

GUIDEBOOK for Global Social Witnessing Conference.Lab



Concept, Theory, Format and Flow

March 30 – April 2, 2020
Witten/Herdecke University



Institute for Global
Integral Competence

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Preface

At the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz on January 27th the Holocaust survivor Batsheva Dagan asked us in her speech: "Where was everybody? Where was the world that knew but did nothing?"

Her question has a powerful warning for us all in the 21st century where humankind are confronted with terrible crises like climate change, refugee crisis, political rightward trend, nuclear weapons, poverty in global south etc. At this time of global crisis Ms Dagan's question should be asked again and again "Where are you? Where is the world that knows but does nothing?"

Are you witnessing the world?

When we see people on the news - children in famine in Africa or a crying mother with her dead child in Syria - we feel touched and empathetic with these people. This often happens, but the impression is not permanent, because it is just too much for us and we do not always want to deal with it. These everyday thoughts are deeply rooted in an individualistic dualism: I (subject) and the world (object) are separated. Through climate change and refugee crisis, however, we have begun to realize that we are related to each other. So we can testify to the suffering of people with belief that we are not separate from them, but we and they are part of a greater system. This kind of cognitive and emotional observation is called "empathy" which has been studied intensively in last years in psychology and neuroscience. There is, however, still a critical question remaining: Is this empathy enough? We and the world are interrelated, but in the experienced reality still fragmented and not interconnected. I see myself as a separate closed system and cannot recognize a larger transcendental system that includes interconnected me (subject) and the world (object). When we see a crying child in Syria on the news, we feel empathy and compassion with this child. At the same time, we feel helpless, powerless and despairful because we are not interconnected with the world. How can we be really present mentally, emotionally and physically with all human and living beings who experience intense and profound moments of struggling, doubting, and suffering?

The question above "Are you witnessing the world?" is therefore not easy to answer. We want to research more what witnessing is and develop the competence for witnessing. The Global Social Witnessing_Conference.Lab 2020 at the Witten/Hertecke University will provide a space where diverse perspectives/experiences from artists, scientists,

spiritual practitioners, and political activists will inspire participants to better understand and embody GSW as a practice of our time (within their mind, heart, and body). Throughout the lab, we will exchange and co-create new ideas, strategies, tools, and energy to help us become mature global citizens in a time of world-wide disruption and transformation.

March 1st 2020

Kazuma Matoba

1. Goal of GSW_Conference.Lab 2020

In the 21st century, schools and universities have a major responsibility to create spaces in which a cosmopolitan society can be prepared for the future. They can be a place where students can practice **'global social witnessing (GSW)'** in order to develop human capacities to attend mindfully to global events with embodied awareness. If our future is to be cosmopolitan, we need to establish cosmopolitan education.

The GSW_Conference.Lab will provide a space where diverse perspectives and experiences from artists, scientists, spiritual practitioners, and political activists will inspire participants to better understand and embody GSW within their minds, hearts, and bodies. Throughout the Conference.Lab, we will co-create new ideas, strategies, tools, and energy to help us become mature global citizens in these times of disruption and transformation.

The target audience of the GSW_Conference.Lab are Change-makers, including: educators, political activists, artists, scientists, students, leaders, etc.

2. Definition and practice of Global Social Witnessing

'Global social witnessing' (GSW), originally coined by Thomas Hübl, an Austrian spiritual teacher, is the human capacity and contemplative practice of mindfully attending to global events with an embodied awareness, thereby creating an inner space mirroring these events (Herrmann, Matoba & Wagner 2018). Here, witnessing is not seen merely as a passive act. It is not by accident that witnessing plays a crucial role in court and comes along with a high degree of responsibility. GSW has been facilitated by mediators and therapists and practiced by many global citizens who want to take responsibility for the global crises in health, wealth, and peace. However, methodologically this new approach has not yet been brought to fruition.

An embodied practice of compassionate global citizenship

On a phenomenological level, the practice of GSW involves a sequence of micro-actions (Petitmengin et al., 2017). It includes an active choice to pay attention to world events, to allow oneself to be affected by them, to become aware of phenomenal impressions on various levels (including mental, emotional, somatic, relational, etc.) and to attentively stay with these impressions and their unfolding within one's awareness. Through this, deeper layers of sensation and insight into the potentialities which are hidden in a situation may arise.

GSW is thus a practice where global realities and likely scenarios (e.g. global warming and climate refugees as scientifically evident consequence) are met with compassionate awareness of interconnectedness, while also staying in touch with a natural sense of possibility and vision. With this, the tension between the current reality and a positive wish or vision is contained inwardly, even if the potential of what could be may not be realized in one's own lifetime.

GSW can be practiced individually or by a collective entity. The potential collective practices are two-fold. First, initiated through a shared intention held by a collective entity, a particular global event is attended to simultaneously by each individual member. Secondly, the collective entity's social field may "mirror" the complex systemic dynamics of global events and their potential unfolding (Hübl & Ury, 2017). To this end, the elements of a global event become represented by group members. Examples for the second type of practice are Social Presencing Theater (Hayashi, 2015), Process Work (Mindell, 2010), and Systemic Constellation Work.

3. Format of the event: Conference.Lab

3.1. Conference.Lab

The GSW_Conference.Lab creates the experimental conditions to collectively explore and redefine GSW in an impactful way. An intentionally diverse group of contributors and co-creative participants will move through various formats, roles, perspectives, and experimental set-ups, experiencing themselves as speakers and listeners, agents and recipients, experts and learners. Through this, we intend to enable an interplay not only between the various disciplines, but between the lived experience of global social witnessing and our diverse ways of sense-making and conceptualizing. Since it is difficult to look at 'global events' in the abstract without looking at specific events, this laboratory will involve practice examples that target specific, localized issues with a somewhat global dimension. Furthermore, we also try to accommodate the fact that the research topic of GSW has multiple facets and sparks several questions requiring transdisciplinary explorations. Inspired by the approach of real-world laboratories (dt. 'Reallabore'), the Conference.Lab is designed to generate transformative knowledge at the science-society interface through a transdisciplinary lens (Schäpke, Stelzer, et al. 2017).

3.2. Scientific explorations of GSW

GSW can be explored from multiple academic perspectives. As a contemplative practice, GSW relies on the same mechanisms as meditation and likely generates effects comparable to other, especially socio-cognitive styles of meditation that have been extensively studied from a neuroscientific and psychological stance (e.g., Singer et al. 2015). In addition, the foundations of GSW may be explored from an ontological viewpoint, trying to reframe the interaction between consciousness and matter in the practice of GSW from a quantum physics perspective (cf. “consciousness-information-energy” by Oku (2007)). As a practice of relating to global events, GSW has political, ethical, and communicative implications. Since global events such as climate change have become more and more perceptible and ubiquitous in everyday life, the fundamental question of how individuals and collectives narrate and make sense of these events is crucial in addressing them. Cultivating generative ways of collective sense-making may be a steppingstone for the emergence of a truly compassionate global citizenship. GSW is therefore relevant for various fields of application, such as education, where it may support students to better navigate the complexities and interdependencies of the world they live in.

The scientific explorations of GSW revolve around two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Witnessing as a capacity for 'Compassion in action'

Witnessing world events leads to a greater degree of response-ability and generates compassion in relation to the world. Therefore, we assume, that witnessing is a practice of compassion in action.

Witnessing someone else's suffering can evoke a variety of responses ranging from emotional disconnect and empathic distress to compassion and profound interconnectedness (Boell & Senge, 2018). Neuroscientists have been able to pinpoint some of the specific brain regions responsible for these different degrees of socio-cognitive connectedness (Singer, 2012). GSW may not only provide a practical approach for accessing the deeper layers of socio-cognitive connectedness, but also motivate compassionate action. For the hypothesis of 'compassion in action' the following sub-themes need to be investigated more deeply:

- Social Cognition (e.g., Fuchs 2016, Singer, 2012, 2015, Siegel, 2012)

In how far can GSW be conceptualized in terms of social cognition? E.g., how does the practice of GSW increase one's capacity of empathizing with and mentalizing other's

(and potentially large group's) inner states? How does GSW involve neural circuits of perspective-taking, empathy, and compassion?

- Developmental psychology (e.g, Kohlberg, 1958, Graves , 1996)

How can the practice of GSW lead to an increased sense of (embodied, global, and personal) responsibility?

- Discourse analysis in institutions: Brown (2005)

How could GSW support the evolution of identity constructions from ethnocentric to world-centric or cosmopolitan levels?

Hypothesis 2: Witnessing social fields as leverage points for systemic change

When a group of people engages in GSW, something different happens compared to an individual person practicing GSW alone. We assume that a witnessing social field may not only affect the individual practitioners' experiences, but can be regarded as a leverage point for systemic change. In the discipline of action research, it has been argued that 'making a system see itself' is the key for facilitating profound change (Scharmer, 2007). Along that line, one can conceptualize witnessing as a transformative act and a leadership capacity. Its effects, however, might not be properly understood in a linear fashion, but may require taking into account complex systems dynamics and even quantum physics. The following sub-themes of Hypothesis 2 should be investigated in depth:

- Large System Change (e.g. Scharmer,2007; Waddell, 2015)

How can the practice of GSW enable a 'system to see itself' (Scharmer, 2007)? Which are strategic 'acupuncture points' in a system for witnessing to be impactful? What is the impact of GSW on the level of the social field?

- Leadership (e.g. Greenleaf, 1991; Zululeta, P., 2015)

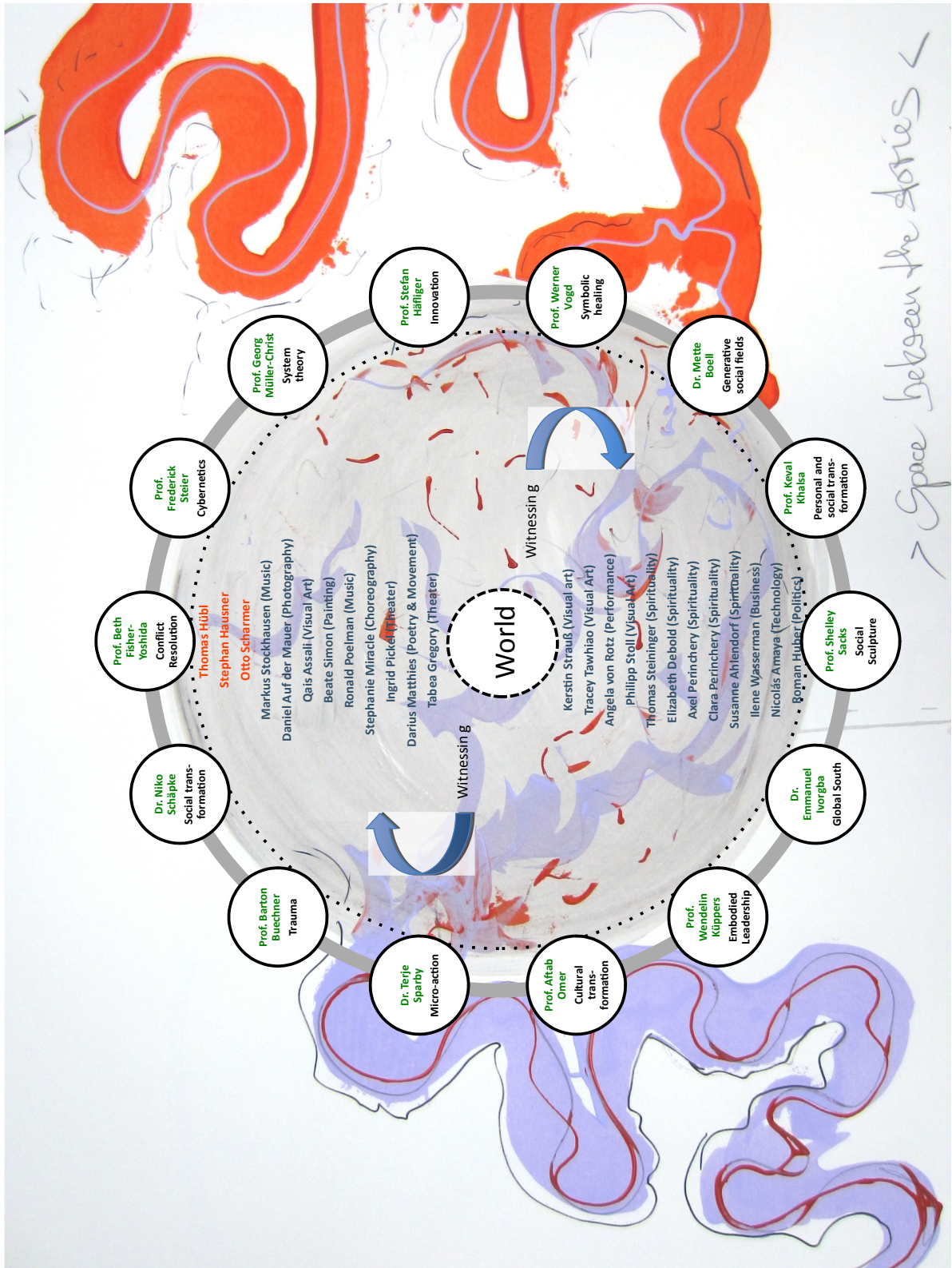
In how far can GSW be conceptualized as a compassionate (collective) leadership capacity?

- Quantum entanglement (e.g., Walach & Stillfried, 2011)

Can consciousness of physical events and situations be entangled with the witnessed events even on a physical distance, and if so, which leveraging effects may witnessing have beyond the level of the witnessing person or group?

Process-oriented Conference.Lab

A process-oriented laboratory is one in which participants work in groups to conduct experiments in workshops facilitated by artists and scientists. Prior to the beginning of any laboratory work(shop), the input-dialogue poses a focus question set by the facilitator and groups propose a set of tentative answers. To test these hypotheses, participants pay attention to / observe / notice both their inner and outer experiences of their minds and bodies while practicing GSW, which are shared, reported and then analyzed by scientists with the aid of question-guided inquiry in output-dialogue. This learning-cycle approach guides all participants including artists and scientists to construct their own understanding of GSW.



"Space between the stories" created by Beate Simon

Day 1 (March 30th)

The goal of the first day is to understand GSW intellectually and experience it through heart and body. This exploration will be guided by Thomas Hübl, Stephan Hausner, and Otto Scharmer. It is anticipated that a large, stable container among all participants will emerge through establishing a generative social field for the four days of the GSW_Conference.Lab.

➤ **Input-dialogue by Thomas Hübl (9:30 – 11:00)**

Thomas will refer to his definition of GSW:

*"The term **Global Social Witnessing** was first introduced at the Celebrate Life Festival 2017. This came about against the background of the widening gap between what is possible from the potential of the individual and humanity, and what is realized from it. Looking at the conflicts in the world and the destructive developments, one gets the impression that humanity seems to be learning very slowly from the past. Why this is so has long been a question that is close to my heart and that is incorporated into our work.*

*Our realization is that **collective traumas** are at the root of most conflicts, mostly unrecognized and often unconscious. Adequate healing and peace building is possible only if this is included. First and foremost, this requires the ability to gain a precise and comprehensive picture of what is happening. We call this process of insight, Global Social Witnessing. It is the ability to feel and relate to the cultural process. It's an awareness that the social body is developing through us.*

*It also encompasses a **vision** of what can develop and **methods** that promote the way there. We call the ability of a person or a system to have awareness of one's own current life process conscious experience. The ability to reflect, the self-critical examination of motivations and actions, the ability to change and a sense of humor are just a few of the functions of this. When a living system (an individual, an organization, a culture) becomes **aware of its own process**, an inclusive and integrative or integral way of life is the expression of it. Global Social Witnessing deals with the awareness of the collective subject of it's own process. This awareness begins with the fact that first the information of the processes of the system is mapped within itself."*

Thomas Hübl (2019)

As a starting point, we will explore Thomas Hübl's understanding of GSW in a dialogue with him.

➤ **In-depth workshop by Thomas Hübl (11:30 – 13:30)**

Thomas Hübl will invite us to interactive workshop in order to deepen our insights about GSW and develop our GSW-competence.

➤ **Dialogue by Thomas Hübl and Otto Scharmer (15:00 – 17:00)**

Otto Scharmer is senior lecturer at MIT, Boston, USA, and co-founder of the Presencing Institute. Otto's work on *Theory U*, a methodology and framework for leading change from the emerging future, underlines the importance of *seeing*, *sensing*, and *presencing* as core capacities for change agents. These capacities foster fully becoming aware of a given situation and its latent, highest future possibility and correspond somewhat to the practice of GSW. What is more, Theory U proposes further steps which facilitate the actualizing of this 'presenced' future possibility on a micro-, meso-, and macro level. Therefore, in order to inquire into the transformative potential of GSW on a collective scale, this dialogue will bring together the depth of Otto's action-research-based understanding of systems transformation with Thomas' contemplative-based understanding of global social witnessing and spiritual transformation.

➤ **Systemic constellation (17:30 – 20:00)**

Stephan Hausner, a senior facilitator and healer, organized a large systemic constellation (Systemaufstellung) with Thomas Hübl in 2017. This constellation focused on the theme of 'North Korea' and is an example of a successful GSW large-group event (cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyRGwqNg0rs>). In the GSW_Conference.Lab, Thomas and Stephan will invite us into a systemic constellation and facilitate it as a tool for GSW. The theme of this constellation is not yet set and will not be pre-announced.

Day 2 and Day 3 (March 31st & April 1st)

The goal of the second and third day of the GSW_Conference.Lab is to experience and embody GSW through 'art as witness'. The somatic and affective experience of each participant will be highlighted and sensitized from scientific perspectives given in our panel discussions.

➤ **Input-dialogue by scientists (10:00 – 12:00)**

- On day 2, after the keynote speech by Georg Müller-Christ, three scientists - Keval Khalsa, Beth Fisher-Yoshida and Kazuma Matoba – will talk in a dialogue facilitated by Adrian Wagner and Bee James.
- On day 3, after the keynote speech by Mette Boell, three scientists - Shelley Sacks, Aftab Omer and Wendelin Küppers – will talk in a dialogue facilitated by Lukas Herrmann and Bee James.

In this multi-disciplinary panel discussion, our speakers will explore different types of awareness of critical global events while drawing from their academic expertise and

personal-professional experiences as practitioners and world-citizens. The dialogue will target the following guiding questions:

- ✓ *(How) can the practice of GSW lead to an embodied personal and global “response-ability”?*
- ✓ *As practitioners, what is required in order to let oneself be affected and become an effective agent for social change? What is the role of ‘negative feelings’ such as guilt or despair or experiences of apathy and overwhelm, and how can they be dealt with?*
- ✓ *How can witnessing as a leverage point for change enable the “system to see itself”?*
- ✓ *In how far can GSW be conceptualized as a collective leadership capacity? What does it mean to lead with compassionate integrity in a complex world?*
- ✓ *To what extent can the act of witnessing itself influence what is observed?*

➤ **Workshops (13.30 – 16:30)**

- Artists and activists invite the participant to experience her-/himself as a ‘global social witness’ and explore her/his related inner feelings through authentic artistic dialogue.
- Scientists will participate in the process and observe and notice what arises in their bodies as well as their minds and emotions.
- Artists and activists will be coupled with scientists as follows (the coupling will be changed possibly):

Day 2

Artists, activists	Workshop Title	Scientists as witness (Research focus)
Roman Huber (Politics)	<i>New power spaces of democracy</i>	Wendelin Küpers (Management: GSW and embodied leadership)
Qais Assali (Visual Art)	<i>Art as political witness</i>	Beth Fisher-Yoshida (Communication: GSW as transformative learning)
Keval Khalsa (Dance)	<i>Technologies for Transformation: Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan® and Augusto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed</i>	Shelley Sacks (Art science: GSW and social sculpture)
Tracey Tawhiao	<i>“Kotahitanga”</i>	Werner Vogd (Sociology:

(Visual Art)		GSW for symbolic healing)
Angela von Rotz & Darius Mathis (Performance)	<i>Witnessing as a Ceremony</i>	Terje Sparby (Philosophy: GSW and micro-action)
Beate Simon (Painting) Ronald Poelman (Music)	<i>Five Minutes a Day</i>	Georg Müller-Christ (Management: GSW and sustainability)
Susanne Ahlendorf (Spiritual activism)	<i>Compassion - A deeply human essential ability to connect</i>	Frederick Steier (GSW and communication)
Tabea Gregory & Lukas Herrmann (Theater)	<i>Social presencing theater</i>	Aftab Omer (Psychology: GSW and iconic power)
Nicolás Amaya (Technology)	<i>Human Online - Technology to overcome separation. An experimental live connection with Nigeria</i>	Emmanuel Ivorgba (Religion, peace: GSW and Global South)
Stefan Häfliger (Social science)	<i>Witnessing global business models: Amazon and the Amazon</i>	Niko Schöpke (GSW and social transformation)

Day 3

Artists, activists	Workshop Title	Scientists as witness (Research focus)
Ingrid Pickel (Theater)	<i>The responsive body – giving GSW a voice through movements</i>	Frederick Steier (GSW and communication)
Stephanie Miracle (Choreography)	<i>Eye as a camera</i>	Keval Khalsa (Art science: GSW for personal & social transformation)
Ilene Wasserman (CMM, communication)	<i>Global Social Witnessing: emerging communication perspective</i>	Georg Müller-Christ (Management: GSW and sustainability)
Clara & Axel Perinchery (Spiritual activism)	<i>“The Citizen is Present” - Global Social Witnessing in public places and global hot spots</i>	Wendelin Küpers (Management: GSW and embodied leadership)
Shelley Sacks (Social sculpture)	<i>Landing Strip for Souls</i>	Terje Sparby (Philosophy: GSW and micro-action)
Daniel Auf der Mauer (Photography)	<i>The embodied photographer – photography as an empathic interface for relation to conflict and trauma</i>	Barton Buechner (GSW and trauma)
Mette Böll (Biology, sociology)	<i>Compassionate systems leadership for an uncertain future</i>	Stefan Häfliger (Management: Innovation & technology for GSW)
Kerstin Strauß &	<i>3 sync – Express your inner world</i>	Aftab Omer (Psychology:

Phillip Stoll (Visual art)		GSW and iconic power)
Werner Vogd (Social science)	<i>GW under the perspective of James Dow's Theory of Symbolic Healing</i>	Tracey Tawhiao (Visual Art)
Elizabeth Debold & Thomas Steininger	<i>What is Sacred Activism? Practices for Global Wholeness in a Time of Division</i>	Adrian Wagner (Sociology: GSW and collective trauma)

Note: It is very important for both artists/activists and scientists to discuss about following questions in advance:

- ✓ *How can the questions in the input dialogue above be investigated through artistic performances during the workshop?*
- ✓ *How can participants easily be involved into dialogue between science and art?*

➤ **Elephant-dialogue by artists, activists & scientists (17:00 – 19:00)**

- One scientist and one artist will lead a discussion on what emerged for participants at a table with 20 participants.
- They will try to help participants make sense of their experiences by drawing parallels/connections with the input-dialogue session.
- All participants, scientists, artists, and activists will be divided into 5-person-groups where they will discuss key topics that emerged during the output-dialogue.
- All participants continue and deepen the dialogue in dyad.
- Finally each person is asked and guided to meditation individually.

➤ **Evening program (20:30 – 21:30)**

Free Market for Future: Networking lounge (Day 2)

Singphony – Collective Sound Improvisation by Markus Stockhausen (Day 3)

Day 4 (April 2nd)

The goal of the final day is to evaluate all experiences during the GSW_Conference.Lab from the perspective of social activists and educators. We will collectively discuss how the concept of GSW should/can be talked about scientifically and how the proposed methods can be improved so that GSW can be implemented as an efficient and effective concept and tool for social transformation.

➤ **Sound meditation & Gallery walk (9:00 – 10:00)**

After Markus Stockhausen will invite us to “sound meditation”, we can walk through between some co-created art-objects in the hall and attune ourself to the collective field.

➤ **Taifun-dialogue / Debriefing (10:00 – 14.30)**

All experiences and insights gained during the last three days will be collected and reflected in the outcome-dialogue like “resonance bowl”. Additionally, any possible concrete ideas and proposals will be generated for ‘global citizen’-education in this dialogue.

In a large dialogue process (Bohmian dialogue process), all participants will add more ideas and proposals to be implemented for education and create sustainable energy to be supplied to all generated ideas and concepts.

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5. GSW speakers, scientists, artists and activists

Aftab Omer, Prof. Dr. (Psychology, Meridian University / USA)

Angela von Rotz (Performance, Germany)

Axel Perinchery (Spiritual activism, The Citizen is Present / Germany)

Barton Buechner, Prof. Dr. (Military Psychology, Adler University / USA)

Beate Simon (Painting, Germany)

Beth Fisher-Yoshida, Prof. Dr. (Conflict Resolution, CMMI, Columbia University / USA)

Clara Perinchery, Dr. (Spiritual activism, The Citizen is Present / Germany)

Claus Otto Scharmer, Dr. (Social Science, Presencing Institute / USA)

Daniel Auf der Mauer (Photography and Conflict Transformation, Switzerland)

Darius Mathies (Poetry and Movement, Germany)

Elizabeth Debold (Spiritual activism, evolve / Germany)

Emmanuel Ivorgba, PhD (Peace education, The Emmanuel Ivorgba Foundation / Nigeria)

Frederick Steier, Prof. Dr. (Communication Science, Fielding Graduate University / USA)

Georg Müller-Christ, Prof. Dr. (Sustainable Management, University Bremen / Germany)

Ilene Wasserman, PhD (Social Evolution, CMMI / USA)

Ingrid Pickel (Theater and Performance, Germany)

Kerstin Strauß (Visual Art, Germany)

Keval Kaur Khalsa, Prof. (Practice of Dance, Duke University / USA)

Markus Stockhausen (Music, Germany)

Mette Boell, PhD (Biology and Sociology, Center for Systems Awareness at MIT / USA)

Nicolás Amaya (Technology, Human Online / Spain)

Niko Schöpke, Dr. (Interdisciplinary Social Science, Goteborg University / Norway)

Phillip Stoll (Visual Art, Germany)

Qais Assali (Visual Art, Museum of Fine Arts / USA, Palestine)

Roman Huber (Integral Democracy, Mehr Demokratie e.V. / Germany)

Ronald Poelman (Pianist and Composer, Germany)

Shelley Sacks, Prof. (Social Sculpture, Oxford Broocks University / UK)
Stefan Häfliger, Prof. Dr. (Strategic Management, City University of London / UK)
Stephan Hausner (System Constellation, Germany)
Stephanie Miracle (Choreography and Performance, USA)
Susanne Ahlendorf (Psychotherapy, Germany)
Tabea Gregory (Improve Theater, Germany)
Terje Sparby, Dr. (Philosophy, Witten/Herdecke University / Germany)
Thomas Hübl (Inner Science, Academy of Inner Science / Germany, Israel)
Thomas Steininger , Dr. (Spiritual activism, evolve / Germany)
Tracey Tawhiao (Shamanic Art, New Zealand)
Wendelin Küppers, Prof. Dr. (Organization and Leadership, Karlshochschule / Germany)
Werner Vogd, Prof. Dr. (Sociology, Witten/Herdecke University / Germany)

6. GSW_Conference.Lab team

Managing Directors

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