



*The Climate Security Festival is an event that brings together civil society, public sector, businesses, artists, researchers, and active citizens to discuss the risks associated with climate change and seek climate-safe living. At the heart of the festival program were workshops aimed at strengthening and promoting collaboration among various actors in an open and equal space.*

*Workshops were confidential, and each participant represented themselves rather than their organization or title. This workshop report summarizes the two-day workshop sessions and is the result of participants' collective thinking.*

Name of the workshop: ***Climate, death and (mental) wellbeing***

Date and time: **Thursday 21.9.2023, 10.00-12.30am & 13.30-15.00am**

No. of participants: 19 (including workshop facilitators and a few late joiners)

Notes taken by: Janne Salovaara + additions by Rosa Rantanen

#### 1. What were the key questions that sparked the workshop's work?

The existential dilemmas and delights of the death and surviving of nature and the human—and human endeavours and productions—in it. (as understood by Janne 😊). However, the published description was:

*This workshop aims to offer a space for discussion on topics that are often considered negative and difficult, and to help participants identify some key questions for future climate security discussion in relation to death and wellbeing.*

#### 2. What answers did you find to them, i.e. where did you end up? AND 3. What kind of learning experiences were created during the work?

Our Thursday workshop had several parts in it which I feel all approached the chosen topics and themes differently and thus also facilitated different outcomes on them. I will list the sub-workshops here, combining the questions 2 and 3, as they to me seem to relate as a set to these two in different ways.

**Silent walk** was a workshop where our group of participants went on a walk to the nearby surroundings in silence. The group followed our workshop facilitator to an opening next to green areas, on rocky mossy hills, and found their own paths through the hills back to the FMI building as a group. No words were spoken outside during the walk. After, the group spoke about the

experience inside with the workshop facilitator chairing the discussion. The following notions were raised and discussed:

- Human relation to surroundings and other people
- One's own role in the whole system, both as a physical being — earthling and an individual
- Creating interventions to the norms, like the silent walk but also as sustainable alternatives
- Experiencing and sharing together — setting the mood, creating the group

Next, we had the artist-researcher, **Teemu Mäki** present us some of their work, predominantly through 3 different length short movies on topics related to climate. The first was a documentary-esque clip on the anthropogenic impacts, where the second was a recorded short poem on human life, and the third a recording of a dance—a person dancing like a tree. The short films are called *The Sixth Mass Extinction – Kuudes massasukupuutto*, *Life Is Given to Man (Yvette's version) / Elämä on ihmiselle annettu (Yvetten versio)* and *Maija Dances like a Birch Tree – Maija tanssii kuin koivu* and they are all a part of an installation called *Metamorphosen* (2022). After the clips, in a dialogue between Teemu and rest of the workshop participants, and participants to other participants, we talked about:

- Human nature, and is it a destructor or a constructor?
- Am I part of “the human” even though I haven't been part of the addressed processes?
- Art as a form of expression but more as a form of thoughts and questions... a construction for learning and teaching — although the audience is abstract
- Death, responsibilities, past and future generations
- Empathy outside your own bubble (understanding the different point of views of the past generations but also that our views will be challenged and outdated in the future)

From the group, who also introduced themselves during this session, such interests and expertise were raised as:

- working with human emotions (in relation to climate change)
- people and their perspectives
- art and science
- people and transformation
- human rationality and sense-making
- artistic expressions of knowledge
- art of and from the environment
- ethics of sustainability
- interests of individuals of other species
- the concrete shifts and the numbers to showcase the situation
- climate citizenship with its responsibilities
- teacher education
- art science psychology
- politicised/activist-science

At the last part of the day, we had a workshop on Eco-emotions, led by Juni Sinkkonen who is a psychologist and a representative of **Tunne ry**, a Finnish organization specialized in eco-emotions. At the workshop we got to first listen to conceptualisations of such things as eco-emotions, and what the researchers at Tunne ry have concluded from them. After the lecture part, we firstly got to write down some thoughts, almost as a warmup poem, on our thoughts of the day and of the topic of climate change and eco-emotions. These free-association writings were not shared by the group but in the next phase, we co-created poems on pieces of paper that had climate change

related keywords written on them. The idea was for each participant to contribute to a poem for two rows of text, utilising one word from the previous contributor and handing forward the poem hiding their top row. This was done to each "letter" for a few rounds. Here is one example poem written, and shared among the group at the workshop:

*Sometimes it is difficult to capture,  
the largest emotions into rational language,  
the hottest, happiest, sharpest feelings resist words,  
    Feelings that cut the ground, digging up memories  
    of yesterday and tomorrow, creating a cycle  
        Tomorrow I will visit my feelings  
        pouring over the trees  
            I can see how you feel  
            pouring over the forest  
            Light is so smooth  
            but over the lake I finally see it  
I see how my grief shows its worth  
How my death neighbours  
Next birth.*

#### 4. Could you find any suggestions or activities that could be taken forward?

There was an apparent general interest to continue this kind of explorative and collaborative work between different fields of science, art, design, exploration, humanities—you name it!

Date and time: **Friday 22.9.2023, 10.30-12.30am**

No. of participants: 14 (including the main workshop facilitators)

Notes taken by: Janne Salovaara

### 1. What were the key questions that sparked the workshop's work?

See above. Plus: the second day was organised around a workshop on inclusion in education. Thus issues on inclusivity, fairness and justness were talked about, predominantly from the perspective of individual's abilities and capacities to—at one hand; participate, and on the other hand; facilitate others' participation.

### 2. What answers did you find to them, i.e. where did you end up?

During the introduction to their previous and ongoing work, the workshop facilitators; **Philip Heron and James Williams**, talked of inclusion but such issues as:

- Power, also in such latent expressions as spatial or structural power
- Vulnerable groups, such as prisoners and homeless youth (and others)
- Different ways and challenges to learning; such as for those with autism or ADHD
- How difficult it can be for people to even enter the room or the discussion, and what we can do to change that
- And how to meet peoples' right and need to attain an education?

### 3. What kind of learning experiences were created during the work?

From the introduction to the topic, we split into two smaller discussion groups to talk generally under the heading: *How do you talk to your dad?* -referencing the intergenerational dialogue we seemingly need to have to spread the knowledge on climate change.

From these conversations, such notions were later shared between the two groups:

- *"Talking about climate without talking about it"* — meaning that the eco-value could be attached to some other apparent benefit and interest that is more shared
- Something that brings people together first— not necessarily climate but anything. Anything of value, of interest, of personal. Finding a bridge.
- Urgency, time, patience, co-production and co-creation. Finding shared interests.
- Acknowledging the failure in climate change prevention, conversation... should we talk more?
- Together in silence - watching the changes unravel

### 4. Could you find any suggestions or activities that could be taken forward?

From the workshop, I had written down one, quite general yet positive note:

### *Keep on keeping on!*

However, after that I had also written down two notes, perhaps more for myself, but however maybe they are relevant, since they were at least inspired by the workshop:

- Different thinkers, the non-conformist, the misfits, the broken minded are needed in the process of trying to solve sustainability issues!!
- Our grandparents lived in scarcity so we can learn something from them...BUT HOLD ON; our problem is dealing with the abundance. It's sort of the same problem but not really...

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### Conclusions:

In general, it was agreed that artistic methods and being present with others are important elements in the climate security discussion and climate change discussion. A more specific approach can be useful in the future to define a clearer role that this kind of an approach can have in the more traditional climate security discussion. We also identified a need for a more methodological discussion on science–art interfaces as well as philosophical approaches to climate security, mortality, and human wellbeing.

James and Philip wrote a song based on the two days' discussion and performed it to the group, and explained the lyrics. The song was received well and also performed as part of the conclusions of the group work in front of all other participants. The song with its lyrics will be available as a recording soon.

Some general notes from the two days. This is what the group found important in the context of discussing death and (mental) wellbeing in the context of climate security:

- Embracing more different types of methods in the climate security discussion
- Discussing existential or fundamental questions as part of climate security
- Embracing the idea that sometimes art or collaborative activities do not have, and do not need to have, a clear result or measurable impact
- Non-verbal communication can be used as a means to communicate between different individuals and groups, and as a means to better understand our human existence as part of the environment and in relation to other species – breaking barriers of communication

In the end, we asked everyone (not just group 2), who is in for breaking barriers in the climate security discussion. This can mean participating in planning and/or organizing events utilizing different (artistic) methods regarding climate security.

- Names: Helena Wirta, Philip Heron, Juni Sinkkonen, Sonja Salomäki, Kaisa Penttilä, Valteri Moilanen, Ellen Haaslahti, Tuuli Parviainen, Paula Toppila, Saara Böök, Roberto Blanco Raitasuo, Kamil UI Masih, James Williams, Katja Tiisala, Rosa Rantanen, Jarmo Pykälä

Lyrics of the song performed by Philip Heron and James Williams:

*As colours change*

*Sometimes we don't know what to say  
But should we try anyway?  
This will haunt us, until we learn to talk more*

*Sharing a silent breath together  
We're treading roots as colours change  
This will haunt us, until we're here more  
This will haunt us, until we let ourselves grieve more*

*Storms cascade across coastal plains  
The wind that's reaching through your door*

*This connects us  
until we are no more*

*This connects us  
forevermore*