

A Nourishing Network

A Nourishing Network is a publishing project that aims at documenting and circulating current research done by a network of artists, activists and programmers that collaborate with the Austrian net culture initiative *servus.at*. Especially in this moment of reduced mobility and physical encounters, the publication stimulates the circulation of materials and their further development in a community that usually gathers in small-sized events and festivals.

The project is a continuation of *Art Meets Radical Openness-AMRO* in short-a bi-yearly festival organized by *servus.at* in Linz. The festival creates space for discussions around the current impact of internet technologies and platforms. It aims to imagine possible (real) sustainable models for computational infrastructures, as an alternative to the growing techno-solutionist trend.

A Nourishing Network is produced as a hybrid publishing process realised by Manetta Berends and Alice Strete from the Rotterdam initiative *Varia*.

The project emerged as a response to the following three departure points:

- **Another lost occasion for degrowth?**

At the beginning many thought that the spring lockdowns of 2020 might have been a great opportunity to embrace less impactful lifestyles and production models. As soon as the measurements loosened up, the level of consumption rose to pre-lockdowns levels. Was the emerging environmental awareness overshadowed by a „sort of“ return to normality?

- **Re-centralization or blooming alternatives?**

During the first wave of lockdown, data-avid proprietary services gained a more central role within online ecosystems and daily life. Faced with this new context, communities dealing with free and open source software continued to work on alternative platform models. What happened? And what could be further explored?

- **Artdiversity loss: is now Zoom the best art gallery of 2020?**

In 2020 many cultural initiatives were forced to shift towards online videocalls, where often the materiality of bodies and matter is deprioritised. As the spectrum of technical possibilities offered by (centralised) digital platforms currently shape and actively format the field of the arts, how can we make space to experiment with alternative formats?

How the nourishing network works:

The publication is in itself an experiment: one in peer-to-peer publishing starting from the *feed* as a potentially multi-directional circulation device. Through web-syndication protocols and mail art practices, this publication engages with complex circulation flows, thereby exploring the social dynamics of such networked forms of publishing. Borrowing from food terminology, the activity of *nourishing* translates into an act of care which strengthens the links within the network.

A subscription to the digital and/or postal feed, nourishes her subscribers with a stream of essays. The feeds are available at <https://a-nourishing-network.radical-openness.org> and can be digested in different ways: as RSS, Atom and ActivityPub streams, or as a stream of physical publications which are distributed through a “postal feed” throughout Europe.

How to circulate within the Nourishing Network?

The project is an invitation to stimulate circulation by further disseminating the material in online and offline ways. Each subscriber to the postal feed will receive two copies of the publication in order to extend the circulation network with one step - by sending it to someone who might appreciate it. Similarly, the feed is prepared to circulate in online networks.

Finally, to enforce feedback and more spontaneous responses to the articles, we are open for contributions from the community of readers. You can toot your thoughts on Mastodon, tagging @ann@social.servus.at or upload your comments at this link: <https://k4.servus.at/s/d6Qsa5Cjzqosfng>

