

## ***On Care — Enni-Kukka Tuomala***

Empathy designer + artist

As an empathy designer and artist my vision is to transform empathy from an individual feeling to a radical collective power for social change. I want to challenge us as designers, artists and makers to be more than empathisers, and become catalysts for empathy. My practice is built on collaboration and my work is often realised in partnership with others, from working with communities and people passing on the street to politicians, decision makers and organisations. Two years after launching my empathy studio akin kollektiv, my writing explores my own processes of care as a practitioner.

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*The care in my work feels inconsistent  
I have a lot of care for others, but I am not always the best at practicing  
what I preach  
Sometimes I can pour myself over into my work and the people I work  
with  
I can sacrifice my own care for the care of others, too easily  
The shape of care feels like a membrane  
Forever in movement and changing shape  
Continuously morphing depending on  
the space  
the moment  
the people  
the emotions  
Both my own and those of others  
Sometimes it's large and wide and expansive  
Neverending  
All encompassing  
Without clear boundaries  
Other times it's narrow, and tight and claustrophobic  
Compressed and constrained*

*I feel out of breath*

*The membrane is soft and cool  
But the temperature keeps changing  
Parts feel cold, others are too hot to touch  
I can see through it  
Everything looks a little hazy*

*I can make out eyes after eyes after eyes as far as my eye can see  
Inquisitive eyes  
Kind eyes  
Questioning eyes  
Suspicious eyes  
Bored eyes  
Sleeping eyes  
Empathic eyes  
Blinking eyes  
Expecting eyes  
Looking at me  
Looking at each other  
Looking at nothing at all*

*The membrane morphs around them  
In between them  
Surrounding them  
Engulfing them  
Avoiding them  
Going under them  
Over  
Past  
Inside  
Pausing  
Then moving again*

*It feels like I am standing on a sponge  
It's soft and squidgy  
It feels moist and pleasant, if not a little wobbly  
It's absorbing everything around me  
Sucking it in  
Savouring it and storing it  
Keeping it  
I want to jump on it, roll on it, play with it  
Become it  
I am the sponge*

*I arrived here by becoming one with the matter  
By taking shape alongside it  
By immersing myself in the movement of the stream and moving with  
it  
Letting the current take me forward*

*And at the same time I am peddling fast to go in the right direction  
It's a balance  
Going with the flow and knowing where you want to go  
I practice*

*We are all one  
And we are all none  
We are all the same  
And we are all different  
We strive for equality  
But we don't have equally  
We want connection  
But we foster disconnection  
We seek empathy  
But we don't empathise with ourselves*

*Question: How do I continue to give so much of myself to my work and  
the people I work with, whilst practicing more care for myself?*

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Read more *On Care*, through Design and about the writing prompt  
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