

La Trappe; an open atelier,  
garden and community

"where is  
this all going?"

- notes + questions for 2025





# Introduction

*"Where? A dream!?"*

After four years of coming together in the moist, misty hills of La Trappe, we can slowly start to see the colors of the seed that was planted in the winter of 2021. Its soil nurtured by the hands of many people, its growth warmed by the sun of many seasons, our seed starts to carry some strange tasty fruits!

All of you have been in the valley once, twice or many more times. Breathing in the fresh air, and breathing out dreams and thoughts for a growing collective space. This document is a start in capturing the vision for La Trappe, and an open invitation to anyone who is curious about a deeper involvement in this special journey.

Sprouting from a collective yearning for a space far away from the frenetic pace of urban life, we found a space to slow down, to experiment, to feel free and create, enjoy lots of food and wine and to do it all together. Our community keeps growing every year, knows the place, its rhythms and balance, and starts to take root, intertwining with the land.

Over time, the festival — La Trappe #1 2021 // Con-Fusion 2022 // Holy Mountain 2023 // Fuite Cosmique 2024 — has demonstrated the transformative power of coming together to create, celebrate, and envision new possibilities. To connect across many different places, disciplines, cultures and ideas.

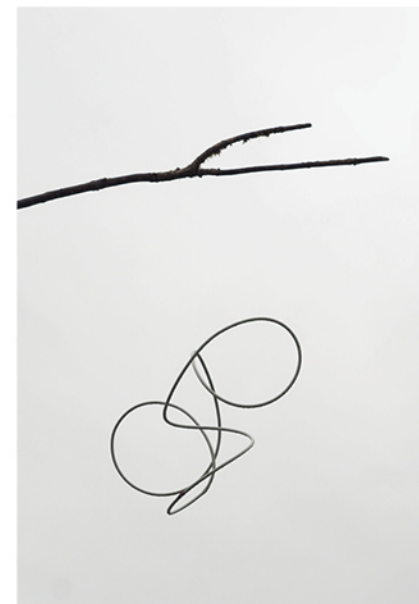
The festival, however, is but one of many moments and seasons in the valley — the house, the trees, the lizards, the dry toilets and the sauna are always there! With the new house and land (officially since June 2024), and the possibilities within the open co-ownership model of this new place, the moment has come where the engagement of the community in shaping its trajectory seems like a beautiful next step. Altogether, I bet we have many dreams when we're hearing: *"where is this all going?"*

If you would ask me to dream, I would say La Trappe could be an open garden, atelier and community-run space. A garden and landscape planned with the expertise of the group and maintained with local residents. A large makerspace for artist residencies and local crafts shaping the valley and its

buildings. A kitchen and house for all, run by all, like we've seen with the co-creation of the festivals. This can happen in many ways, from funded artist in residencies to pizza nights with home-grown vegetables for the local community. From a sculpture garden visited by art-lovers to an annual construction festival where we build pavillions and structures to enrich the valley.

The main question will probably always be: *"how do we think big but also preserve the small and intimate?"* Meaning: how do we preserve the grassroots and independent; the non-profit and experimental? How do we grow as a team to organise and fund, but preserve the honesty and collectivity that exists within the group at large?

*Pepijn Determann*







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# Spirit & organization

Within the spirit of ‘not rushing—La Trappe holds all the time and peace we want’, excitement about the future is an understatement. Who’s been in La Trappe feels curiosity, empowerment, love. Many conversations in many cities and corners of La Trappe have witnessed the development of the space. Let’s dream a bit about what La Trappe could evolve into..?

Let’s say the essence of what has unfolded in recent years revolves around the following themes:

- art
- food
- festival

Looking further into what La Trappe could become, we could draw up the themes:

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These elements are broad enough to take shape in many ways that could benefit the place and the community. They align with the incremental growth of La Trappe and have sparked the love of its people so far. They are potentially largely interdependent, but can make up five distinct realms of taking care and growing La Trappe, with the fundamental

question how they leave enough space for one another. In the next pages, these themes will be further explored as possible projects.

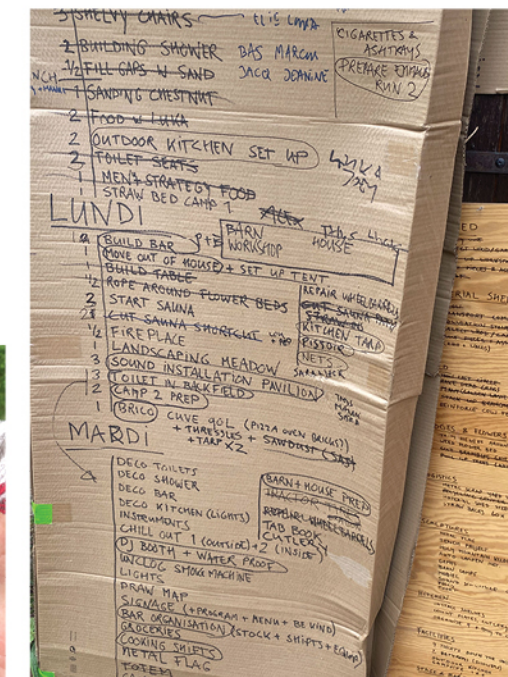
How do we unite to organize such beauty?

Developing La Trappe into the vibrant space imagined here obviously comes with a good organization and embracing all experimentation to learn what works. Some of the most important lessons we’ve learned over the years, are that a community space holds freedom and flexibility, it thrives when everyone is part of the team, you can show yourself (and try stuff out), it is safe, it seems effortless and finds a balance between what drives people and what it needs in return from people to be sustained / grow.

Thus, where the trajectory of La Trappe is leading us, is somewhere we want to celebrate together, a shared vision that inspires people’s care, love and dedication..!

To give an idea about the necessary organization to allow a shared vision to grow, this could entail:

- **community** (communication, hosting, engagement)
- **vision** (diversity, ethics & direction)
- **organisation & planning** (management, year plan)
- **finance & admin** (funding, business case, insurances)





# Intention & notes on ownership

by Jacqueline & Bastiaan

For a while, we had the idea of buying a piece of land in the Netherlands, to give it back to nature. We wanted to make a positive contribution by transforming the soil, polluted by intensive agriculture, healthy again. So that some biodiversity would return.

What could we do for a healthy world ?

When our neighboring house in la Trappe came for sale, a dream suddenly arose. How beautiful would it be for young people to have a place where, next to the demanding busy and hectic city life, peace can be found in inspiring nature with healthy fresh air? Here, there is room to discover, explore and create new things.

By buying the neighboring house and its land, we want to give the opportunity to a group of people (who are already familiar with la Trappe, through the festivals that Pepijn organized here) to use our neighboring house, without having to buy it themselves. This makes it financially easy

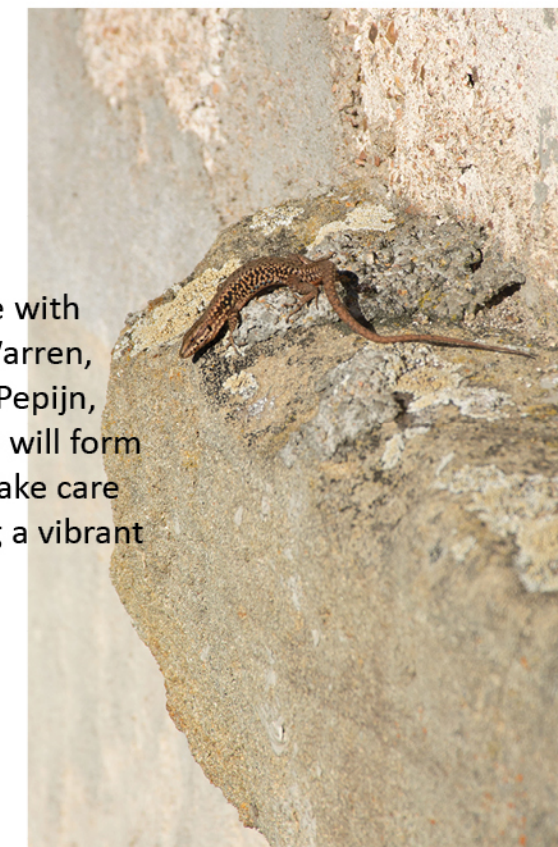
for a group of young people to use the house and the surrounding garden for all kinds of purposes, and together take care of the maintenance and associated costs.

Our dream is that there will be activities where people come together to make art, find peace, make music, dance, garden, meditate, read, write, walk, or enjoy nature, the peace and the clean air!

Because of the positive experience with many people we know from the Warren, and likewise with some friends of Pepijn, we are confident that a nice group will form from home and abroad, who will take care of our neighboring house, creating a vibrant activity, literally and figuratively!

Welcome to la Trappe!

Jacqueline Bohlmeijer & Bastiaan Determann











preliminary

vision

'The Common Atelier' (..?) aspires to be a self-organized, community-driven space for collective and personal slow-down, for creative experimentation and cooperative endeavors. Nestled in the remote valley of La Trappe, it offers an antidote to the overstimulating, rapid urban environments in which many of its people live. Here, people converge to cultivate, create and build, sharing moments, lessons and ideas.

Practically, the aim is to sustain and enhance the infrastructure of the house, barn, and guesthouse; nurture the surrounding garden; and host residencies, workshops, and events. La Trappe's ultimate goal is to evolve into a sustainable locus for experimentation and retreat, balancing pragmatic upkeep with fostering a culture of art and community. Eventually, La Trappe will grow as a resilient space, transcending its physical location by connecting people, places and communities.





# An unfinished Manifesto

Slow not fast

Nature is all around us

Alone together (...?)

Trash = treasure

C-C-C-C (carbon collective care chain)

...





# Art, Residency & Research

Residencies for artists are becoming more and more relevant in both the young and established ecosystems of contemporary art. As urban stimuli intensify, residencies in rural landscapes become invaluable infrastructures for critical thinking and artistic experimentation, cross-cultural collaboration, interdisciplinary knowledge production, and site-specific research. Residencies exist most importantly to support artists in their development, to provide time and space for art, research, and reflection, away from the structures and institutions that dominate the scene; away from the daily routine of city life.

Around the festivals in La Trappe, we saw the creativity of its community; a sort of self-evident mode of manically producing experimental structures sitting somewhere between design, visual arts, architecture and performance. In last year's festival (2024), the high quality of the workshops showed the incredible dedication of people to sharing & learning, hosting & participating, creating & reflecting. The idea of a residency at La Trappe seems really appealing. So what could it look like?

Would it be a week bringing together various disciplines (think costume design, ceramics, sound art, video art, performance art, visual art)—a condensed moment where expression, exchange and individual research and production are prioritized, with a light program of workshops and rituals? Or is it a month mostly for people who are already part of the community, providing them with the time and space to focus on their own work, while sharing the space and daily routines? Are the pieces produced part of La Trappe—for example the sculpture garden, a digital archive, or even painting the shutters—or is there no direct material goal or output contributing to La Trappe? Should there be any material output, or is this residency about the experience—a week to connect to yourself and nature through rituals and experiential practices?

Next to residencies, there is a dream to develop a sculpture garden over time that integrates the practice and vision of the people into the valley's landscape. Nature and creativity, growth and direction flowing together in living experiments holding the middle between land-art, installations, structures and ecological practice (research into feralization, carbon sequestration).







# Garden, Nature & Food

In the early 19th century, La Trappe was founded by people who fled from the upheaval and reformation of the city (post-Revolution), hiding in the lush embrace of the valley. They supposedly built the first house, pigshed, and outhouse using rubble from a chapel on the hill destroyed during the French Revolution and lived completely off-grid, with livestock, a vegetable garden and several wells to feed their people.

This strong image can still be felt in La Trappe—geographically isolated by the surrounding hills and forests, the terraces, its fertile soil and even remaining old structures like wells and basins that used to feed the animals.

The garden was always a central aspect of La Trappe, symbolizing care, autonomy, patience, and the connection of the people to the landscape. The maintenance of the garden requires our attention, dedication and vision to enrich biodiversity, understand the soil, maintain water management and plant a flourishing garden. The garden and surrounding nature are a key part of this new chapter—developing La Trappe means searching for the balance of the valley, honoring the spirit of the place while nurturing the needs of this new community.

Lastly, food is an important element between the humans and the landscape of La Trappe. Preparing and sharing dinners, small and big, holds a power of unlimited gratitude, happiness and togetherness. Potentially eating homegrown food, think of a permaculture garden and seasonal vegetables and fruits, would strengthen that with a sense of the spirit of the land.







The expanding world of the festival, thusfar, is the heart of the culture and community of La Trappe. Every year, around the first weekend of September, the valley transforms into a melting pot of workshops, big dinners, building, dancing, sauna-sessions and campfires. We build and run the festival together; big or small, everyone plays a part in the moment that celebrates our collective creative spirit in the valley.

In the summer of 2021, we came together for the first time with a small group of friends from Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Paris for a long week of campfires, music, dancing, Burgundy cheese and wine. The barn was transformed into a mini-club for the first time and the neighbors loved the young energy in the otherwise sleepy valley. The next year, we gathered again, this time with double the people, and organising

# Festival & Community

the operation lightly to be able to create a sauna, sculptures, fruitcrate-dinnertables, live paintings and enjoy exquisite dinners during the long weekend. In 2023, the 'Holy Mountain' themed festival, we celebrated the absurdity of this extravagant gathering in nature, exploding in creativity and gluttony, with 3KG blocks of French cheese, again restaurant-worthy food and a deco-transformation making it feel like we were actors in the theater of our own utopia. Fuite Cosmique (2024) was the first festival in the new house and meadow, with much more space, maintaining the same qualities through an organised 3-week build-up adventure, a diverse program of workshops, an excellent soundsystem and around 90 people attending.

Although growing slowly each time, the festival is meant to be small; for and by the people of a growing community. Beyond being a moment of celebration, the festival introduces new people and perspectives to the valley, helps to sustain La Trappe financially and shows the potential and vibrant soul of the place. The festival serves as a soft instrument building momentum, collective memory, inspiring love for eachother and the place and renewing energy and ideas to propel La Trappe forward. In developing La Trappe, these values will be important to consider when thinking of next festival editions.









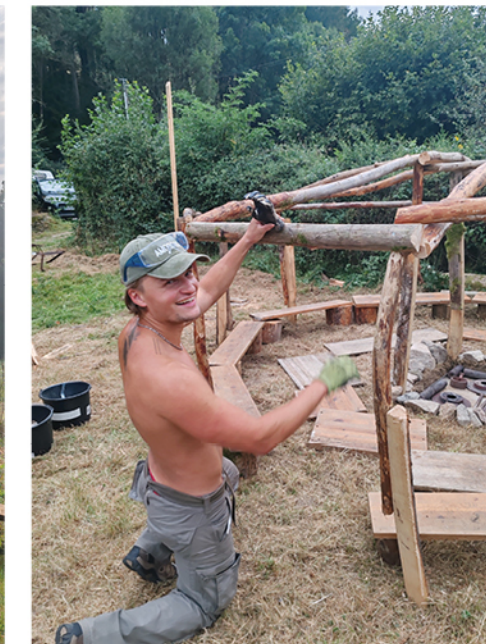


# House & Maintenance

How do we organise, fund, and execute the upkeep of the objects and structures of La Trappe? What are projects of maintenance and expansion? How do we make our existence in the valley both durable and exciting? These are important, if not fundamental questions to the vision of La Trappe.

They perhaps spark the follow-up question: how do we come together in La Trappe in a way that makes the space grow gradually overtime? Can

we leave something behind every time we gather in the valley, to make the valley grow with our time and love? We are already seeing how building new structures can be one of the most exciting and empowering anchorpoints for shaping the space. The sauna, the dry toilets, the outdoor kitchen, even large dinner tables—building structures that improve La Trappe in the long run feels great. Think of a pizza oven, a terrace, placing large windows in the small atelier, building a new covered platform in the middle of the field...(!?)







# Retreat, Slowness & introspection

Easily overlooked when thinking of all activities mentioned above, is to just be. This is an important value of La Trappe, and most of the year, when nothing is happening, it is dead silent in the valley. Perfect for resting, reflecting and connecting to nature. This poses the question of how La Trappe as a retreat is balanced with other activities, preences and rhythms of the valley.





# Questions for 2025

To start the conversation, spark ideas and invite you to thinking about how La Trappe will develop, these are some of the questions we could discuss. Not only to 'solve,' and 'get it done,' but more so to better understand how we want to shape this trajectory together. Keep in mind: La Trappe is not in a rush, so let's take our time.

*How do we keep La Trappe funded and running smoothly financially?*

*What should we plan for the year ahead / annual calendar?*

*What fixes or upgrades can't wait?*

*How do we host artist residencies while keeping room for community life?*

*What's the best way to manage our resources?*

*What's an easy, not so intimidating approach to decision-making?*

*How can we keep the community growing and welcoming?*

*How can we diversify community participation?*

*How can the festival fit even better with La Trappe's larger vision?*

*What's a good way to share what we're doing with others?*

*What part does each of us want to play in shaping La Trappe?*

*What else would you ask La Trappe...?*

