

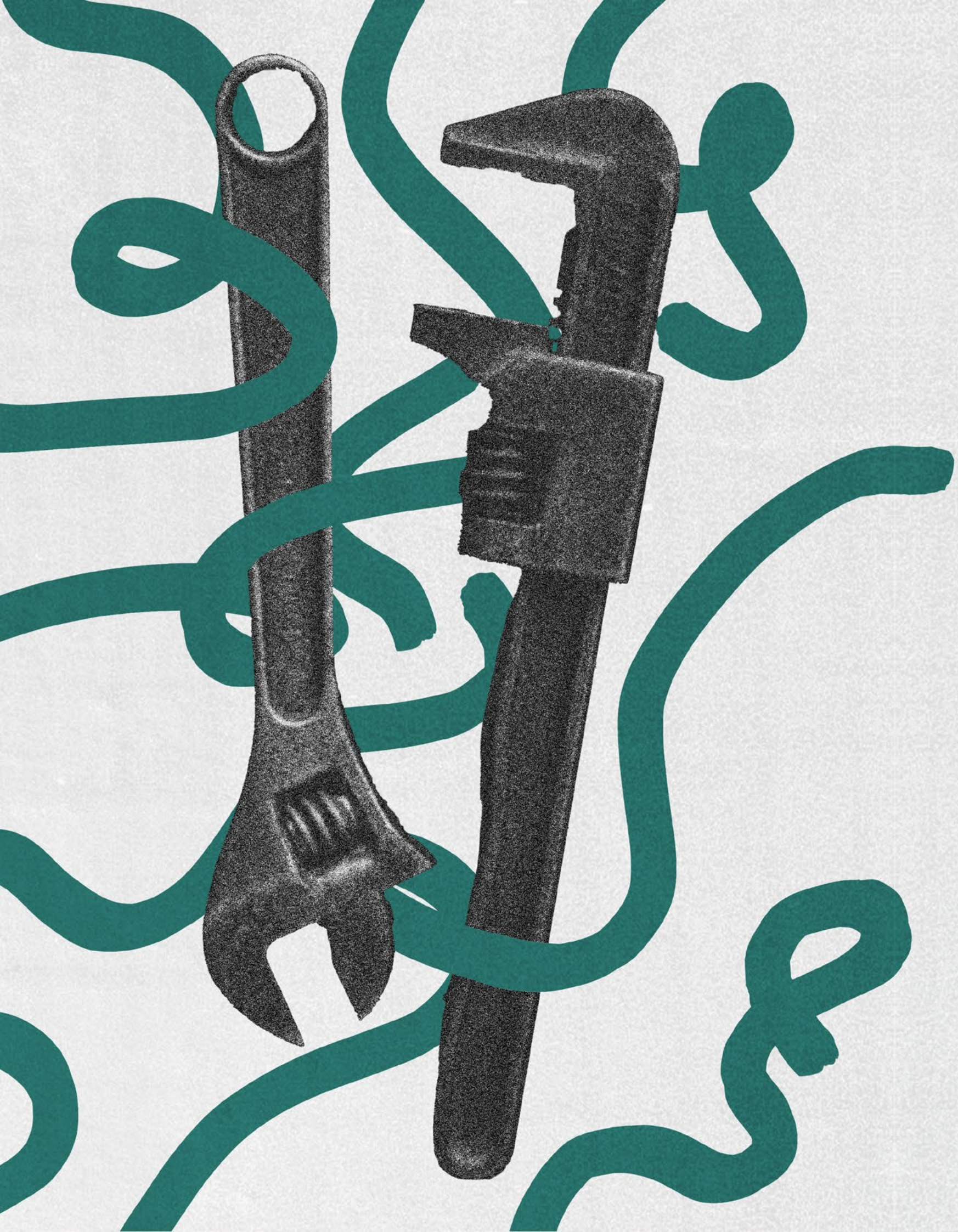


Duct Tape And Dreams

MENTORSHIP

PROGRAM

REPORT



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“Empowering the Young and Bold”

A REPORT DETAILING THE MENTORSHIP OF FOUR EMERGING CULTURAL INITIATIVES

ABSTRACT:

This report seeks to establish a framework illustrating the journey of four emerging cultural initiatives participation in TEH’s 2023 duct tape and dream mentorship program. The 10-page document comprehensively explores the essential elements of the mentorship program, detailing activities, highlighting challenges, and explaining the valuable learning outcomes achieved by the participants.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Objectives of duct tape & dream mentorship program.

Leveraging 40 years of experiential wisdom, we recognize that managing a space dedicated to art and culture can be a formidable undertaking. The transition from conceptualization to implementation is often a complex and challenging journey, particularly during the initial years. The passion and vision of young creatives frequently collide with the harsh realities and bureaucratic hustles. In response to these challenges, TEH since 2018, took proactive steps by establishing a hands-on mentoring and capacity-building program tailored for emerging artistic collectives. This program embarks young and dedicated creatives on several months of developmental journey, equipping them with essential tools and expertise needed to construct a sustainable future within the independent cultural sector. Guided by seasoned mentors, the program serves as a comprehensive roadmap for navigating the exhilarating yet demanding early years, aiming to secure a more sustainable future for emerging cultural centres. In 2023, the program was rebaptised and rebranded with the introduction of the Philippe Grombeer award to one selected participant.

2. WHO WE ARE

Trans Europe Halles is a member-led international non-governmental organisation born on March 6, 1983, and currently based in Sweden. We are a bottom-up value driven activist network of grassroots cultural centres in 40+ countries across and beyond Europe and currently unit 162 members. We have two categories of members - Full members and Associates - who work towards the sustainable transformation of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities through arts, culture, and citizen participation. As an international member-led activist network, our goals and objectives are to continue being a place for learning and exchange, a Platform to campaign, advocate and raise awareness. Moreover, we are an accumulator of collective knowledge and interdisciplinary expertise in fields such as cultural production, advocacy, city planning, sustainable architecture and circular design, energy efficiency, community engagement, fundraising, creative industries, policy, social innovation.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Cotranspose

Nestled in the vibrant city of Orestiada, Greece, Cotranspose emerges as a dynamic creative endeavour, dedicated to revitalizing dormant spaces through meaningful cultural and social engagements. This innovative project extends an invitation to creatives to breathe life into inactive areas, fostering collaboration and co-creation while establishing enduring connections with the communities that host them. Cotranspose operates within a transformative framework, aspiring to offer a collective experience in the trans-local production of narratives, dialogues, and knowledge, fostering the creative evolution of shared spaces. Departing from the conventional concept of patronage, Cotranspose embraces the ethos of feminist hospitality, transcending sociocultural hierarchies and embracing an extension of care ethics. At the heart of Cotranspose's inquiry is a fundamental question: Can we adopt methodologies that champion radically anti-competitive and fundamentally supportive approaches to co-creation? Seeking to break free from the shackles of commercial and consumerist paradigms in art, Cotranspose endeavours to blur the boundaries between practitioner, participant, and the public sphere.

The goal for Cotranspose is to cultivate an ongoing dialogue, fostering connections between diverse selves, cultures, and lived experiences. In its relatively short existence, Cotranspose has successfully orchestrated several community-based initiatives. However, the path forward is not without challenges, as the team encounters resistance and scepticism from local institutions, primarily due to its predominantly female composition. Despite facing discrimination, Cotranspose remains resolute, driven by an unwavering commitment to challenging norms and reshaping the narrative of creative collaboration in Orestiada.



3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3.2 Fundacja Ziemniaki i

Situated in the vibrant city of Warsaw, Poland, Fundacja Ziemniaki i is an innovative initiative conceived and constructed by cultural workers, predominantly comprising artists, designers, curators, and writers.

However, its inclusive ethos extends a warm embrace to individuals of all professions, non-professions, humans, and non-humans who contribute to the realization of its goals. Recognizing that art and design alone cannot be a remedy for all social issues, nor does mere critical action suffice, the foundation firmly believes that creative expression serves as a catalyst, laying the groundwork for future collaborative endeavours. Guided by a set of principles, Fundacja Ziemniaki is dedicated to collaboratively working towards depolarizing people and ideas through the creative arts. Their approach involves mediating, facilitating, supporting, educating, exhibiting, discussing, and proposing a more engaging interaction. To fulfil their mission, Fundacja Ziemniaki i commits its efforts to supporting artists, designers, writers, and storytellers. Their focus extends to exploring the contemporary relevance of folklore and fostering connections on both local and global scales through the creation of binding rituals. Additionally, the foundation is committed to addressing the climate catastrophe by leveraging the methods outlined in its charter and statute.

Despite its commendable objectives, Fundacja Ziemniaki faces challenges inherent to its early stages, such as the ongoing formalization of its center and the associated responsibilities. As a fledgling, legally registered not-for-profit organization, navigating the complexities of establishing a firm footing in the local, national, and international artist-run-space scene poses an additional set of hurdles. Nevertheless, the foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to overcoming these challenges and contributing meaningfully to the cultural landscape.



3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3.3 Objekt4000

Located in the outskirts of Berlin, Germany, Objekt4000 is on a mission to repurpose the historical significance of an abandoned bunker, transforming it into a dynamic space where people can explore, create, and express themselves. At the core of their philosophy is the belief that, beyond traditional institutions like churches and libraries, modern urban environments lack places where individuals can simply exist without the primary focus on consumption. Objekt4000 strives to liberate individuals from the role of mere consumers, inviting them to engage with themselves in a novel way and explore the historical tapestry of Germany beyond its capital. The vision of Objekt4000 extends beyond the physical space, with the hope that the bunker and its hosted events will provide a distinctive experience, fostering connections and nurturing personal growth. Envisaging a diverse array of activities, including collaborative art, performances, critical discussions, and workshops, their aim is to create an open learning environment.

At its core, Objekt4000 stands for the establishment of a safe space that encourages connections, devoid of discrimination and prejudices. The organization embraces the principle that encounters with intolerance and conflict should be viewed as opportunities for growth and expanding perspectives. Recognizing that creativity thrives in an environment of openness and the ability to learn from friction, these principles are actively practiced within the internal workings of the team. However, Objekt4000 grapples with two significant challenges. First is Financial. while they use the bunker for cultural activities at no cost, the structure itself requires extensive renovations. Currently reliant on a generator for electricity and a water tanker as their primary water source, substantial investments are necessary. Additionally, logistical challenges arise due to the lack of reliable public transport connections to their location, making it difficult to encourage a consistent flow of people to their space. Despite these hurdles, Objekt4000 remains committed to overcoming obstacles and creating a transformative space that transcends physical and cultural boundaries.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3.4 Shadows & Clouds

Situated in the vibrant capital city of Skopje in North Macedonia, Shadows and Clouds is on a mission to cultivate a mobile and independent theatre platform. Embracing the allure of an age-old medium, they explore novel forms of expression, aiming to engage citizens beyond the confines of institutionalized theatre. Woven into their vision is the steadfast belief that art holds the power to effect positive change in the world, one captivating shadow theatre performance at a time. Beyond this overarching vision, Shadows & Clouds is dedicated to two primary objectives: promoting the artistry of shadow theatre and leveraging it as an alternative, creative tool. Through non-formal education and targeted outreach, they strive to impart meaningful insights and spark dialogue.

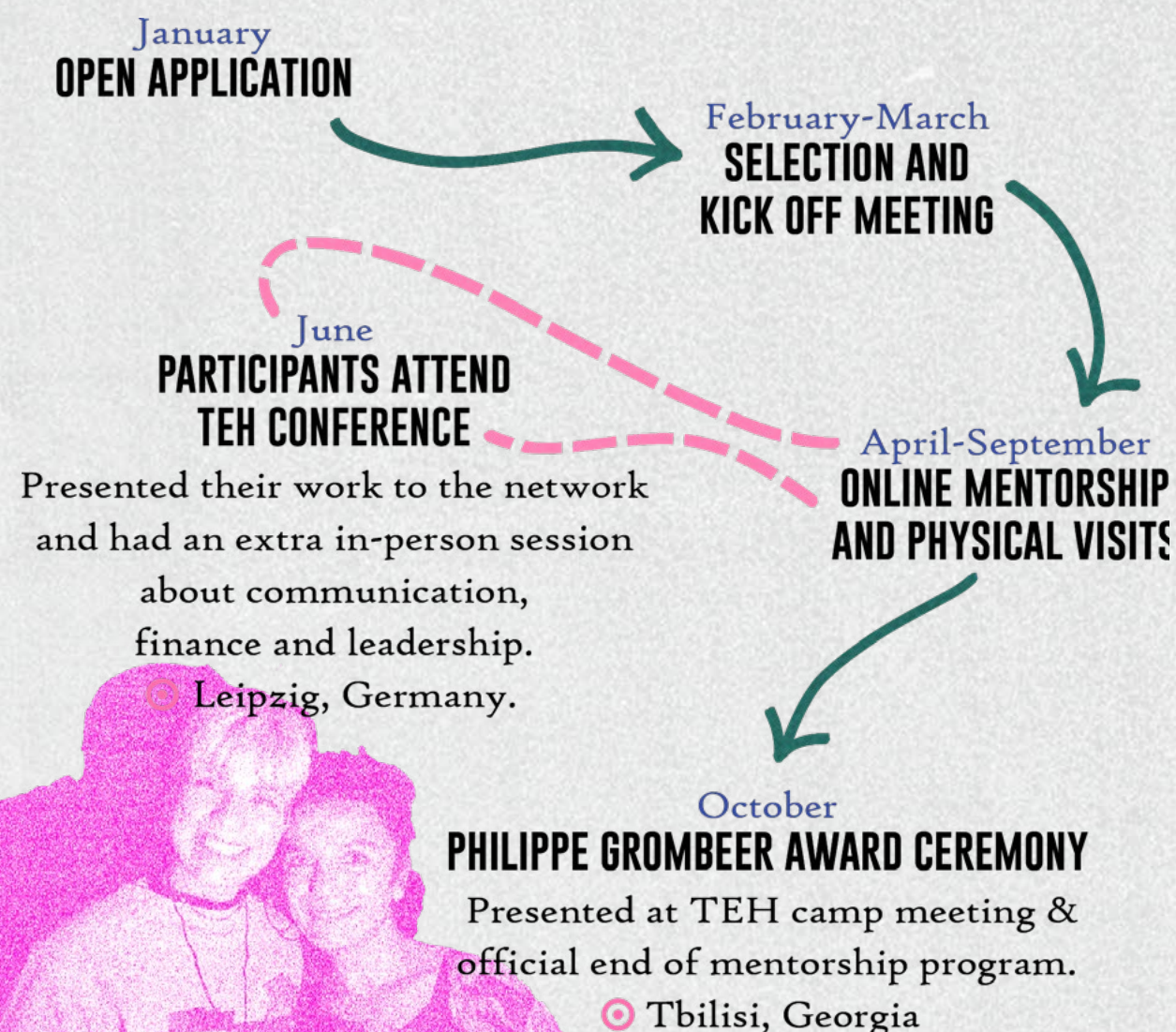


Despite the commendable strides they've made since their establishment, Shadows and Clouds confronts several challenges. Notably, they grapple with the delicate balance between being a needs-led and opportunities-led organization, often navigating funding opportunities before project conceptualization. Moreover, with a burgeoning array of ongoing initiatives, maintaining consistency across all projects proves challenging, attributed in part to a lack of strategic planning and a more intuitive approach. Internal communication within the team poses its own set of challenges, as the team comprises close friends, and the blending of personal and professional dynamics can be intricate. Shadows and Clouds acknowledges the need for enhanced strategic planning to steer away from intuitive and abrupt decision-making. Another significant challenge the organization faces is diversifying financial streams to ensure sustainability amid the post-pandemic struggles encountered by independent cultural centers in Macedonia. This multifaceted challenge underscores the necessity for innovative approaches to secure the organization's financial resilience in the evolving cultural landscape. In the face of these challenges, Shadows and Clouds remains resilient, committed to overcoming hurdles and continuing their impactful journey in the realm of independent theatre and community engagement.

4. Program design & Structure

Beginning with an initial online introduction meeting organised by the program coordinator, mentors were strategically paired with two emerging cultural centers. This meeting served as a platform for the representatives of the cultural centers to familiarize themselves with the mentors. The matching process leveraged the mentors' experience to align them with the centers that stood to gain the most from their guidance.

Subsequently, the entire program was tailored to align with these mentor-center pairings, ensuring a customized and effective approach to the mentorship journey.



5. MENTORSHIP: PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

5.1 Objekt4000 & Co-Transpose

Beginning with an initial online introduction meeting organised by the program coordinator, mentors were strategically paired with two emerging cultural centers. This meeting served as a platform for the representatives of the cultural centers to familiarize themselves with the mentors. The matching process leveraged the mentors' experience to align them with the centers that stood to gain the most from their guidance.

Subsequently, the entire program was tailored to align with these mentor-center pairings, ensuring a customized and effective approach to the mentorship journey.

MAIN CHALLENGES: OBJEKT 4000

- Strengthen the collective / team building: via team structure, clear communication channels, definition of a common vision and commitment as most of the team members see their contribution as something they do in their leisure time.
- Establishment of sustainable and active space including legal questions on organizational work, infrastructure, and safety.
- Community involvement – diversity within the music programme as well as audience
- Awareness and an anti-discriminatory approach within party activities.
- Financing and funding strategies for Objekt4000.

MAIN CHALLENGES: CO-TRANSPOSE

- Establishment of sustainable multi-layered artist residency program which lives up to a contemporary, site-specific approach beyond classical Open Calls
- Community involvement / local acceptance vs prejudice and stereotype (diversity sensitive as well as anti-discriminatory work.
- Financing and funding strategies for Cotranspose: municipality, region, national, international, private & public, foundations, sponsoring, European Calls; short / medium and long term.
- Cotranspose's team structure and development: people on site vs working from Athens or abroad, team vs volunteers.

As part of the mentorship, Fariba and representatives from both centres met physically for a session in June during the TEH conference. During this session, Tiffany, Barbara, and Shawn, all from TEH coordination office held sessions with the participants focusing on structural and administration issues emerging centers' experience, such as different governance models, funding sources, negotiations with authorities, community engagement, co-creation methods, etc. taking different examples from the network. Furthermore, Fariba organised separately, visits where representatives from both centres explored various cultural centres and scenes in Vienna, Austria. The agenda by Fariba for Objekt4000 included visits to [ArtSocialSpace Brunnenpassagee](#), [Bunkerr16](#), and [flucc](#), and [Vienna Club Commission summer gathering](#). For Cotranspose, they visited [ArtSocialSpace Brunnenpassag](#), [White House](#), [Soho Studios](#), [Q21](#). These visits offered firstly, insights to representatives of both emerging centres opportunity to understand the concepts, visions, and working methods of the centres they visited. Secondly, it was aimed to foster networking and project opportunities in Austria to the emerging centres.

"All the meetings with the spaces you arranged for us were very eye-opening and inspiring for us, and we will for sure incorporate a lot of their ways of functioning and organization tools to CoTranspose."

Quote from CoTranspose's short report on their visit in Vienna, June 2023

"The reflection upon seemingly obvious things is very stimulating and brings up things you were not thinking about or two people were not talking about."

Eleni T. on need analysis, May 2023



"After this trip I see some actionables that we could leverage. We are already well into the cultural fabric of the city so we can have contacts to bring a diverse form of art into the bunker as the cherry on the cake for our parties. We can try to figure out collabs, also outside Berlin (ex. Flucc seems open to proposals and it's closer than we think). We also need to figure something to start making Objekt4000 sustainable. Mixing all these ingredients together is likely the receipt to have Objekt4000 next year evolve."

Quote from Antonio's short report (Object4000) on his visit in Vienna, June 2023

LEARNING OUTCOME: OBJEKT4000

- Collaboratively develop a concept with clearer aims and visions for Objekt4000.
- Developed engagement strategies with local communities and artistic endeavours beyond rave parties for sustainable operation.
- Built a framework on how to focus on key areas: structure, funding, and local community involvement.
- Emphasise the importance of concentrating on deepening and consolidating existing program elements rather than extensive expansion.
- Buttressed the need for re-evaluation and restructuring where necessary to enhance effectiveness.

LEARNING OUTCOME: CO-TRANSPOSE

- Developed framework on fostering community engagement through various levels, emphasising the importance of integrating locals into Cotranspose's core team to mitigate resentment and expand the initiative's reach.
- The team learnt how to contribute to sustainable, long-term efforts in Dikea by consistently utilizing abandoned houses.
- Helped the team on how to prioritize main topics: structure, funding, and local community involvement.
- Emphasised the importance of avoiding extensive program expansion; concentrate on deepening and consolidating existing elements.

5.2 Ziemniaki i & Shadows and Clouds

The mentoring sessions with Ziemniaki I and Shadows and Clouds commenced on a positive note. This included a physical mentoring session held during TEH's conference in June in Leipzig, Germany, where only the representative from Shadows and Clouds was present. During this session, Tiffany, Barbara, and Shawn, all from TEH coordination office held sessions with the participants focusing on structural and administration issues emerging centers experience, such as different governance models, funding sources, negotiations with authorities, community engagement, co-creation methods, etc, taking different examples from the network. Subsequently, and due to failure to honour the terms of the contract, we made the decision to terminate the contractual agreement with our initial mentor. Thereafter, Ella was engaged as the new mentor for Ziemniaki I and Shadows and Clouds. After an introductory meeting, Ella organized initial sessions with each team from Ziemniaki I and Shadows and Clouds to conduct needs analysis and collaboratively design the rest of the mentorship sessions. Drawing from insights gathered from the previous mentor's discussions and the findings of the needs analysis, Ella identified the main challenges faced by both centers, as detailed below.

MAIN CHALLENGES: ZIEMNIAKI I

- Formalising roles and responsibilities.
- Access to a centralised space and systemic funding to support activities.

MAIN CHALLENGES: SHADOWS AND CLOUDS

- Look at options on how to develop the social enterprise aspect of the center.
- Learn from others on how to strengthen the sustainability of cultural centre and projects.
- Understand options on how to build long-lasting and motivated teams, who are capable of cooperating with other professionals.
- Explore ways on how to equip the running towards greater stability, in terms of consistency in the quality of work, motivation to invest selves into the projects,
- Exchange from peer colleagues and organizations and gain better European visibility, explore opportunities for entering the international market.
- Exit comfort zone because of curiosity to see what the mentorship program offers, its versatile elements and wide network of individuals.

To tackle these challenges within the limited time available, Ella offered valuable guidance to the emerging centers. Specifically, she coached Ziemniaki i on how to explore options such as co-ownership and community-led solutions for securing permanent access to a building/space for their activities. Moreover, together, they started working on a business model canvas on product and services as well as finding alternative revenue streams since this was also a major challenge for Ziemniaki i. Finding ways of formalisation of roles and responsibilities for team members of Ziemniaki I was another point of focus. This led to Ella introducing them to the concept of <https://www.disco.coop/> since it aligned with Ziemniaki I's values. Shadows and Clouds on the other hand had different sets of challenges that required other type of solution because they operate in a niche field. Mentoring sessions with team members of Shadows and Clouds mainly focused on firstly, searching for possibilities to offer services where Ella emphasised the need to optimize the channels already at their disposal due to limitation of capacity to develop new products. Secondly, finding connection and getting acknowledged by other theatre's was important for Shadows and Clouds because of their lack of international recognition as well as challenges with frequent production. Ella guided Shadows and Clouds on creating a manifesto to unify shadow theatre collectives worldwide, sharing it with Facebook groups and calling for a community call to action.

LEARNING OUTCOME: ZIEMNIAKI I

- Ziemniaki i is also part of the Warsaw Fringe festival of 22 independent galleries. In the search of finding an alternative and more suitable governance model, they were introduced to the disco.coop organisation, and now the festival is in the run to become part of this project.
- Created a business model canvas for Ziemniaki i. This would be a tool to help the team navigate alternative forms of income of their centre.
- Created networking opportunities for Ziemniaki i by linking them to the Eastern Hub of TEH, and they met with Mykhailo Glubokyi and Mykhal Michal Klembara in person. They can become a member of the hub and benefit from the other centres dealing with similar challenges and contexts, and more experienced centres that can provide suggestions and solutions.
- After the mentorship Ziemniaki i is still connected to mentor Ella Overkleeft, and they can always approach her and access her network.

LEARNING OUTCOME: SHADOWS AND CLOUDS

- Created networking opportunity as one team member from Shadows and Clouds attended the Balkan hub meeting in November 2023. This would act as the springboard for Shadows and clouds to continue networking with members of the Balkan hub, hoping that it will be a step towards international partnerships.
- Shadows and Clouds will be more active in the global shadow theatre world and act on the potential international collaborations that can occur from this network.
- Through the mentorship, Shadows and Clouds will take the lead on unifying shadow theatre initiatives from all over the world to strengthen their position and seize collaborations.
- They will visit another TEH centre and come to the next TEH conference in Tartu, Estonia 2024 to continue networking.

7. Conclusion

The TEH Mentorship Program, featuring mentors Fariba and Ella, concluded successfully starting from February to September 2023, fostering the growth of four emerging cultural initiatives: Ziemniaki i, Cotranspose, Shadows and Clouds, and Objekt4000. The program's official closing happened during TEH's camp meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia. The mentorship journey kicked off with a needs analysis, where mentors visited mentees physically and virtually to lay the foundation for a constructive partnership. This was complemented by mentees gaining hands-on experience by visiting the mentors' cultural centers. As a collective learning experience, all participants attended TEH's annual conference in Leipzig, Germany. A highlight of the program was the prestigious Philippe Grombeer Award, clinched by Cotranspose in October at the TEH Camp Meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia. This accolade not only brought recognition but also came with a significant prize of 5000 euros. Moreover, this achievement elevated Cotranspose to become valued members of the TEH network. The mentorship program exemplified the spirit of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and practical engagement. As the mentees evolved, so did the mentorship community. The impactful closure during TEH's camp meeting in Tbilisi served as a fitting celebration of the collective journey undertaken by Ziemniaki i, Cotranspose, Shadows and Clouds, and Objekt4000 under the guidance of mentors Fariba and Ella. This report encapsulates the transformative experience and tangible outcomes of the TEH Mentorship Program, reinforcing the commitment of TEH to nurturing emerging cultural initiatives.

8. MENTORS PROFILE



8.1 Fariba Mosleh

Fariba Mosleh is a cultural manager and curator with extensive experience in the art world. She holds degrees in Cultural Anthropology, Sinology, and Cultural Management from universities in Vienna, Guangzhou, and Barcelona. Her work in the arts has taken her to various cities around the world, including Vienna, New York City, Taipei, and Brussels. She specializes in project management, production, and curation of transcultural, cross-genre, collaborative, and anti-discriminatory artistic practices, with a particular focus on performative and visual arts. In addition to her institutional curatorial activities, she founded and leads studioOne - an association for art and culture projects. Fariba is also a member of juries and advisory boards in the art sector. Currently, Fariba Mosleh is working as a curator for performative and visual arts, as well as a creative Europe project, at Brunnenpassage Vienna. Her expertise lies in promoting diversity and addressing the needs of plural societies through the arts.



8.2 Ella Overkleeft

With 15 years of experience in the Cultural and Creative Industries, Ella Overkleeft has made impact with projects in the field of arts, culture, and social innovation all over Europe. She is the co-founder of The Night Mayor Foundation in Amsterdam and worked as a Senior Project Manager at Trans Europe Halles the biggest network of independent cultural spaces in Europe. Ella is as much an activist as a spiritualist, and with a set of strong beliefs and a holistic approach, she aims to push things forward by stimulating human interaction and connection. Her latest project is the creation of Rural Radicals: a cultural enterprise dedicated to empowering and enriching non-urban creative spaces and communities.

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