

BYBI 2024

honeymoney

a currency of care



“To have any chance at building a sustainable and inclusive future, we need to re-think and re-organise money”

Ester Barinaga Martin, ‘Remaking Money for a Sustainable Future’ 2024



Employees and families from L'Oréal gather wildflower seeds from the garden, august 2024

Did you know that Bybi is more than bees?

For the last few years, we have been positioned at the intersection of art, research, ecological activism and regenerative agriculture – exploring the question of how bees, people and flowers live together in the city. This report shares some of the questions we have been looking at in 2024.

This year ‘money’ has been a major theme in our activities. How can we better connect economic activity with ecological and community care? As we try to cultivate a new, more aesthetic language outside of ‘production’, what role does money play? What role does honey play in a business where we refuse to use the word ‘product’?

In 2024 we held a series of public conversations with our community about money and a programme of experimental honey/money events with a few selected partners. In many traditions honey was money. We asked, what if honey was seen as a currency today? How would our relationships with animals, plants and each other be different?

The result is the idea to reimagine honey as a ‘currency of care’. It is something to be circulated, creating new connections as it flows among us and new landscapes as those it touches plant flowers to ‘thank’ the bees and pollinators. Bybi facilitates this movement with events, artistic installations and community interventions. Rolling out this approach in collaboration with artists, researchers and our partners will be the focus of 2025.

We anticipate honeymoney will attract a lot of attention in the coming months. Ecological crises are becoming more urgent, prices are rising and globally, dark political clouds are gathering. We all

need new ways to emphasise the practices of joint responsibility and care. Honeymoney, together with our community of businesses, artists and municipalities could provide both the space and infrastructure for doing this at home and inspiration to projects struggling with the same dilemmas further afield.

It works because it is a collective project. Bybi has welcomed three new partners – Boehringer Ingelheim, Stack Infrastructure and Frederiksberg Centre. We have organised 85 events, talks, tours and performances. 6,4 tons of honey – or ‘honeymoney’ - have been gathered, shared, shared again, almost all of it in and around Copenhagen.

None of this would be possible without you. So thank you, again, for your commitment, curiosity and support. We invite you to continue the conversation in 2025.



SYMPOIESIS (MAKING WITH)

Sympoiesis is a concept that comes from Donna Haraway, one of our favourite thinkers. It means, simply 'making with' and captures the way we work with animals, plants and people in Copenhagen. We are constantly 'making-with', weaving a tapestry of connections that cannot be captured numbers alone.

In our report, we don't address targets hit or missed. Instead, we reflect on the questions of how we are together and what new questions have arisen during the year.

In 2025 we feel it is more important than ever to create spaces where trust and resilience can be held and cultivated collectively. What do we need to do to take our friends and partners with us in this direction? What do you need from us?

Please help us to answer the questions in our report. If you have suggestions or ideas write to us at bzzz@bybi.dk or share your thoughts [@bybi.dk](https://www.instagram.com/bybi.dk) on Social Media.

Honey spoons for sharing. We use them in all our events and tastings.

Honey workshop with the team from Ørsted.



ARE THE BEES AND BEEKEEPERS HAPPIER?

A year is a long time for a bee. Spring and early summer were very warm and last year's interventions meant that they were strong and healthy going into the summer. Winter so far has also been unusually warm, which can mean more parasites and the sudden collapse of healthy colonies. We are crossing our fingers that they will be OK come spring.

As I write this, the regime in Syria has just fallen and while the possibility of freedom is welcome, the situation for the Kurds looks uncertain. The forces standing in the way of freedom and security for our beekeeper Aref and his family are still overwhelming. It is a reminder that care and safety are concerns that link both the bees and the people around us.

Aref is constantly adjusting his way of working with the bees. We have tried letting them keep more of their honey, different kinds of treatment for diseases and changes to the timing of when we harvest. We continue to reduce the number of bees per site so we don't overwhelm areas with honeybees.

We would like to do more to 'de-industrialise' the bees but in many ways, we are still locked into decisions that were made years ago about what kinds of beehives and equipment to use. The impact of unpredictable forces (climate change, foreign wars, sudden illness) is greater than the small, everyday adjustments that we can make. We hope honeymoney will provide a new way of thinking and perhaps new resources to confront this dilemma.



Aref with the bees at Frederiksberg Centre



The beekeepers inspect the hives at Fabrikken for Kunst, Sundholm

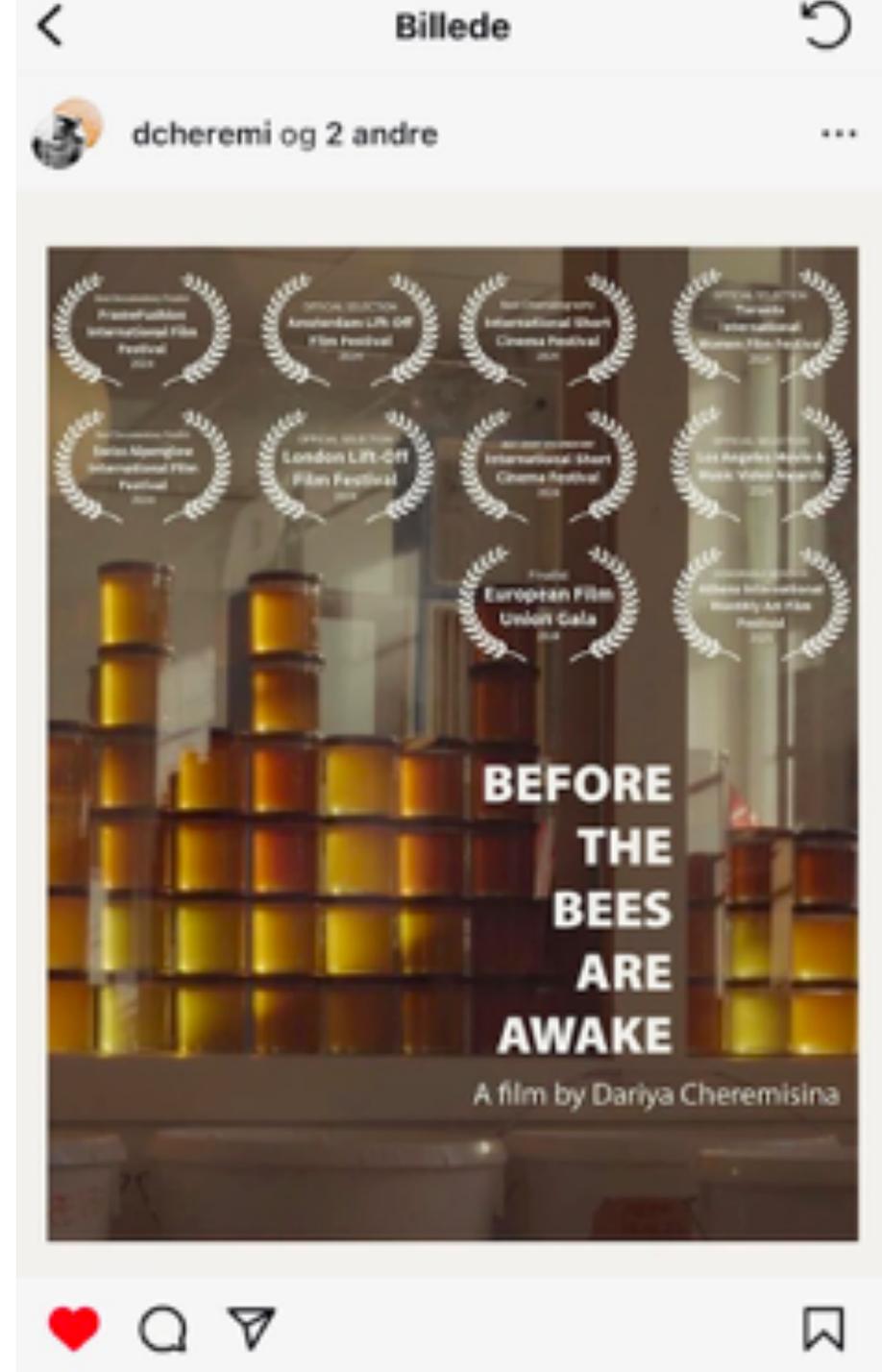
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE BEES? HOW HAVE WE SHARED IT?

Our ambition this year was more artistic collaborations to find ways of telling the story of bees and people. We used the year on research, planning and smaller actions with local artists. We made a film with Daiya Cheremisina, a young Russian film maker. We made sensory models with Laura Winge, and helped Peter Franceschi rediscover an ancient Egyptian portrait style, painting with beeswax. Artists and performers approached us looking to explore materials and landscapes through the bees.

Peter's portraits are pieces of time and place. The faces capture people who died over 2000 years ago, re-created on the hard covers of discarded danish books – medical textbooks, agricultural journals, cookbooks from the 1930s. The 'paint' is beeswax from Copenhagen, pigmented with natural minerals. They smell amazing too.

In 2024 we also made in 84 events, festivals, talks, tours and projects with schools and universities. We distributed 35000 packets of flower seeds and 8000 organic flower bulbs. We were mentioned in 5 international press stories.

Next years' challenge is to bring these sensory, aesthetic productions into the exchange of the honey. Can we make our partnerships into artworks? Can we find the means to support the artist in our community financially? How do we make every interaction with the bees and honey into an act that contributes to the health of the community?





Recreations of ancient Egyptian portraits using pigmented beeswax.

HAS THE HONEY BECOME MORE OF AN INVITATION?

Is this the moment when honey will evolve from being an 'invitation' to 'a currency of care'?

We introduced double-headed porcelain spoons (made by volunteers from L'Oréal) and had our guests feed each other honey. We obtained antique pots, jars and spoons that are aesthetically more pleasing than modern plastic buckets. We experimented with new versions of the honey ceremony.

In one series of experiments we invited people to choose themselves how much money to exchange. The idea was joint responsibility: If we trust you with the honey, will you trust us with the money? Not everyone was as generous as we expected, but many understood what it takes to gather the honey and shared accordingly. What would it take to encourage more people to act like this?

We made 10 honey ceremonies this year, involving over 3000 people, 1 ton of honey and associated flower bulbs and seeds. We also shared the honey with cocktail bars, restaurants, bakeries and small, sustainable producers making local wines, meads, chillies and remedies.

We have also experienced falling interest in more conventional markets and a dilemma about increasing prices in line with inflation. We are not sure people are prepared to pay more, but we insist on staying out of a 'race to the bottom'. Something needs to change, and we think the solution is to lean even more into art. How can we re-recreate more of our business infrastructure: our receipts, invoices and partnership agreements as sharable artworks that emphasise joint responsibility and community care?





A honey ceremony at Buster Film Festival



While the bees make honey, flowers make seeds. Both need to circulate.

HAVE OUR PARTNERSHIPS BECOME MORE REGENERATIVE?

In 2024 we enjoyed the company of three new partners: Stack Infrastructure, Boehringer Ingelheim and Frederiksberg Centre.

We made 'Parliament of Things' discussions with DIS and Rambøll and 'resting with bees' workshops with Rockfon and L'Oreal. We made honey ceremonies with Frederiksberg Centre and Pension Denmark, among others.

In our annual teambuilding events with L'Oréal and Ørsted, we tried to change to focus from being about 'helping' a community project, to being a way to take shared responsibility for animals, plants and people in the community.

In 2025 we want to rearticulate our role with our partners, so that our events, installations and interventions are understood as a way of guiding the circulation of 'honeymoney'. This will need time and space to cultivate. Can we take our partners with us on this journey?

We still feel that there is a bigger potential to bring employees and friends from our partners into our events. How can we improve our communication with these groups?



Bees and a new pollinator garden on the roof of Stack Infrastructure

HAVE WE IMPROVED THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION?

In our organisation, one-off projects can have a big effect. Two projects closing in 2023 resulted in our turnover going down by about 12% in 2024. We think the extra time spent on experimenting and development has been useful (funded by ourselves), and we will still make a profit through new partnerships and better ways of using the honey, so we are not concerned in the short term.

However, future potential in specialist farmers markets and delicatessens continues to fall and we need to replace these channels with a new approach. Just like other farmers, we will need to break out of the perception that 'producers' and 'consumers' have opposing interests if we are to thrive in the future.

Making a profit is not the aim of the organisation, but sustainability is important, so we need to create a little more space for ourselves next year. We need to spend more time on our communications and materials, and on inviting more people and institutions in to the discussion on honeymoney.

The question is this: If honey was a 'currency of care', how would we make it differently? How would we share it? How would we exchange it with kroner, so we could pay our rent, salaries and support our families? What would it mean for the animals and plants around us?

Our ambitions for honeymoney would be helped by some kind of project support from partners and funders as a kind of collective research project. We hope it will be possible to mobilise this support using the aesthetic, open-ended language we have learned from the regeneration movement.



A honeymoney event with Ørestad Grundejerforening



HAVE WE IMPROVED THE DIVERSITY AND ENGAGEMENT OF OUR SOCIAL COMMUNITY?

Building a human community around Bybi has always been an ambition of the organisation. With time and practice, what we do because it seems right is beginning to evolve into a culture.

We are 3-4 paid staff and 25-30 volunteers, assistants, students and helpers from over 12 countries. We have volunteer days every Tuesday and a small army of helpers every day in the weeks when we are harvesting. Some volunteers have been with us for years and we are always happy to welcome back old faces.

We continued to hold open, free, 'conversation and soup' events every month in 2024 and a programme of candle-making, spoon-making, book swaps and dances.

At our Christmas event this year, we held a folk-dance party for our volunteers, friends and families.

Characteristic of our events is the idea of commitment and joint responsibility. Everyone helps, everyone joins in. Everyone makes sure that everyone is welcome, regardless of age, culture, gender or background.

In 2025 we would like to do more. We would like new partnerships with other social communities in Copenhagen so we can share our ideas and practices in new directions and better ways to administer our events.





Volunteer Tuesday at Bybi.

DOES THE WAY WE TALK INFLUENCE THE FUTURE WE CREATE?

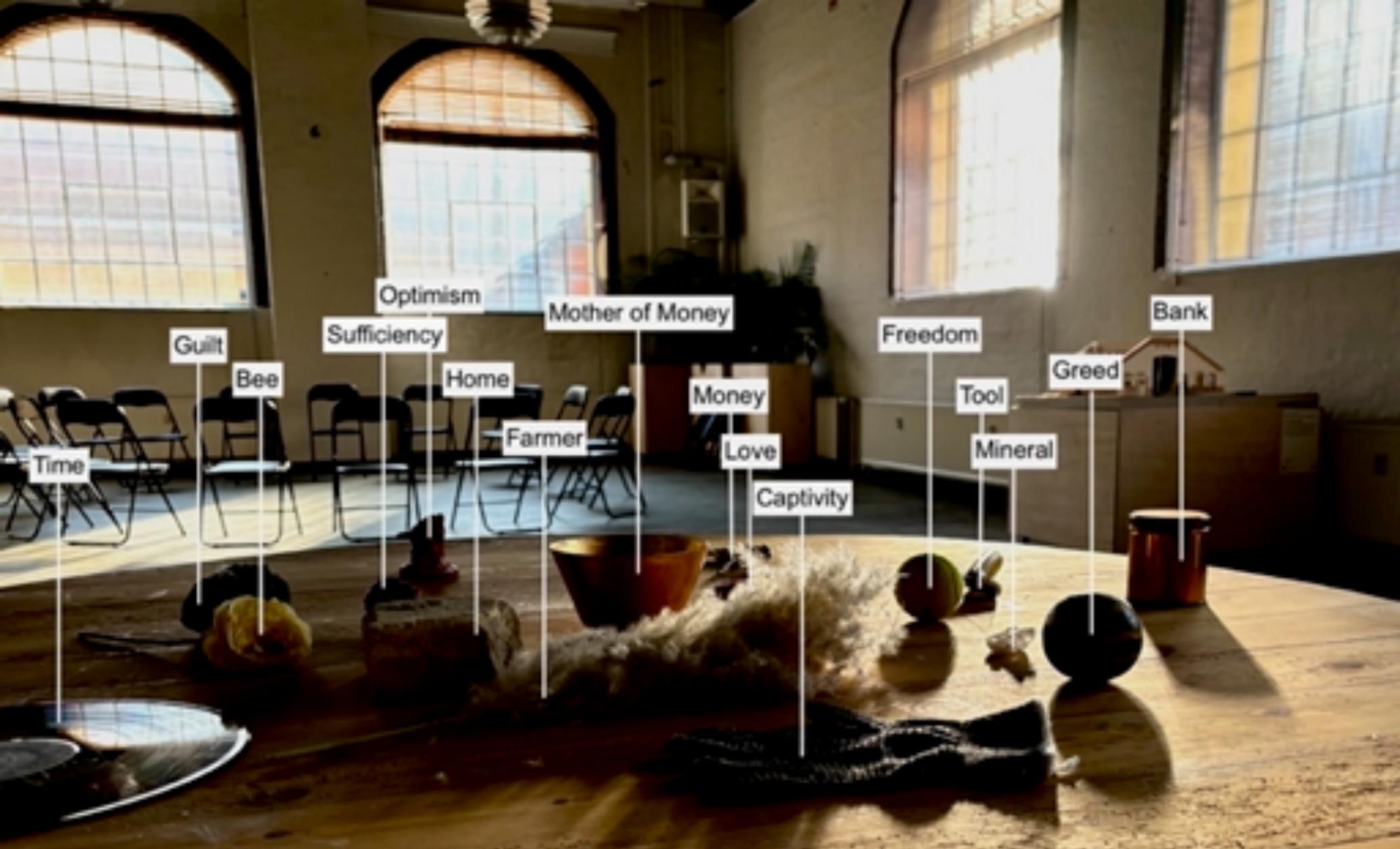
In 2024 Bybi continued to develop a platform for dialogical practices. Inspired by Building Conversation, a Dutch art group, we work with conversational traditions from other cultures and philosophies and stage them together.

The conversations work as an alternative to planning, as teambuilding exercises and to give new perspectives on sustainability practices. We have conducted conversations with universities, citizens and with large businesses like Rambøll.

We see a huge potential for these conversations growing in 2025. As an organisation, we have an ambition to nourish this practices and share them with other organisations. Perhaps you would like to join?

'Time Loop' – a conversation style
inspired by indigenous communities in
the Great Lakes.





'Parliament of Things' These were the voices that discussed the future of Money.

HONEY GATHERED IN 2024

Partner organisation	Bee colonies	Total honey gathered 2024 (kg)
3F	4	250
Bella Center Copenhagen	5	261
Boehringer Ingelheim	2	109
Copenhagen Botanical Garden	7	629
Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS)	3	146
Fagbevægelsens Hovedorganisation (FH)	2	69
Frederiksberg Centre	2	209
Frederiksberg Kommune	3	236
FX team	2	108
Grundejerforeningen Ørsted Universitetskvarter	0	0
Kongelund Forest	4	143
Københavns Rådhus	2	105
L'Oreal	6	317
Lederne	5	256
Niels Bohr Insitut	8	647
Parken	2	181
PensionDanmark	2	72
Radiometer	4	210
Rockfon	4	117
Stack Infrastructuure	2	87
Sundholm	4	92
Tivoli	3	85
Valby Parkstein	5	327
Valby Robin	6	377
Velux	4	166
Ørsted	4	35
Blend and other partners		1120
TOTAL	94	6354

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!





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