

EDN Atelier: Moving Ground
1-2 June 2022

EDN Atelier: Moving Ground

Summary written by Carmen Amme

The EDN Atelier 'Moving Ground' was hosted and co-organised by the [Duncan Dance Research Centre](#) and took place between 1-2 June 2022 in Athens, Greece. Cultural professionals, artists and pedagogues were invited to discuss, explore and share artistic practices in the context of permaculture with EDN members and others. The participants also got the chance to experience artistic practices around permaculture. Guest speakers were **Anastasia Polychronidou** and **Anastasia Barka**, researchers and dramaturgs, **Elena Gogou**, permaculture designer and educator, **Fay Zika**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Theory of Art at Athens School of Fine Arts, and **Gigi Argyropoulou**, arts researcher and curator.

The atelier evolved around the garden and began with a stroll to experience the garden and observe it mindfully. Afterwards, the project '[Moving Ground](#)', initiated by the Duncan Dance Research Center, was presented. As part of the project, a disused water depository was transformed into a communal garden to sustain the ecosystem, which also opened the institution's doors and invited the community, all of that by following the principles of permaculture: earth care, people care, fair share. By inviting a diverse community of people to join the project, multiple artistic gardens were cultivated that had to be taken care of. The project turned into an initiative that offered education and workshops to the community and connected dance practice and art with the practices of care, sustainability and responsibility. The question that drove Moving Ground was how the principles of permaculture could be transported and applied to the practice of dance. „The garden can be seen as the smallest part of a whole and still a whole,” says Fay Zika. The body can also be seen as a garden and should be treated according to the principles of permaculture. During her introductory talk about permaculture design, Elena Gogou introduced the model of natural equilibrium: „As above, so below.” The seeds that are sowed impact the micro-cosmos on multiple different levels. If the garden and this atelier are seen as a micro-cosmos, what are the plants that are cultivated from that?

During the Garden of Artistic Practices that took place on both days, participants were invited to join different artistic workshops that grew on the soil of Moving Ground. One of the core principles of permaculture is sustainability and zero waste. It was discussed how this applies to the field of dance, and the question of what sustainability means in dance practices came up. „Producing choreographies sometimes feels like producing waste if these productions are not part of longer and more sustainable research,” says Mariela Nesotra, choreographer, researcher and co-curator of Moving Ground. Creating something in the field of dance that is regenerative could mean creating meaningful and long-lasting relationships that are not just product- or project-orientated. Arts and dance not only has the responsibility to communicate ideas, but also to actually take responsibility on the level of materials and practices to reduce waste, use resources more efficiently and have a positive impact on the environment.

This atelier showed that the care of a garden can have an impact on daily life if the principles of permaculture are transferred to the social domain and it made all participants rethink their doings and practices in the scope of permaculture. Human and nature's movement can be integrated with each other, yielding new possibilities, inspiring creative work and nourishing social connections.

