# Company Drinks with Kathrin Böhm

Maddy: I am speaking to you from the lands of the people of the Wurundjeri and the Boonwurrung and I'd like to pay my respects to elders and ancestors past and present, and also to acknowledge that sovereignty over the lands and waters which we live, was never ceded. And this is Aboriginal land. Um, we are speaking today to Kathrin Bohm who runs a project in London called Company Drinks and has a proliferation of other projects that are things like center for plausible economies and the rural economics in my villages. So many things that you've done. And so we wanted to speak to you today to talk about your project Company Drinks mostly, but I think all of the things that we're speaking about will also maybe hopefully touch on some of your other projects as well. Um, maybe before, maybe just for the purposes of the video, we could start with a question about like what his Company Drinks and how did it start and how does it work?

Kathrin: Thank you. Thanks for the invitation. I'm sitting in east London, but not as far east, as Company Drinks. Company Drinks is based in what's called greater London. So on six, um, in parking in Dagenham and Company Drinks is a drinks company and many other things, um, purposely many other things. It started in 2014. So an arts commission, I'm an artist. I work in public space. My main interest is to see how we get the support existing public spaces or create new ones. So Company Drinks, is a public space for most. Um, and yet we had an art commission, um, award money to set up, uh, a one-year long project. And I think through all the works I've done previously, I quite explicitly wanted to set something up that could continue that isn't a project, but becomes a kind of reproductive cycle of something.

So Company Drinks is informed by a lot of other previous work where we look at like local resources, kind of localizing a kind of collective production around them, look at different systems of trades to play, but also to enact different economies. Um, so if a Company Drinks, a lot of those ideas from previous work came together with this relatively simple idea of, um, creating a continuous circle of collective production that shapes a drinks company, um, the important bit, um, how it connects to east London is that history or community heritage of, um, east end as going hot picking. So along comes relatively close, uh, closeness to the countryside. Um, um, and it's it, wasn't an important starting points. The idea of going, picking together, everybody who comes from a working class background in Eastland would recognize that term going 'picking' because it was just like annual harvest, like, um, holiday, um, paid holidays, working labor, um, mainly women and children going from the east end of London to the Ken countryside.

And it was vast amounts of people. It was like a hundred thousand women and children every year, over a hundred years. So it's not just a few people that did it once in a while. It's really part of the kind of memory of East London. Um, and of course a lot of things have changed. You know, there's no traditional east end that geography has changed. The demographics have changed dramatically. Um, so this invitation to going picking again was

the first invitation of Company Drinks in this new geography with it's very different population. Um, and the simple invitation to go picking again is easily recognized because it's, it's a very simple invitation let's go picking. And then what I often do, or what we often do is then to like, make this very attentive. The whole process of we are going, picking, we're making the drinks together. We are trading the drinks together. We are reinvesting. So after the first year it became clear that Company Drinks was going to be this continuous cycle of drinks production.

Maddy: Just have a quick question just for clarity, is that, do you know what the history of that movement of people from east London to, did that start as a, as a kind of result of the enclosures?

Kathrin: No, no. That's straight forward. Capitalist market,

Maddy: Freelance cheap labor.

Kathrin: It's nothing but cheap labor. Um, Ken was the biggest top growing area. It isn't anymore. Um, before the harvest got mechanized, they just relied on vast numbers of cheap labor. I think a lot of cities have this relationship then something you like, you have a, have a big population of women and children who, who don't have income elsewhere. So that becomes one of the possible, only incomes. And to those kinds of temporarily, it wasn't just east end as it was. Um, a third of the pickers were Loper. A third of the pickers were travelers and a third of the pickers came from east London. But I think that's a very kind of common relationship between cities, um, and their, their kind of agricultural surroundings. But what's interesting about, um, so there's, um, I think the fact that it was mainly women and children, you know, it was this, um, um, temporary women led culture time and there's a lot of really interesting oral history, um, collected from the women.

And when we started researching this, the reasons for going picking were many. So of course the main reason for many was a bit of financial independence and income, but, um, the reasons were everything from, um, going on a holiday, getting the kids out of London, having time with other women, having time to yourselves away from the kind of more patriarchal, immediate household structures. So those are records were very, um, kind of important in terms of saying, okay, Company Drinks, but also have this multitude of reasons why people can join and it will have this like, um, multitude of identities as well. You know, it can be a company, it can be a community space, it can be a bar. Um, so I think this might actually would have reasons why women when picking has directly informed Company Drinks, being this quite, um, not so clear. One thing, sorry. Yeah, but it's a universal history, you know, it's like the history of like cheap labor I was in, uh, was in agricultural production.

Maddy: I guess for me, I wonder if that connects to the history of the enclosures and the commons. And I think all of that is sort of written as the beginning of capitalism anyway. So people were forced out of, well, there was a kind of nucleation, super nucleation towards

cities towards urbanization that often meant that rural knowledges were moved into the cities, through the enclosures acts, which I always...

Kathrin:  It, it definitely is, but I think time-wise, that is too disconnected that probably the families of the 1870s would reconnect the enclosures and, and reconnect with the land. Um, we mainly reconnected with this, um, quite exceptional culture of, um, inner city community, actually having a real memory and the rural heritage, which is normally, um, more part of the upper and middle classes that you, you know, you go to the countryside every, every summer. Um, that's not a heritage, um, accessible so easily. Um, if you don't have that mobility.

Maddy: I saw these amazing pictures in the isle of dogs. I went to the isle of dogs. It had this archive room and there were loads and loads of pictures when I first moved to London. So 2010, I just went there and had a look and there was some amazing pictures of all the people going there. So when I found out about your project, I was really interested in it...

Kathrin: No, the scale of it was quite amazing because then of course you have a whole architecture around those, you know, you have to temporary housing across Kenya, you have train lines, there's a lot of temporary culture around it, which is super interesting.

Yeah. I actually know that Kent wasn't as much of an enclosed landscape anyway. It wasn't, it didn't really, it had a different, um, colonial history.

Meena: , I mean, you know, we've been talking, um, a lot. I mean, it's interesting to think about this sort of rural and urban,  you know, or the countryside and the city and it's something that's often come up with also some of the other projects that we've been speaking to. But there's always a different social or cultural or a political plan obviously, right? I mean, that's certain overlaps and yet they're coming from really different, um, knowledges, I guess, and histories. I guess I was curious about these (aspects) that we've been talking about interdependence and autonomy quite a lot. And, uh, we were just curious about how you see that  within the work that you're doing. And also, you know, related to that, how does, how does company drinks, just as a community is something that you're creating now, um, you know, which is referencing certain bias and certain histories? How are you disorganizing now and, in the context of, of this particular project is there something you're taking from  these histories.  so maybe just to reflect a little bit on how you all are thinking about organizing, what are the relationships that exist between you and others in the community or building.

Kathrin: - I think there's, uh, rural, urban connection is, is a very strong one, which would don't stress too much, but, um, that is something to recognize within a completely changed landscape, offline, you know, who, who has rural memories, who comes from a rural background, who is part of what history is. Um, so this going, picking as a kind of universal enough invitation, and we know it from whoever's coming to those trips, that a lot of people can reconnect it with a memory from elsewhere. So of course the east end, as we reconnected with the hop, picking a lot of other families reconnected with picking, uh,

mangoes somewhere or picking bluebells in this way. And yeah, so in that sense, **this going picking is a very kind of basic human experience that allows us to draw together a lot of geographies.** Um, and, and that seems to work.

We have, in the first few years, this kind of hopping heritage was very dominant and this became an issue, you know, there's like, it's this kind of like a white working class heritage. How, how much do we want to open this up? So we are much more careful now with, I'm not saying this is an reenactment of a particular community's experience. This is really this, um, universal, um, activity of enjoying to pick someone and eat it and make food and maybe a trade it, and maybe that's where autonomy comes in. So of course, even though we completely think of everything we do as a kind of independence, you know, every single contribution underpins another contribution and makes those impossible with Company Drinks. And they're really tiny, but to have a little bit of autonomy within the organization where we can respond to a request or quickly do something this little, **this little bit of independence as an organization, it's actually very valuable to us, um, where we can, um, also maybe make irrational decisions** or, you know, **we don't have a master plan and see through a kind of social enterprise plan for the next five years**.

So this little bit of autonomy in terms of, um, an independent economy, um, allows us to react very often the way we want to react. Um, and I think that has changed the last two years in, in a few, in the first year, there's a kind of drinks, production has very much driven the narrative, um, was Corona that of course has massively been disrupted. Now we are much more organized around the groups and the regular users who actually want to use us and, and activities are led by, by the groups rather than, um, as continuing or overimposing the cycle too much. So there's a change happening at the moment.

Maddy: So , you were organized, you were producing drinks and now you're more of a community?

Kathrin: We still are. , uh, in the first years, um, it was also the drinks. Um, I don't know if you've seen the photos, but sometimes you have like a family portrait. So we always call it like family portraits and, it's always a family or the extended family goes picking. So I very much liked those portraits to say, look, that's a kind of contemporary portrait of this neighborhood because the photos document who went picking what we went, um, ideas for, for recipes and so on. So those, those photos were very, very important in order to talk about.

We are making something we're doing this together and it's quite tangible, you know, there's, it's a drink at the end of the day. So they have a very important need in order to, um, communicate the realness of the invitation. And I think last year, obviously, um, we had no drinks outlets... Um, we've had not many of those big trips, which always quite spectacular i. Nice. Um, and we have refurbished our building in, in barking. So we've shifted a little bit the emphasis from going out and going picking to actually taking over the building more and settling more in with the different user groups who, who are part of company drinks. So we

are making less strings, but less of the resources go into producing the drinks at the moment. Most of the resources go into looking after groups, wellbeing, um, providing programs that are really needed.

Maddy: We have been thinking a lot about, um, because the premise of the disorganising what sort of a program is around, **what are the narratives that can support radical shifts in the way that we share and produce resources?** And I think you've spoken about going, picking, um, and you've spoken about like, kind of collective working a little bit, but I wonder about, um, some of these, is this practice of bringing people together also about sort of changing narratives about resources and how people have access to things?

Kathrin: At company drinks, we discuss it a lot. How much **we keep this openness in the language,** you know, we hardly ever specifically say, this is about changing the economy, or this is about changing food systems or, and this is about the comments and, and many others around to it. And we reflect ourselves, you know, they reflect on us, but it's a tone that we, we had from the beginning**, I think, um, with the idea that many different interests can actually come into the company and they can come for different durations**. You know, some people come once, some people have been coming for seven years. So to, to quite, um, purposely let it leave it and pick yours, which is sometimes a problem. Um, but overall we think to have money access points, so you can enter it based on your own interest has actually worked quite well so far.

So it's not very prescriptive in terms of, um, we make drinks and you have to make drinks. Uh, it's, it's more on a cycle of, we are growing, we are tending to our own wellbeing and to what we grow and we make drinks and we socialize, but we also trade together that narrative works, works better for us. Um, in terms of just allowing a much broader, um, community to actually make use of company drinks, it is very, very mixed in terms of who is coming in, uh, what reasons people are coming for. And I think that's, that's kind of the interest in like a public space. You know, how can you actually create quite an open but complex public space where interests can meet and they meet quite directly, you know, they meet when we do something together. So in that sense, it's a little bit more abstract and the language around it is not so politicized. Um, but I think the way we, who we work with, um, what other movements we connect with, make it clear that ultimately this is about, of course changing, changing food systems and changing society, but that wouldn't be the best message to walk into all the time.

Maddy: I like the fact that there are all sort of doing things together, and lots of people that we've spoken to and even instituting otherwise is about doing things together, learning together, being together, cooking together, making drinks together, trading. I liked the fact that you spoke about trading together, that that they're all in the action that these things happen.

Kathrin: We tried to be quite explicit. That company that brings foremost is about unlocking resources, resources around us and using them collectively. We don't use the word commons

very often because it's just, it's not easily understood. communities are much better understood. And it's also more real to everyone who's coming. The commons are relatively abstract terms.  Where we work and who we work with. So community economies, that's a practical term. Like that's a much easier term. It's like, alright, economies of community, That's a more practical term, but even interdependent is not exactly such a practical term all the time, but I think a tone we always had, and I mean, it might be a negative thing or a positive thing, but it was to be not too prescriptive around what we want people to think and do.  I can see both that this can be a shortcoming and the strength. So I'm putting it out as that.

Meena: I still want to do, maybe dive in a little bit, because I'm really curious about like how, um, what you mentioned works. You have you said, you know, there's like a group of you who would identify as being part of Company Drinks, and then there are others that kind of come in and work maybe like, just to talk about how those structures work?

You know, is it that they're fine that would say I'm with company drinks 100% of the time, you know, and then there are others that kind of come in and go. And because I'm really interested in the doing of many things, because it's something that I find, you know, um, as a part of an and think of just working and not going around, like, you know, very neoliberal, capitalist ideas of like productivity and hierarchies and so on. But so I was just curious about like, just really your own organizing and, you know, then other like guidelines that this is always how we maintain our relationships and, or is it just a lot more free and open?

Kathrin: Good question. And I think because it started as an arts commission, it then did this thing of growing organically, which of course when last year we were like, oh shit, this is actually not a great idea to think about yourselves like that, you know, um, to be transparent as an organization to actually make it clear how you're organized or also in terms of accessible. So, you know, not to create an exclusivity around being organic. Um, so we've always been organized around a small team that gets paid and that team is organized in a cooperative manner. We are incorporated as a community interest company. We are incorporated as limited but organized as a cooperative. And so there's a small team of between five and six of us. Nobody works more than two or three days. So it is small. And we, um, yeah, as I said, we organized ourselves cooperatively.

Like we earn the same, we decide things together and team meetings. And then now on the website, it is clear that these six people are heads and hands of different activities, you know, where our personal interests and our skill set. So, Sean, for example, is leading all the growing activities and the wellbeing activities. So then he would look after the groups and the individuals and communities who will come for this program. And then we, um, organize it within, um, also our financial ability, um, because everybody who makes sure that things can take place, get, gets paid. There's no volunteering on the organizational level. Um, and then, uh, um, yeah. Okay. So there's like six hats and hands-off, and we, um, just then

facilitate different groups coming, picking, growing education. And, um, we have more, um, keyholders now who use the building outside of our kind of programs.

Um, so it's a constant like responding to, um, the clearest idea of what to do next. It's a bit like, yeah. So this summer we are running, uh, uh, uh, uh, program for free school meals for primary children. And we quite closely work with the council. It's uh, it's quite cool, like the council does give a lot of its contracts to local organizations. So in that sense, we deliver quite a few contracts for the council as well. Um, yeah, but that's how it's organized. And then like, I'm more looking after let's say that the heritage side of things. So then we work with other local partners get grants in and then it comes back completely funding. We need income, but income and then make those different programs public and available.

But that's valid. There's not so much volunteering. You know, I wouldn't call someone who comes for a trip and picks a volunteer. You know, it's a guest, it's a visit. So we're trying not to use the word volunteers. We're talking about team members and members of the different groups and users and regular visitors. I don't know if that answers your question.

Meena: It did actually. I was very curious about just a structure. Because you know, when we're always talking about moving away from structures, like what does it mean to call yourself a team member? Like even just the title or nomination, within institution-making or anti-institution making or community building, right? It's easy to say let's just not have any structure (but) that never works. And, you know, even to build a collective, is hard. We know that. When you've had a certain world, you know, with its systems and then you're kind of stepping out of that. You're critiquing what you're rejecting, that there's still so much, you have to keep unlearning, you got to keep responding to it intuitively and you know, sometimes, I mean, and Maddie and I have had these, this, I think Maddie's the one who said like, you know, how do you, how do you exist as an artist, like within compromised systems, because we're not gonna, you know, suddenly wake up and end capitalism tomorrow. Like, you know, the, the, the ideology is ongoing change. So how do you function? You know, um, anti-capitalism might look good on people, but not necessarily easy to do. So I'm really curious about these stills and titles and structures. And so, yeah. Yeah.

Kathrin: - I mean, I'm rejecting all those ideas of directors and stuff. You know, it's a language you're trying to use, but at the same time, I think we also need to recognize that **the structures have to do with accessibility.** So if we have a board, if it's of use to someone to actually become a director of a company, you know, if that actually is of value to someone, because it's then on the CV and maybe gives access to, then we would use it. I think that as an organization at the moment, a bit of unlearning, like how structured we need to be, more structured so that it becomes clearer how to access the organization. So you don't have to be friend in, we are mainly white led team, you know, it's like, you don't have to be a white friend of the white director to get in. Then organizing and structuring is actually super

important because  it describes  it a bit better and it's not reliant on your ability, it's reliant on your interests.

So that I think that has changed, but it's also confusing then we certainly, we introduced, um, top descriptions and because of that, okay, now let's be clear, you know, let's write down like all the things like the pay, um, the leave pay, the sick pay, you know, like contracts, like agreement, that's more outspoken. And of course people were extremely surprised that you're suddenly so formal. And so it's, of course it's a constant struggle between being clear how you operate and who's allowed in under con on which under which conditions and not overly formalizing it. But I think it's going to be a continuous struggle. I don't think there's going to be a solution. I think it's, that's all, what also worries me, what organizes me in regards to like, um, organizing public space, because it will always be the struggle between like formalized and sometimes also very useful conditions, you know, like risk assessments or something. Um, but, and, and, and keeping it informal. So I think that tension is not going to go away. I think it will never be no right and wrong either. I think it's always adjusting one to the other, to not let one overwhelm the other. But I think it's going to be a continuous tension.

Maddy: I really liked that you say that being organized somehow makes you more accessible because being more transparent about your roles means that other people know how to access you. And that when you know, this project that we're working on or that we're looking at is about disorganizing. But actually, you know, in the end how that might take shape for the three organizations that are not our organizations, somebody else's organizations. It is really unclear because, because they still need to be able to do the job of managing their spaces and looking after their communities.

Kathrin: And I think, I mean, with this kind of old world attitude of like doing 15 different jobs on like non existing contracts and kind of overworking set of exploiting, you know, that's just, can't be a mentality that you wans to maintain and I'm the only artist on the team, you know? So it's also like, you also don't recognize how much it's a kind of lift culture within the arts. **There's kind of constantly being excited over producing mode**, which is, is actually quite dangerous, you know, to someone who can't do it, doesn't want to do it. Um, yeah, it's almost deponing polling down. And I think maybe it's also at the moment I realized when I talk about Company Drinks, you know, the first few years I would always do this like amazing pet, you know, and I have no desire. I have no desire to do this anymore. I think we are completely toning down. Uh, you know, I'd rather, I'd rather risk not sounding exciting anymore, but saying something exciting we can't do.

Meena: Yeah. I relate absolutely to that feeling. It's just so strange because I've been speaking to, this idea of, you know, even to share information, like a lot of people would tell me, Meenakshi you used to say so much more before, why aren't you speaking out louder? And I'm like, I am speaking and it is loud. It's just that it's not in the framework of what you know, well expectations have been sometimes about how you need to be visible, to project yourself in a certain way. it's unlearning., you're recognizing that **the more you actually**

**start to do the work, there's this weird kind of stepping back that feels completely comfortable**. Like there's just no need, you know, to necessarily use the same kind of frameworks that we're so used to using. I mean, it's more comfort in actually saying, **"Hey, you know, I I've just been laying down in bed all day today and I can't get through this" just to even say that and feel comfortable within your community or the people that you're working with and collaborating with feels like a big deal**. Because it is recognizing well-being for what it is rather than just something that's abstract, you know?

Kathrin: But general exhaustion. And I think then there's this tiny autonomy that we have of this tiny independence that we have is then really of value because we can say, okay, then let's do less, you know, let's, let's, you know, no one is telling us what to do. We can completely do what we want. Like literally, you know, there's, I mean, it's like two funders would be a little bit unhappy, but of course, um, I think there's within the team, that's a felt responsibility that we want to Company Drinks to continue, you know, the, of course, and then that has, that comes with economics, you know, that's, we always have to prepare, you already know the next year to make sure we are still around next year. But once we have secured this kind of quite basic economics, we can actually have alot of decisions, no one is going to come and really count how many people came. We don't have to have 1200 people a year. Even if I would love that, but if no one else would want that, that's it. Thankyou for sharing this. I think we have to become more comfortable with we are doing less than 4 years ago. We are actually doing less, not more. In the art world, everyone wants to hear the next achievement, the next goal, the next conceptual goal. i have to be careful in Company Drinks, I'm one of many, I can't drive the narrative, I can't introduce panic non-stop. If it goes somewhere else that has to be fine, in that sense it's cooperative. Do you know Frieze Art Fair?

Yes we do.

We do a bar there every year. We are back this year. Okay, our shelf life is quite long. At the beginning people were really worried that the shelf life of Company Drinks only going to be a few years… but it's not true. We are still a solid-functioning community organisation. That's of value. We don't have to say every year, 'We've done this new, we've done that thing'. So Frieze was like, 'what are your new flavours?' ...and I was like (sarcastically) 'yeah we have alot of new flavours'... who really cares! it's good we still exist.

Maddy: About that relationship to the art world. So I can, maybe it's interesting to talk cause it outlet has a different economic structure, you know, it's based much more not, I mean, I think they're trying at the moment to think about collectives, but, um, you know, it's based much more on the sort of spectacle and the solo artist. And I know that you wrote about that in your, um, iceberg and principles, but I wonder about like, is there, is there a desire to resist those spaces of kind of extreme extraction or

Kathrin: I, of course, of course, of course. I mean, I think company drinks is in that word, a good example for possible different practice. You know, I do company drinks as an artist. I

don't do it as a social entrepreneur, so it is my place of practice and therefore it's artistic practice, you know, a bit stubborn. And I think too, and then you have the iceberg again, because it's a completely possible plausible artistic practice, but not within the market logic, but it exists. It's survives. I've been doing this for a long time and I think that's why I'm within an art context still quite interested in proclaiming this as a possible practice. Um, also for younger artists too. I mean just yeah, for once get rid of this idea that if you're not part of the glossy market, you're a loser, you know, crack racial let's idea around dark matter.

Kathrin: Who's the dark matter. I'm quite, I don't want to be there. You know, it was a decision not to be in the art market world either. So I think, I think within the art world, there's still a lot of, kind of just emancipating to do around. What's a, what's a plausible practice and what's a successful practice and to not make it dependent on your market value because I have no market value. Like none, I know that. Um, but it doesn't mean that I have a non valuable practice, um, and people see it. And because I now at the moment I have this quite prominent solo show at the showroom. Um, people have been like, oh my God, you've, you've done lots. You're like, yeah. And, and they're like, there's an assumption that I'm upset because it never made it to the market and I'm not, I'm not upset about it. It really doesn't bother me. Um, and I think just to say this out loud is important because it's, that market is too dominant in terms of driving the narrative and it's boring in terms of practice. And I think a lot of artists see that the market driven practice is actually really quite boring because it's only organized around spectatorship and consumership and everything else. Other

Maddy: It's only really organized around sales. And there's a very small audience of people that are actually

Kathrin: All the gallerists agree. It's boring. It's that boring? Honestly, it's so boring because you have such a conservative buyer. The consumer says, what are you expecting to sell it to people who want to furnish their flats? You know, but I think there's a general agreement that this market is relatively boring. And I think all of us work, not towards that market. I have to be clear. Why, why maintaining an art practice it's of value to us? You know, I, I still, I remain an artist because I have, I can use that autonomy to, to try other things out, which then I don't want to be autonomous, but I use the autonomy to open up things like a company format, you know, to, um, to try formats differently. So I think it's super exciting, but yeah, that market is so boring. We all just have to keep saying very boring.

Meena: Reflecting on what you said, there's, it's interesting that we talk about, like, when you say this is an artistic practice, this is, you know, of value as an artistic practice. It's not about being a social entrepreneur because I know that even in the context of India with the market is still very, very dominant. Like my practices, like people don't understand what I'm necessarily doing and you know, how you even like sustaining yourself. I mean, not that artistic practices necessarily about sustaining yourself financially ever, but there's a resentment that we can call this practice. Like I've had friends who have very much, um, you know, a practice that's very, uh, centered on the market, meaning that artists that didn't make it, they make sculpture, they make paintings, so they're conceptual artists, right. And

then they look at me and they're like, well, you just moved on like all able to get opportunities because your practice, you know, that's the thing now. And, and, you know, so there's a resentment of also reorganizing the industry or to say, I actually don't get… I don't care for the dominant narrative, but even your own peers actually can like be resentful of it because it means because they still want that. But they also don't want that. You know what I mean? And it's, it's a, it's a really, it's a crazy space, to be honest.

Kathrin: Yeah Yeah.

Maddy: I'd love to hear about the part about interdependence. Did you set that up and is that partly a kind of way of shifting? Because part of the reason we wanted to set up the Food Art Research Network was to connect researchers. You were sort of doing similar work in different parts of the world. And also a lot of their researchers are not kind of working in long-term kind of community projects that do interesting work around environmental restoration or community economies. And often that can be, you're the only artist in a context, and you want to speak to other artists who are doing similar things in different places to learn from each other. Um, and I wondered if the interdependence was partly like that, or what was the impetus behind it?

Kathrin: It came out of this initial sun network, the community economy research network. Um, and I think it was a workshop, um, in Italy two years ago, two years ago. Yeah. And we we're trying to think how to make this, the scale of the practice within the network, more visible, um, because of course the killer argument for each of us, it's like, oh, it's nice. It's what, what, you know, what are you achieving? You're working with like three people. I like, you know, there's like argument of scale and not being able to scale up. And I think it was a frustration for a long time, for many, both for the researchers also for the practitioners that it's always regarded as a kind of mini intervention, somewhere temporary. And, but we all know the lived experience is that it's much bigger, you know, and we all do this and we do it over many years. So there was a, it was just an attempt to find something that can identify that, um, led scale off us, not being together in an organized way, but being together through practice and ethics and, and discussion. So this became this like identifier to us to say there's different practices.

When we started it and that's again, why I'm a bit hesitant. We,  thought, oh, this is going to be like super big, you know, it's going to be, it's going to replace the limited within two years, you know, when you're really excited by an idea like this, we're going to be so successful, like everybody's going to put IDT behind. And I did, it was not meant to be a membership scheme. It was just an affiliation with the community economy, his principles. Um, so we've started it and then just, you know, like just to do with resources, it's still relatively small. But, um, we, we, we kind of, the aim is to open it up, but it is even for those who are part of it, now it's a useful tool to say, look, those practices are connected and interconnected. And we are interconnected, um, both on a, on a peer to peer level.

You know, that we actually, you know, that's our network. That's like, there's like three drinks companies in, in the IDT. That's also the colleagues we talked to when we about like,

um, our portal is more sustainable than cans. You know, it's a very practical questions, but also to not, to not feel small and to use students say, no, this is, this is a multinational. I mean, we don't want to use the word multinational we'll use multilocal or translocal, but to, um, be able to refer to that bigger scale, um, whenever someone says, oh, it's nice, but, but what are you actually achieving? So I'm a bit, there's a bit of like sadness because IDT, I think I didn't have the personal resources to grow it more and push it more and support it more. But I think it's still, it's a very, um, it's a very clear content.

I think as soon as we have a bit more resources, it probably needs two people to work on it for a year. Part-time, you know, it needs marketing and it, it does need those things as long as people don't hear about it. Um, I think it's, it, it could work really, really well. And it works for those who are part of it. It already works quite well because you can go like, oh yeah, but we have a sister company in Italy, you know, you sometimes can also do this like stupid, um, business, uh, speak to just kill an argument, you know? Um, so yeah, so the IDT is by affiliation and it's open to groups, um, companies, social enterprise individuals, research researchers, and the ideas that you put  behind your name.

Maddy: Yeah. I know curators who were starting to call themselves interdependent curators instead of independent curators. And they started in a conversation that was happening between a bunch of international curators at the beginning of the pandemic. And everyone started to say, this is not so interdependence became such a sort of crazy word last year. You know, it was used a lot and it was really nice to see you taking it a step further.

Kathrin - I mean, I think it's also going to be used more in order to, um, tackle this very, um, unpleasant relationship we have with capitalist economies and we have to tackle it, you know, less, I mean, as no purist solution to anything. And I think especially in the art world, um, it's not done very much. Of course you don't want a sponsor, but the money is constantly coming from areas that you wouldn't fully support. I think to acknowledge this and say, okay, if we don't want it, what are we going to do?  I think  that's for me a kind of next step in the discussion within artist economies. And we just had an example because,, I'm part of this British art in Aberdeen. Patina is the oil capital of Europe. You know, there's nothing that's not sponsored by BP novelty.

So you can't come within a project and like, uh, yeah, no, I'm anti BP because it's, it's all BP, you know, and it's completely ingrained in the Carlton has spent 400 years. So I think those situations that need a slightly different approach, like how can you be against fossil fuel usage, but still acknowledge the situation you're in and think about steps to move out. And I think those discussions, um, will be more fruitful if they actually quite broad, you know, if they step away from the kind of you're the enemy, we know how to do it more, which the art world doesn't do either. Well, does it often, well rhetorically, you know, they can, they, they build a position for themselves of like the kind of ethical position, but I think in practice, there's a massive, massive gap still. Especially, that's something we're gonna address, through the rural school of economics, with partners in Aberdeen who also know the regional economy much better, you know. I'm not a specialist in the Scottish oil industry.

Like definitely not. But I think that's a slightly different angle on the topic to also acknowledge an unpleasant interdependence in the arts.

Maddy:I feel like that might be a really good place to stop. It's an uneasy place and we are at we're at an hour.

Kathrin: Nice meeting you. Sorry.