heritage, health, etc. The cumulative effect of working with complex problems (often in transdisciplinary teams) should help make the works more inclusive, systemic and holistic, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods, with no 'externalities' and no 'aways'.

Transdisciplinary artists, scientists and collectives, such as SymbioticA, Angelo Vermeulen (cf. BioMODD), Bernard Lahousse (cf. 'foodpairing'), Radiqualia (cf. 'Radio Astronomy') or Project ATOL (cf. 'Makrolab'), tackle complexity by dissolving or permeating boundaries between traditional disciplines. At FoAM, we encourage the development of this community of generalists, looking to synthesise knowledge from a variety of domains. In our opinion, this can be a slow, long and often frustrating process. It took centuries to fragment

knowledge into a myriad of useful specialisations, so we expect it will take a while to reconnect the weave. However, we suggest that this process is invaluable for creating more holistic, sustainable human cultures able to live with complexity while understanding the need for specialisation.

In Bruce Sterling's manifestly grandiose espousal of the guiding principles for the Viridian Design Movement, there is a single, salient 'Viridian Research Principle' that encourages Viridians to 'Walk Through the Walls of Knowledge Guilds – The boundaries that separate art, science, medicine, literature, computation, engineering, and design and craft generally are not divine. These boundaries are socially generated. Research techniques are not identical, nor are results all equally valid under all circumstances; quantum physics isn't opera. There exists a sensibility that can transcend intellectual turf war with no loss of rigour. If you choose to do it, you can step outside the boundaries history makes for you. You can walk through walls.' (Sterling 2001)

Participatory culture

One of the notable differences between the environmental movements in the 1970s and today is that we are beginning to understand that prescribing universal solutions and telling people what to do, doesn't work. There may be as many approaches to problem solving as there are problems. What we are looking for today are ways in which everyone can become an active participant and work on finding specific solutions. Anyone should be willing to proactively think and engage – everyone's help is needed – from those in academia, industry or the

professions, to enthusiastic amateurs with a do-it-yourself approach. There is an overload of information out there and while access to it becomes easier, there is still a need to be able to cut through the jungle of nonsense to build knowledge relevant to our own lives and environments. Rather than 'The Solution', we should be looking for ecologies of solutions, interdependent and robust, nourished by local conditions, with strong trans-local ties able to evolve through collaboration and trust.

The creative sector has extensive experience with participatory forms of culture. In particular, media and electronic arts have moved toward engaging audiences as co-authors using a wide range of methods and formats: from performative interventions in public spaces (e.g. Future Farmers, Blast Theory) and happenings focusing on relational aesthetics (e.g. Boo Chapple, Arabeschi di Latte), to games (e.g. Sixtostart, Tale of Tales), interactive environments (e.g. Time's Up, FoAM) and community workshops and festivals (e.g. Constant, CityMined). Design has become instrumental in engaging 'end-users' as participants in the design process itself, from being passive consumers to becoming active producers. Social design engages communities to rethink their daily habits (e.g. Participle), product design becomes a relational service industry (e.g. Elephant Design, Reprap), the black boxes of digital tools are broken open and placed as tool-kits into the hands of their users (e.g. Tinker.it, Bricolabs), materials and structures are becoming adaptive and responsive to external stimuli (e.g. Loop.ph, Textile Futures). Each of these examples respond to a present need, while also working to change people's attitudes towards culture – from passive to active, from consuming to experiencing. Aren't these precisely the attitudes

needed to address some of the most pressing problems of our times?

Beautiful things, delightful stories

One of the cultural challenges for the near future is a de-cluttering of the world from unnecessary 'stuff' – things we don't want (such as e-waste or MMTCDs⁴), but also many of the things we believe we want (like cars, electronic gadgets, throw away cups, or cheap, breakable furniture). How much of this stuff is truly fulfilling a need, enhancing our experiences, improving living conditions? How do we select what to make, what to unmake and what not to make in the first place? How can we influence these decisions when they are made on a global scale, influenced by large marketing machines and single-issue lobby groups? In the final Viridian note, Bruce Sterling proposes a set of criteria for 'uncluttering' our surroundings by a process of categorisation, and elimination. (1) 'Beautiful things' able to fill your life and the life of others with meaningful aesthetic experience; (2) 'Emotionally important things' whose story you want to remember in order to share with others; (3) 'Tools, devices, and appliances that efficiently perform a useful function.' (4) 'Everything else'. Keep, improve or acquire things in categories 1, 2 and 3 & get rid of everything (yes, everything!) in category 4. (Sterling 2008)

Tools and technology are often on the agenda and, since we are tool-using animals, will necessarily form a part of our approach to problem solving. Aesthetics and storytelling pop up less frequently in environmental and policy debates, but they are key components of cultural experiences (and there-

fore cultural change). Again, it is the creative sector that has extensive experience with these domains. We make things that people want to consume, surround themselves with and immerse themselves in. Beautiful things in all their sounds, colours, textures, tastes, smells and movements can focus us fully on experiencing the present moment, while simultaneously feeling connected to 'something larger', to the continuum of beautiful and mysterious things that stretches through time immemorial. Without aesthetic experiences, any specific solutions to today's problems will remain in the sphere of the functional and will expire over time. If a solution is beautiful as well as functional, if it touches people not only intellectually, but also on emotional and even spiritual levels, it has a chance of more profoundly influencing people's thoughts, behaviours and cultures. In Buckminster Fuller's words:

'When I am working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I only think about how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.'

Just as technology alone won't suffice, beauty on its own isn't enough. Beautiful things can clutter the world in many new and exciting ways, but only some of these things will end up becoming culturally significant, and socially meaningful – when they become used, shared and integrated into the social fabric as stories, gifts or experiences. Eventually this 'stuff' becomes wholly consumed, worn out through extensive (re)use, transformed and repurposed, ripped apart to become 'compost' for new stories and experiences. 'consumable' is the truest sense of the word – consumed, until matter dissolves, absorbed into a story that endures.

'The process of unfolding goes step by step, one pattern at a time. Each step brings just one pattern to life; and the intensity of the result depends on the intensity of each one of these individual steps.' (Alexander 1979)

Looking inward

There is much that creative practices can offer to the world, but there is also much work to be done to make current practices more environmentally and ethically sustainable. On the simplest level this means refining the material conditions in which we work - choosing non-toxic materials, using renewable energy sources and carefully examining our supply chain. This is no different from the responsibility of every other person on the planet. More specifically, we can look at how the practice itself needs to be transformed to inhabit and embody some of the ideologies that we propose. This involves questioning our methods, formats and artefacts along with examining the integrity of our own everyday lives. The creative sector can become a laboratory for possible futures, in which we can experiment with different models of working, living and sharing. Moving beyond critiquing and commenting on the sorry state of the world, to generating different realities, starting with our own workspaces, studios or living rooms. Natalie Jeremijenko (cf. 'Environmental Health Clinic'), Marko Peljhan (cf. 'Makrolab'), Kate Rich (cf. 'Feral Trade') and Heath Bunting (cf. 'The Status Project'), for example, provide a range of creative activities which encourage us to embark upon the long journeys towards new realities. Luminous Green aims to be a temporary point of exchange where such possible futures can be learned, examined, supported or critiqued. We want to encourage people

to combine existing efforts, share knowledge and bundle resources. To involve people operating on the outskirts of the creative sectors, as well as those who may have forgotten that we exist. We aim to integrate rather than separate, clarify rather than reduce, working towards a shared abundance, rather than enforced scarcity.

Inconclusion

Luminous Green gatherings are conceived as complete experiences, where we aim to stimulate the participants intellectually and emotionally, in both material and spiritual spheres. Our goal is to immerse ourselves in an imaginative present to be able to envisage possible futures. We don't try to force any particular future, nor conclude with a five point action plan. The real outcomes of Luminous Green are the lasting impressions on the participants' lives – whether through a new collaboration, inspiring directions, an exciting relationship, or something else that none of us expected. None of this can be designed into the programme, but what does help is a carefully prepared context, an inspiring setting, a friendly group of people and a good dose of attention. Everyone at Luminous Green is encouraged to be completely present and committed to the experience. When this happens, we become aware of what's really at stake and what role we can play. According to Masanobu Fukuoka, 'we have come to the point at which there is no other way than to bring about a movement to bring nothing about' (Fukuoka 1978). Then, from the centre of nothingness, we can begin to see more clearly what it is that we can do to become more luminous.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 Permaculture design principles: (Holmgren 2002)
 - [1] Observe and interact.
 - [2] Catch and store energy.
 - [3] Obtain a yield.
 - [7] Design from patterns to details.
 - [8] Integrate rather than segregate.
 - [9] Use small and slow solutions.
 - [10] Use and value diversity.
 - [11] Use edges and value the marginal.
 - [12] Creatively use and respond to change.
- 2 From Latin cultura (growing, cultivation) and colere (to tend, cultivate).
- 3 See: <<http://www.openspaceworld.org>>, also known as Unconference, or FooCamp.
- 4 Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalents.

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