

rather raw but turning softer

re: collecting
reflections on a dialogical research process

ADMA 2019 – 2020

Presentation by

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Image credits:

Drummin Bog image from: www.drumminbog.com

An Spéir Ark image and map by: Jen Castle artist

All other images by: Tunde Toth

RESEARCH PROJECT

proposals, re-adjustments and the (fragile) possibilities of actions

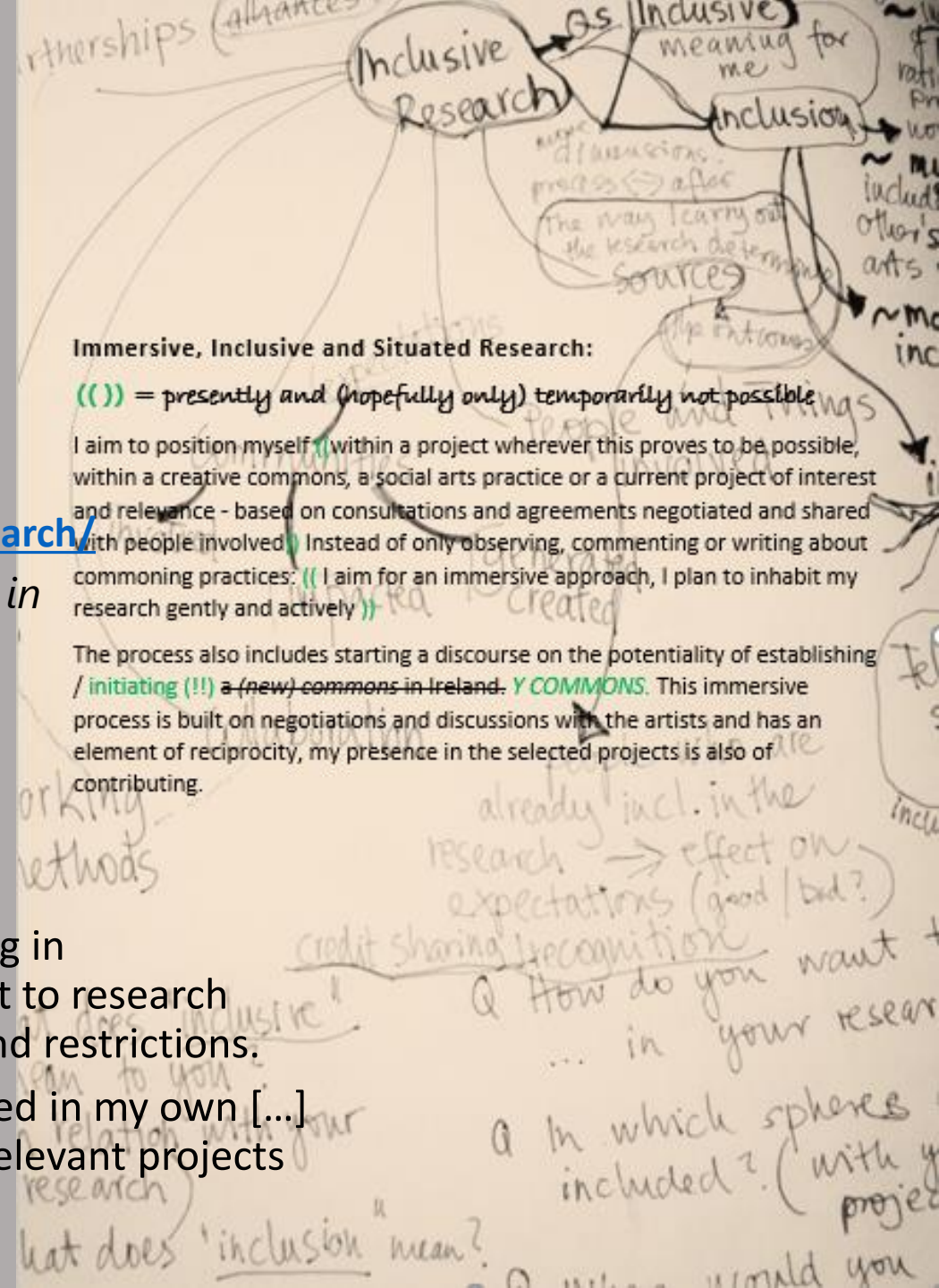
LINK to the 'original' research proposal – gently revised for the purpose of this presentation: <https://tundetoth.com/artistic-research/>

Current title: *Commoning Methodologies and Modes of Collectivity in Dialogical Social Arts Practice*

((Title of original proposal: *Commoning Methodologies and the Conditions of Creative Commons in the context of Socially Engaged, Dialogical Arts Practices*))

{in other words} a research of commoning methods by artists working in conversational social arts practices. {adjustment needed}: an attempt to research modes of collectivity during times of physical and social distancing and restrictions.

{the plan was} working with case studies: “While my research is rooted in my own [...] practice, I aim to gradually extend the scope of the work to include relevant projects in Ireland and in international contexts [...] confirmed with artists”





So what happened with the case studies?

Short answer is, very little.

Drummin Bog – raised bog wetland preservation project and eco-social art practice: the first meeting with project partners took place in March 2020 – a very positive and hopeful experience! Every thing else was put on hold due to the lock-down that followed, incl. the continuation of the project and any steps of my proposed inclusive, situated research process.

Utopia Ducks collaborative project in the North-West of Ireland – scheduled meetings and first interview for April cancelled and existing travel restrictions made it impossible to reschedule.

Deenview Project, Co. Kilkenny – the centre closed temporarily and reopened only partially since, with strict restrictions and no outside visitors allowed. Claire Wilson and I arranged for Zoom conversations with some of the participants.

the (fragile) possibilities of actions

How is it possible to continue a dialogical, participatory, inclusive art and research process – in times when we can not meet?

Considering the context of COLLECTIVE PRACTICE:

rethink *preparedness*

inclusion of the *unforeseen* and the *unintentional*

welcoming *fragility* and *experiment*

accepting the potential of *failure*

(un)learning

What can *action* mean in this research process?

How important is it to take action?

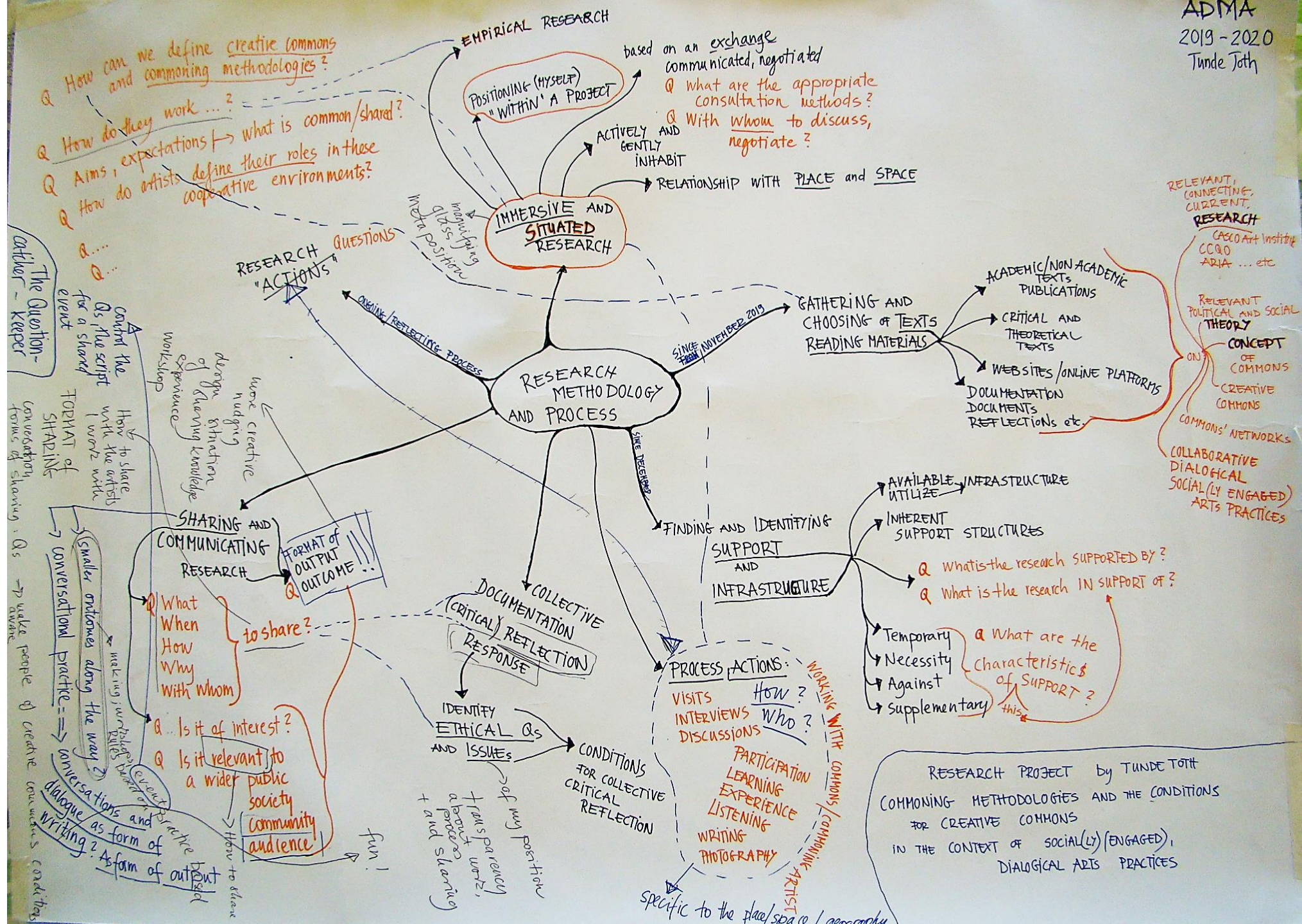


Mind Maps

Living Maps

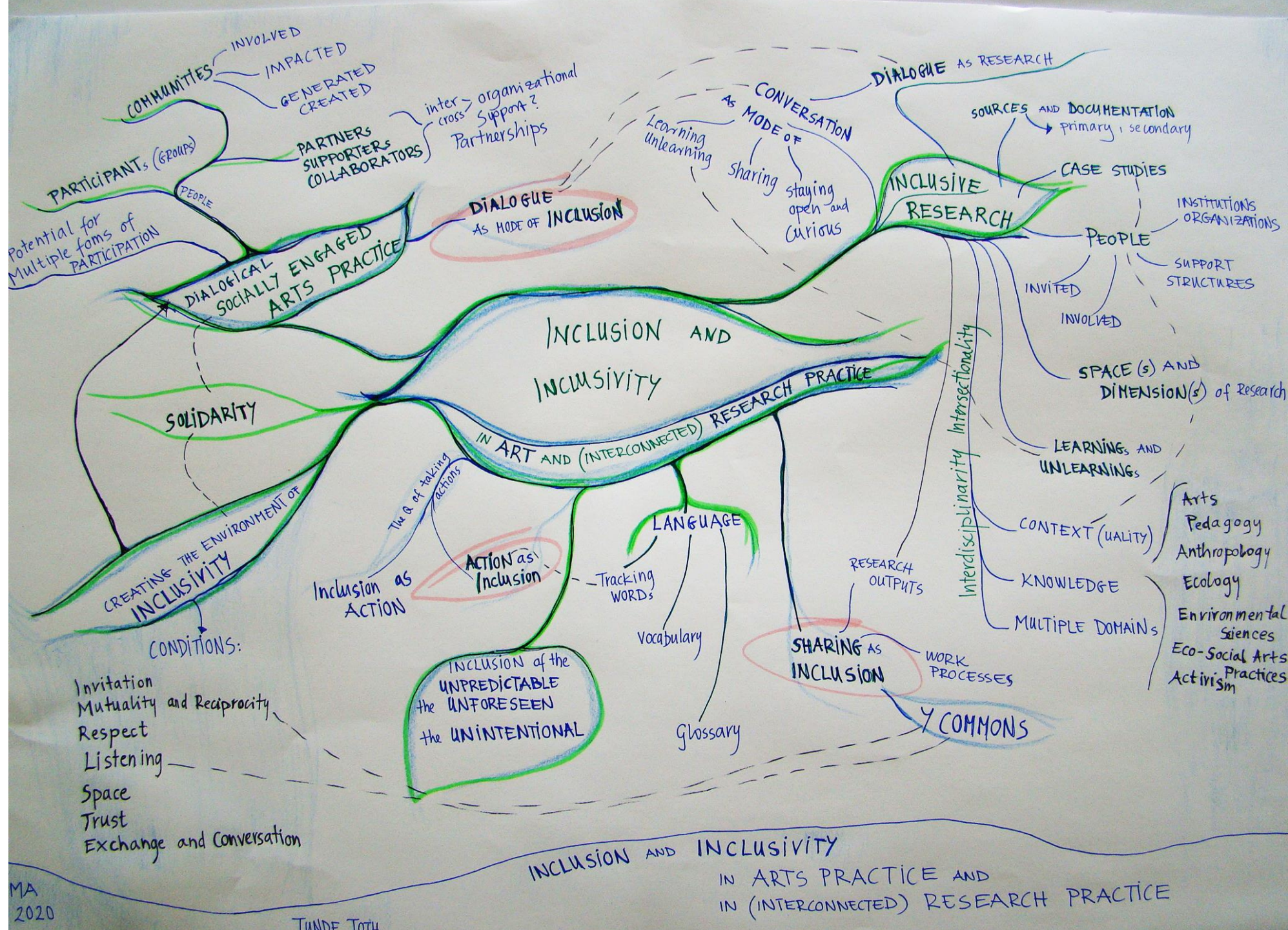
"...they are research and thinking tool and insight tool, {...} energizing and communicating hope all at once." PVB

"...they are very precious for me, like personal notes or diaries of thinking-routes... They help me to focus and support the shaping of questions, and all the non-linear narratives that I felt were there in my work processes for so long." TT



Inclusion

Mind Map

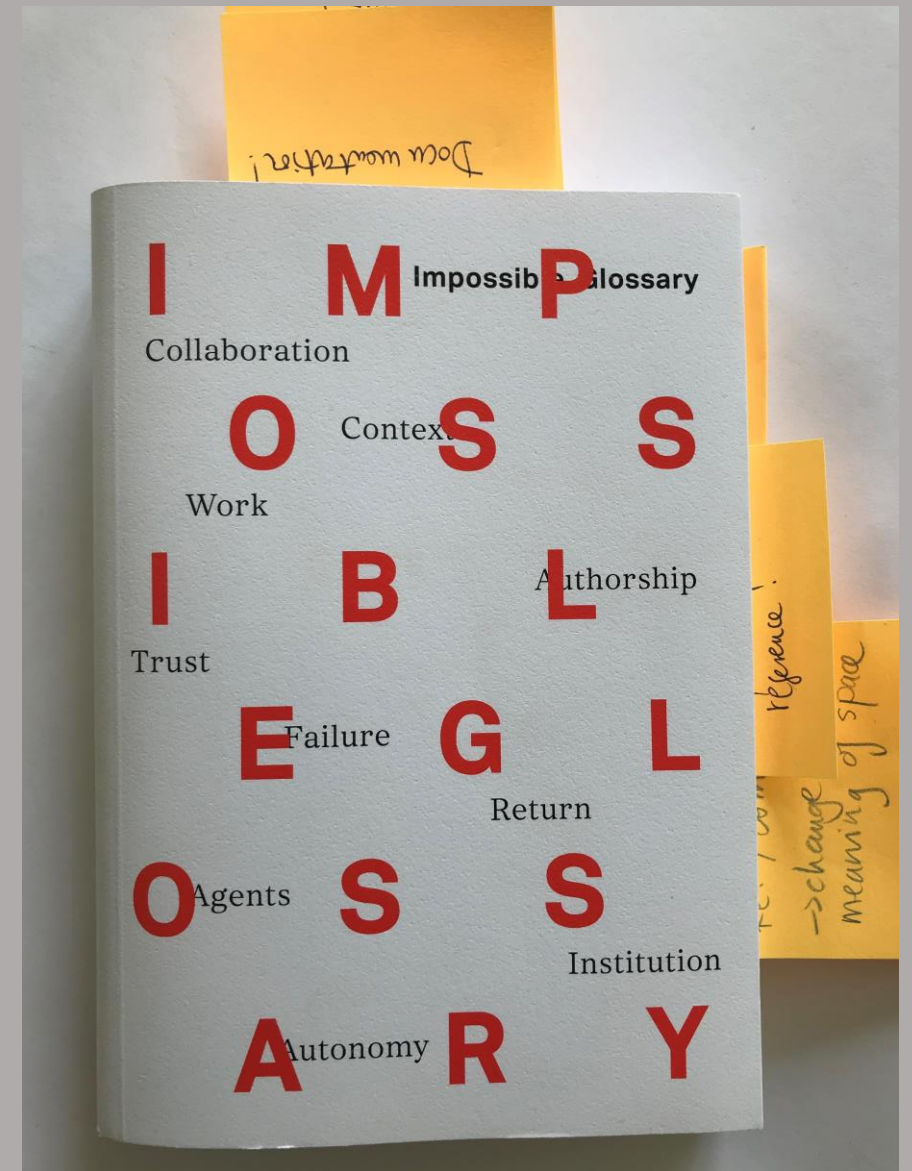


TRACKING WORDS

*locating anchor points and
starting a research glossary*

for vocabulary, language and access points

Collectivity **TRUST** *conditions* **SPACE**
conversation **Commons**
SHARE **inclusion** **Collective**
listening *dialogue*
PARTICIPATION **(un)learning**
agency **SOLIDARITY** *collaboration*



Impossible Glossary, 2018, Hablarenarte, Madrid



why COMMONS

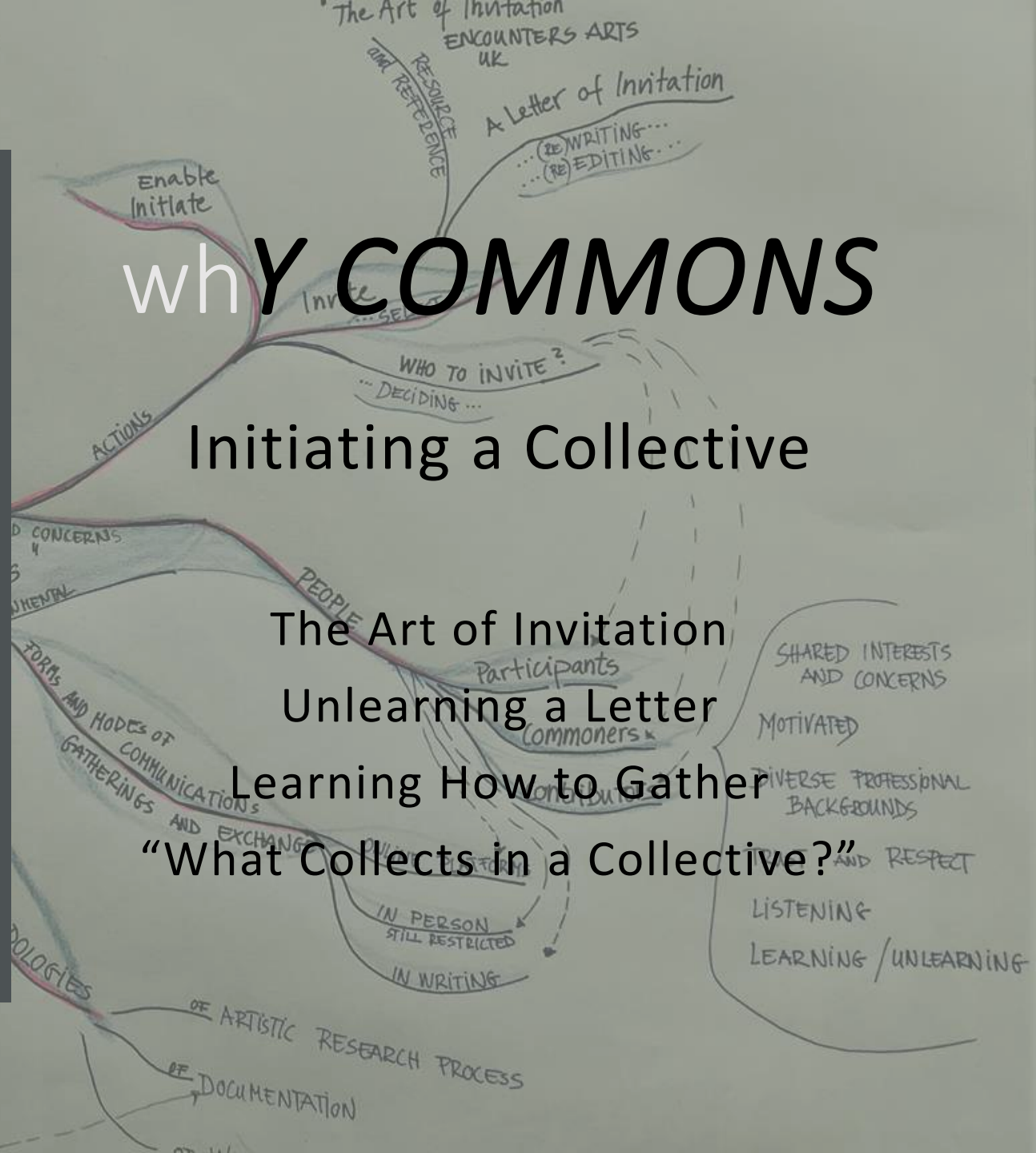
Initiating a Collective

The Art of Invitation

Unlearning a Letter

Learning How to Gather

“What Collects in a Collective?”



whY COMMONS

The Art of Invitation*

“I am in the process of *initiating* the setup of a collective” – I wrote in the letter of invitation.

What is the role of an *initiator*, where does it start, how far it stretches? How does it end – or rather: does it end or gently shifts and transforms into a different role?

How to be aware of the problematic nature and ambiguity of (pre)selecting people, future collaborators – and do it anyway?

How to compose a process of initiation and invitation without conveying any pressure on anyone? How to start creating *conditions* that will cultivate **inclusivity**, **mutuality** and **trust** while being convivial and inspirational?

*This title is taken from the Encounters Arts training project by the same name. <https://encountersarts.wixsite.com/legacy>

First physical meeting of
whY COMMONS

An Spéir Ark

Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland

4 August 2020

A Letter of Invitation (June 2020)

I have been learning the complexities of composing and sending a letter in the slow way: through a process of exchange, feedback, response and re-editing(s).
Quotes from four ADMA tutors – referencing four distinctive viewpoints

“[...]I really like the focus on commoners instead of the commons. Maybe this could be even more central in your letter? More using of the word of commoners instead of commons? I think this would make it very unique in a way – and more in relation to your practice: collective & collaboration in conversational art practice. That is what commoners do!” PVB

“Mentioning the Master course makes it a bit too institutional. This research program is something temporarily in the margin, for a few months it has been (and will still be for a few months longer) a reflection group. But this collective will last longer...” WM

“What is the difference between *us* and *you*? Maybe it would be interesting to use *us* since the beginning to give a sense of commonness?” LF

“One thing you don’t talk about is the solidarity that can be formed through collective groups — this is especially important to mention I think in respect of the differences inevitably present when more than one person gathers!” MS

why COMMONS



Online meeting vs physical gathering

What to Unlearn

Structural forms, expectations of what an *aim* or a *goal* is...

"... placing emphasis on unlearning, however impossible, as integral to learning something new" Site for Unlearning (CASCO and Annette Krauss)*

Learning how to get together, how to be a group, a collective.

Visiting *An Spéir Ark*: move, walk, sense, perceive, talk and (ways of) *conversations*.

Learning *about*, *with* and *from* (re)wilding.

* Baldauf, A.(ed.) (2018) *Spaces of Commoning – Artistic Research and the Utopia of the Everyday*, Publication Series of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Vol.18.Sternberg Press. p.170.

Unlearning a Letter

Learning How to Gather

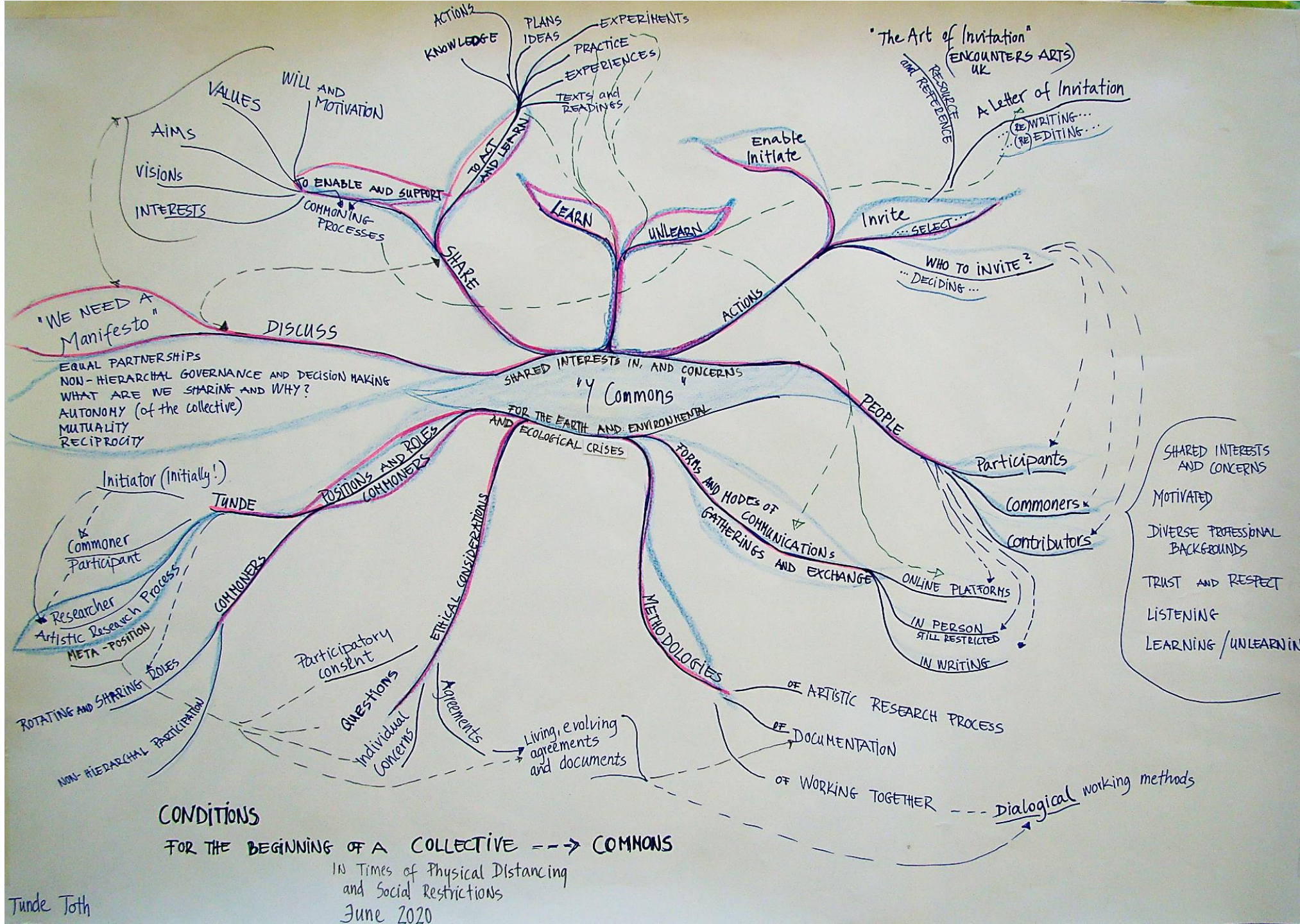
whY **COMMONS**



Conditions

Mind Map

For the Beginning of a Collective, a Commons (in times of physical distancing and social restrictions)
Y COMMONS 2020



whY COMMONS

“What Collects in a Collective?”

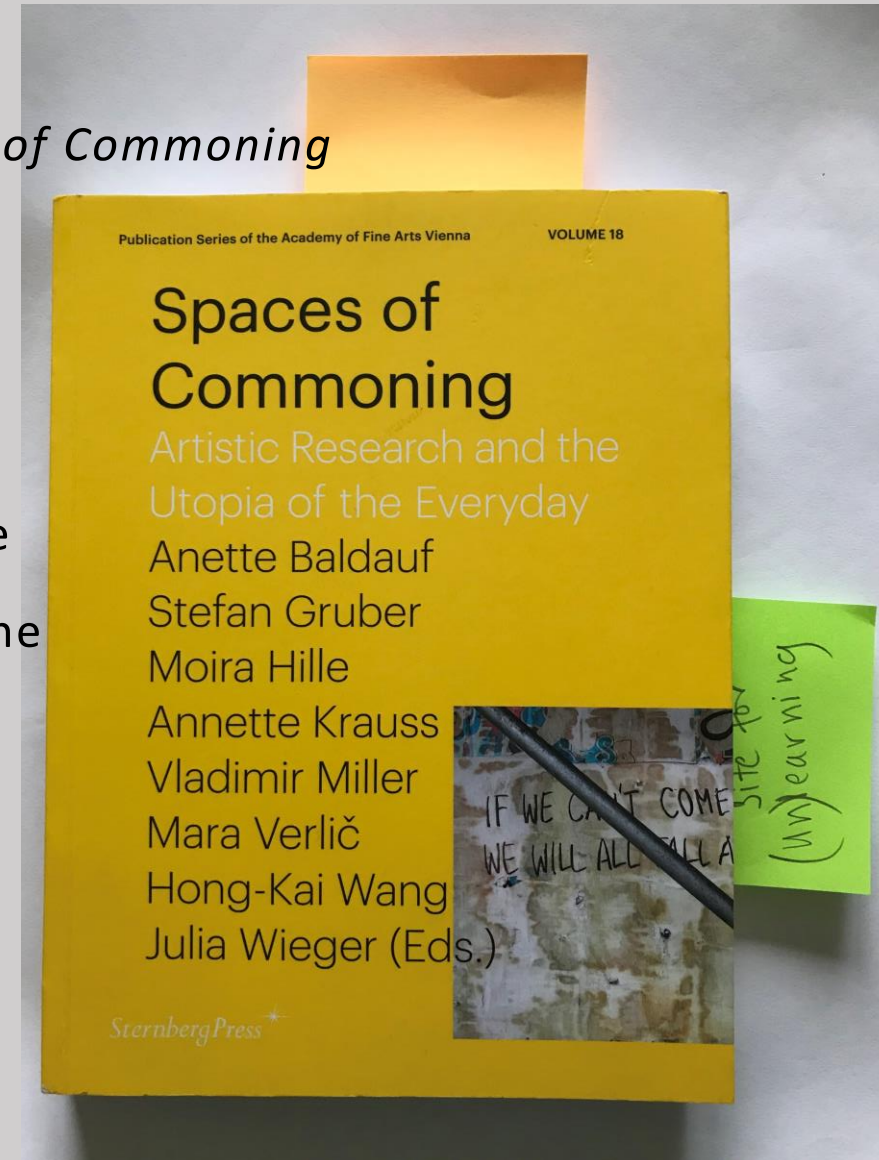
A borrowed title from Stefano Harney’s introduction to *Spaces of Commoning*

“... one does not come to own what one collects, nor does collection become the right to ownership, or the ownership of such rights.”

“A better-posed question ... may be: What does it feel like to be collected, to allow oneself to be brought together? The feel of collecting in others and of others collecting in you ... leads to the collective.”*

*

Baldauf, A.(ed.) (2018) *Spaces of Commoning – Artistic Research and the Utopia of the Everyday*, Publication Series of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Vol.18.Sternberg Press. pp.10-12.



ADAPTABLE ROLES

*of the artist researcher
in dialogical, participatory practice*

meta position(s)

enabler, initiator

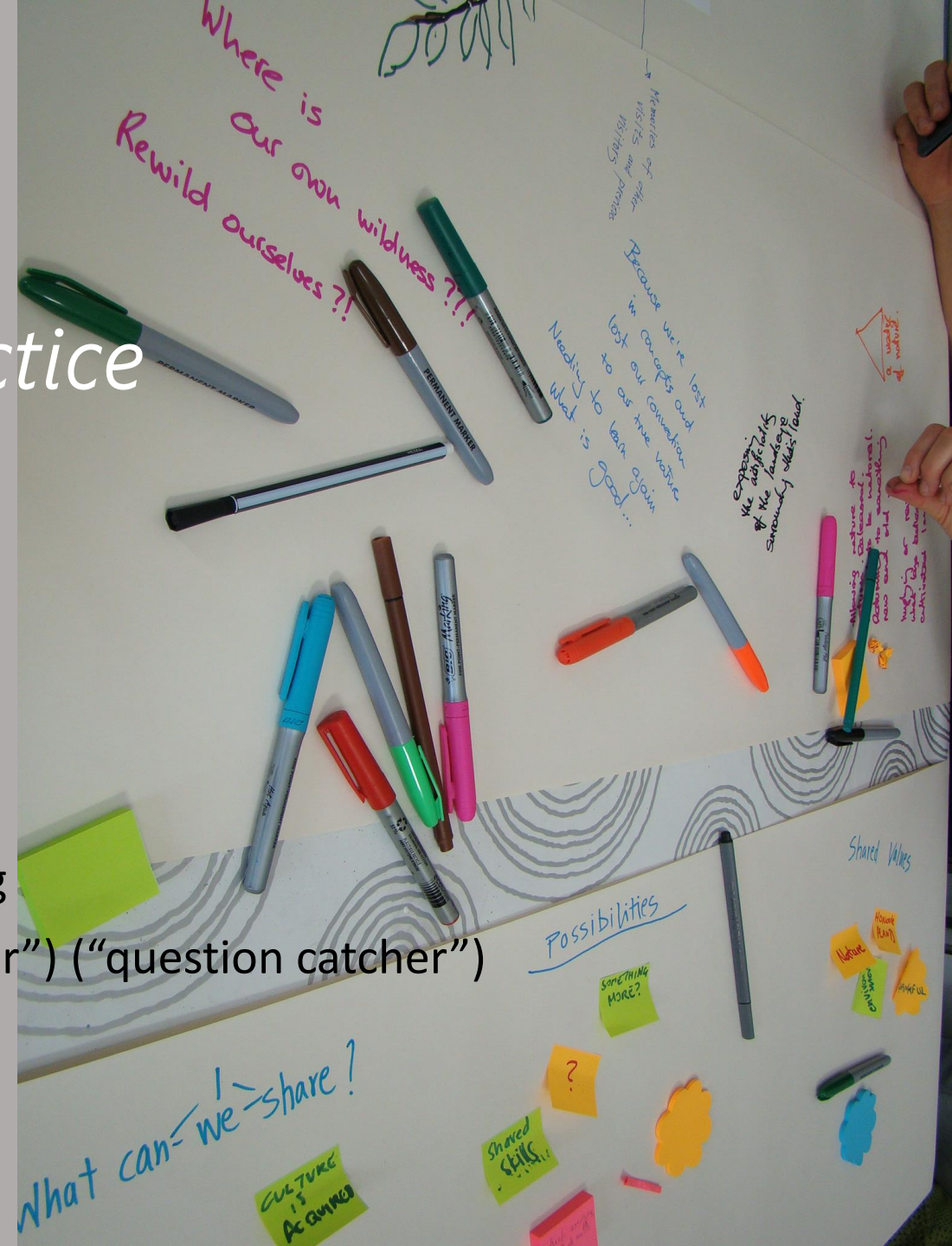
participant, collaborator

ensuring and supporting transparency, mutuality, listening

caring for conversations and questions – (“question keeper”) (“question catcher”)

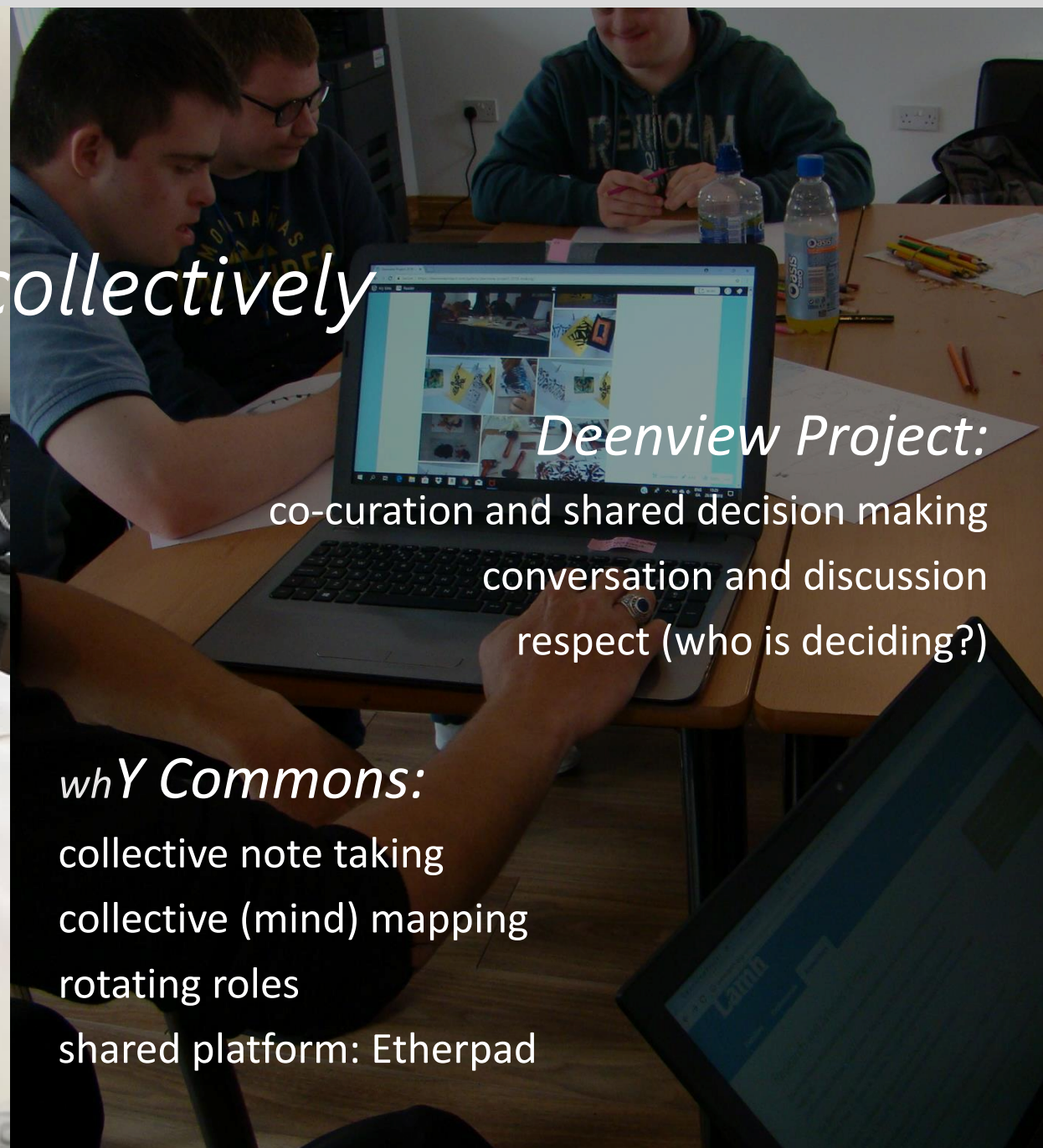
holding a magnifying glass, gently – *holding a mirror?*

co-create, co-document



DOCUMENTATION

choosing what matters, collectively



Deenview Project:

co-curation and shared decision making
conversation and discussion
respect (who is deciding?)

whY Commons:

collective note taking
collective (mind) mapping
rotating roles
shared platform: Etherpad

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

*contributors, collaborators and
the shape of partnerships*

commoners

participants

project partners

collaborators

friends

researchers and artists

organizations

networks

