



Creative Fellow 

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Coconuts Space

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CIRCE Creative Research Project
Final Report
by Anna Kint

A. MAIN INSIGHTS

Coconuts is an innovative initiative in the creative industry that conducts research on mental health recovery. It is a creative space located in Leuven (BE) designed for young adults who have a sensitivity to psychosis and are searching for direction. We provide them with a space to (re)discover their place in society and to showcase their zest for life through art, design, and social entrepreneurship.

Together we are the editors of a new magazine, Coconuts. A magazine for all of us seeking imagination, fresh perspectives, and inspiration. Each magazine is a work of art. It is a first step we are exploring in our journey toward our ultimate goal: the development of a creative space, a site where treatment and creative services go hand in hand.

Our operation is characterized by an organic yet well-founded way of working. Intuitive and associative work are at the core of our operation. Additionally, we also place importance on pausing to evaluate and exploring how we can concretize our approach so that we can pass on our accumulated knowledge and experience within our organization and share it with other external parties. So what makes Coconuts Coconuts?

Insight 1 - Being in between: an undefined place that doesn't fit into a box or regulation. We operate with Coconuts in an undefined space, an in-between space. Between mental healthcare and the creative industry. Between young people and adults. Between work and leisure. In between... An inspiring yet frustrating place to be. We approach things from a different angle than what is conventional, we take risks to do it differently.

Insight 2 - The importance of a physical space. A space to play. An open space, white space, experimental space where 'things' can arise. Throughout our process, we have rediscovered the importance of whitespace, of play space. It is the starting point of our operation, but it becomes increasingly clear that in addition to creating mental space, there is also a need for a real physical space for our operation and everything we still want to do. Play space, open space, whitespace. Space where we can be alone with our operation, a safe and stimulating place.

Insight 3. - Enough 'innovation', let's go back to normal. In essence, we're not doing anything special, nothing hyper innovative, spectacular, or fancy. In fact, we're going back to

the ordinary, the human, to being together. Doing fun things together in a positive context. We create an open, positive, energizing setting where exchange is possible, and everyone can contribute from their own capacity, talents, and desires. Nothing is mandatory, everything is allowed. We work very organically and work with what comes up along the way.

Insight 4 - Paradoxical thinking and doing: open and closed, alone and in group, free and framed. Complex, systemic challenges have no obvious or straightforward solutions. It's often more of a both-and story rather than an either-or one. A both-and story of elements that may initially seem contradictory. This is also characteristic of Coconuts and our operation. We work under the radar and are constantly seeking connections. We open ourselves up while also protecting our operation. We share stories with the public but prefer to stay in the background. We work in groups but also enjoy working alone. Everything is open and yet also defined.

Insight 5 - Take a small entrance point to enter the larger system. Be like a fungus. To introduce movement into a stagnant, existing system, you can take a small access point and create a more extensive web or network

from there. This is how we aim to bring movement to what 'recovery' means in mental healthcare today. We do this bottom-up, starting from practice in a very applied manner, with our magazine as a starting point. We begin with a knot and gradually work towards a network of different knots, inspired by the characteristics of fungi and how they organize themselves as a process.

Insight 6 - The power of an applied, tangible medium. The power of art. We strongly believe in creativity as a lever for creating sustainable impact, as a force to facilitate change. Additionally, the importance of a tangible object should not be underestimated. A concrete, tangible product in the here and now, that you can show, exchange, take with you, or leave behind. Something tangible that allows you to connect and make contact.

If you look at a fungus up close you will see nodes with tissue between them. You could also look at our society in this way. In our society, on the one hand you have the part that organizes, that sets the laws and rules. That economical part can only exist if you have something else in return, something that is real. Something that makes living together real, that gives atmosphere and life. An emotional support of people, a cultural tissue. It is the existential foundation needed to build further. Why are we here? Why do we do what we do? That's what it's about for us too. That is what we see as culture and what Coconuts contributes to. That's our Coconuts Space.

B. CREATIVE ENDEAVOUR

Dear reader,

I am about to pose an important question to you. The answer has the potential to completely alter your life. It will rewrite your existence. Consider it a final opportunity, as there is no turning back after this. A chance for more, a chance for enlightenment, a chance to escape. Like everyone else, you were born into slavery, born into a prison you cannot smell, taste, or touch. It is a mental imprisonment. I ask you to make a choice between

two pills.

If you take the blue pill, the story ends here, and you wake up in your bed believing whatever you want to believe. You won't discover anything new, and you can continue enjoying what you were doing. The world you know, as you know it, will remain intact.

If you take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland, and I will show you how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember: all I am offering is the truth. Nothing more and nothing less. When you turn the page, I see it as a decision for the red pill. Your mind or perhaps your body knows something that is drawn to the red pill. Perhaps you wish to know the world beyond the world?

After all, we are all sailing in boats of immense sorrow and profound happiness, and like the tendrils of ferns, we make connections that can be indestructible.

Welcome to Coconuts magazine #1. Be coconuts! Stay coconuts!

Letter to the Reader - From Coconuts #1 Magazine

About Coconuts

Coconuts is an innovative initiative in the creative industry that conducts research on mental health recovery. It is a creative space located in Leuven, Belgium, designed for young adults (ages 18-35) who have a sensitivity to psychosis and are searching for direction. We provide them with a space to (re)discover their place in society and to showcase their zest for life through art, design, and social entrepreneurship. We collaborate with stakeholders from the mental health sector, the creative industry, research institutions, public entities, and other domains.

With Coconuts, we are launching a new magazine, 'Coconuts.' It is a high-quality magazine aimed at individuals and organizations seeking beauty, imagination, fresh perspectives, and inspiration. Each magazine is a work of art. The magazine serves as a means to reconnect young adults with psychosis sensitivity to society and

help them find their place there, both professionally and personally, using creativity as a catalyst. It is a first step we are exploring in our journey toward our ultimate goal: the development of a creative space, a site where treatment and creative services go hand in hand.

Context

Every society defines its ideal 'normal person.' Today, that ideal is the social, hypercompetitive professional who has made it and flaunts it. That's how we raise our children. There's nothing inherently wrong with it, but it leaves many people who don't fit that mold. A group that experiences mass failure. Excelling has become the new normal. - Em. prof. dr. Paul Verhaeghe (UGent) (Vergeyle & Joos, 2019).

Experiencing a psychosis leads you into a profoundly bizarre world, where you can no longer rely on your own experiences and sensory impressions. A psychosis is a psychiatric condition in which one loses contact with reality wholly or partially for a certain period. It's particularly challenging for outsiders to comprehend. Even for some who experience it, understanding the psychosis can be difficult. Stijn Vanheule, professor of Clinical Psychology at Ghent University and expert in psychoses and psychiatric disorders, states that around 15% of the population encounters psychotic experiences at some point. Typically, this is harmless. But 3.5% of people require professional help. Half of them can manage to live with their lingering delusions. Others continue to struggle, becoming depressed and suicidal. Therapy focused on recovery can alleviate much suffering. In the past, these individuals were often isolated from society. Now, efforts are made to work on an individual basis so they can reintegrate (De Windt, 2022).

For many people who experience psychosis, it occurs in their late adolescence or early adulthood, between the ages of 16 and 26. Vanheule explains, "Psychoses often occur when you're going through a turbulent period in your life. With young people, that's almost a given: you undergo many changes that can potentially act as triggers." These

moments include transitioning from high school to further education (if any), obtaining your diploma and trying to find a job, but also events like a breakup can be triggers (De Windt, 2022).

As a psychotherapist at the University Psychiatric Hospital of KU Leuven, Coconuts co-founder Niel Van Cleynenbreugel observed that it was extremely challenging for many patients to reintegrate into society immediately after hospitalization due to psychosis. A psychosis completely isolates you from your environment. He saw a need for an intermediary step – a bridge between mental healthcare on one side and projects that help people with psychiatric vulnerabilities find work on the other. Pre-activation in a safe environment, preferably with people who have had a similar experience.

Coconuts draws inspiration from psychiatrist Erik Thys, who, with his project KAOS vzw in Elsene (BE), brings together art and psychiatry. He found, as several psychiatrists

before him did, that many people with psychiatric issues have artistic talent. He connects them with established artists who spend some time in psychiatry. We also strongly believe in this approach. Research shows that having sufficient psychopathology can contribute to more profound artistic expressions. Of course, the pathology should not become too extreme, as patients can then be too far gone. However, this too can lead to a burst of creativity.

Coconuts #1 Pilot

Madness should be appreciated for what it is. It is not a defect; on the contrary, madness is capable of so much more. It possesses the power to express itself, the power to resolve, and the power to connect (Moyaert, 2019).

The Coconuts magazine is a magazine about the madness within each of us. It's a bottom-up magazine, with a group of young adults with a vulnerability to psychosis co-editing it. We aim for one edition per year, with

each edition being steered by a new group of young adults. They determine the direction and content. Over a period of 6 months, we work together to create the magazine. Each editor chooses their own way to contribute. We create original work and connect with artists, experts, peers with lived experience, academics, and professionals. We collaborate across sectors. With the magazine, we aim to inspire people, provoke questions, and encourage reflection. We invite action to create space for play and imagination. We are an independent magazine, making our own content and design choices. The magazine is a tangible object in reality. We want young adults to extract a sense of meaning from their experiences, as if they are turning madness into art, connecting it with their lives and society. We seek the 'sense' in 'madness.'

In September 2022, we embarked on a pilot project to test our approach in practice. Over 20 weeks, we met weekly with our editorial team, a group of 7 editors. We worked in design sprints of 4 weeks each, continuously evaluating and adjusting our process. The result is our magazine, which was launched in May 2023. The magazine has become a themed issue about 'Sailing.'

With our process, we aim to help our editors break their isolation and reconnect. Besides connecting with each other, we match each editorial member with external experts or creatives who suit them and can open doors for them. In the pilot series, we collaborated with Wouter Kusters (philosopher and writer), Wouter Elsen (photographer), Birgit Sebreghts (writing coach), kpot (graphic design/layout). We interviewed individuals such as Wouter Torfs and Dirk De Wachter, received contributions from Delphine Lecompte and Wouter Kusters, and featured illustrations by Lisa Van der Auwera and Paulien Verheyen.

In essence, our weekly editorial meetings are an excuse to engage in enjoyable, positive activities. Collaborating creatively and playfully in a relaxed atmosphere forges



Figure 1: Coconuts Crew

bonds. Simultaneously, we provide space for our editors to unleash their creativity, learn, and do what they love, with a concrete goal in mind. Some excel in visuals or words, while others are more conceptual. Everyone contributes according to their abilities and interests and is encouraged and supported in their process. Although we refer to our magazine as an excuse to do fun things together, the intention is not for people to buy our magazine out of sympathy, but because it is art.

On May 17th, we joyfully launched our magazine at the Silo in Leuven, where we had the pleasure of welcoming a diverse mix of enthusiasts from various walks of life. The outcome of our pilot, the magazine, is now available for purchase in our webshop and through local distribution points.

Next Steps

Our pilot project has affirmed our vision. We see that our approach is gaining traction, being received refreshingly, mobilizing people, and fostering connections among individuals and organizations. Part of this success is attributed to how we position ourselves: as a creative enterprise outside the boundaries of healthcare, but in close collaboration with it. Even before we became fully operational, Coconuts won the award for the most innovative project at the annual Belgian mental healthcare congress in November 2022.

With Coconuts, we aim to explore how we can create innovative solutions with a focus on mental health recovery, rooted in the creative industry. Now, we want to take the next step and investigate how we can refine our approach and movement, making it accessible to other stakeholders in Belgium and abroad. While our operations are locally grounded, they are based on global trends.



Figure 2: Cover Coconuts #1 Magazine



Figure 3: Some spreads from Coconuts magazine #1

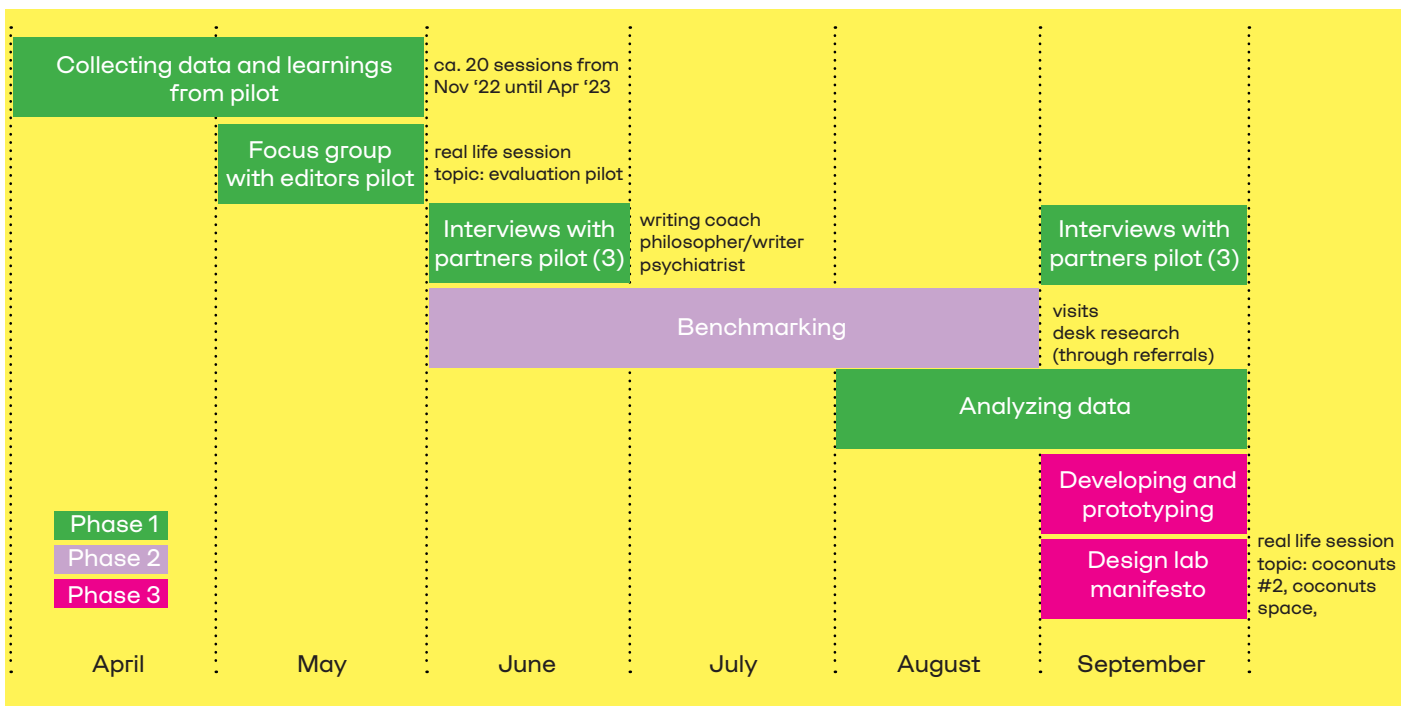


Figure 4: Research approach

C. CREATIVE PROCESS

Situating the process

Our pilot was learning by doing. We had a well-defined framework and approach, but it was also a leap into the unknown. What was once an idea was now coming to life. Through hands-on experience, Coconuts truly became Coconuts. And this is thanks to the group of editors who gathered around the concept. Together, we embarked on the path to creating a magazine in an organic, calm, and playful manner. We couldn't have imagined a better editorial team to go through this pilot with. The conclusion of the pilot immediately marked the starting point of our research. It was an ideal moment to scrutinize our intuitive approach and delve deeper into how we can refine this approach and use it as a tool to inspire others. During the research period, an important milestone also occurred: the official launch of our first magazine on May 17th.

Phase 1: Insights Pilot

In the first phase, we aimed to gain an understanding of the progress of our pilot and how it was experienced by

various stakeholders. To achieve this, we undertook the following activities:

Activity 1: Data and Lessons from the Pilot: Extracting data and formulating lessons from the 20 workshops with the editors that took place between November 9, 2022, and April 30, 2023.

Activity 2: Focus Group: A session with the editors of the pilot to evaluate the pilot process and gain insights into their experiences, recommendations, and lessons learned. Key questions:

- What did you like?
- What could have been better? Where is there room for improvement?
- Ideas for the next series or for the organization?
- Your expectations when we started versus how it turned out in reality?

Activity 3: Interviews: Interviews with 3 individuals who were involved in the pilot in different ways to gain insights into our process from an external perspective:

- Person 1: Writing Coach
- Person 2: Writer-Philosopher
- Person 3: Psychiatrist with expertise in psychosis

Activity 4: Data Analysis: Aggregating, analyzing, and clustering all data, lessons learned, and insights from the activities mentioned above.

Analyzing all the data led us to four clusters or themes. These four themes are relevant to or inherent in our operation: space, meaning, rhythm, and the relationship between inside and outside (Table 1).

Reflections on Phase 1

It is important to reflect on processes and take time to look back on the path you have taken. Not only looking back by yourself, but also together with other stakeholders. Our pilot had flown past, we were aware of that. But by taking time to look back, you become even more aware of the speed behind the entire process. This also came up in one of the interviews, the fast pace at which we got ourselves out there, put out group together and created a magazine. This is in strong contrast to the time, for example a scientific article that needs to be revised and rewritten before it can be published. The process that all editors went through to create work themselves was also strongly influenced by the available time and deadlines. It was

Space	Meaning	Rhythm	Relationship inside-outside
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For playfulness • To do your own thing • Allowing space for each other • To be creative • Sharing knowledge • Individual freedom • Loose operation • Sensing each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity • Equality • Contribution • “You are engaged but you don’t realize it well.” • Result • Passing on knowledge • Transcending individual skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchors • Associative work • Continuity • Recurring • Frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintegration • Coming out • Connections • Collaboration • Involvement • External input • Bringing the outside world in • Safe, supported growth process

Table 1: Clusters data analysis

Organisation	Country	Short description	Tags	What can we learn from them?
Het Gevolg	BE	Het Gevolg is an arts centre that starts from the person in every artist and the artist in every person.	theatre - artistic processes - dreams - lowering the barrier to the arts	investigating how theatre can be included in care; two-part operation: productions and processes; open foyer
Subjective Editions	BE	Subjective Atlases are bottom-up cartographic publications mapping a country, region or city by the inhabitants themselves.	participative - publishing platform - communities - place-based understanding - lived experiences - magazine	operation based on invitation by local partners who want to go through a process together
Museum of Homelessness	UK	The Museum of Homelessness is a community-driven social justice museum, based in London, and created and run by people with direct experience of homelessness.	community driven - social justice - artistic creations - action - education - system change	professional, artistic place and operation led by the community
Adamant	FR	The Adamant is a unique day-care centre. A floating structure located on the Seine in the heart of Paris, it welcomes adults suffering from mental disorders, offering the kind of care that grounds them in time and space and helps them to recover or keep up their spirits.	day center - preservation of autonomy - therapy - partnership with the city - architecture	approach in response to the dehumanization of psychiatry; attention for space and architecture
Leon	BE	Leon shows dance at its most human, most vulnerable and most essential.	intergenerationality - inclusion - dance - collective - nomadic - participatory processes - meeting - connection	dance as a means of connection and encounter
Vice	US	VICE is one of the fastest growing youth media companies in the world.	media - collective - young people - content creation - worldwide - creativity - identity - magazine	responding to trends; connection with young people; attractive content, decentralized operation

Table 2: Benchmarking (part 1)

Radio Nikosia	ES	Nikosia is a collective and an association formed by people with and without medicalized routes of suffering: there are artists, economists, philologists, writers, poets, dieticians, doubt professionals, psychologists, educators, anthropologists and many more.	deconstruction of stigma - mental health care - space for meeting and dialogue - open space - radio	have been around for 20 years; ways to influence politics/ systems
La Rara Troupe	ES	La Rara Troupe is a mental health working group that uses audiovisual creation based on self-representation and first-person narratives.	mental health care - audiovisual creation - meeting place	create a meeting place outside of what you are expected to be; dismantling binary system (disease/ health, professional/ amateur, inclusion/ exclusion...)
Locus	ES	LOCUS* is a project that explores the cultural/community mental health confluence. It subverts the concept "place of safety" - which in hegemonic psychiatry is related to police and health containment spaces - through various contemporary creative languages and claiming coexistence with madness rooted in mutual support.	mental health care - culture - community - madness - destigmatization - emancipation - away from hyper medicalization	subversion of the concept of 'place of safety' - which in psychiatry is related to police and healthcare spaces - through various contemporary creative languages
Villa Voortman	BE	Meeting House for Breeding Spirits	meeting house - dual diagnosis - psychosis - innovation - creativity	structural cooperation with government, hospital and cultural players
Kunstenfestival Watou	BE	Annual arts festival in which poets and visual artists, emerging talent and established values, from home and abroad always provide a wonderful experience in characterful exhibition spaces.	art experience - poetry - visual arts - space - exhibition	creating a meeting space with words and images
Snask	SE	SNASK is an internationally renowned creative agency that makes kick-ass branding, design & film. A creative agency of misfit geniuses conquering the world through fine lookin' design and real emotions.	creative agency - branding - communication - rock 'n roll	do their own thing, are true to who they are
Outsider	SI	Outsider is a magazine about architecture, design, art and culture. The main goal of the magazine is to open the profession up and attempt to raise awareness about its issues, thus connecting professionals from neighbouring fields, providing unlikely alliances and provoking unexpected thoughts.	magazine - architecture - connection - accessible	Making architecture accessible to everyone, magazine available in every gas station in Slovenia

Table 2: Benchmarking (part 2)

a real balancing act between, on the one hand, taking time in a creative process to let things 'simmer' and on the other hand making choices and decisions at certain moments. Scarcity as a driver for creativity and unexpected outcomes. The interviews therefore functioned as moments to pause and reflect. About the process, and also your own vision, position and role in that process. They have been valuable moments, each time using a different mirror. Through that 'external' view, your own ideas, assumptions and self-evident facts are questioned and you form new ideas and thoughts for future, richer scenarios.

Phase 2: Benchmarking

In a second phase, we aimed to gain insight into other inspiring initiatives in Belgium and abroad, with a similar vision, approach, or theme. Initiatives that highlight one or more elements from which we can learn. To achieve this, we undertook the following activities:

Activity 5A: Benchmarking of inspiring initiatives through desk research

Activity 5B: Benchmarking of inspiring

initiatives through visits and/or exchanges

Table 2 presents various initiatives with a brief description of who they are and what we, as Coconuts, can learn from them. It is a colourful mix of organizations. There is no logic or coherence in the list. The only thing that connects them is that we find them inspiring, each in a different way. The information is collected via desk research.

Reflections on Phase 2

Nothing is more interesting and enriching than meeting driven and passionate people and exchanging with them and learning from each other. Learning from what is still happening in the world and how that relates to your own operations. At the same time, another moment of pause, of reflection. For example, our entire team visited Het Gevolg, an artistic place that makes theatre productions and dares to look 'over the wall'. We met with Stefan Perceval, artistic director, and exchanged about the importance of an open space where you can simply go, about personal processes in relation to professional productions, about the importance of

aftercare, about how they investigate whether your theatre might be able to prescribing, about the search for active substances... By exchanging and visiting people you notice that a lot of people are busy, albeit from a different approach or angle, with similar searches, that you are not alone in experimenting and that we can learn a lot from each other. This also came up in conversations with other CIRCE community members. For example, I found a lot of recognition in the story and trajectory of My Migrant Mama and that of Vollpension, two very different initiatives than ours, but with many similarities in the way we want to make an impact and in the way we do not always choose the easiest path. We all remain true to who we are and what we stand for, and seek solutions from there. It is something that is reflected in various organizations in the benchmarking exercise: looking for alternative ways to create impact, trying out unexplored paths, looking for new or different applications or constructions than people are used to... And being surrounded by other individuals and/or organizations, who can help you network, support you, open doors, allow you to reflect or be a sounding board...

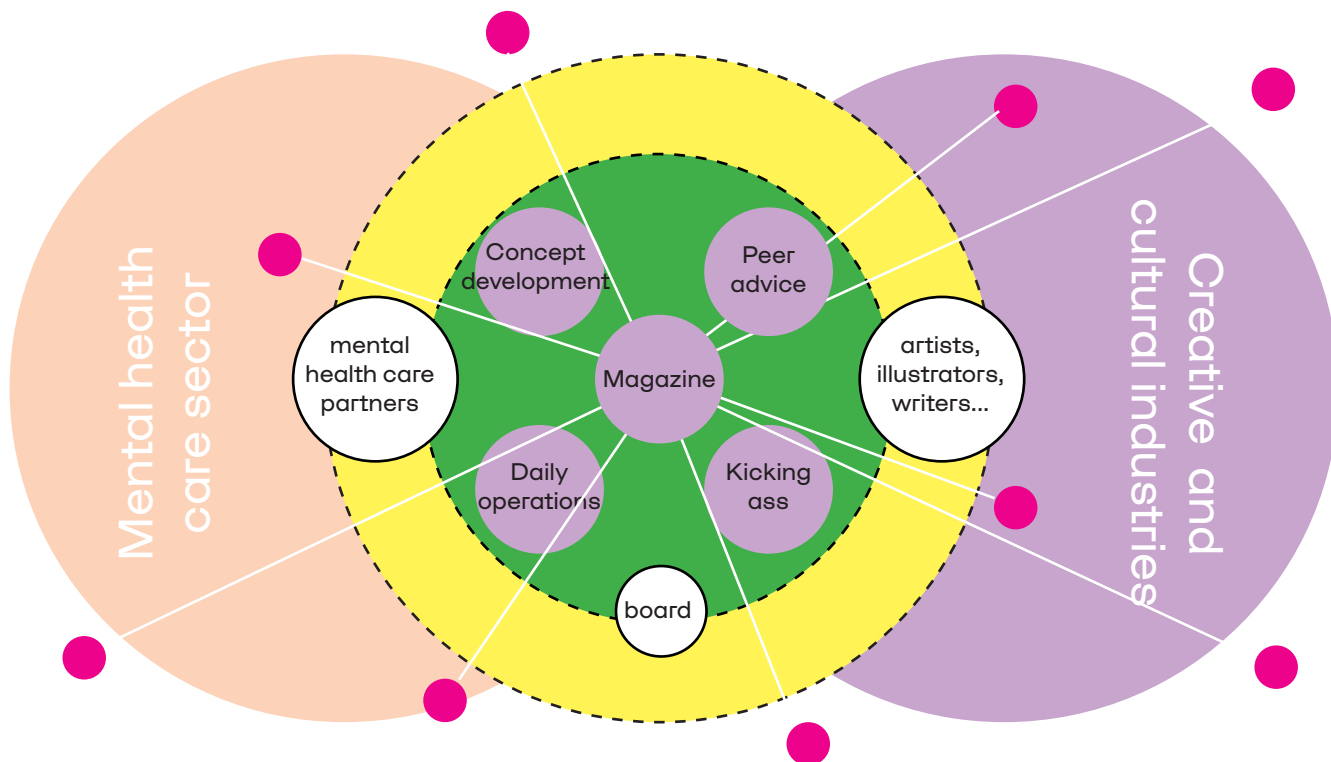


Figure 5: Coconuts Space Prototype

Phase 3: Prototyping

In the third phase, we took the output from the first and second phases and worked towards what we initially called a 'Coconuts Manifesto.' This idea evolved throughout the project into the visualization of our 'Coconuts Space.' Throughout the research, the importance of space, both mental and physical space, kept coming up. Starting from the space characterizes our operation, and we would like to emphasize this in this evolution as well.

To create our prototype, we went through the following activities:

Activity 6: Translating our way of working into the Coconuts Space

Activity 7: Working session with pilot editors: prototyping the Coconuts Space

Activity 8: Refining the Coconuts Space prototype

It resulted in the visualization of our Coconuts Space (Figure 6).

At the center of the Coconuts Space is 'the inner circle,' which contains the Coconuts magazine. It is a concrete application and activity that allows us to easily reach out and connect with others. It is a tangible and concrete object. The magazine is surrounded by the broader Coconuts operation:

- **Operational Team:** Responsible for the daily management of the organization, including vision, strategy, finances, office maintenance, administration, and communication.
- **Concept Development Team:** Tasked with brainstorming and developing new formats, both for ourselves and on behalf of others.
- **Peer Advice Team:** Providing advice to one another, sharing knowledge, and learning from each other.
- **Innovation Team:** Introducing movement and innovation into the recovery movement in mental health care, questioning the status quo, and implementing interventions.

Surrounding our operation is the outer circle, comprised of individuals

and organizations that have a certain degree of involvement in our operation. They serve as sounding boards, facilitators, content creators, artists, and contribute to supporting our operation. This circle also includes healthcare partners (for referral, communication, exchange) and the artists, designers, and creative individuals (for coaching, creation) with whom we collaborate. Both circles are situated at the intersection of the creative industry on one hand and mental healthcare on the other. These are the two sectors we aim to closely connect.

Additionally, there are also small, independent entities, nodes: individuals and organizations that cross our path, collaborate with us, and bridge the external world with the internal and vice versa.

Reflections on Phase 3

It is challenging and educational at the same time to capture how we have evolved as an organization and how we view ourselves and want to see ourselves evolve, now and in the future. This phase is again about the importance of pause and reflection. It is about time that you have only little or even not to take in your daily work to reflect. In this phase we worked towards a visualization of our Coconuts Space. We already know that we are in continuous evolution, that we are constantly moving as an organization. The Coconuts Space is therefore a living visualization and representation in change, which is adjusted and evolves over time. It is a process of constant iteration. Capture, learn, adjust. And that again and again. A continuous learning. When you read this, perhaps certain elements may already have been changing again, or there may have been new accents emerging that pull the whole thing in a different or specific direction. You could compare our operation with a 'Barbapapa' figure (a Barbapapa figure can adopt any form they choose, but they remain easily identifiable by always retaining their faces and their distinctive colour), a kind of movement or figure that changes shape over time and adapts to or organizes differently in different situations. The visualization is an image, an invitation and a way to

enter into conversation with others, to reflect on our operation and approach and to exchange with both our inner and outer circle. Also in our operation itself, it is a nice instrument to position yourself as a team member in a larger whole: where do I want to be, what do I want to be part of, how do I see myself evolving over time, where do I see or feel opportunities for personal and professional growth, where do new people come in, etc? We'll always keep iterating, prototyping, learning. That is who we are, how we work and how we will remain ourselves as a creative research body.

D. ANALYSIS AND MAIN INSIGHTS

Our operation is characterized by an organic yet well-founded way of working. Intuitive and associative work are at the core of our operation. Additionally, we also place importance on pausing to evaluate and exploring how we can concretize our approach so that we can pass on our accumulated knowledge and experience within our organization and share it with other external parties. It was indeed enriching to be able to pause and reflect during this research project, examining the process we went through. It led us to various insights that are characteristic of our operation and in which we believe. Each insight is accompanied by a quote for further support and depth of the lesson. We summarize them below.

Insight 1 - Being in between: an undefined place that doesn't fit into a box or regulation.

"If you always take reality for what it is and react to it, you reinforce that reality each time. But you can also pursue a reality that you consider possible. People who deal with reality relate to the world as it is and try to be very creative with it, but people who deal with possibilities create the possible world." - Marleen Stikker (Zomergasten, 2018).

We operate with Coconuts in an undefined space, an in-between space. Between mental healthcare and the creative industry. Between young people and adults. Between work and leisure. In between... An inspiring place to be, because that's where it happens. Also, a frustrating place to be: we don't fit into a box, we don't fit into existing frameworks and regulations, we are sometimes moved from one place to another. Nevertheless, we like to stay in this in-between; it's the place where you need to be to make a difference, to bring innovation, to have an impact. We approach it from a different angle than what is conventional, we take risks to do it differently. We can only do this because we have individuals and organizations around us who believe in us, who support us. You need that, and it gives you the energy to keep going.

We shouldn't worry too much about what others think or their need to fit in, we just have to get on with it. However it is interesting to see how the outside world perceives you, and learn from it. You could draw a parallel with what we experience as 'being in between' to our society where people with psychological vulnerability find it difficult to fit in or don't really belong anywhere. It seems that our organization has ended up in exactly this situation.

Insight 2 - The importance of a physical space. A space to play. An open space, white space, experimental space where 'things' can arise.

"It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self." - Donald Woods Winnicott (Winnicott, 1971)

Throughout our process, we have rediscovered the importance of whitespace, of play space. It is the starting point of our operation, but it becomes increasingly clear that in addition to creating mental space, there is also a need for a real physical space for our operation and everything we still want to do. Play space, open space, whitespace. Space where we can be alone with our operation, a safe and stimulating place. Where knowledge can be shared, where things can emerge, and where we can connect with the outside world and bring that outside world in. Where we can invite others. That space is what we want to create, sustain, facilitate. A safe space embedded in the creative world. Taking our place. A space that evolves and grows along with us.

Insight 3 - Enough 'innovation,' let's go back to normal.

"Intuition is neither a feeling, an inspiration nor a disorderly sympathy, but a fully developed method in philosophy." - Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze, 1988, p13)

In essence, we're not doing anything special, nothing hyper innovative, spectacular, or fancy. In fact, we're

going back to the ordinary, the human, to being together. Doing fun things together in a positive context. We create an open, positive, energizing setting where exchange is possible, and everyone can contribute from their own capacity, talents, and desires. Nothing is mandatory, everything is allowed. We work very organically and work with what comes up along the way. And maybe that's what makes us innovative after all: daring to take risks to do things differently, to test, experiment, adjust, and start over when necessary. And surrounding yourself with people with a similar mindset who believe in your approach and support you in it.

Insight 4 - Paradoxical thinking and doing: open and closed, alone and in group, free and framed.

As we try to solve complex problems, we encounter paradoxes that are seemingly contradictions. We tend to dismiss them as irreconcilable and make a choice for one of the extremes, but by doing so we actually make a big mistake. There will always be discontent/conflict in complexity, and you leave a unique chance unaddressed if you disregard this. In a paradoxical situation the seemingly contradictory factors are both true at the same time and should therefore be addressed together. (Van Ael, 2020).

Complex, systemic challenges have no obvious or straightforward solutions. It's often more of a both-and story rather than an either-or one. A both-and story of elements that may initially seem contradictory. This is also characteristic of Coconuts and our operation. We work under the radar and are constantly seeking connections. We open ourselves up while also protecting our operation. We share stories with the public but prefer to stay in the background. We work in groups but also enjoy working alone. Everything is open and yet also defined. These are delicate balancing acts that make things all the more fascinating. The paradox is present in our actions and thoughts all the time, and it ensures that we remain true to what we believe in and that we are not distracted by what the outside world sometimes tries to make you believe you should or should not do.

Insight 5 - Take a small entrance point to enter the larger system. Be like a fungus.

Most fungi form networks of cells: delicate tiny tubes that branch, merge, and intertwine into the anarchic filigree called mycelium. Mycelium possesses the most common of all fungal characteristics and is better understood as a process than a thing: an exploratory, probing, wayward tendency (Sheldrake, M., 2020, p15). Fungi determine where different plants grow; they can even promote the evolution of new species by isolating plant populations from each other (Sheldrake, M., 2020, p163).

To introduce movement into a stagnant, existing system, you can take a small access point and create a more extensive web or network from there. This is how we aim to bring movement to what 'recovery' means in mental healthcare today. We do this bottom-up, starting from practice in a very applied manner, with our magazine as a starting point. We begin with a knot and gradually work towards a network of different knots, inspired by the characteristics of fungi and how they organize themselves as a process.

Insight 6 - The power of an applied, tangible medium. The power of art.

*It's not art to create something
That everyone says is clever
It's art when you create something
That you don't understand yourself
That makes you think: it's not crazy
Where you feel what you mean
You feel what you mean
(...)
Is it art to create something
That everyone says is clever
Or is it art when you create something
That you don't understand yourself?
Like a rainbow
That has no end but a purpose
No one has arrived yet
But on the way, there are many
So many
- From Kunst en Vliegwerk - Herman
Van Veen (Van Veen, 1989)*

We strongly believe in creativity as a lever for creating sustainable impact, as a force to facilitate change. Additionally, the importance

of a tangible object should not be underestimated. A concrete, tangible product in the here and now, that you can show, exchange, take with you, or leave behind. Something tangible that allows you to connect and make contact. And preferably something that looks good, something you want to have with you. A visualization or externalization of your idea or concept, it enables others to understand well the message you want to convey. Although the product is not an end in itself. It goes hand in hand with the process. Both process and product are important, which is a continuous, delicate balancing act.

So did we make a Manifesto after all? We stated during our prototyping phase that the idea we originally called a 'Coconuts Manifesto' rather evolved during our project into the visualization of our 'Coconuts Space'. When we look back on the insights above, we realize that we may have been creating a Coconuts Manifesto after all. The collection of insights above describes and substantiates our operation, our movement. These insights can be seen as our manifesto, what makes us unique and what we stand for. We freely translated these insights into a short, poetic manifesto. A teaser with which we want to reach out to others, based on the paradox in which we find ourselves. In order to expand our movement and tissue more and more.



- - -

We are an
undefined place,

- - -

Somewhere in
between

- - -

A paradoxal space

- - -

Under the rader,
and longing for
connection

- - -

Let's experiment
Let's create
Let's connect
Let's go back to
being human

- - -

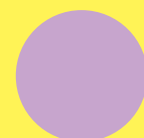


Figure 6: Coconuts Manifesto

E. LINKING BACK TO CIRCE

Let's go back to fungi for a moment, and how fungi form networks of cells. If you look at a fungus up close you will see nodes with tissue between them. You could also look at our society in this way. In our society, on the one hand you have the part that organizes, that sets the laws and rules. Everything that happens and exists in society. That part can only exist if you have something else in return, something that is real as well. Something that makes living together real, that gives atmosphere and life. An emotional support of people, a cultural tissue.

Cultural tissue is necessary to be able to speak of a society. It is the existential foundation needed to build further. The fabric is the existence. It's about why we are here. It's about why we do what we do. That's what it's about for us too. That is what we see as culture and what Coconuts contributes to. Our Coconuts team brings people together, people with different backgrounds, and who also happen to have a psychotic sensitivity. We make a magazine together. But above all we know how to connect. We know how to set a culture, something on which we have no direct effect. That culture is everything together, and therefore more. We see and experience that people reap the benefits of this culture. That it is refreshing and appreciative. And we succeed in extending that culture more widely, beyond the lines of our organization, of our Coconuts space. For us, that is the essence of what is needed in crises of today and tomorrow, after crises such as corona. Creating and perpetuating a tissue. Where it's about people, about sharing joy and sharing misery. Sharing all facets of being human.

Throughout this project we felt the power of such a cultural tissue, and were reminded of what it can do to initiate, facilitate and support social change. We notice that a powerful tissue radiates out to others, inspires or infects others. We notice that various organizations from various sectors follow us because they feel that power and are curious about how it will evolve. Some, because of certain customs, rules or defaults in their own

thinking, are not able to create such a cultural tissue themselves. Places where culture should not come to the fore.

A cultural tissue does not want to be the basis of a society, but it is anyway. And possibly that is the power of culture.

Thanks to CIRCE we came into contact with the wonderful people from the Slovenian magazine *El Normal*. One of the articles from our first magazine was published in their most recent issue. Cultural tissue transcends borders and speaks a universal language.

Passage from the article 'En un momento Dado' by Andreas Flaminio in Dutch, Slovenian and English:

"De associaties met de taal zijn wellicht oneindig. Letterlijk. Een psychose gaat over verhalen vertellen, over een verhaal dat zo belangrijk is dat het hart ons bij de keel grijpt en begint te bonken wanneer we eraan denken, dat we daardoor wartaal beginnen uitslaan. Een psychose gaat ook over het aanreiken van oplossingen, alleen begrijpen wij het zelf niet, waarom de psychotische oplossing de enige denkbare is en waarom die net moet zijn zoals ze zich voordoet. Maar wat voor een oplossing: ze is magisch, magistraal, uniek, briljant!"

"Asociacij z jezikom je neskončno. Dobesedno. Pri psihozi gre za pripovedovanje, za zgodbo, ki je tako mogočna, da dobimo ob misli nanjo cmok v grlu, srce nam začne razbijati, iz ust pa letijo le še nesmisli. Psihoza ponuja tudi rešitve, čeprav sami ne razumemo, zakaj bi bila psihotična rešitev edina možna in zakaj mora biti prav taka, kot se manifestira. Pa vendarle, kakšna rešitev: čarobna, veličastna, edinstvena, briljantna!"

"The associations with the language are perhaps endless. Literal. A psychosis is about telling stories, about a story that is so important that our heart grabs us by the throat and starts banging when we think about it, that it causes us to start spouting gibberish. A psychosis is also about providing solutions, but we ourselves do not understand why the psychotic

solution is the only conceivable solution and why it must be exactly as it appears. But what kind of solution: she is magical, masterful, unique, brilliant!"



Figure 8: 'En un momento Dado', article by Andreas Flaminio in Coconuts #1 (Dutch)



Figure 9: 'En un momento Dado' article by Andreas Flaminio in El Normal #5 (Slovenian)

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