

## Burcu Eke Schneider Talk- ART AND PEACE

### Manifesto

Why am I here today? Well, functionally, the world is “falling apart”. On many, many levels. Brought about by many, many root-cause problems. Our cities need help. Our people need help. And all need a new solidarity more than ever before. So today, let’s talk about actionable SOLUTIONS...that can be implemented...TODAY.

But before I get to these, I would like to first define some terms which I will use during my talk period.

**Peace** means being free from persecution due to one's nationality, immigration status, language, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, religious beliefs (or lack thereof) or sexual preference. Functionally, one’s identity. We can be defined in many different ways, or combinations of ways. But in today’s talk, we will try to find individual peace to help us to go beyond those identities.

**Art** is a diverse range of human activity, and resulting products, that involve creative or imaginative talent expressive of technical proficiency, beauty, emotional power, or conceptual ideas. As such, Art cannot be put into a box. There are more than centuries of the world’s collective inputs, which show civilization’s many patterns.

OK, enough of definitions. Let’s move on to SOLUTIONS.

The idea of peace in a world that transcends human beings, requires a space that is free of the everyday binary - and often hierarchical - categories in which we have traditionally learned to think (they/we,

mine/yours, have/have not, human/nature, etc.) Peace and Art are two approaches that offer such a space in which these categories can be overcome. In history, there are many examples about resistance through Peace and Art - such as Picasso's *Guernica*, some of Norman Carlberg's Vietnam war-era work, or Susan Crile's images of torture at Abu Ghraib. But today's world needs new transformative approaches.

Peace and Art requires changing mindsets through all side's creativity...bringing in all sides' different perspectives. This helps us to shift away from what can too often appear to be a paternalistic-saviour mentality, towards a new, more-inclusive approach to Constructive Resistance for a common future. New approaches through multiculturalism must be co-created with women, the young, indigenous people, and local communities... grounded in their everyday realities and lived experiences...to provide new solutions period.

But do not forget that currently, there is no peace. We have many significant problems and conflicts. For example, the environmental devastation wrought by violent conflicts...exacerbating the human toll and legacies of war. And we could spend all day going over all the other many conflicts as well. With this as background, we need new intersectional thinking and solutions now.

To understand the root-cause of any problem, I mostly focus on, and work within, a multidisciplinary urban philosophy, psychology, sociology, and transformation context...to find solutions. For example, over the last few years, I have been working to change behaviors and attitudes through Wuppertal's Peace Garden. This became an example for new thinking and methods...and inspired academicians, researchers, institutions, artists, and transformers.

But as with the Wuppertal Peace Garden, the first step to problem-solving should be to make changes at the micro-level, through the transformation of the individual. While this is a most difficult step, it is most important for a just, sustainable, positive peace and environment.

Art can be a catalyst for an individual who cannot initiate an awareness process on his/her own. Here, Art is not only what we see in galleries, or listen to moving music on stage, or even the curiosity how it is accomplished for the public good and society. It is also a process to create a dialogue with her or his inner-self's nature...giving the water, light, air, and soil for his/her private garden which will bloom with his/her creativity. This can lead to the discovery of the essence of a person's soul. In history, Thoreau and Gandhi were aware of such a change which needs civil disobedience.

If we want to better understand this micro-level artistic approach, we can just look to the world's masterpieces. For instance, Picasso's Guernica started on a micro level. If one looks carefully at the work in detail instead of looking at the whole art piece, one can clearly recognize how different thoughts were formed in his mind.

In the current century, Art needs to carry this constructive-Peace approach beyond today's needs. It needs to open a space where the diverse individual's identity exists...along with his/her creativity. This is only possible if we create a space of peace. All while, structural violence does not include him/her in the equation, and works against the individual's creativity.

Clearly today's world needs new transformative approaches. Thankfully nowadays, there is an eagerness for a transformative

process that somewhat feels like a global Renaissance. I propose to you, that Peace and Art...through Micro-level Change and Constructive Resistance...CAN transform society accordingly.