

THE OFFLINE SCHOOL VOL.2

GATHERING PRACTICES: THE ART OF MAKING COMMUNITY

FEB 23RD, 2026
SPACE ORBIT

HOSTED BY:
LEIYA SALIS & MEGUMI KOIWAI

GUEST FACILITATORS:
GEMMA CLARKE (ASTRAY)
NADINA (NAMNAM SPACE)

Today's Facilitators



Leiya Salis
Social Practice
Artist



Megumi Koiwai
Writer, Translator and
Production Coordinator



Gemma Clarke
Founder of Astray



Nadina & Hana
NAMNAM Space

What's The Offline School?

searching for the divine?



seasonal fruit

shared meal with friends



playlists from your
teenage years



an open window
with a slight breeze



your reflection

here's some places you can look!

The Offline School curates intimate device-free gatherings for genuine connections and creative exploration.

Our hope is to cultivate bespoke experiences where

- wisdoms/ideas/theories both new and old can be engendered through meaningful conversations
- we can enjoy the serendipity (and embodied joys) of organic connections
- rediscover what it means to share space with one another.
- A space that is forgiving for you to go there – to be vulnerable, perhaps.

← this image I found on Pinterest is, in essence, what we want to do

Split up into four groups, based on the element of your star sign.

Water: Pisces, Cancer, Scorpio

Fire: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius

Earth: Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo

Air: Aquarius, Gemini, Libra



The 3 Question Mingle

1. Write down three questions, each on one post-it. Look at the people in your group – what would you like to ask them?

Examples:

- *What event/gathering have you been to recently that has stayed with you?*
- *Tell me about a memorable conversation you've had recently.*
- *If you had to quit your current job, what would you do next?*
- *What's a small moment of happiness you've experienced lately?*
- *What is a habit, ritual or practice that you swear by?*
- *What were you listening to on your way here?*
- *I love your t-shirt - where do you usually go shopping?*

2. Pair up with someone in your group. For a minute each, ask each other one of the questions you're holding.

3. After you've each had your turn, swap post-its. In each one-on-one mingle, you'll swap one question each.

Exercise from Hyper Island's Tool Kit



What is the first memory you have when you hear the word “community”?

Examples of Communities

- Physical Spaces (e.g. NAMNAM)
- Events (e.g. The Offline School)
- Creative Communities (e.g. Astray)
- Neighbourhood Associations (e.g. Chōnaikai)
- Social Gatherings (e.g. Amapi Night, Koen Book Club, Gorp Girls, Flock)
- Mutual Aid Networks
- “Oddkin” (biological alliances between humans and diverse, "more-than-human" entities)

How do communities emerge?

How did NAMNAM & Astray come to be?

How do you create community?

Process of creating Astray & NAMNAM

**What makes something a genuine
“community” gathering?**

5 minute break :)



Imagining Community

Step One: Reflect

Step 1: Noticing Community (5 minutes)

What does “community” look like in your life?
Think about moments, spaces and gatherings where
you’ve felt community.

Is it a place (e.g. workplace, gym, local cafe, a bar, etc.)?

*Is it rooted in a shared activity (e.g. a book club, a
running club, birdwatching, a class or workshop, creative
collaboration, etc.)?*

*Is there an element of emotional closeness or intimacy
(e.g. friends, biological family, chosen family, etc.)?*

*Is there an element of care, aid or service (e.g.
community centre, volunteering, group therapy, activist
spaces, mutual aid, etc.)?*



Now, in your small groups...



Imagining Community

Step Three: Collective Dreaming

Step 3: Expressing Community (15 minutes)

In your small groups, share the visions and ideas you reflected on earlier.

On the big sheets of paper, collectively express what sorts of communities and pockets of togetherness you would like to usher into your lives.

You can use mind maps, lists, drawings, maps, collective poetry, etc.



① Community Now

- * Cosmos Juice Tomigaya
 - * teacher-friends I made through Astray, which has also evolved into The Offline School
 - * friends made through a mindfulness retreat
 - ↳ monthly dinners on seasonal celebrations (eg. Winter Solstice, Lunar New Year)
 - * friend group of 7 years, mostly comprised of fellow mixed Japanese women
 - ↳ ALWAYS evolving!
- Core
- my current community spaces tend to be rooted in friendships and a shared activity, particularly creative or learning-centered, as well as ritual + spirituality

② Imagining Community

- i) I am yearning for a community experience that is centered in collective-dreaming and spiritual/contemplative practices + play. I yearn for something pleasurable + intellectually playful + stimulating embodied... diverse
- ii) I want this in my life because most community spaces that I know of in Tokyo lack the "intellectual" and "diverse" element. Spaces are either heavy on pleasure and play, are spontaneous (i.e. not facilitated to be intentional) and often not genuine (i.e. popularity, slant, lookism, capitalism, extraction, performance)

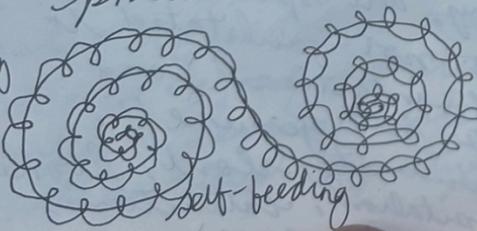
iii) I want to bring this to life by hosting reading groups that combine [reading + learning] intellectual practice

- [co-contemplative + id-synthesis] inspirations include:
- The Critical Theory classes' Community Reading Group
 - Another Library
 - Institute 77 London
 - Advaya
 - Futerea
 - Narrative Nest

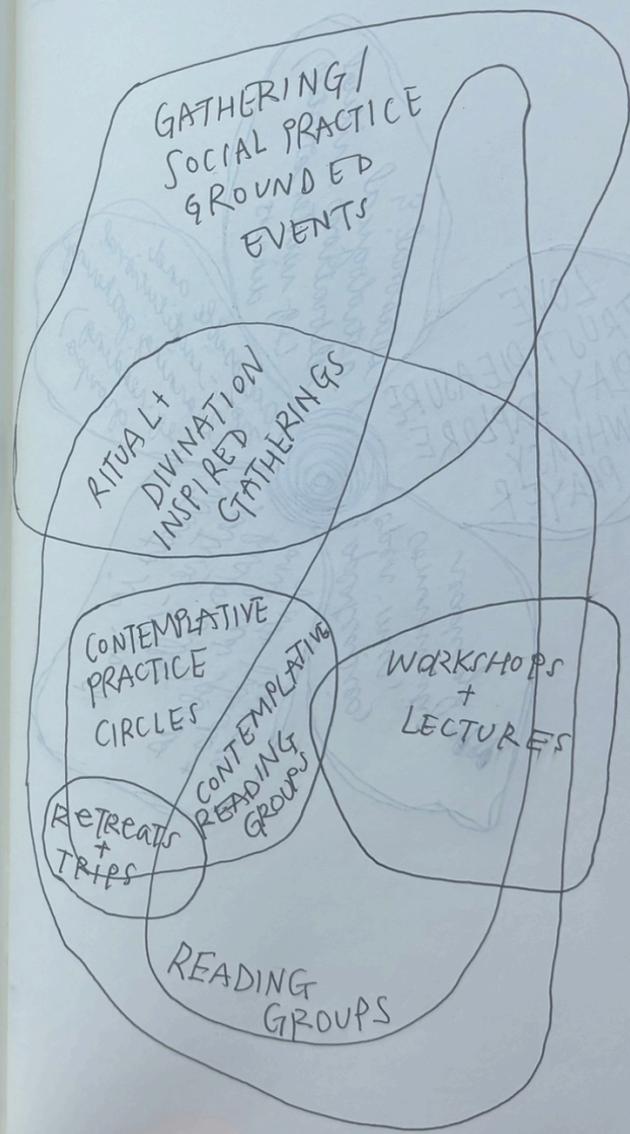
core values

- id-contemplation
- id-synthesis
- trans/nondisciplinary
- queering disciplinarity
- softened educational practices

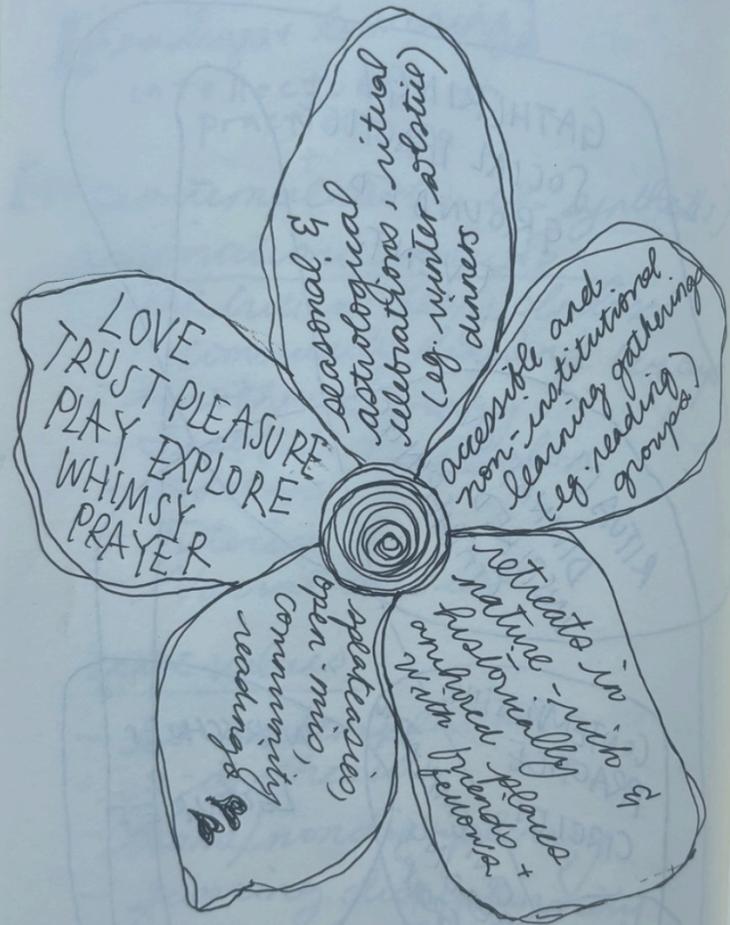
every
is a
spiral



③ Expressing Community



3) Expressing Community



“Community” is a convenient and easy term to use, but not all gatherings & spaces provide belonging, security, rootedness and inspiration.

Communities have to be visible, enduring, evolving and mutual (as in there must be vested interest and participation on all ends)



Did u get my vibes man? im
thinking we are all going to be okay

7:25PM MMS

that's all from us!

enjoy some music & snacks & beverages & most importantly, each other!!

if you feel inclined to exchange contact information,
i encourage you to go old school and write out your details on a sheet of paper!
it's very fun, we promise.

