

A proposal conceived during the 1-week residence in the "Zentrum für Chaos Forschung" in der Ungergasse by Daniela, Steffi & Sandra, or *The Bean, the Squash & the Corn*. Blue corn.
Graz, 14th May 2023



The "3 sisters" refer to a notion of Sisterhood within feminist practices of solidarity and affection among women who have something in common with each other.

The "3 sisters" also refers to a symbiotic cultivation method for growing maize, beans, and squash together, mostly known as *La Milpa*, an agroecosystem based on ancient practices by indigenous peoples from Mesoamerica. The Nahuatl word *Milpa* translates to "cultivated field", but it is also a sociocultural construct, i.e. the entangled system of relations among the farmers, the crops and the land.

For the past centuries, *The Bean, the Squash & the Corn* /or/ *the 3 sisters* have traveled all over, settling and adapting to various bioregions. They have enhanced nutritious qualities of people's diet among different cultures, creating a diversity of recipes and flavors. Yet, colonial plantations and multinational agribusinesses insisted and insist on producing monocultures – in the land and in our minds. Monocultures that separate us from the ones who enable mutualistic, symbiotic relationships. Monocultures that stop the flow of life that is simply there – when we embrace our uniqueness within diversity.

The yellow corn is a good metaphor for this globalized, capitalist, industrial and profit-making mind set. The corn exists in multiple colors, and the reduction of the colorful indigenous maize to a yellow globalized monotone—in the fields, on our plates and in our minds is reflected everywhere on the planet. That is why we will plant **Blue Corn**.

3 sisters in AllerLand is not only as a metaphor, but also as an artistic method and a regenerative practice to advocate for mutual support, solidarity, diversity and localisation. This installation will grow in Gries-Graz this summer, and it will hopefully be healthy enough to bear fruits (or vegetables) when Autumn comes.

Artistic proposal, technical description for "ALLER LAND"

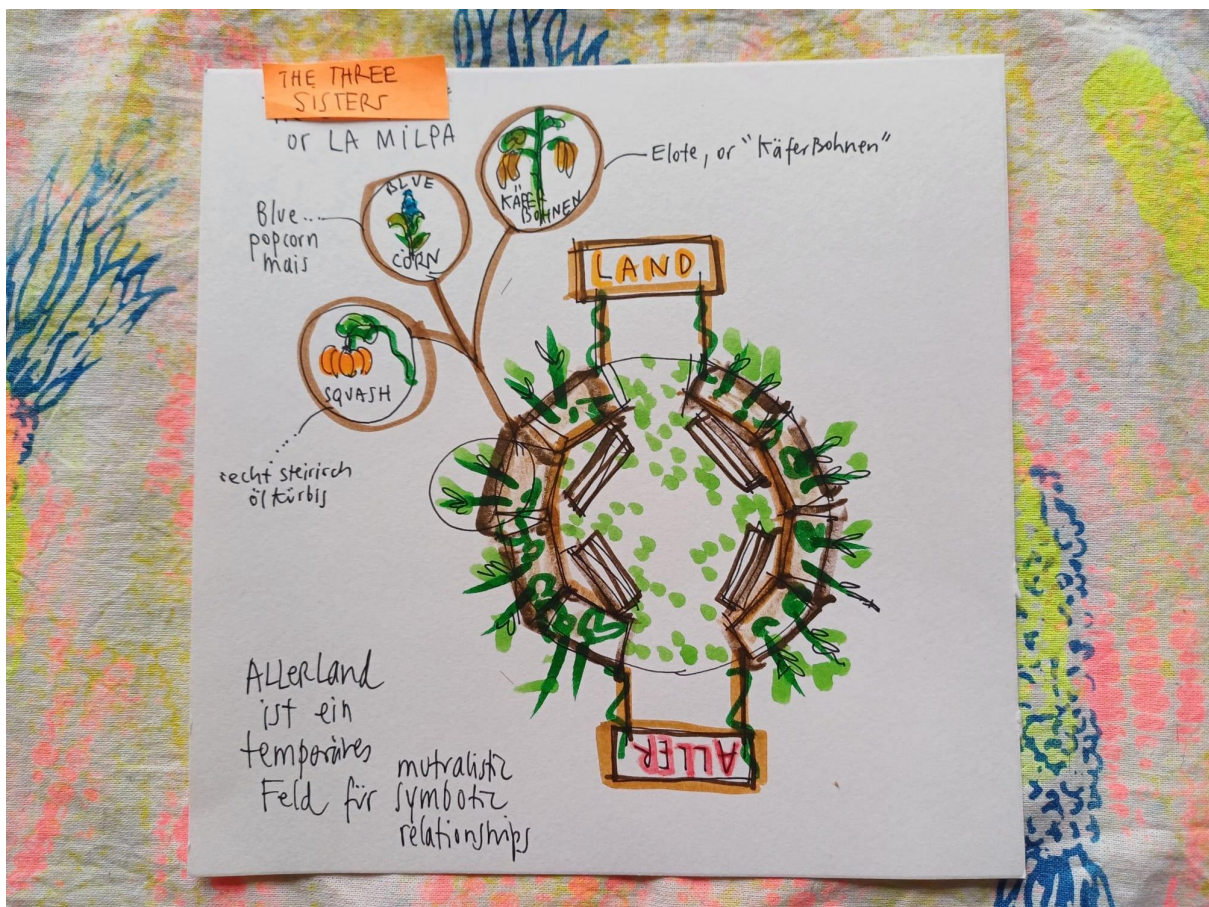
location: Griesplatz

physical objects:

- 8 raised bed boxes
- plants Blue Corn, Squash (Ölkürbis) and Beans (Käferbohnen)
- 6 benches
- 2 entrance signs 1,20 X 0,30cm. painted handwritten text: LAND / ALLES
- wood plates covering the raised beds from the outside, painted partly with stencils, partly real maize texture.
- small wood boards with an explanatory text to the "Milpa/ 3 sisters" in different languages
(german, arabic, farsi, turkish, serbian-croatian, spanish, english)

color family: orange, yellow, blue, pink (as in the printed-textile images)

maintenance: 2-3 people from the neighborhood will be hired by the project to take care of the garden.



time plan/ program:
june – october 2023

official opening by mid-june

pre-grown plants should be planted in a collective act

selected guests from the neighborhood met during the residency will be invited to join and contribute either with a product from their gastronomy shop, to hold a speech, to play an instrument or to sing a song... Names are already pre-selected, we have taken notice and contacts of talented people. (this contribution will be paid from the project budget)

summer program

intellectual / discursive inputs

they will be arranged to address the topics: commoning, rooting & uprooting processes, regenerative practices, sisterhood/ solidarity within the local cultural scene in Graz for ex.

Silvia Federici's *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons* and Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* books (see references)

extra funding needed.

> we hope that naturally through these impulses the communities will appropriate themselves of the space and run their own activities.

autumn

Harvesting fest

To close the season and the project, we will activate the local community to create a collective meal with the vegetables that might have grown for a shared meal. We will invite the Koha Kitchen¹ from Sedweell center, to be the co-hosts, as they practice gift economy and sharing food already every wednesdays in their association space.

Eventually we can coordinate this with the Grieskram festival, already taking place every September.

¹ Koha Kitchen is based on the values of the First Nations people from Aotearoa; Koha means in Maori “gift, present, offering, donation, contribution - especially maintaining social relationships and with connotations of reciprocity”

Context/ Background

Allerland or Akkerland? AllahLand...? Land für alle oder jeder Land?

After living one week together with the task of searching for a *Land for All*, we started an investigation on the so-called "All": who are they, and what do we all have in common. Searching for commoning practices, community building, conviviality, support and solidarity through the neighborhood, we arrived in the ambivalence that what unites us, often is the same that separates us.

Every day we walked, talked, laughed and discussed together, in so many experiences that were impressive and strong. We agreed with dissensus. We agreed that listening is the most important: at least trying to deeply listen to our differences. We do not have to necessarily find a common voice, but to acknowledge and value our uniquenesses. This led us to the idea of sisterhood within feminist practices of solidarity and mutual support. We acknowledged our differences, while trying to respect and nurture each other's way of being, perceiving and acting in the world.

Where are the (in)visible frontiers that separates and unites us?

We tried to find answers by observing, meeting and talking to very different people in the neighborhood. In the end, as we already knew, *Allerland does not exist*.

All the people living in Gries have so many different ways of making their living, different view on what is a livelihood and what the "good life" is. They have arrived here from elsewhere; it is impossible to grasp all the stories, struggles and barriers to enter and to stay *in this land* – Do we mean this nation-state called Austria, do we mean the EU or the Schengen Area, a continent called Europe, or do we mean this millions of years-old earth, this clayish soil along the Mur river?...

What defines *The Land*?

During our visits, we found this sentence written on the wall: "Make the world where you wish to live in". In the harshness of social, political and economic asymmetries, this quote seems to be a luxury for a few. Who can really choose the Land, moreover, the World she/he lives in? *Allerland* is an illusion, but it is also a vision.

That's why we believe that *Allerland is a possible utopia*.

Perhaps it is a fugitive space, an enclave or autonomous zone, where exclusions do not happen, a Land that welcomes everyone exactly as she/he is.

Is this doable, or is this a fantasy... is it worth proposing?

Allerland has many possible layers and interpretations. If you ask 100 different people how *Allerland*, this ideal place is, you will get 100 different answers. The three of us also had and still have – very different perspectives on it. So, again, we agree on dissensus and therefore we believe in the pluriverse.

We had different ideas of how the installation or art work we wanted to do could look like. But one thing was really clear for us. We want to create a safe-brave space for everyone: at least to the ones who feel brave and/or safe enough to join in, to be comfortable to be in this bucolic little garden just in the middle of an urban chaos.

This installation should be a place for casual encounters, where passers-by can rest, enjoy company and, in the best case, talk one with another and wonder: *Allerland...?*

This installation is a field for growing plants, a field to be entered and used, but it is also a field of idealized relations: a *dispositiv* that activates the social space through generating a spirit of circularity, generosity and conviviality.

It opens up a field for discursive excursions, as for instance these:

- practices for commoning: who owns the land, which land?
- critical history of settler colonialism and indigenous commons, “buen vivir”
- migration, rooting and uprooting processes (people, plants and goods)
- practices of solidarity
- feminist ethics of care and sisterhood
- food sovereignty, localisation movements, mutualistic symbiotic relations
- worker’s/migrant’s associations and networks

All in all, this became a poetic-political inquiry on the journeys and adaptation processes of people, plants, tastes, mouths and their wor(l)ds. How and through this can we open up spaces for the pluriverse to thrive?

The *3 sisters*, the 3 plants, corn, bean and pumpkin are stronger when they are together, they support each other in order to grow healthier and abundant. They are the base of staple food in not just one continent but also in Africa and Asia. In Austria, especially in Styria, the Käferbohnen and the Kürbiskernöl have settled in local agriculture and culinary for 150 years, as well as the yellow corn who has spread in Europe as a hunger saving crop and currently occupies most of the *Akkerland* in Styria. These plants unites us, even though we might find them in so many different sorts, so many different recipes and so many different tastes...

We believe that the act of growing the *3 sisters* in the middle of town is a symbolic gesture of regeneration: by regenerating the land, i.e. the urban space and the soil below, we can also decide on which kind of relationships we wish to cultivate among us, citizens of this city and inhabitants of this planet. We chose to move out of discriminatory, extractive and exploitative relations that keep being reproduced in the intersection of white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy. We choose the *3 sisters* that nurture each other: through food, encounters and love.

The “3 sisters” should be an oasis, a vision, an impossibility... a resting (yet thriving) stop within our collective journey towards *Allerland*.

The 3 sisters

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References

