

GLOSSARY „Who Cares?! Current Perspectives on Care Work“

This **GLOSSARY** is an artistic contribution by the Kollektiv Wortfinder*innen (en. Collective Wordfinders) and was created for the exhibition “Who Cares? Current Perspectives on Care Work” at the Vebikus Kunsthalle Schaffhausen. The Kollektiv Wortfinder*innen contacted all the artists in the exhibition and asked them three questions:

What significance does care have for your artistic practice?

(How) Is it visible and/or tangible in your artistic practice?

What do you wish for now and in the future?

The answers to these questions are varied and show a spectrum of what care can be. Based on these answers we selected terms that seemed particularly interesting and developed a glossary from them. The texts in this glossary are the result of a critical examination of Bassma El Adisey, the exhibited artists' comprehensive answers to our questions and our perspectives and research on the topic of care. The glossary is a snapshot and not complete. It is intended to broaden and multiply perspectives and show that care reaches into every area of life. In addition, the Kollektiv Wortfinder*innen envisions the glossary hanging as a poster in your kitchen, your living room or at your workplace so that you can look at it from time to time and the terms can become part of your everyday life.

The Kollektiv Wortfinder*innen wishes you a caring day!

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The pressure to perform in society can push us to our limits. The repeated transgression of our own limits can lead to personal **EXPLOITATION**. Many people are aware that they are being exploited, but their own internalized or socially imposed pressure to perform prevents them from changing their behaviour. Many people are broken by the expectations that society places on them or by their own demands to fulfill them. This creates distress in meeting unwanted expectations. It is important to take care of oneself, to know one's own needs and to meet those needs in order to maintain one's well-being.

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The **CARE ECONOMY** encompasses paid and unpaid care labor and is a huge financial sector. It includes health and social care, education, childcare and other personal

services. This work is important for the well-being of people and society. (Mascha Madörin)

The artists' collective RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co) describes: "...the fact that some of the care work areas can experience pressure, remain undervalued, invisible and usually poorly paid or not paid at all, has to do with the patriarchal division into profitable and unprofitable areas that has persisted for centuries. To this day, unprofitable areas are excluded from overall economic accounts, yet they are counted as services to be rendered, for example in the form of unpaid work. Or they are subjected to pressure to be profitable, as is the case in the healthcare sector. As the feminist economist Mascha Madörin says, "cars and cell phones can be produced faster and faster, but people cannot be cared for faster and faster". Care work, whether unpaid or low-paid, is often carried out by women, migrants and Sans-Papiers because these social groups are easier to exploit due to the prevailing structures. The examination of the care economy shows how gender inequalities and structures of domination and exploitation operate in the economy.

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EMPATHY describes the ability to engage and empathize with the other person's situation, by temporarily withdrawing one's own needs and turning one's attention to the other person with a non-judgemental and understanding attitude. Empathy can be seen as a tool. Empathic people try to imagine what the other person is thinking or feeling and want to help make the other person feel better.

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EMOTIONAL WORK is closely linked to the concept of empathy. In everyday life, we are constantly trying to share our emotions, i.e. our feelings, with or for those around us. If we care for other people or ourselves, this requires effort. It is therefore important to recognize the importance of emotional work and, if necessary, to offer support if the burden becomes too great. Where emotional labor is required, a healthy balance of personal commitment must be sought and encouraged for one's own well-being. Due to the very personal involvement, emotional work is always associated with extreme feelings; in a special way recognition and fulfillment can thus be perceived more strongly. It is therefore important to emphasize the positive aspects of emotional work.

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IMPROVISATIONAL POTENTIAL describes the art of reacting spontaneously and imaginatively to unforeseen situations and the ability to use this as a developmental catalyst. Improvisation, i.e. the free creation in the moment, makes it possible to find

new solutions. This can open up new perspectives and be enriching for us all. In care work, improvisation can help us to break out of routine and explore new paths.

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CLASSISM is a form of discrimination based on class origin or current class position. Classism promotes social inequality and limits access to housing, educational qualifications, healthcare, power, recognition and money. Classism rarely comes alone. Often, social groups affected by racism, ableism or sexism also experience a form of economic disadvantage and are thus discriminated against in multiple ways. Classism can also be found in cultural institutions. Cultural institutions can help to combat classism by taking a critical look at their own operations, developing guidelines and redistributing resources more fairly.

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COLLECTIVE MEMORY is like the mental library of a society. It allows the remembering and passing on of events. Remembrance work means dealing with the past in relation to the present. This can mean keeping past events alive and counteracting forgetting with appreciation or even reviving a forgotten past. It is important that all parts of society have a say in what is considered worth remembering or which issues have received too little or no attention. If necessary, the archived representations of the past must be supplemented, corrected or even refuted. The fact that all people can have a say makes it possible for prevailing power relations to be dissolved and allows for further development.

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CULTURAL WORK promotes and enriches life in a society. By creating open spaces with the help of artistic strategies, participation and diversity can be promoted. It helps to create a vibrant and liveable environment for everyone and to continue to move towards a society characterized by diversity. Cultural work allows encounters to take place which enable access to different life paths and thus also an expansion of our collective memory. Cultural work can break down barriers and promote coexistence by counteracting prejudice and discrimination and breaking down outdated and outmoded role models. In this way, cultural work is a care work for our life in community.

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Day in, day out... **ROUTINE** is that which is repeated and thus becomes part of everyday life. In our busy working society, it is almost unavoidable and often perceived as

something tedious. But it can also be seen as a way of overcoming challenges more easily, as it can also provide a safe framework for not losing one's head. However, it can also be beneficial to introduce variety into your routine by approaching it with creativity and incorporating a small change every now and then.

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VISIBILITY is an important aspect of social justice and belonging. It helps to recognize and value the distinctiveness and potential of each individual. By listening to, respecting and supporting the needs and concerns of all people, visibility helps to promote equality. This combats forms of discrimination and breaks down social barriers. It creates awareness by bringing things into our field of vision. If we look at paintings in church buildings, for example, we realize that art has always been a medium that creates visibility. Understanding art as a traditional practice of making things visible and recognizing it as a social practice is therefore only logical.

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The **TOOLS** of care work include the personal skills, talents and knowledge that a person possesses. In addition to specialist knowledge, these also include interpersonal skills such as communication skills, dealing with stress, a sense of responsibility and empathy. These tools help to overcome various challenges. Recognizing and using these tools, for example, makes it easier for us to achieve our goals. Understanding art, science and technology and their methodological instruments, allows us to find an awareness for the recognition of individual abilities. For a change in values in the assessment of the importance of certain tools, the focus must be shifted away from standardization and efficiency towards forms of action based on empathy.

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APPRECIATION is not just a passive form of recognition, but an active action of the heart that is expressed through words, deeds or gestures. Appreciation can therefore relate to relationships with living beings, objects or nature. It involves the giving of attention or benevolent treatment and empathetic care. Appreciation strengthens our relationships, gives us a positive attitude towards life and motivates us to create community and mutual exchange. Appreciation also triggers a change of perspective and creates new ways of treating each other with respect.

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We understand the term **RESISTANCE** in the context of care work and art as a willingness to talk about injustice. Resistance describes the courage and determination to stand up against oppression. Resistance is important to counteract injustice. Resistance is essential for social change. Resistance is often understood as something active, but it can also express a passive attitude. This passivity manifests itself in the conscious withdrawal or non-support of actions or undertakings that do not correspond to one's own beliefs. In other words, contradicting them. Art can also be seen as a practice of resistance: by making deficiencies visible and making an effort to combat mechanisms of abuse in society.

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