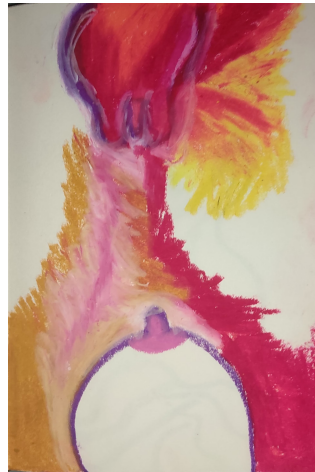
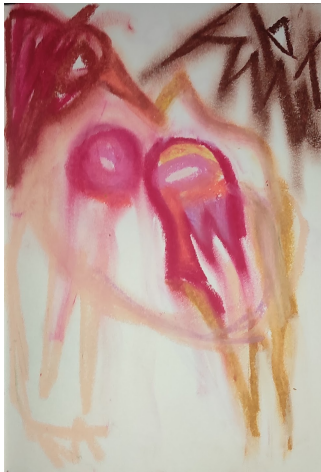


I made seven drawings/sketches using crayon depicting different types of generosity, which are all still a work in progress. For the second session I am not sure yet whether I want to continue with my collection of drawings or if I want to combine different aspects of my drawings into one big new work. I would love to hear some interpretations of my work and what symbolism you are able to recognize in my drawings. Technical advice and other suggestions are also very welcome.

For my drawings about different types of generosity I took inspiration from our talks during the first session, my personal experiences, nature and religious & historical events. For the execution of my work I was inspired by living organisms, cancer and Koen Vanmechelen's work since I had been 'cross-pollinated' during the tour we had of LABIOMISTA. Generosity can be defined in many different ways, I don't think any of them are wrong but the concept has so many aspects I was only able to pursue a few of them. I like to show duality in my art as nothing is either completely good or bad, so I incorporated the 'dark sides' of generosity in my work. I think these 'dark sides' can be seen as important challenges for our future.



1. Working title: Abused generosity



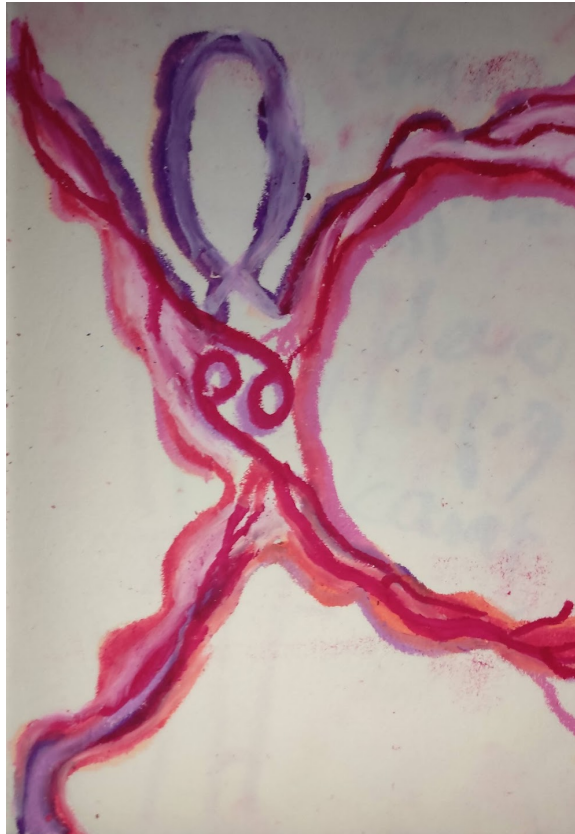
On top you can see the udder of a cow. The cow is naturally very generous, this generosity in the form of milk was originally meant for its calves. However we discovered cow milk to be a very nutritional and tasty product. As represented by the bleeding udder feeding the human breast, we abuse this generosity to feed ourselves and be generous to our own children. Cow milk has grown on to be one of the most consumed commodities and is being appropriated on an industrial scale for human consumption. This work represents the idea that when one is generous, others can abuse this. The main message of this work is however not to stop being generous because of the possibility of abuse which I see as a form of victim blaming. It would be 'generous' of us to, while we take this beautiful gift from the cow, at least show gratitude and treat it with respect. This is not just applicable to the cow, but to our entire planet and humanity as a whole. If we continue to abuse someone for a longer period of time, at one point this generosity will end. I think the same can be said about our planet and everything on it. Changing our ways could in turn be seen as a form of (long term) self-generosity as humanity depends on earth's generosity.

2. Working title: The fear of generosity



During the second night at the farm, unable to sleep, I started to process everything that had happened during the day. I asked myself the question: "What is the hardest thing to share with others?" This is of course a very personal question. For me it can be very hard to share my feelings, emotions and mostly my vulnerabilities. Sharing such information about ourselves with others is extremely generous. It is generous to both ourselves and others. Sharing our deeper emotions with others can feel like a warm blanket for both parties. We might help others realize they are not alone, or we help them to be more understanding, empathetic and in turn generous to others. Being generous in this sense can cause a chain reaction of generosity. It is not easy to open up to others, there can be the fear of being misunderstood, made fun of or becoming the subject of gossip. In this work you see two beings sharing their emotions and deepest feelings with each other. On top you can see the fear of opening up. This scary looking bird was inspired by a very cute bird that "attacked" me while I was posing for a picture at the farm. Something sweet looking can in reality still be very mean, we are aware of the fact that meanness is often invisible. However the connection between the two people protects them against the frightening bird. Once you start opening up to the right people, it makes you realize it is in fact not as scary as it might seem at first.

3. Working title: Perceived generosity



This work was inspired by the unification of "charity" and consumerism. Many commodities are being sold under the presumption that one is also doing something good for the world by buying the said commodities. For example, businesses sell a specific commodity by saying you will be contributing to some form of charity by buying their product. Often I am very skeptical about the actual generosity of this. I see this as a great selling tactic since it can give one the false presumption they are doing something good, causing the consumer to experience a "warm feeling" in which they feel good about themselves. While in reality they are just serving themselves, the act is perceived as generous but is in fact a form of indulgence.

I tried to portray this 'perceived generosity' by depicting the over-synthesis of blood vessels as a result of protein overexpression. Normal VEGF protein helps generate blood vessels. A mutation in a cell however can cause an overexpression of VEGF proteins, synthesizing more blood vessels. In this case, a cancer cell is being too generous, as the increased amount of blood vessels start feeding the tumor. The body perceives it to be generous as the proteins are healthy, so the body does not attack the cancer cell making the tumor grow bigger and bigger. It looks very generous as there are way more proteins, creating more blood vessels which sustain the functionality of our life. In reality they sustain a tumor. This can be considered to be a form of perceived generosity, which in reality is not generous. It causes the tumor to grow and deprives oxygen & nutrients from the healthy cells. The same can be said about using charity as a selling tactic. It looks and feels generous, but in reality it often sustains an unsustainable industry and might cause people to give less to actual charities as they have already done their bit of "charity".

4. Working title: Conditional generosity/ generosity as a weapon



This work is inspired by my own personal experiences growing up as a Jehovah's witness. Cancer cells are very generous, but only to cancer cells themselves, as they hoard all nutrients. Usually cancer is so very dangerous and deadly because we are not aware of the fact that we have cancer. While we are unaware, cancer usually doesn't hurt, but because we are unaware, we can not fight it either. In the image cancer is portrayed in the form of a crab. Finding out we have cancer too late can result in our death. Conditional generosity, in the form of cancer, can in this sense be seen as a deadly weapon.

Just like the cancer cells, I was part of a very generous community. It is a very closed community, so when I did not believe in the religion anymore I lost (a big part of) my life. This religious community is extremely generous but only to themselves, just as we see in cancer cells. So when I lost my faith, a difficult battle started as well. I lost the support of all my "brothers" and "sisters" in the faith. The religion uses conditional generosity as a weapon to make its followers dependent on the community, making it extremely hard to leave the organization. At the same time this generosity shared within the community is seen by its members as an argument of this religion to be the Truth. Staying in the cult, staying a "sheep", might have been easier. I regret nothing as there was nothing more liberating than losing my religion, at the same time it made my life so much harder. It was an intense and painful battle which has left many scars. But if I would have stayed a "sheep", I would not have been "me", my "free" will would be dead. On the other hand I can very clearly see that for some it is at this point better to stay in the faith. One can be very happy in a generous community which takes care of each other. My main point of this work is that conditional generosity can be used as a weapon. We can profit from conditional generosity when we fulfill the conditions set forth by a group and are unaware of the conditionality of it. When we have become dependent on the generosity, it is hard to "open our eyes". When we do open our eyes, a battle starts. This difficult journey can however save us from 'death'.

5. Self generosity



This is a self portrait about self generosity. It is important to be generous to yourself. For some it is very easy to do, but being too generous to yourself can also become harmful. Not being generous enough to yourself is also problematic. Neither cancel each other out. I am both.

6. Forced generosity



These works were inspired by the concept of 'tribute', as commonly seen during antiquity and the middle ages. Historically a tribute is a payment from one ruler to another as a sign of submission or dependence. A ruler could for example have to make the decision to either get conquered by Rome, or pay Rome tribute in order to stay semi-independent. Before Egypt was conquered, they had paid the Romans copious amounts of grain in order to stay 'alive'. So in reality paying tribute is the first step towards the inevitable, annexation or becoming conquered. Similarly, forced generosity in the form of enslavement can be the first step toward ethnocide or even genocide. In this work an Uyghur is depicted, as they are being forced to work. At this point the Uyghurs pay 'tribute' in the form of creating highly cost-efficient commodities that are being sold at scandalous prices to fulfill our "needs". This creates a dilemma. Do we completely ban any form of produce made by enslaved Uyghurs as to not sustain slavery? Or would banning the consumption of all their goods, making the enslaved redundant, lead to ethnocide of the Uyghur? Re-education camps could be used to forcefully "remove" their culture and religion? How can we be generous in this situation? Maybe losing your culture and religion is less bad than being enslaved? Or can we do more than this? How can we escape from this dilemma?

Concepts I would have loved to explore more but couldn't due to lack of time:

- Potlatch and tit for tat generosity, I would like to still make a work of this
- Generous artists that produced a lot of art such as Simon Vestdijk, Buckethead, Zappa etc.
- Generosity by sharing (empowering) knowledge (Maybe Zizek)
- Generosity by objects/technology
- Systematic generosity/ generosity in (political) systems
- Generosity & ideology
- I touched the subject of conditional generosity, there is so much more to say about this:
 - Eg People being more generous towards certain types of refugees compared to refugees with another background (protection own group identity)
 - Protection of one's own group identity and similarities with animals.
 - Populism is a big challenge, how to overcome populism, in an age in which politics have transformed (power is transferred, politics has become heteronomous and everything is recontextualised) and (social) media plays such a major role? Are politicians even in power anymore? How to deal with this in the context of generosity?
- Something more problem solving: How to "make" ourselves, our children and society as a whole more generous? What can we ACTUALLY do? Especially since the transformation of politics?