

# THE JESTER

a professional joker or 'fool' at a medieval court, typically wearing a cap with bells on it and carrying a mock sceptre.



een professionele grappenmaker of 'dwaas' aan een middeleeuws hof, meestal met een pet met belletjes erop en een nepscepter.

**ISSUE #8**  
**November 2021**



# editorial

How do I surf my stress? Is it the same as surfing waves? I surfed waves once. Before going I watched youtube videos of people surfing with their sculpted bodies casually cruising along beautiful barrelling waves. Kind of like those mindfulness videos I watch when I'm stressed. When I got to the beach, I spent most of the time flailing my arms in panic and falling off the board into the water. When I did finally manage to balance, I ended up surfing into the back of another person who had fallen off in front of me. Oh there is one difference though. The stress waves are ten times bigger and ever-present. I don't have the option to just swim back to the beach, drink a cup of tea and forget anything ever happened. Or do I?

## info

The Jester is a periodical student paper that is published 4 times a year. We write about everything and anything related to what goes on at our university and little town.

jester

**noun**

1. a professional joker or 'fool' at a medieval court, typically wearing a cap with bells on it and carrying a mock sceptre

## colophon

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The Jester is made by a team of amateurs that are striving to make a funny, critical and interesting magazine. We are always looking for your contributions.

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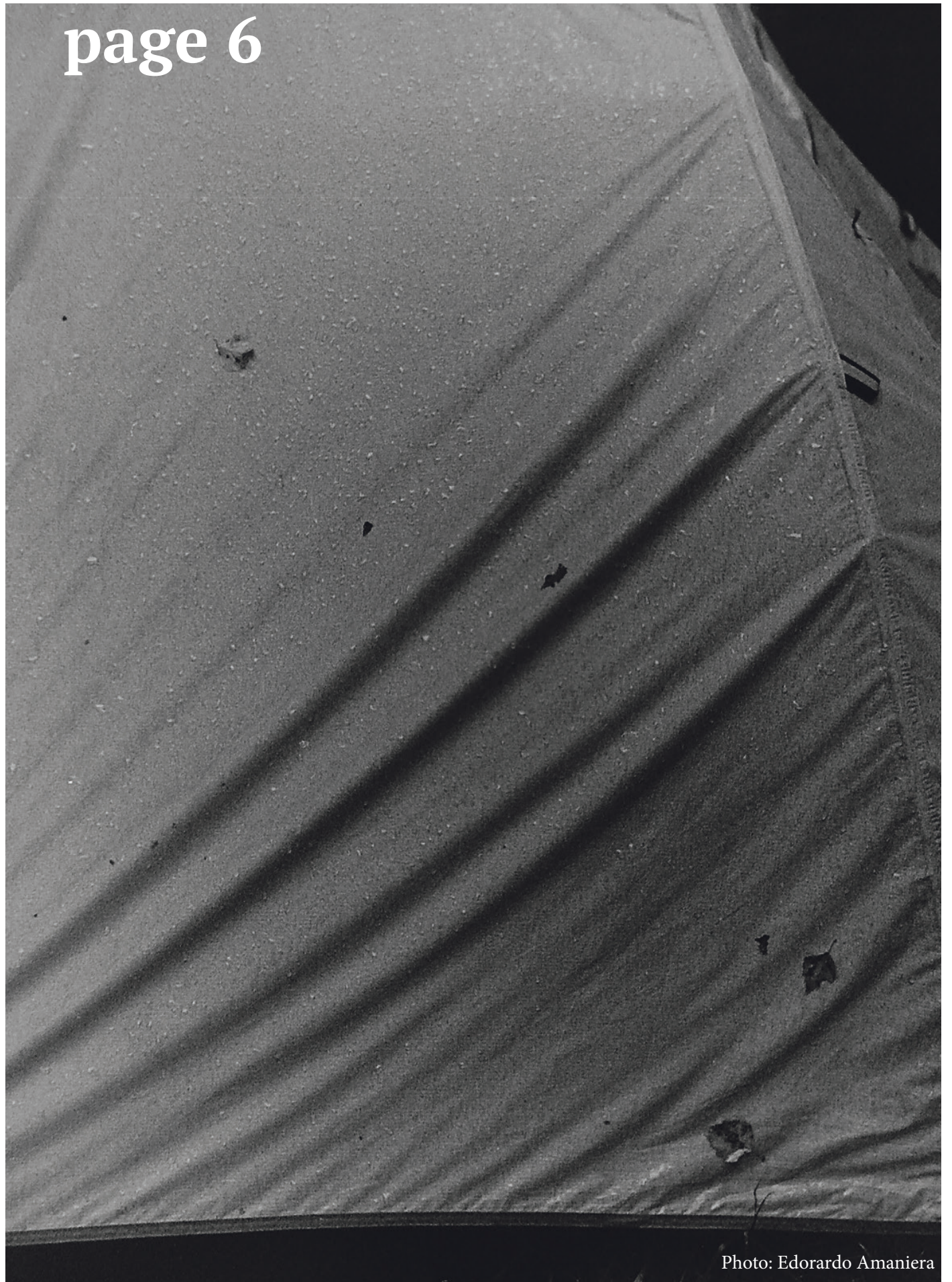
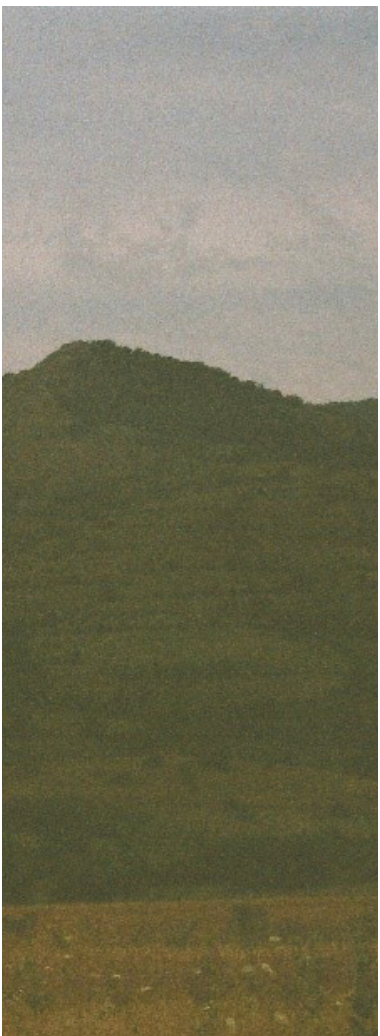


Photo: Edorardo Amaniera



EARTH AS A SUPERFOOD

oh and by the way

there is an earth tasting  
exhibition by masharu

in the World Soil  
Museum, GAIA

every  
Wednesday  
13:00-18:00

Photo: Jester van Schuylenbursch



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# WUR research used to weaken the Farm to Fork strategy

The Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy is the European Commission’s proposal for the transformation of the European food system. With ambitious environmental targets, it has understandably put agri-businesses on edge. Last month, they commissioned Wageningen research to back up their case.

The F2F strategy sets out five “Green Deal Targets” for 2030. They include reducing nutrient loss by 50%, pesticide application by 50%, fertiliser use by 20%, and increasing the amount of farmland under organic agriculture to 25%. The negotiation process started in May 2020 when the European Commission announced its bold and somewhat vague aims for the European food system.

On the 12th of October, one and a half years after the strategy was released and two days before the annual F2F conference where Louise Fresco was a guest speaker, a joint declaration was published by a coalition of 28 agri-business representatives. The declaration was titled “FARM TO FORK - IT IS TIME TO LISTEN TO WHAT THE DATA SAYS”. This came at a key moment, nine days before the European Parliament voted on the amendments to the F2F strategy.

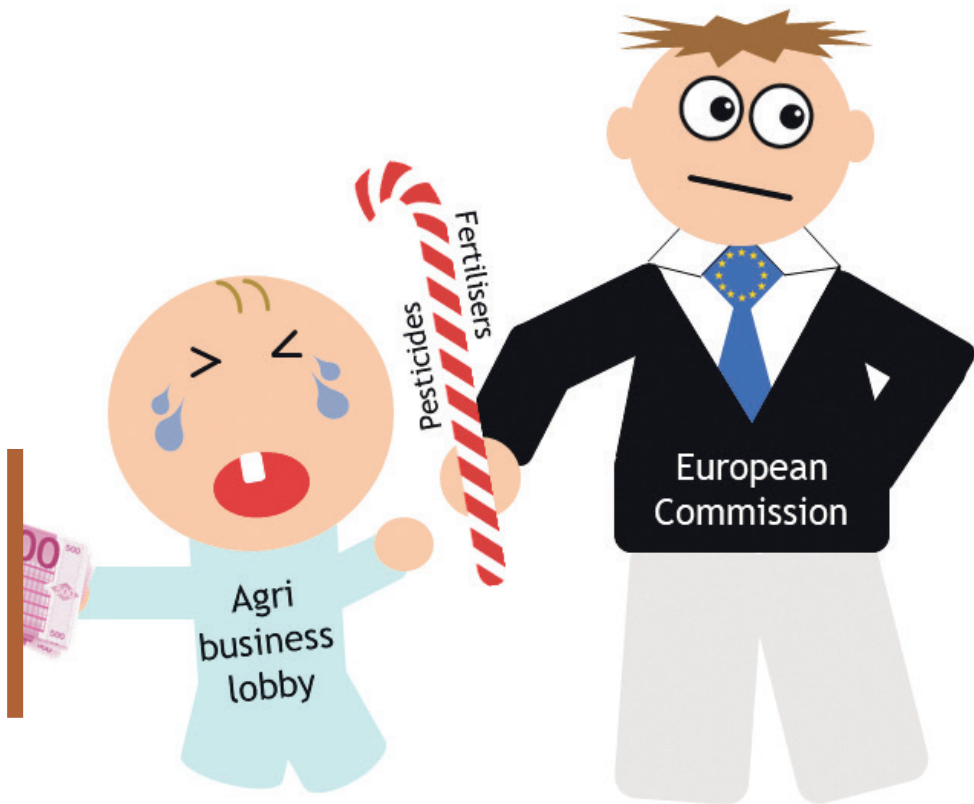
In the statement, the authors referenced two unpublished studies commissioned from WUR researchers, to argue that the implementation of the F2F strategy would “come at a significant cost for EU farmers and the viability of the entire European agribusiness culture”. It also warned

that the changes in the food system “could make it socially unjust”. The signatories on the statement included the European Agricultural Machinery Industry, European Fertilizer Producers, Euro Foie Gras, and Copa-Cogeca.

This led to a large backlash from environmental organisations who issued a counter-statement titled “The EU must stand by the Farm to Fork strategy”. Inés Jordana from the EU Policy Coalition addressed the studies directly, stating that “These partial and industry-commissioned studies don’t include the positive effects from developing the urgently needed Farm to Fork Strategy and related legislation.” So let’s look closer at the studies.

The first one from Wageningen researchers is titled *Impact of the EU’s Green Deal on the livestock sector*. It was commissioned primarily by Copa-Cogeca, and lobby groups such as Animal Health Europe and the European Feed Manufacturers’ Federation, for an unknown sum of money. In this study, the researchers modelled “thirteen illustrative farm cases” and found that income for six of these farms would increase while income for the other seven would decrease. In other words, there will be winners and losers - about 50/50 if their projections are right. In an apolitical setting, this study seems unproblematic. However, the fact that they were sponsored and then used by the agri-business lobby prior to full publishing makes them questionable.

“Copa-Cogeca lobbyists suggested 2,300 amendments to the F2F strategy, hollowing out commitments to environmental and health challenges, and denying the role agri-businesses have played in the climate crisis.”





The main sponsor, Copa-Cogeca, claims to be “the united voice of farmers and agri-food cooperatives in Europe”. And it lobbies generously - spending up to €1.75 million in related activities in 2019. With the F2F strategy, it unsuccessfully lobbied to delay negotiations and voting last month, arguing that extra time would be “critical” to influence public perception and political decision-making. Another example was last January, when Copa-Cogeca lobbyists suggested 2,300 amendments to the F2F strategy, hollowing out commitments to environmental and health challenges, and denying the role agri-businesses have played in the climate crisis.

<b>Amendment 8</b> Paragraph 4. Emphasises the importance of recognising the significant impact of agriculture and especially animal production on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and land use; stresses the need to enhance natural carbon sinks and reduce agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, in particular in the feed and livestock sectors; calls for regulatory measures and targets to ensure progressive reductions in all GHG emissions in these sectors;	<i>Emphasises the importance of recognising the significant impact of agriculture and especially animal production on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and land use; stresses the need to enhance natural carbon sinks and reduce agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, in particular in the feed and livestock sectors; calls for regulatory measures and targets to ensure progressive reductions in all GHG emissions in these sectors;</i>  <i>Emphasises that EU agriculture is the only major system in the world that reduced significantly greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;</i>  <i>Recalls that European agriculture and forestry plays a crucial role in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation, as it has significant potential to reduce the emissions, to sequester carbon and to boost economies in a sustainable manner; that said, when addressing emissions stemming from agriculture, we must also recognise that these result from natural processes;</i>
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Photo: corporateeurope.org

The second study is titled *Impact Assessment Study on EC 2030 Green Deal Targets for Sustainable Food Production*. This study was commissioned by CropLife Europe, CropLife International and several unspecified “agri-food chain stakeholders”. Through modelling “typical farms”, the study concluded that increasing the area under organic farming and reducing fertiliser use would result in 10-20% reductions in crop yield. These conclusions alone are not problematic or surprising: the issues lie in the recommendations and, once again, the sponsors.

To address these reductions, the researchers recommend increasing innovation through new plant breeding techniques which would be facilitated by “removing legislative barriers [...] to shorten the breeding process”. The jump to this recommendation is worryingly unscientific and aptly in line with the views of the study’s main sponsor CropLife Europe - a lobby group made up of, among others, Syngenta, BASF, and Bayer-Monsanto. These are plant breeding multinationals that have vested interests in “removing legislative barriers” on plant-breeding and it might not be a coincidence that the Wageningen research they sponsor supports this line of reasoning.

What do the scientists say?

On the same day that the joint statement from agribusinesses was released, the scientists who conducted the various impact assessments discussed the intricacies of their models (interesting for those modelling nerds out there) at a webinar also supported by CropLife Europe. There, Giampiero Genovese from the Economics of Agriculture Joint Research Committee at the European Commission stated at the very beginning of his talk that “the Farm to Fork is a multidimensional strategy and we can only look at four of these dimensions”. He even admits that their study “is not an impact assessment of the Farm to Fork strategy”.

Acknowledging assumptions and limitations is important when presenting results, especially in a political setting. However, Johan Bremmer, who represented the Wageningen bench, did little to clarify limitations throughout his presentation. In fact, he only touched upon it when asked to sum up his thoughts, stating, “we have our limitations in our approach such as the demarcations focusing on specific objectives”. But in the same breath, he confidently claimed that “there will be significant yield reductions”.

The sponsorship and use of these studies by the agribusiness lobby once again raises important questions about our university’s cosy relationships with industry. Over the next months, we will be developing a comprehensive list of our university’s ties to agri-businesses in education and research. If you would like to join, get in touch through [thejester.wageningen@gmail.com](mailto:thejester.wageningen@gmail.com)

 B.W. & O.B.





# Tales of Nature [and farming]



One step and the forest knows I'm here.  
It takes only one step and some vibration for the roots of the trees to send signals that someone is entering their home.  
One step only and I kill 10, 100, 1000, 10000 little organisms living under my foot.  
Under this one step a leaf from the tree I am under is being transformed into food for another one over there and so the cycle begins. Life begins.

I walk in the forest and I am intrigued...  
by how patterns and layers;  
colors and shapes;  
textures and structures  
basically just fit.  
Pure chaos turned into beauty.



Collective consciousness  
That's what it is  
That makes everything resist  
And co-exist:  
Living for each other  
Living with each other  
Living against each other  
Everything's a mix.  
The trees might burn,  
But the forest will live.

Up on the hill  
Either on the field  
Or in the forest  
Or just in a wheelbarrow full of hay,  
I contemplate  
Butterflies, berries  
Mushrooms and fairies.  
I hear the song of the wind  
I listen to the whisper of the land  
and I am carried away  
to another world  
where I think I have already been  
In either person, stories or my dreams ...



A world in which the clock ticks differently.  
The tick-tock matching completely  
A feeling of melancholy  
But also, simply  
Pure harmony.  
A world that seems to be lost  
In stories and talks,  
Promises and hopes...  
But which is closer to reality,  
which brings more clarity  
To minds, hearts and souls  
Than any other  
Simplified theory  
That nowadays matter.

Even if lost  
The world is never forgotten...  
It's collected and it's shared  
Among each other  
And from one to another.

My dear pasture lands  
I hope that next time I come  
I'll find you  
The same way I always do:  
Rejuvenating and growing old  
Chaotic, but peaceful  
Pressingly quiet,  
Blissful.





# Surviving my first month in Wageningen

Eoghan’s road to Wageningen was long and windy. From studying biomedical sciences in his Bachelor, to contemplating medical school, to working in pharmacies across different neighbourhoods of Dublin, and then in a pharmaceutical start-up in the East Coast of Ireland, quitting that “fucking boring job”, only to be helicoptered off a mountain after breaking his leg on his “I’m free!” skiing trip which put him on bed rest for several months, deciding to become a pilot but then realising that as a pilot, “All you’re really doing is polluting the planet and flying people lucky enough to do so”, pushing him to finally come to Wageningen for a Master’s in Environmental Sciences, a decision he has never regretted.

His first month wasn’t easy though. While he says getting Covid-19 in his first weeks in Wageningen was minor compared to the things he dealt with before arriving, it did confine him to his room for a good ten days. His coughing was so bad - it interrupted the sexy time of a couple next door. When he finally got his freedom back, he went out with the Irish gang, but with one pint of Guinness too many, he fell off his bike on his way home, right onto his face. His bike was so destroyed that he could not even wheel it home, so he abandoned it, walked home, washed his face and went to bed. The next morning, very concussed, he woke up with blood all over his pillow and decided to head to the hospital with a taxi. His face was so bruised and swollen that he couldn’t see from one eye, and had to get his eyebrow stitched up. And as if things couldn’t get any better, as he left the taxi, his keys fell from his lap and down into the storm drain.

“So you’ve messed your face up and you’ve had Covid – I would have gone home by now. Why are you still smiling?” is a question Eoghan got after all that. He admits that he was very, very close to getting on a flight and leaving, but he powered through and things got better. “There are silver linings to every story” he says.

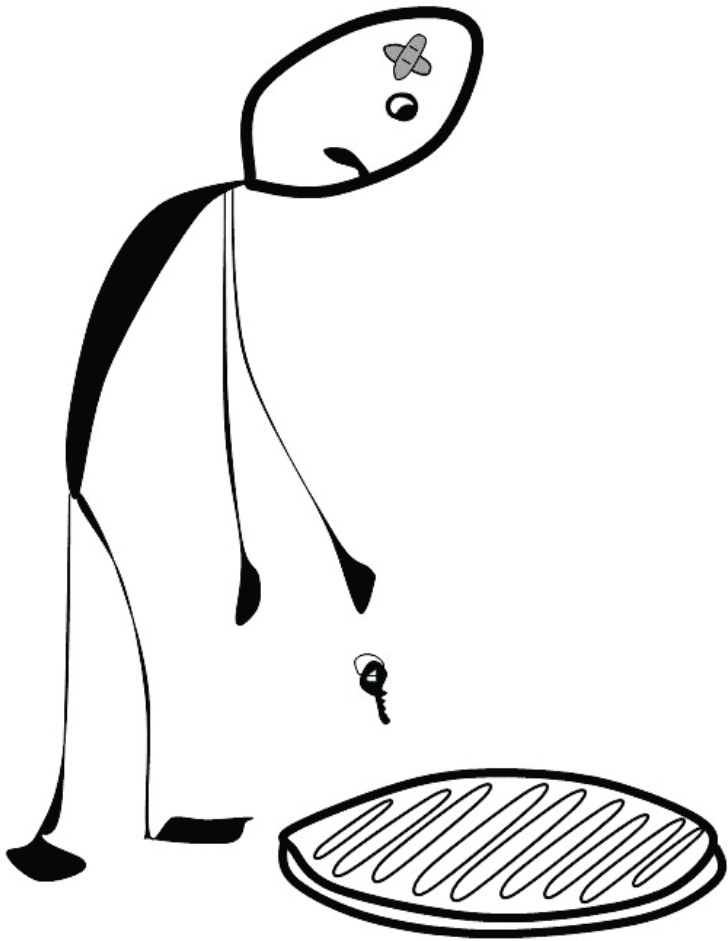


Photo: Edorardo Amaniera

Dodo started his Master’s in Climate Studies in September. He arrived in Wageningen in August for the AID with nothing more than a tent to sleep in, having always enjoyed backpacking and camping. Little did he know, he was getting himself into a massive housing crisis, and the tent life would continue into September.

With no room found by the beginning of term, he set up his tent on a field in Droevendaal following the recommendation of a friend he’d made during the AID. His camping spot is known to some as ‘Rex’s old room’, ‘Paradise walk’ or the ‘Field of weeds’. As soon as he arrived, residents of 69 welcomed him, inviting him to eat with them and use their home as he needed. He quickly packed up his tent, bouncing around rooms that were free for a few days, before sharing a room with another student for a month.

Over a month in, Dodo finally got himself a permanent room. “I feel like I’ve been running a wonderful but socially exhausting marathon. In Droev, that’s a really nice thing; there are so many peculiar and loving individuals that draw your attention and make you want to meet even more people; but at the same time that can be very exhausting since I had no time to process everything. Now I feel like I am finally slowing down and finding a rhythm”. Now that he is inside and dry, Dodo has been able to develop the photos he took during his first month’s adventures. Here is an impression of the home that gave him good nights’ sleep during his first days in Wageningen.





# What type of student are you?

## The guide to your perfect master's programme

### The quiz filled with prejudices

#### When farmers are protesting on WUR campus, you...

- A. Go there to check out cute marriage material
- B. Try to find the John Deere with the most horsepower
- C. Hide in your vegan student house and eat a chickpea iiiisalad
- D. Put on a suit and start talking with a journalist
- E. Plant trees to compensate for the tractor's emissions

#### You are having a fancy dinner with housemates, you...

- A. Order take away sushi at watami
- B. Put way to many hamburgers on the barbecue
- C. Source local lupine for homemade tem-peh
- D. You try out lab grown meat and buy company shares
- E. Make your own pizza

#### It is the final week of summer holidays, you...

- A. Spend some much deserved days on the beach
- B. Help your parents milking the cows
- C. Volunteer on a biodynamic farm to weed
- D. Work on your LinkedIn page and CV
- E. Use your Nieuwe Ronde veggies to make pickles

#### For a Christmas visit to family abroad, you...

- A. Set up a skyscanner alert for the cheapest flight
- B. Finally install a new subwoofer in the pickup truck
- C. Stay home anyway, traveling is not sustainable
- D. Use your parent's brand new tesla
- E. Buy an inter-rail train ticket and bring your bicycle

#### Time to decorate your new room, you...

- A. Make a pinterest board
- B. Use your old farm posters
- C. Order new prayer flags from a fair trade shop
- D. Create a clean background for zoom meetings
- E. Get plants from the plant shelter at thuis



**Most A's:** You have probably barely been north of the Nijenoord Allee, since all your courses take place at the LeBo, short for Leeuwenborch. Social media is a main part of your life, you don't mind becoming more sustainable, but it needs to be instagrammable. Your best bet for a master programme would be the Social science group, specifically the sections Communication, Philosophy and Technology and Space, Place and Society. What do you think about Communication, Health and Life Sciences, International Development Studies or the new Data Science for Food and Health programme?

**Most B's:** For you the choice is easy, it doesn't really matter what you will study. In the end you will take over your parent's farm anyway and probably invest in a larger stable and a top-of-the-line milking robot. In the meantime have a look into Animal Sciences, Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering. It's always good to learn how to use the newest technology, tractors without proper GPS are no good at spraying crops right?

**Most C's:** The chances are high that you either live in Droevendaal, or are illegal subrenting a friend's place there. You know all the local farms and prefer to buy products from the StreekWaar marketstand. The Farming Systems Ecology chair group is the perfect place for you. Top pick is the Organic Agriculture programme but you could also go for one of the niche programmes. That could be for example Natural Resource Management within Plant sciences, but watch out for the Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources specialization, because you probably believe GMO's should be banned.

**Most D's:** Sustainable and Organic are perfect buzzwords and they do tend to sell well. Wageningen University offers great opportunities for internships at multi-national companies, that's the reason you decided to move here. The Business science section is written for you. The best career opportunities (read: highest salary) lie in Management, Economics and Consumer studies, Food Technology or Tourism, Society and Environment.

**Most E's:** Are you looking for a cure for the Climate Change Blues, but enjoy the comfort of modern life? Environmental sciences is going to save the world and you could be a change maker. I doesn't matter whether you pick Climate studies, Forest and Nature conservation, Land and Water management, Earth and Environment or Biology with the ecology specialization. For all of these programmes you are finally allowed to walk around in new hiking boots and carry binoculars.





# The Herbarium Lives On

## Thought you were a plant person? Think again!



### The old Herbarium

Once upon a time, on the road up to the Wageningse Berg, lay WUR's old Herbarium and tropical greenhouse. The Herbarium stored a collection of dried plant specimens, mostly from the African continent, labelled and stored for education and research. In 2010, the land was sold by the University to the investment company Vandenbrink Property B.V., who, despite several attempts by students and residents to rescue the greenhouse, tore it down to build apartments and turned the Herbarium into student accommodation. While the Herbarium no longer stores dried plant specimens, it is still home to hundreds of plants, all of which are very much alive. Is this an attempt by Vandenbrink to connect the building to what it once was? Definitely not. This is the making of the biggest and most committed plant lover I have ever met – Hein Groot.

### How it all began

Hein Groot lives and studies in Wageningen, where he first completed his Bachelor's and is now completing his Master's in Plant Sciences, specialising in greenhouse horticulture – a very fitting study indeed! When he moved into the Herbarium in 2016, there were no plants at all, or at least not real ones. While he began with plants in his room, he declared a war on plastic plants and slowly started taking over common areas, with a collection roughly 400 plants big. From Hoyas and Monstera to Banana trees and Brugmansias, Hein has them all. A personal favourite was his Euphorbia Leuconera – I discovered this plant in Wageningen, but I've never seen one as big as Hein's. It's apparently nicknamed the "bommenwerper" in Dutch because it shoots its seeds around the place, creating a symphony of ticks against windows and wooden floors.

Inspired by his grandparents who spent hours in the garden and a neighbour who was an avid gardener with a greenhouse, Hein's love for plants started from a young age. "Plants just make me happy. Some people like dancing, partying, and I just take care of plants. I love working with plants, potting soil, seeing improvements, seeing things that work well for a plant, or don't".

### A demanding hobby

He didn't choose the easiest hobby, though. When I asked him how many hours he spends a week on-looking after his plants, I could not quite believe the answer. On good days, which are usually in Winter when plants require less care, he spends about an hour a day on his plants. On bad days, that hour is multiplied by twelve. That's right, you read right – Hein has spent up to 12 hours a day looking after his plants! This was the case in Summer 2019 when Wageningen was taken by a heatwave. Keeping up with the banana plants or Brugmansias at that time was impossible; he'd water the plants and they'd be dry as soon as his first round was over. Hein decided to move all the plants to the shade, after which he'd have to spend 6-8 hours a day watering the plants – a relatively more manageable amount of time. Luckily, the housekeepers and other residents also helped in this period, providing some relief to Hein's sore back and knees.

Most of the time, Hein's plants are grateful for all the work he puts into caring for them. But sometimes, they find peculiar ways to remind him that they are not to be messed with. The 2019 heatwave brought Hein many bananas, but due to high temperatures in the building, the bananas turned a strange shade of black. Wanting to taste the fruits of his labor, he couldn't resist taking a tiny bite, ending up in the bathroom for two weeks straight, giving a whole new meaning to going bananas.

Hein received some complaints from Vandenbrink about the plants. The housekeepers, however, have defended the collection against the company, arguing that both they and the residents enjoy them. When Hein eventually leaves, he'll have to reduce the number of plants in his collection and make a selection. But he will not let the plastic plants win. "This is the Herbarium – I cannot leave it without plants", and so the Herbarium will live on.

### Hein's Top Plant Tips

- ◆ If you see a nice plant, buy it.
- ◆ It's wise to pull out your smartphone and look up the plant's basic requirements: What's its water demand? What kind of air humidity does the plant like? How much light does it need? Keep in mind this is The Netherlands; even when you put your plant in direct sunlight, the sun is not that strong in the Winter.
- ◆ Don't forget to fertilise your plants. When people ask Hein for advice on their sad-looking plants, the first question he asks is whether they feed their plants, and 9 times out of 10, the answer is no. Plants need food, just like you and me. So refresh the potting soil and buy a little can of liquid fertiliser. There are plenty of organic fertilisers out there too, but beware, they may stink up your room.
- ◆ There are so many places to find plants these days. Onszaden unfortunately closed their plant shop in the city centre but they still sell a huge variety of tropical, subtropical and non-tropical plant seeds online. Sometimes, you can also get lucky and find nice plants in supermarkets or garden centres. Marktplaats and Facebook groups are also great places for plant hobbyists to share plants.





# WHO WILL BE THE NEXT LOUISE FRESCO?

**WUR'S SUPERVISORY BOARD IS LOOKING FOR THE NEXT LOUISE FRESCO  
AS SHE WILL BE STEPPING DOWN IN JULY 2022.  
WHAT DO YOU WANT/EXPECT FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT OF WUR?  
GET CREATIVE AND WRITE OR DRAW HOW YOU ENVISION THEM.  
DELIVER TO THE NEW JESTER SPOT AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS  
1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR, AURORA BUILDING.**





# Report on private sector collaborations

**RUW Foundation has released a report based on the outcomes of a series of discussions it hosted to delve into the topic of how WUR works with the private sector. Last month, the report was presented to the executive board and they gave a response.**

In the last academic year, RUW Foundation and OtherWise organized a series of three events to discuss the collaboration between WUR and the private sector. These events were triggered by the protests and discussions that surrounded the arrival of the Unilever building on campus - almost two years ago.

Through a panel discussion, two discussion workshops and a survey, the report gathered opinions from a variety of perspectives. The high levels of participation and impact showed how important this topic is for the WUR community.

The report describes the subject, explains the different steps of the process and the outcomes. It is divided into four subtopics: transparency, decision-making, presence of companies on campus, and influence on research. For each of the subtopics, potential risks and benefits are identified, and potential solutions or recommendations are suggested.

Check out the report at [ruwfoundation.nl](http://ruwfoundation.nl)

## Take-home messages

First, we need more discussion. The WUR community has shown interest in engaging and reconciling the conflicting opinions on the topic. Inclusivity appears to be a key aspect to consider in doing this. “The conversation needs to be continuous, transversal, inclusive and relevant”, meaning holding periodic discussions that include a representative group of the university community.

Second, WUR needs to review their transparency policies. The report states that transparency is both the problem and the solution. People want more than information on a website, open communication about these collaborations and their implications is necessary.

Third, in the process of deciding which companies to allow to build on our campus, there needs to be more involvement from the wider university community. Everyone should be in an “open and participatory process”. Let’s set some ethical guidelines together!

The big question is private sector on campus, yes or no? Well since WUR represents many people, studies, and research with conflicting opinions, it is important to make sure that the image our university portrays represents that. The large presence of corporations on campus represents a vision of our university that is not representative. Where are the NGOs and social enterprises? Lack of representation can threaten the independence and credibility of the institution.

Finally, there is the influence on research. People requested that the university review the patenting regulations, and establish mechanisms to ensure scientific independence, and ensure the quality of training for researchers to maintain independence and integrity is up to scratch.

## So what did the executive board say?

The Executive Board of WUR has read the report and responded:

*We have read “The Impact of Collaboration” by the RUW Foundation with great interest. The report contains interesting conclusions and recommendations and supports WUR in its efforts to achieve open and participatory collaboration based on transparency. The report provides an insight into the conversations that were held during a dialogue and workshops on issues that are important to the participating students and staff. These are often dilemmas to which answers can only be found by working together. We also note that the report paints a fragmented picture of meaningful discussions within a relatively small setting. For this reason, we agree it is necessary to continue these discussions but within a larger forum, where input and representation from a wider group of our staff and students is possible. WUR also considers transparency to be of the utmost importance and will address this continuously. Please read more about this topic on [www.wur.nl/transparency](http://www.wur.nl/transparency)*

So, will something actually happen, or was this whole process just propaganda to pretend there is some engagement with the topic but lacking the real willingness to change anything?

RUW have asked if there is a clear plan “to continue these discussions within a wider forum”. The spokesperson for the executive board told us that there is a master thesis being conducted on the topic and that WUR dialogues will organise a session titled “Partnerships to create impact on society: how to deal with large and small partners?”. Is this enough? I’ll let you be the judge of that.



*Transparency this, collaboration that. I’m so confused that I feel like doing nothing about it. Or is that what the board want me to think?*





# WUR BIKE REPAIR: WAGENINGEN'S BICYCLE HEROES

It's Tuesday evening in the corner of the Forum basement, and a group of volunteer students slips on their orange jumpsuits, ready to take on the line of bikes that is slowly growing before them. Lights on, tools out, music turned up, and off they go! Broken disks, punctured tires, snapped chains or rubbing breaks, there's little this team cannot handle, especially when they put their minds together. I spoke to Aart, Lilly and Lima, three volunteers at WUR Bike Repair, to find out what gets them going.

## What's WUR Bike Repair all about?

WUR Bike Repair was started in 2013 by a few students and their tools. As you know, having a bike in Wageningen is pretty central to getting around. With so many in town, there's always a bike in need of tender loving care. That's where WUR Bike Repair comes in – a Tuesday evening hangout where you can go and get help with your beloved bike, and maybe learn something from the lovely volunteers along the way. For Lilly, “the student bike repair is all about helping other students and members of the community while learning new skills. Because you don't need to know a lot to start becoming a volunteer, it's a great way to learn how to fix bikes while helping others, which is an extremely rewarding and fulfilling way to pass time”. WUR Bike Repair volunteers “like getting busy and dirty with bikes”, especially when they get to help others or “teach them how to be a little more self-sufficient, Dutch-style”.

## Why do you do what you do? Do you like repairing bikes?

Whether compared to Lego or to a puzzle, WUR Bike Repair volunteers see bike repairing as a game, from which you can always learn and for which there's always a solution. In Lima's words, “it's like Lego but metal and it will thank you by taking you home once you're done”. Lilly finds “fixing bikes really relaxing, like some sort of meditating state, which is often punctuated with insults towards rust and other hitting things with big tools until they do what you need them to do. So yes I'd describe myself as a bike nerd or bike gremlin”. Aart also likes putting his knowledge and feeling for repairing bikes to good use by helping others. He says there's a “really nice dynamic going on in the repair sessions and it is also a nice contrast to being busy with studying”. Having been there a few times to get help with my own bike, I can confirm – it is a nice place to be on a Tuesday evening!



## Around how many bikes do you repair every week?

Aart, Lilly and Lima estimated repairing roughly five bikes each on Tuesday evenings. Lima explained that at times, volunteers are running around working five bikes, and other times, “we're hanging out, catching up and dive like a team of surgeons on one bike for the whole night”. I have a feeling they were being humble though. The night I was there, I counted 24 students lined up with their indisposed bikes, with more people coming in as I was leaving.



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November 2021



## What's the most broken bike you've ever repaired?

“Ha, too many to count! We pride ourselves on saving bikes, so they usually come in as older, used, maybe slightly abused bikes. We had one that had a broken chain, bent wheels, flat tyres, no lights. We got that one riding again, so almost no bike is truly lost as long as we're around!” said Lima. Very sweetly, Aart also noted that “sometimes people come with bikes of which almost everything is broken and the mechanic in me wants to fix all issues but the owner just wants the worst problem to be resolved in order to cycle again. That also is something I appreciate, people are so forgiving, understanding and considerate in these things”.

*Fixing a bike is “like Lego but metal and it will thank you by taking you home once you're done” -- Lima*



## Can you think of any funny stories linked to broken bike you've had to repair?

Last year, Lilly got to fix a recumbent for a kid at her workshop, ensuring in “30 mins of skidding in the parking lot with my co-workers to test its abilities. That was a fun day”. Something funny that happens very rarely, but always amuses Lima, is when “someone comes in saying that their steering wheel is tight, and their brake acts weird when they turn. It has happened twice, and what happened there is that they just turned their steering wheel 360 degrees and have tangled the cables around the steering. It's the simplest fix and always ends in a chuckle”. And of course, there are those post-night out bicycle stories, with people bumping into things in a way that always surprises Aart: “Bit by bit they start, with some shame, to tell that they were super drunk so they were unaware of their accident happening”. “Sometimes people offer food or drinks. That is always a pleasant surprise”, says Aart. Take note people! You know what to do next time you head to the Bike Repair.

## What would you tell people who don't want to fix their bike because they'll get oily hands?

“Oily hands are great”, says Lima “Anyone in the group can tell you how great it is to get out of screens and books and



puzzle with cables or chains and very rewarding because we will make sure your puzzle fits. On top of that, we have a nice citrus mechanics' soap that is a little zen victory moment to rub in your hands, enjoy your success and get all the grease out”. Lilly also shared some wise words, that “it's easier to walk with dirty hands than walk with clean ones in the Netherlands”.

Aart added that he's “not here to judge these things, I met many people with two left hands for repairing and maintaining bikes but they have talents elsewhere that are more valuable. I met so many brilliant students on their way to improve the world so I respect their vision and I like to have helped them a little”. Aart – we thank you!



## If you could choose one bike repair tool to take with you everywhere you go, which would it be?

Lilly carries a multi-tool everywhere she goes, so this might be worth noting for all of us (if we can figure out what to do with it that is). But if she had to choose a very cool, nerdy tool, it would “definitely be a derailleur hanger alignment tool – it is massive and only has one use, but it does it well”. Lima's favourite tool would probably be a number 15. It's the one that opens the axis of the wheel. “I mean, it's all teamwork with the tools, but the number fifteen is like the big brother, that does heavy lifting. A heavy, weighty, reliable big brother”. Finally, “out of a purely rational pick, [Aart] would pick an adjustable wrench but the tool that amazes me most is something that looks like a screwdriver though has a 10mm socket on the end. Ideal for adjusting the chain tension on standard Dutch bikes. Nerdy enough?”.

Come rain, come shine, WUR Bike Repair is always there, every Tuesday evenings from 18h00-20h00 in the Forum basement. I guarantee you'll be met with smiles from Aart, Lilly, Lima and other volunteers who'll help you with your bike and teach you some tricks of the trade if you're interested. And if you want to get more involved and join the team of volunteers, you're welcome!

*“It's a small gesture, but if you think small things can't change bigger things then think about the tiny mosquito in your room at night”*

- Aart  
S.M.



# Chosen Blindness

## Claiming ignorance does not mean innocence

**If innocence is ignorance, as Kierkegaard suggests, it means that we cannot be innocent without being ignorant. Then, how blameless are we for the climate and social problems we are facing?**

**To point out the enemy or the problem requires knowledge. Knowledge is the opposite of ignorance, and so by pointing out the enemy or the problem, we are no longer innocent.**

**The true innocent doesn't know, has no questions, experiences a paradise of consequences without cause, and feels no/little remorse from decisions that they take. It sounds so wonderful that we often pretend to be ignorant to achieve innocence. But, if it's true that we cannot be innocent without being ignorant, that doesn't mean being ignorant makes us innocent.**

One example of this “trying to be innocent by pretending to be ignorant” is the position of many universities, WUR included, on sexual violence and the rape culture among staff and students within their walls. Months ago, Amnesty International Netherlands published a survey concerning this topic, revealing terrifying information: 11% of female and 1% of male students experience rape during their university studies. 67% of them suffer psychological, sexual or social problems as a result. The first reaction of many universities was: “we didn't know about it”.

It's important to mention that the survey only includes Dutch-speaking students. Considering the number of internationals in Wageningen, this number may vary for better or, most likely as Dawn Cheong's work suggests, for worse. Regardless, we can't deny the existence of the problem; we cannot use the inaccuracy of the data as an excuse to refuse reality and feel innocent about it.

The fact that we know that sexual violence exists, the fact that Rector Magnificus, Arthur Mol, placed his shoe and wrote that the Executive Board stands for consent on the symbolic event that happened on September 22 outside Forum, after the decision of not signing Amnesty International Manifesto, is acknowledgement enough that they are not innocent; none of us are.

For the university authorities, it might be simple to ignore what doesn't appear to exist at first sight, because let's be honest: who knows where to go on campus if they've experienced or want to talk about sexual harassment? Besides the trustful friend or teacher, most of the WUR community doesn't know where to go. With reported incidents so low, it is no surprise that faking ignorance and feeling innocent has become easy. If we add to this the bureaucratic steps that compiling a formal report requires, the surprise becomes even smaller.

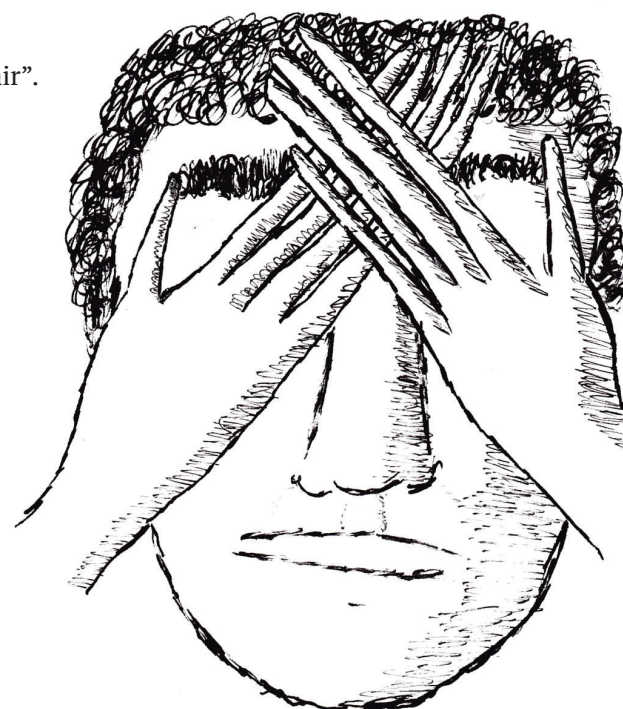
For us as individuals it might be simple as well. We might not know someone who was a victim of this rape culture, but we came to study and study we did, our eyes, ears and hearts are closed to what's beyond our Wageningen bubble. Are we innocent or merely ignorant?

In an effort to answer this, a working group has been formed at the university to come up with an action plan to address sexual violence at WUR. This plan must aim to create a safe environment for everyone. Prevention and awareness are some of the main focus points, but also providing the right means of information to know what to do in case anyone faces the situation.

In the meantime we should talk about it, raise our voice, acknowledge its existence and fight against ignorance. We shouldn't be surprised by the numbers, we should take them personally and eradicate them. Big responsibility lies on the table. Bringing up the tools to tear off the veil of a comfortable ignorance is sometimes tricky and always painful. Though fake, the world of innocence is hard to leave, but is the least we can do.

Once we recognize the existence of a problem name it, sexual violence, discrimination, climate change, etc., we lose our innocence towards it and become accomplices of it until we fight against it with all that is in our hands. We can only improve the world if we stop begging for innocence and recognize our responsibility within. Only if we renounce the comfortable life of ignorance, will we be able to change the causes and stop being victims of consequences.

In the words of Jose Saramago,  
“If you can see, look. If you can look, repair”.





# Art and Science

**I am involved in Beatreece Circus, a project that started almost two years ago and that in 2021 gave birth to Divina Tragedia: tales of (dis) empowerment. This was a circus show with aerial acrobatics, fire shows, theater and drag queens, telling stories about oppression in its different shapes, created by a group of friends who are all doing their thing at WUR. In doing so, we have been part of a challenging and wonderful creative process far from our routinary tasks as students or young scientists. Some things came to mind during this process and I wanted to share them with you.**

Time goes by, summer arrives, and you decide to go back home to visit your family for a while. Take a little break from the Wageningen bubble. But something is different. Days and weeks pass, and you still have heard nothing about permaculture or the future of the arctic penguins. At some point you miss your Wageningen friends, so you get brave and try to have a melancholic conversation about the latest climate science, with your parents after dinner, or at the bar with your friends from school, and... BAM! People look at you like some mysterious creature speaking in an alien language, the conversation quickly dies because no one finds it interesting, or they just agree to

or to an art exhibition (unfortunately only for those who can afford it these days...). Everyone reads books, listens to music or watches shows on their laptops. But science, including all of us, is failing at being a part of that, which leads to you looking like a freak after dinner with your friends.

What if we could be part of culture? What if we could make art from science? Would that become a bridge between us and society? Can we listen to science? Can we photograph science? Can we dance or express science through our body movements?

challenges that don't let us sleep at night? I think so. If we were to connect with either our own artistic expression or with those who do that for a living, could we bring science closer to society? Imagine if the IPCC climate change scenarios were used for the next Hollywood Sci-Fi movie? Like an actual movie, not based on a book or on someone's extraordinary imagination, but based on the work of scientists describing what the future will look like depending on the decisions we make now (of course including a ridiculous love story and some drama). Or making art expositions with images from our microscopes? Visual art for music videos or festivals? Exploring music and sound and movement? Could we avoid that uncomfortable after-dinner conversation at home, and instead have our friends and families speak the same language we do?

As of right now, at WUR you can take some courses on scientific divulgation and communication, and we have a giant beetle on the pond between Forum and Orion as the most apparent work of art. If you live here, science is what you'll focus on, the real stuff, and maybe after you are done with your academic or working day, you can engage in some artistic or expressive activities.

What if WUR partnered up with some fine arts university? And we all had to take a few courses there? Or have group work with students of other completely different disciplines, where we were challenged to find visual engagement and humanisation of science?

Anyway, all of this was just a bundle of my own thoughts, I do not have the formula for how it should be done, but I encourage everyone to get on it. Do not leave art aside, consume it, explore it, and make it part of yourself.



Photo: Jacob Kaptein

whatever you said even though they did not understand a thing, but the football match is about to start. Then, like a sad puppy you return to your corner of the sofa to think, is it only me, or is science a million miles away from society?

Lets face it, we are in a bubble of people that study and research how to make the world a better place, but once you get out of the bubble, people don't have a clue what you are talking about... great! I am no marketing or communication expert, but I would say that this is not the best strategy to spread ideas. But is there a good way? If people are not in this field, it is more complicated to reach them and have them gain interest and understanding in what you have to say.

Basically, in the same way I do not know how to build a helicopter or define the new trends in the autumn-winter season of the fashion industry.

Luckily, there is one thing that everyone shares whether you are an environmentalist, a lawyer, a waiter or an astronaut, and that's CULTURE. Culture is entertainment, consumed by going to the theatre, to the cinema, to a concert

Entertainment is transversal, all of society consumes culture in its multiple shapes and forms. Culture connects us, inspires us, and allows us to get out of our daily lives and struggles. It gives us air, an escape from our reality by connecting with the artistic expression of those who share it with the world.

These days, connecting with artistic expression is often limited to doing so as a spectator, since self-artistic expression has been forgotten and left aside. Art is hardly a priority or given enough importance to take a central role in our lives. Does that help the scientific community? Is it positive that we are disconnected from our imagination and creativity? Or is it counterproductive? There are millions of ways of creating art or expressing ourselves, through writing, painting, music, moving, dancing, singing, sculpting, taking pictures...

Whichever way one feels more comfortable with, exploring this part of one's self can bring only good. Allowing the mind to go places and leave the squared repetitive routine, letting imagination and creativity take control changes the perspective of how we understand things, gives us a different pathway for making sense of reality, a diverse point of view. Can that help us in our mission to turn the world upside down and find solutions to the pressing





# HORRORSCOPE



**Sagittarius**  
(November 22-December 21)

There is something lurking in the dark, and it's not just your thesis supervisor asking why you have not finished your draft yet. A cold and unsettling atmosphere is surrounding your house this winter. Steer clear of a particular roommate – the broom in her room is not just for Quidditch practice.



**Capricorn**  
(December 22-January 19)

Lately, you are struggling to follow your intuition. Remember to stay true to yourself this winter. Your irrational fear of garlic, your pointy canine teeth and sudden dislike for sunlight are not a coincidence. Embrace your new identity and maybe you'll soon find your Edward or Bella.



**Aquarius**  
(January 20 – February 18)

Dear Aquarius, love is in the air for you! In contrast to previous months, you are now in incredibly high demand on the dating market. Reward yourself by going on some campus crush dates. But, do not fall in love too easily. Steer clear of those that disappear at full moon – and have unsettling amounts of back hair.



**Pisces**  
(February 19 – March 20)

You always try to prioritise friendships, but it is undeniable: the past weeks you have been an absolute pain to your friends. In fact, they are marching to your house with pitchforks as we speak. To prevent you from becoming the next Frankenstein, give your friends some love instead of merely focusing on yourself.



**Aries**  
(March 21-April 20)

You suffer from a serious case of 'social hangover' now you are free to go to campus again. Allow yourself some time to recharge your batteries, and soon you will return to your own energetic self. Oh, and by the way: Don't look under your bed. Just don't.



**Taurus**  
(April 21 – May 20)

Laundry, chores, homework, bills... Lately you have been so focused on helping others, that you are slacking on your personal tasks. Schedule some time off to relax and get back on track. And, meanwhile, do not forget to light some incense against evil spirits. The flickering lights in the hallway are not just a sign that your landlord cannot pay the electric bill.



**Gemini**  
(May 21 – June 20)

BOO! It is time to wake up Gemini! The ghostly figure you see in the mirror is no ghost, but merely your own reflection. Your partying behaviour is starting to take a toll on you. Take some time to detox, do yoga and hydrate. Oh, and, please - water your plants.



**Cancer**  
(June 21 – July 22)

Many new opportunities are crossing your path. Do not fear change and approach that new person, join that sports association and take on that new job! Just not that nanny job in the ginormous, definitely haunted manor surrounded by willows at the end of the road. with pitchforks as we speak.



**Leo**  
(July 23 – August 23)

Dracula is not the only thing that is sucking the life out of you. Lately, you have been taking studying too seriously and are starting to feel overwhelmed. Allow yourself to take a break and enjoy the small things: go for a walk, get coffee with friends, and take back control of your life!



**Virgo**  
(August 24 - September 22)

Something appears to be following you in the dark. Do not worry - it is just a stray dog. This season, try to be more open to new creatures trying to become a part of your life. Experiences with new people will fill your holiday season with joy.



**Libra**  
(September 23 - October 23)

Lately, you do not feel like yourself. The decisions that you are making seem irrational and illogical. Try grounding yourself by reconnecting with nature this winter, and go on some elaborate walks with friends. If that does not work, someone is probably voodooing you.



**Scorpio**  
(October 24 - November 21)

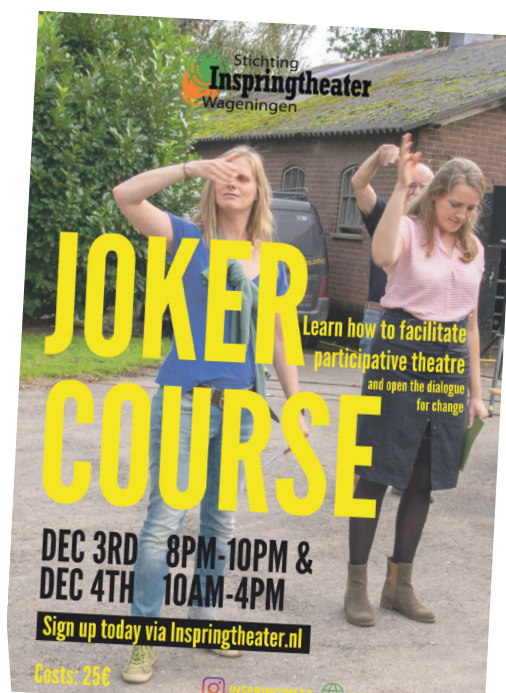
Your favourite person to talk to appears to be ghosting you. Remember to not rely too much on the validation of others to build your self-confidence. Ultimately, it really is not the end of the world. Although... maybe start stocking up on food.

## poster wall

### JOURNALISM FOR CHANGE



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### TREASURER WANTED!

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# BEST OF STUDENT PLAZA

12 November at 12:09 · 🌐

Hey everyone, me and some of my (girl) friends are interested in playing dungeon dragons 🐉 but we don't really know where to start.. I have played it only once, and the others never. So, we are looking for someone more experienced that would like to join us and act as dungeon master? (We would prefer a girl)

23 comments

👍❤️😮 20

24 October at 13:06 · 🌐

Hey kinda weird question.

Is there anyone who is well familiar with old electronic circuit "diagnostics"? Got atm an old Casio keyboard which I wanted to circuit bend but before that I need to figure out how to get the keyboard running again because I tried to find what's wrong with the circuit but so far I had no luck maybe someone else could take a look?

1 5 comments



Like



Comment



Share

Most applicable ▼



You're welcome to come to the Wageningen NurdSpace to have a look at it.

[https://nurdspace.nl/Main\\_Page](https://nurdspace.nl/Main_Page) ✓... See more

NURDSpace.N  
NURDSpace

19 October at 17:17 · 🌐

Hello guys!

Does anyone happen to have a metal detector to borrow for a little recovery mission? A friend of mine lost her ring in the pond of the uni. She can provide a little compensation for it (chocolate, beers...) in return. Thank you for your help 😊



13 October · 🌐

Hey guys! This afternoon my Keys flew away, along with my will to study! 🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️

They are two keys on a black lanyard/key chord, with the words ELEMENT in red.

I think they fell from my pocket while biking along Nijennoord Alle, between rijnveste - bornsesteeg - leeuwenboch.

If you find them please send me a message 🙏 and I Will compensate you with a warm dinner!

😮👍 11

3 comments

Hi everyone

Yesterday evening, before I biked home, I had to attach my lights and in doing so I left an art piece behind @Wageningen busstation (I think). It's red&gold with tits on it. If you found it pls return it to its rightful owner (me) cause I feel so empty without my boobs.

Edit: if you took it and you like it too much to return that's also fine, just pm me so I can sleep at night knowing my baby is safe.

Thank you.

👍😮😮 20

25 October at 23:35 · 🌐

Hey!

I need to move an armchair tomorrow from Ede to haarweg 333. Would anyone be available around 6 pm for this small paid gig? 😊

Send me a PM!

Cheers!



1 November at 22:30 · 🌐

Those who's been in the center today, have you seen the Oliebollen stand again?



Wageningen Student Plaza  
Yesterday at 14:59 · 🌐

LOOKING FOR A MAN

A friend of mine is looking for a cute guy that was at De Gieterij on Tuesday August 31, right before closing time. She noticed him stroll through the store and he offered to share the remaining rucola with her. He struck up conversation during which he informed her that he was making a rucola soup (lol what?). If you know who this experimental chef might be, please message me.



12 November at 10:42 · 🌐

Who else has noticed the higher level of smokers on bike paths all around the campus?

👍😮 8

15 comments