
DESIGNING FOR EMPATHY

A WORKSHOP AT THE MIT MEDIA LAB

Wednesday, January 29, 2020
2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

MIT Media Lab: E14-240 • 75 Amherst Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
This is an invitation only event

Designing for Empathy Workshop is an invitation to design together those transformative spaces, experiences, and products that might foster empathy towards all of humanity and the planet. The workshop will offer three experiential learning opportunities, through which the participants will explore several of the ingredients of the *Alchemy of Empathy* –a new framework that explores empathy for its design elements such as proximity, curiosity, dialogue, collective journeying, and contemplation. The workshop will offer an opportunity to contemplate on the following overarching questions: “What is the object of our empathy; how do we perceive the other?” “What is the *Alchemy of Empathy*; what are some of the ingredients of pragmatic perspective shift?” and “What are the Scope and the Spectrum of Empathy; how our knowledge of empathy can help us create a better world?”. The workshop will be facilitated by **Elif Gokcigdem**, PhD, Founder of Empathy-Building Through Museums Initiative, and the Editor of *Designing for Empathy*; in collaboration with: **Philip Himberg**, theater activist, playwright, and creative director of MacDowell Colony, and **Zorana Ivcevic**, PhD, Research Scientist and Director of Creativity and Emotions Lab at the Yale University.



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Elif M. Gokcigdem, Ph.D. is a thought leader, historian of Islamic art, and a museum scholar who is committed to creating fertile grounds of empathy through informal learning platforms. She is the founder of Empathy-Building Through Museums Initiative, which aims to transform museums into platforms that inspire positive behavior change, caring mindsets, and compassionate worldviews that value all of humanity and the planet. She is the author and editor of two visionary books on the subject: *Fostering Empathy Through Museums* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), and *Designing for Empathy: Perspectives on the Museum Experience* (American Alliance of

Museums & Rowman and Littlefield, 2019). *Fostering Empathy Through Museums* has been recognized as a reference book by the American Alliance of Museums' (AAM) TrendsWatch 2017. Dr. Gokcigdem co-chaired and curated the world's first summit on "Fostering Universal Ethics and Compassion Through Museums" with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, October 2018. She curated and chaired the second empathy summit titled: "Designing for Empathy Summit" in Washington, D.C. in November 2019. Dr. Gokcigdem is a Fellow at the World Innovation Organization (WIO) by the World Summit on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (WSIE), and an Advisor to the following initiatives: Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia)'s Center for Empathy and Visual Arts (CEVA), the Empathy Project by the Woodland Park Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium and Point Defiance Zoo, and (An)other AI. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Art History from the Istanbul Technical University and completed her Museum Studies graduate certification program at The George Washington University. More information on her work can be found at: www.elifgokcigdem.com



Philip Himberg is the Executive Director of the MacDowell Colony. Philip oversees the creative mission as well as the financial well-being of the nation's first multidisciplinary residency program. He arrived at MacDowell in May of 2019 from The Sundance Institute where he spent 23 years guiding all aspects of the Sundance Theatre Program, including its Theatre Labs and satellite residency programs in Massachusetts and Wyoming, and internationally in several locations in East Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. Under his aegis, the Institute's Theatre labs have supported many hundreds of playwrights in the creation of important new work which has

been produced across the U.S, off and on Broadway. Philip's collaboration with IDEO produced "Creative Tensions", a dynamic model for group conversation and discovery. Himberg is also a playwright, and his most recent play, *Paper Dolls*, had its world premiere at the Tricycle Theatre (now Kiln Theatre) in London in 2013 and its U.S. premier in Washington at Mosaic Theatre in 2018. He is a former member of the Tony Award Nomination Committee, served as past president of the Board of Theatre Communications Group and was a trustee of the Kiln Theatre, London. He has taught at NYU/ Tisch and the Yale Drama School. In addition to a B.A. from Oberlin College, Himberg holds a degree as a Doctor of Chinese Medicine, and previously was a practicing acupuncturist and herbalist.



Zorana Ivcevic, Ph.D., is a Research Scientist at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Dr. Ivcevic studies the role of emotion and emotion skills in creativity and well-being, as well as how to use the arts (and art-related institutions) to promote emotion and creativity skills. She is Associate Editor of *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, and the *International Journal of Creativity and Problem Solving*. She collaborated with colleagues from Denmark, Spain, China, and Croatia and published her research in journals such as *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Journal of Personality*, *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *Creativity Research Journal*, *Journal of Creative Behavior* and others. Dr. Ivcevic received the Award for Excellence in Research from the Mensa Education and Research Foundation and the Berlyne Award for Outstanding Early Career Achievement in psychology of aesthetics, creativity, and the arts from the American Psychological Association.