

THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION MOVEMENT (CTM) PROJECT KNOWLEDGE ROUNDTABLE #3

Transformative creations

Thursday, November 1st, 2025, 10:00–12:00

Venue: Horse Room at Riga Cirks

TEH Camp Meeting 100 'SHIFT+CULTURE'

Report by:

Israel Aloni – CTM project researcher

TEH Camp Meeting 100 'SHIFT+CULTURE' took place between Thursday, October 30, 2025, and Sunday, October 2, 2025 and hosted by Kaņepes Kultūras Centrs, Latvia.

Text about TEH Camp Meeting in Riga, taken from pre-meeting marketing materials:

SHIFT + CULTURE is a space for us to pause, reflect, and imagine new ways of working in a world that keeps shifting around us. Together, we'll explore how the knowledge, stories, and patterns we already hold – sometimes hidden in conversations, moments, or data – can guide us toward clearer decisions, stronger collaborations, and clearer, more measurable community impact. What doors might open if we approached data not for certainty, but for connection? What shifts when we stop asking data for answers, and start asking it questions? This conference is an invitation to open our minds, ask new kinds of questions, and reshape the way we think about change, technology, and our place within it. Along the way, we'll explore what it means to stay rooted in culture while growing toward something new – with hands-on practice using digital tools and AI that could support our work.

What is a knowledge roundtable?

A knowledge roundtable is a method we chose in the [Cultural Transformation Movement project](#). We are committed to facilitating an annual roundtable in order to broaden the field in which our work resonates, as well as to inform our work within CTMP about the reality and circumstances of our peers and colleagues around the world.

In our application to Creative Europe, we described the knowledge roundtable as a context in which CTMP partners and I (as researcher in the project) can share our gradually accumulated insights with the international arts and culture sector, as well as receive reflection and input from professionals who are not part of the project.

The roundtable in Riga focused on artistic creation processes and the different forms and practices that can be employed, generated, or aspired to in processes and projects that aim to address discrimination, marginalisation, underrepresentation and oppression of certain groups and communities. This theme directly corresponds to the current phase of CTMP, in which the artists/agents of change (#AoC) and centres of change (#CoC) are embarking on the creation and presentation processes of performative acts that, in form or practice, refer to the experiences, methodologies and knowledge cultivated within CTMP thus far.

Abstract

In preparation for the roundtable in Riga, the following text was proposed for the TEH Camp programme:

Ways of Seeing – Rethinking Perspectives, Creativity, Curiosity. As part of the Cultural Transformation Movement Project (CTMP), this is the annual roundtable workshop. In Riga, the workshop will be dedicated to thinking about creation processes which involve, include, relate to and consider community, and ideas about diversification of knowledge, methodologies and aesthetics. The roundtable will offer insight into the work and developments of CTMP thus far and involve all participants in dynamic collective imagining of creative processes that can in some way transgress convention.

The context of Riga's knowledge roundtable: the space it took place in

The knowledge roundtable took place on November 1st, 2025, 10:00–12:00 at the Horse Room at Riga Cirks. The Horse Room is a performance space which might be described as a black box, although it is not particularly boxy nor leveled as many black boxes tend to be. It has a few pillars dividing it into subsections and significant differences in floor levels, connected by stairs. The room has no natural light, and the only proposed lighting for the session was glaring-white LED stage lighting in a fixed and intense brightness.

Only after persistent requests was it made possible, with the assistance of the technical team at Riga Cirks, to alter the lights to a warmer and arguably more welcoming glow. Note: When organising a knowledge roundtable within CTMP, it is important that we examine our decisions and choices regarding the spaces we invite people into – physically, socially, and symbolically.

Where is CTMP right now?

To begin, I invited the Centres of Change from CTMP to give an overview of their organisations, contexts, and current stages in their artistic residencies and creation processes.

Belgium – Viernullvier / #AoC Mira Bryssinck

Speakers: Tine Theunissen, Marieke De Munck, and Mira Bryssinck

Mira described her project with people living with disabilities and their family members. Guiding questions include:

- If you grow up with a disability, how does it form your family structure?
- How does your family structure inform your encounter with society?

She referenced *Crip narrative*, acknowledging that disability stories are often told from the perspective of non-disabled people. Her project seeks to add to the canon with stories authored by people living with disabilities.

Italy – Zo / #AoCs Elie Laucher & Emanuele Miceli

Speakers: Elie Laucher, Emanuele Miceli, Ségolène Lecontellec, Pamela Toscano

Zo has chosen to create a hybrid festival involving and presenting artists and audiences from different underrepresented communities on the island of Sicily. Developed through residencies and co-creation with local communities, the festival aims to diversify leadership by collaborating with a “table of people” from underrepresented communities.

Examples shared include:

- work with a theatre group of people living with disability;
- a festival component dedicated to the Safer Spaces Guide, developed within CTMP.

Austria – Brunnenpassage / #AoC Farila Neshat

Speaker: Fariba Mosleh, Farila Neshat

Brunnenpassage uses CTMP support to deepen work on diversity and access. One focus has been ongoing *Awareness Workshops*, starting with internal organisational practices. Farila's artistic project works with memories as material – through wood cutting and craft workshops with people from Central Asia and Africa, addressing the climate crisis and its geopolitical implications. She explores how different languages and forms of expression can be embedded in woodcut as a medium.

Ukraine – Izolyatsia / #AoC Ksenia Ulianova

Speakers: Yuliya Zakolyabina, Ksenia Ulianova

Yuliya expressed sensitivity around working with Ukrainians affected by war, acknowledging that some in Ukraine may see CTMP's work as less urgent in a survival-focused reality. Izolyatsia prioritises identifying the actual necessities of the communities they support.

Ksenia shared how her artistic practice has shifted since the war – now centering *radical care as a political instrument*. She works with artists now serving in the Ukrainian army, creating spaces for art and healing. She has also developed musical community projects with Ukrainian refugees in Paris and, after visiting frontline cities, decided to mount an exhibition in Ukraine featuring artworks by soldiers.

Trans Europe Halles – Coordination

Speaker: Ceyda Berk-Söderblom

Ceyda shared how TEH realises camps and conferences, disseminates CTMP information, and coordinates project implementation. She noted CTMP is the first *TEH project to explicitly focus on diversity and accessibility*, and spoke about the organisational transformation process (2024–2025). Within CTMP, she and her team are developing a *TEH Charter*.

Conversation starters

To explore how creation processes can respond to discrimination and systemic injustice, I invited the group to consider four aspects:

Four lenses for transformation

Aspect	Etymology	Meaning
Method	Greek	Pursuit of knowledge; a way of going about something
Concept	Latin	To take in, conceive, or receive
Context	Latin	To weave together
Aesthetics	Greek	Perceptive, sensitive; sensory perception

I proposed that shifting perspectives — and thus perceptions — requires sensitivity to power imbalances across all four aspects, though addressing all equally may be challenging in practice.

Content of the discussion

Participants were divided into four groups (Method / Concept / Context / Aesthetics) to generate practical suggestions for mitigating and transforming challenges faced by underrepresented communities.

Group sizes:

- Method: 4
- Concept: 5
- Context: 4
- Aesthetics: 4

Generated ideas

Method

- Diversity in the team and decision-making
- Creating safe spaces and tools for safety
- Transparency
- Easily accessible formats (eating together, etc.)
- Relational practices

- People with different skills and backgrounds
- Dialogue
- Co-creation
- Simple, social formats

Concept

- New perspective
- New norms
- New visions
- New power balance
- New habits
- New reality
- Manifesting lived experience through freedom and honesty

Context

- Propose, not impose
- How do we motivate the audience?
- Question the place of the event
- Learn about different contexts to understand each other
- Zoom in and zoom out of our own context
- Time and resources may be required – but it is worth it
- Marginalisation is context-specific
- Q: Will AI internationalise the context?

Aesthetics

- Space – how does it work on bodies?
- Lighting – what mood and invitation does it create?
- Routing – how are spaces accessed?
- Digital accessibility – also important
- *New transformative aesthetics* – who has been structurally excluded?
- Allow physical, emotional, material and immaterial change

Mira (#AoC Belgium) emphasised that *accessibility is also about autonomy* – designing art and spaces so people can engage *without needing to ask for assistance*.

Takeaways

After the vital exchange in the group I offered two ideas for us to leave the roundtable with:

- Do not be afraid to cause harm.

This is of course not promoting or insisting violence in any way, shape or form. On the contrary. This is inviting us, those who can, to be the necessary wall to block the violence and violations that people in underrepresented communities have been experiencing thus far. To stop the flow of discrimination and marginalisation would cause some harm to what has been, and to the way things have been done. I utterly oppose violence or violent opposition. We need to be careful and caring. We need to be sensitive and attentive but also, we need to be willing to harm the systems that have led us to the current reality which for many people in underrepresented communities only proposes increasing challenges and threats with the current political processes and events in many places in Europe and beyond.

- Invite childlike play and playfulness into our processes.

Being open to unpredictable processes, allowing the wander of the journey to navigate us to unfamiliar places, fall deeply into a tunnel filled with possibilities and potentialities, allowing our imagination to inspire us and encourage us, accept our desires and need to also be motivated by joy and enjoyment without feeling ashamed or guilty about it.