

Open Call for Participants: Workshop on "The Invented Institution" at Drugo More, Rijeka

Introduction

We are inviting participants to join us in a workshop taking place at the cultural centre Drugo More in Rijeka, Croatia, from 8th to 10th April 2024. Inspired by Franco Rotelli's concept of the Invented Institution, this event aims to explore the intersections of art, culture, and social care, focusing on the practices of institutional change today.

This workshop is part of the activities under Working Group 3 "Analysis, Theory and Politics of Care" of the COST Action "Toolkit of Care" (<https://toolkitof.care/>).

What to Expect

The workshop will provide a platform for collective discussion, inspired by Rotelli's "Invented Institution," to critically analyse its concepts, challenges, and potentials in the context of contemporary social, political, and cultural action. We will engage with questions around the role of art and culture in fostering social and institutional change, especially in relation to mental health critique and community care practices. The workshop will span two and a half days of intensive discussions, collective readings, short presentations and other dialogical exercises. Participants will have the opportunity to become more familiar with Franco Rotelli's theoretical and practical contributions and explore their application in contemporary settings, as well as to engage in more reflective and speculative conversations around their own practices and experiences of institutional analysis.

Background

In 1988, Franco Rotelli (1942-2023) proposed the *Invented Institution* as a strategy to persist the institutional experience of Trieste, where, following the abolition of asylums led by Franco Basaglia, the process of radical imagination of other forms of care led to a profound re-signification of welfare in general. Specifically, new community care services for people with mental health problems were implemented in the 1970s, and then - throughout the 1980s - cultural laboratories, housing projects and labour cooperatives were set up in a social-public partnership to support the social rights of people in situations of vulnerability, breaking beyond the boundaries of the psychiatric discipline. In the 1990s, this process of radical institutional design reached the rest of the health system and welfare in general. The transversality of this endeavour makes it significant in the field of radical institutional practices in general and specifically in the contemporary challenges of radical cultural practice.

Speaking of the invented institution, Rotelli writes:

"The production of life and social reproduction, which are the purpose and practice of the invented institution, must escape the narrow ways of the disciplinary gaze, as of the psychological investigation, as of the pure phenomenological understanding, and become fabric, engineering of reconstruction of meaning, of production of value, time, responsibility, identification of situations of suffering and oppression, reinsertion into the social body,

consumption and production, exchange, new roles, other material ways of being for the other, in the eyes of the other. We are increasingly convinced that our work is this work of de-institutionalisation aimed at reconstructing ourselves with others as social actors, at preventing suffocating under the role, the behaviour, the stereotyped and introjected identity that is the overdetermined mask of the ill. That to cure - *to care? to curate?* - means to take care here and now of transforming the patient's ways of living and feeling suffering and at the same time transforming his or her, as well as our, concrete everyday life."

"Therefore, the invented institution on the theme of the 'suffering existence of the body in relation to the social body' is made up of practices that, by breaking the separation of the medical model and recognising in the psychological model the identical vices of the biological model, fully enter the territory of social engineering as motors of sociality and producers of meaning, fully intervening in daily life, daily oppressions, moments of possible social reproduction, producers of wealth, multiple exchanges, and therefore therapeutic. *Therapeuticity* is therefore the intentionality of practices that are material mediators, capable of restarting blocked social exchanges, of collecting and valorising the symptoms, the symbols, the multiple senses of the patient by dislocating them, de-institutionalising them through paradox. Accepting the challenge of the complexity of the multiple levels of existence and not reducing the subject to an illness or a communication disorder, or to a poor person, or autonomising his body or his psyche, but reinscribing him in the social body."

(Extracts from: Franco Rotelli, *L'Istituzione Inventata*, 1988, in "*Per la salute mentale/ For mental health*" 1/88 – *Review of the Regional Centre of Study and Research of Friuli Venezia Giulia*)

Starting from a shared reading of Rotelli's text - considering its shortcomings or contradictions, as well as the potentialities and the openings it affords – we will engage in a collective discussion on the practice of art and culture for social and institutional change today. We will be asking ourselves at which extent and how the mental health critique of Franco Rotelli can be a counterpart for our social, political and cultural action.

Participation Details

We invite researchers, practitioners, artists and anyone interested in the intersection of art, culture, and social care to apply. Participants are expected to contribute actively to the discussions, bringing their insights and experiences to enrich the collective learning process.

To Apply:

- Submit a short bio or CV, highlighting relevant background and experiences to the workshop's theme.
- Write a short statement (up to around 500 words, 1 page max) articulating your motivations and expectations in participating in this gathering.

Submission Deadline:

Please send your application to Valeria Graziano: Valeria.Graziano@theater.uni-giessen.de & Davor Mišković: davor@drugo-more.hr by **15th March 2024**.

Financial Support:

Limited funds are available to support some participants' travel expenses. If you would like to apply for support, please make this known in your application.

This Activity is part of the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)-funded Action: TOOLKIT OF CARE (TOC), CA21102 (<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA21102>)

Who can apply?

Practitioners/researchers of any nationality or place of residency affiliated with an academic or other legal entity in one of these countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, the Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Republic of North Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, as well as in one of the EU Member States Outermost Regions (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin, Azores and Madeira, and the Canary Islands)

*Examples of such an affiliation (non-exhaustive list): work contract, enrolment in a PhD or Post-Doctoral programme, voluntary service in a NGO, emeritus professorship, etc.

Selected international participants shall have their travel expenses reimbursed according to COST travel reimbursement rules:

https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2022/09/Travel-Reimbursement-Rules_March_2022.pdf

**TOC is an international project led by an interdisciplinary group of creative practitioners, academics, researchers and arts organizations that specialize in creative technologies and that have considerable experience in the production and dissemination of this kind of knowledge across Europe and internationally, who have come together to form a “critical network of care”. The network will collaborate to share their collective expertise and technical knowledge employed in creative ways to develop knowledge and methodologies of care. The main aim is to produce a well formulated and integrated TOOLKIT OF CARE comprising articles, prototypes, audiovisual documentation, technical manuals, theoretical analysis, and data. It will act as a model of how to successfully share knowledge and expertise across different geographical regions and social groups.*

***COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across*

Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.

<https://www.cost.eu/>

This training school addresses the following goals, as detailed on e-COST:

- Initiate the development of a toolkit of care. More specifically, we begin implementing actions on all four working groups.
- Begin international cooperation and knowledge sharing towards the production of a shared toolkit of care.
- Begin designing a toolkit of shared resources and methodologies towards a common understanding of the subject matter.
- Begin envisioning and discussing what is required to build a self-sustained community of creative practitioners, researchers and NGOs past the end of the Action.
- Implement actions in a number of ITCs (Cyprus, Croatia).
- Begin envisioning and discussing what is required to build a self-sustained network outliving the Action.



**Funded by
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