LAB RECAP
ABOUT THE RADICAL COLLABORATION LABS

On 6 December 2019, more than 200 participants from various disciplines came together in the Nemo museum in Amsterdam for a pilot programme entitled ‘Radical Collaboration’. The labs are intensive full-day R&D workshops in which creatives and multidisciplinary experts join forces to collectively address issues that are too complex for individuals or a single organisation to tackle on their own. The labs are a hands-on application of research through design, focused on gaining a deep understanding of a wicked problem and co-creating new perspectives on it.

COLLABORATIVE AND OPEN PROCESS
The programme took place in two blocks: a morning and an afternoon session, in which we rolled up our sleeves and delved deep into the key issues raised and prepared in collaboration with various partners.

Though each lab had a tailored programme with a very different focus, the outline of the process was comparable.

The results of the labs not only inspire and connect the participants, but by openly sharing they hopefully also inspire others. This collaborative and creative R&D approach can provide essential connections between key stakeholders related to each topic, and open doors for new partnerships, projects, challenges and further events.
WHAT CAN DESIGN DO

What Design Can Do believes that design is more than making pretty things. Design and creativity can play an important role in transforming society. We need design and creativity to come up with fresh ideas, alternative strategies and provocative thoughts to address the urgent issues we are currently facing. What Design Can Do connects creative communities with public and private sectors utilizing design as a tool for social change.

EVENTS

WDCD events are a vital tool for people to meet live, exchange knowledge and ideas, share stories (as they are so important), get inspired, connect different nationalities, cultures and sectors, and start collaborations. The WDCD events are organized in Amsterdam, São Paulo, Mexico City, Nairobi, Delhi, and are important moments in time to research, develop and accelerate ideas.

CHALLENGES

The objective of the challenges is to actively call upon creative makers to use the power of design to come up with innovative solutions to global problems. The aim is to demonstrate the potential impact that design can have on society, and to activate designers and creative entrepreneurs to use their skills to address pressing issues. We help to develop and accelerate the winning projects to make their ideas reality and create real impact.

RADICAL COLLABORATION LABS

The Radical Collaboration Labs are a first step in exploring and developing new design challenges. Through formulating questions such as ‘How might we ..’ we aim to pinpoint the issues that are raised by our partners. Moving forward, we can continue the research and narrow down real opportunities for design. The questions, discussions and insights of today will be summarized and shared with everyone who contributed.
INTRODUCTION

The Doughnut economy model offers a new way of thinking about the core principles of our economy and society.

It focuses on defining a safe and just space for everyone on this planet - in contrast to decadence for some and deprivation for many. This principle is appealing to many creatives, especially those who care about people and the planet, but the way the model has been expressed up to now was quite abstract. How to bring it closer to home? How to apply this way of thinking, and doing, to our professional, creative practice and our everyday lives?

This is what the Radical Collaboration Lab on 6 December 2019 aimed to do. It was not ‘a lecture on Doughnut economics’, nor was it ‘a jam session to come up with creative solutions’. Rather, it was a collaborative R&D session for creatives to jointly try to get their heads around this new way of thinking, taking inspiration from the Doughnut economy model.

The Doughnut Economy Lab programme consisted of two collaborative rounds:
1. Exploratory Mapping
2. Unpacking & Reframing

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ROUND 1
EXPLORATORY MAPPING

Connecting the main elements of the Doughnut economy model to experiences from our everyday professional lives.

We jointly mapped our personal stories of encountering tensions related to the ‘ecological ceiling’ and ‘social foundation’ that mark the border of the safe and just space for all in the Doughnut.

We then added new cards to the map, expressing our aspirations and fears related to navigating those borders.

And this led us to identifying some key issues that we would like to dive deeper into

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**MY STORY**

**MY FEARS**

WHAT FEARS AND CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE AS A PROFESSIONAL CREATIVE MAKER?

**KEY ISSUE**

WHAT ISSUE IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOUR INDUSTRY TO ADDRESS, IN ORDER TO REMAIN IN THE ‘SAFE & JUST SPACE FOR HUMANITY’?
SHARING STORIES

What do we recognize as examples of ‘a safe and just space for all’?

**MY STORY**
Working with local designers to solve issues and ensure real commitment to results

**MY STORY**
Increasing spread of responsibility and accountability

**MY STORY**
Enabling people to ditch their cars and learn new travel behaviour (public transport, cycling, working at home)

**MY STORY**
Feeding people’s imagination. See the 2040 Film of The Netherlands

**MY STORY**
Visualizing shortfall and overshoot

**MY STORY**
Data transparency. Not only rational values, but also social values

**MY STORY**
Choosing to focus on working for better causes

**MY STORY**
Facilitating the conversation with companies about purpose, responsibility, meaning

* These notes are a summary of the key takeaways from the lab
What do we recognize of the overshoot beyond the ecological ceiling?

**MY STORY**
Growth at the expense of the consumer (e.g., collecting personal data on social media)

**MY STORY**
Clients asking me to create websites that make people buy more

**MY STORY**
Giant change needed to move my clients away from overshoot

**MY STORY**
Stakeholder Capitalism versus People, Planet, Profit. Being agnostic about growth

**MY STORY**
Philanthropists and businesses are two unrelated extremes. This should change.

**MY STORY**
Organizing design conferences on the other side of the planet to advocate climate action

**MY STORY**
Over-use of materials and energy

**MY STORY**
Boundaries between work and private are disappearing

**MY STORY**
Recognize that we are in a conceptual crisis

* These notes are a summary of the key takeaways from the lab
SHARING STORIES

What do we recognize of the shortfall beyond the social foundation?

MY STORY
Creating a tool that eliminates a person’s job

MY STORY
‘We want to know everything about our customers’ - do I want to facilitate this?

MY STORY
For lease schemes you need partners, networks and finance, and also the will to experiment

* These notes are a summary of the key takeaways from the lab
OUR FEARS

What do we want to avoid?

**MY FEARS**
What fears and concerns do you have as a professional creative maker?

- ECO BURNOUT! FROM CONTINUOUS REPETITION AND NEW INPUT
- BEING TOO LATE TO ACHIEVE SUFFICIENT CHANGE
- AFRAID THAT I CANNOT DO A LOT OF THINGS ANY MORE - FLY, EAT MEAT, DRINK ALCOHOL

**MY FEARS**
What fears and concerns do you have as a professional creative maker?

- OPERATING WITHIN SYSTEMIC BOUNDARIES OF DEGENERATIVE ECONOMIC LOGIC
- I DON’T HAVE THE OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY, BUT I DO FEEL THE ‘MORAL’ RESPONSIBILITY
- A FULLY HOMOGENEOUS SOCIETY

* These notes are a summary of the key takeaways from the lab
OUR ASPIRATIONS

What do we want to achieve?

**MY ASPIRATIONS**
What inspires you to make a positive impact in your industry?

KEEPING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY GOING, SO THAT WE DON'T CREATE ECO-BURNOUTS OR INDIFFERENCE

HELPING PEOPLE TO MEANINGFULLY CONNECT TO THE CHALLENGE. CREATING NEW TYPES OF EXCHANGE AND WAYS OF WORKING

DEVELOPING MORE RADICAL MEASUREMENTS TO ASSESS RELEVANT CHANGES IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO FEEL A GENERAL SENSE OF ENJOYMENT AND CONNECTION BECAUSE THEY OWN AND USE ENOUGH

INCREASING OUR CAPACITY FOR COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND ALSO RESPONSIBILITY AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL

BEING ABLE TO HELP, TO MAKE CLEAR, TO ENABLE PROGRESS. THE SIMPLE FACT THAT YOU CAN MAKE A CHANGE. THE FUN OF LEARNING

EMPOWERING AND ACCELERATING BEAUTIFUL AND SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES THAT ALREADY EXIST

INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS TO QUESTION THE PURPOSE OF CONSTANTLY CREATING NEW PRODUCTS

**MY ASPIRATIONS**
What inspires you to make a positive impact in your industry?

ENABLING PEOPLE AND BUSINESS TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT. SEEING A WAY FORWARD TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SAFE AND JUST SPACE

INCREASING OUR CAPACITY FOR COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND ALSO RESPONSIBILITY AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL

BEING ABLE TO HELP, TO MAKE CLEAR, TO ENABLE PROGRESS. THE SIMPLE FACT THAT YOU CAN MAKE A CHANGE. THE FUN OF LEARNING

EMPOWERING AND ACCELERATING BEAUTIFUL AND SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES THAT ALREADY EXIST

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KEY ISSUES

What do we think needs our urgent attention?

KEY ISSUE
What issue is most important for your industry to address, in order to remain in the ‘Safe & Just Space for Humanity’?

WHERE DOES MY RESPONSIBILITY START/FINISH? WHAT IS MY MORAL COMPASS?

WE DON’T KNOW THE TRUE COST/PRICE OF THINGS!

DO WE NEED TO CONSUME TO BE HAPPY?

KEY ISSUE
What issue is most important for your industry to address, in order to remain in the ‘Safe & Just Space for Humanity’?

HOW TO ORCHESTRATE SYSTEMIC CHANGE?

INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY. HOW DO THESE VALUES RELATE TO EACH OTHER?

* These notes are a summary of the key takeaways from the lab
In the next round we unpacked the key issues that resulted from the explorative mapping. We used the Causes Diagram tool to dive into these issues and identify their direct symptoms and root causes.

We then used the Problem Definition tool to reframe the core issue each group wanted to focus on. The aim of this re-framing was to come up with a Call to Action that could be shared with the wider creative community as a result of the lab.
KEY ISSUE 1 - PROBLEM DEFINITION

PEOPLE AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS DON’T PAY THE TRUE COST

KEY ISSUE
The whole value chain needs to change. This is a massive system change.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY IT?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SOLVE IT?

REFRAMING THE ISSUE, OFFERING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE MATTER:

» How can we make all stakeholders more willing to pay true costs?
» Radical transparency is needed
» Law and taxes. Apply force. How might we force retailers to disclose the true price/costs of the products or services they sell?
» Labels and certificates. Common good economy.
» Ethics and rediscovering values. Naming and shaming.
» Simplify communication. Make it more understandable and engaging. Better design.
» Movies, games, momentum, urgency, volume
» The endgame is systemic change
» Creatives can contribute by enabling fair and open communication about the challenges, roadblocks and inspiration
KEY ISSUE 2 - PROBLEM DEFINITION

TENSION BETWEEN ‘WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE’ AND ‘DIFFICULTY IN CHANGING’

KEY ISSUE
Not easy to let go of the urge to ‘add something new and make a quick profit’. And serious investments are often needed.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY IT?
Businesses, manufacturers, designers, and also wider society. ‘Newness’ is still considered cool, and adds to identity and status. Sustainability can sometimes be considered as elitist.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SOLVE IT?
Why not? Doughnut economics is good for everyone. There is a general willingness to become sustainable, but many people do not know how to make the change.

REFRAMING THE ISSUE, OFFERING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE MATTER:

» Sharing = Caring. If people share their dilemmas more widely, they can learn from each other. Sharing their tips and tricks.

» Better education. Both for professionals and at primary schools. Make sustainability less elitist.

» Invent a ‘healthy Doughnut alternative’. Version 2.0 - a fried egg perhaps?
KEY ISSUE 3 - PROBLEM DEFINITION
‘BRANDS ARE THE NEW CHURCHES’

KEY ISSUE
Mass consumption makes us happy. But how does this balance against our responsibility?

WHO IS AFFECTED BY IT?
- Kids working in the production lines in low-income countries
- Consumers buying the products
- Shops selling the products
- The planet

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SOLVE IT?
- Social justice
- Ethics
- Environment
- Diversity of people in the streets

REFRAMING THE ISSUE, OFFERING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE MATTER:

» Develop new ways to find meaning
» Be part of a community without having to buy things
» Educate/inform people about the consequences of the things they buy
» Spread opportunities/possibilities equally among people (financial and education)
» Reduce the urge to constantly show off our ‘new things’
» Less focus on individualism, and more on community
» Holistic approach
» Creatives can contribute to this. Help raise awareness and build communities
KEY ISSUE 4 - PROBLEM DEFINITION

FINANCIAL VERSUS ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE

KEY ISSUE

Financial value and social/environmental value are not perceived as equal. A lot of emphasis on financial performance for companies, while you can get away with not being sustainable.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY IT?

Everyone. The belief in quantity of quality is already embedded in early-stage education. And sustained in regulations and practices.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SOLVE IT?

To stay in the Doughnut, we need to change things. Startups are moving ahead of government because new regulations take time. Accumulated problems should be more openly addressed.

REFRAMING THE ISSUE, OFFERING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE MATTER:

» Make social and environmental values more visible, tangible and aspirational

» Develop better ways to measure and express qualitative values

» Creatives can contribute to this with innovative communication and good research. Set examples.

» Alternative and more aspirational Doughnut shape:
KEY ISSUE 5 - PROBLEM DEFINITION
MORE SHARED OWNERSHIP OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

KEY ISSUE
Key element in move towards Doughnut economics can be more shared ownership of products and services, but the take-up is slow.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY IT?
The whole ecosystem around products and services needs to change. Consumers, manufacturers, suppliers, designers, providers, regulators, education, media.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SOLVE IT?
Everyone should feel more empowered that this is the right way to go. However, change is too slow. We need to speed up.

REFRAMING THE ISSUE, OFFERING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE MATTER:
» The narrative of more shared and efficient use of resources should be built more strongly into the design of products and services
» Creatives can help with that – Doughnut-driven design. Help develop sustainable products and services, and share strong examples of success.
» Regulators (law and taxes) also need to play a role. Incentivize and penalize companies to move towards Doughnut economics.
» Set and evaluate Doughnut Goals for society as a whole, based on principle of the commons.
REFLECTIONS

RADICAL COLLABORATION FOR CREATIVE R&D

The lab focused on trying to get our heads around what the Doughnut economy means for creative practice. How can we learn and benefit from this ourselves, and how we can help others do that?

We tried hard to apply the perspective of Doughnut economics on our everyday practice as creative professionals, and this often proved hard to do. It was easy to slip into more general conversations about over-consumption and more critical use of natural resources. This is the part we are fairly comfortable with, because due to the increasing climate emergency it’s what most of us have learned to do and fold into our behaviour and thinking as consumers.

The hard part is to apply a similar approach to our professional behaviour and thinking. The Doughnut economy model offers a useful tool to help us with this, but it is complex and needs concerted effort. Hence this collaborative R&D lab session. By jointly investing creative energy for a couple of hours, we were able to get further then we would have all on our own. And we created some useful pointers for everyone to act on and share further.

The creative industry largely consists of many small organizations. R&D happens all the time and everywhere of course, but we are often at our best when we pool our resources for a creative sprint to our mutual benefit. The results of this Doughnut Economy Lab are meant to inspire us, and hopefully others as well. Let’s go for it!
MORE INFO:
WHATDESIGNCANDO.COM

IN COLLABORATION WITH

THIS ACTIVITY WAS PARTLY FINANCED BY THE TOESLAG VOOR TOPCONSORTIA
VOOR KENNIS EN INNOVATIE BY THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS