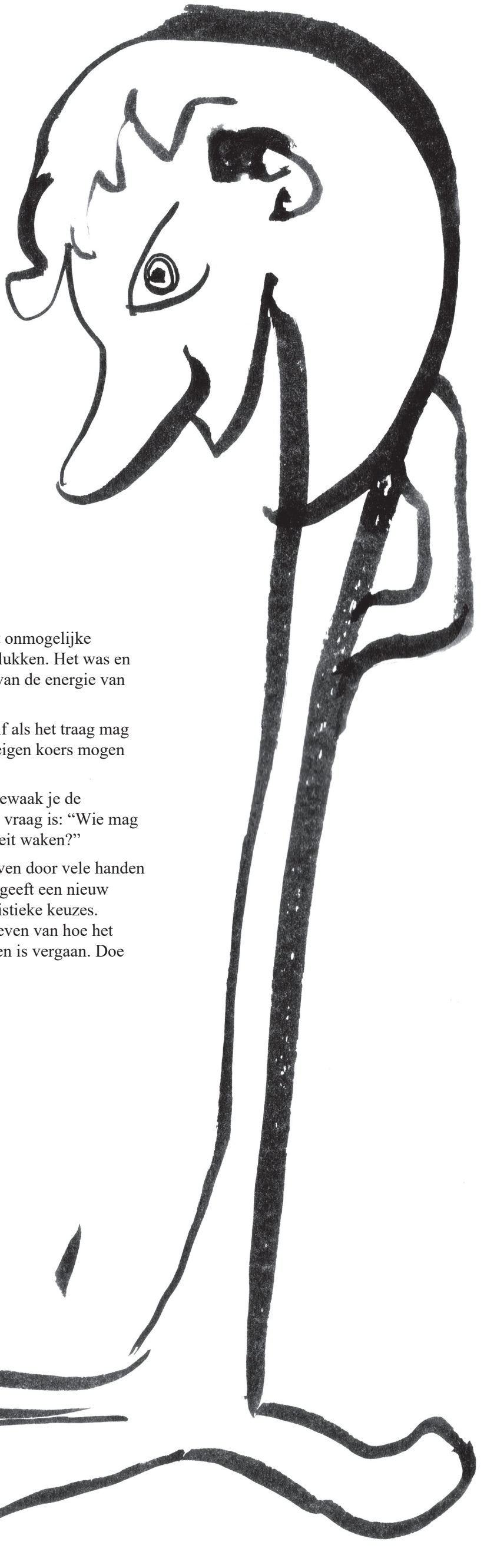
DE KRANT van de EINDELOOS UITGESTOKEN HAND



ENTER FESTIVAL BXL was een laboratorium. Niet een proeftuin van vier dagen en vier zones, maar een langgerekt experiment van vijfhonderd dagen. Nu komen we uit ons labo gestapt met een vuile schort. In de zakken van die schort zitten verfrommelde kattenbelletjes, schetsen, bedenkingen. Die willen we graag met zoveel mogelijk mensen delen. We stappen weg zonder procedures maar met handelingsprincipes. Zonder recept maar met een attitude.

Niet opdringen maar aandringen. Meer geven dan vragen. Onwrikbaar geloof in de transformatieve kracht van de kunsten. Ruimte creëren waar er voorheen geen was. Publiek genereren wat daarvoor niet bestond. Erop vertrouwen dat mensen niet dom zijn. Een context creëren die liefdevol en warm is. Met eindeloze mogelijkheden om aante haken en telkens nieuwe kansen. Met plaats voor kinderen en honden. En altijd lekker eten.

Iemand die altijd opnieuw vraagt: “Kom je meedoen?”

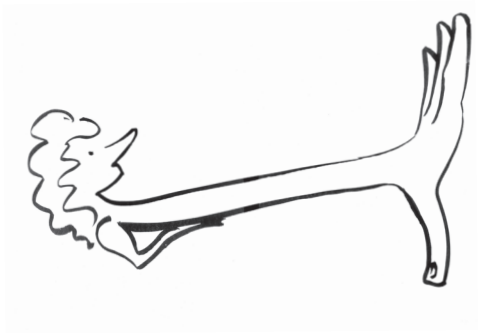
ENTER Brussel was het onmogelijke festival dat niet kon mislukken. Het was en is gewoon de optelsom van de energie van mensen.

Die energie komt vanzelf als het traag mag gaan, en de dingen een eigen koers mogen varen.

De vraag is niet: “Hoe bewaak je de artistieke kwaliteit?” De vraag is: “Wie mag over de artistieke kwaliteit waken?”

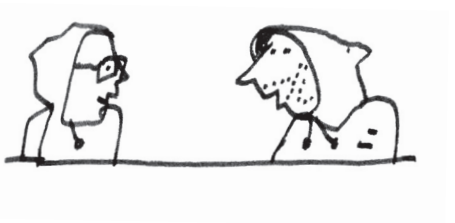
Het aanraken en doorgeven door vele handen is waardevol op zich en geeft een nieuw soort legitimiteit aan artistieke keuzes.
In deze gazet kan je proeven van hoe het ons die vijfhonderd dagen is vergaan. Doe er uw voordeel mee!

TEAM ENTER





la main tendue a l'infini



ENTER FESTIVAL BXL a été un laboratoire. Non pas un centre de test de quatre jours en quatre zones, mais une expérience étendue de cinq cents jours. Actuellement, on sort de notre labo avec notre tablier bien sale. Dans les poches de notre tablier se trouvent des petites notes froissées, des ébauches, des réflexions. Et nous souhaitons les partager avec autant de personnes que possible. Nous partons sans procédures mais avec des principes d'action. Sans recette mais avec une attitude.

Ne pas imposer mais insister. Donner plutôt que demander. Une croyance infaillible à la force transformative des arts. Créer un espace où il n'y en avait pas auparavant. Générer un public qui n'existait pas avant. Avoir confiance au fait que les gens ne sont pas stupides.Créer un contexte chaleureux et plein d'amour. Avec des possibilités infinies de s'accrocher et de nouvelles opportunités, incessamment. Où les enfants et les chiens sont les bienvenus. Et où il y a toujours quelque chose à manger.

Quelqu'un qui demande toujours:
"Tu participes?"

ENTER Bruxelles était le festival impossible qui ne pouvait pas échouer. C'était et c'est simplement la somme de l'énergie des gens.

Cette énergie vient naturellement si elle a le temps de grandir, et si les choses peuvent prendre leur cours à eux.

La question n'est pas de savoir comment surveiller la qualité artistique. La question est : "Qui peut surveiller la qualité artistique ?" Toucher et passer par de nombreuses mains a une valeur intrinsèque et donne une légitimité nouvelle aux choix artistiques.



Dans ce journal, vous pouvez savourer comment nous avons vécu ces cinq cents jours. Régalez-en !

L'ÉQUIPE ENTER

L'APPEL OUVERT

En juin 2017, nous avons lancé un appel ouvert en trois langues (NL, FR, EN). Cherchons : productions artistiques de 2016 ou plus récentes où les artistes impliquent les citoyens dans le processus de création et du talent frais bruxellois encore trop peu visible sur les podiums de la Capitale. Toutes les disciplines sont les bienvenues. Ceci a mené à 209 candidatures en 6 Google sheets.
En marche !

ACTIONS DE RUE

Afin de recruter des habitants du quartier pour les différents processus participatifs dans ENTER, nous nous sommes baladés dans les rues. Tricoter et crocheter à Laeken, un fauteuil devant le centre communautaire, créer des badges à partir de cartes de pays avec les expatriés à Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, déguisées en infirmières dans la rue à Halloween…

LE COMITÉ DE RÉDACTION

En octobre 2017, nous avons demandé 18 personnes de trancher pour nous: établir une présélection pertinente et gérable destinée aux groupes d'habitants d'ENTER Festival BXL. La méthode de travail était à la fois simple et complexe: lors de trois réunions, les 209 candidatures ont été réduites aux 78 productions reprises dans le catalogue. Nous remercions de tout notre cœur Alex Deforce, An Vandermeulen, Ann Overbergh, Ann Van de Vyvere, Angela Tillieu, Anja Van Roy, Els Rochette, Hans De Witte, Hamid Al Riahi, Ilyas Mettioui, Ingrid Vranken, Jan Wallyn, Joon Bilcke, Kris Kaerts, Salim Haouache, Sofie Joye, Wim Embrechts et Xavier Daive!

LE CATALOGUE

La présélection d'ENTER Festival BXL est devenue un ensemble impressionnant de talent artistique. Vu qu'ENTER Festival BXL se veut également une déclaration ayant comme objectif de donner plus de visibilité aux pratiques artistiques participatives et au jeune talent, nous avons décidé de publier la présélection dans un beau catalogue. Garage64 et Chez Rosi ont pris cette tâche à coeur. Nous avons envoyé le catalogue dans le monde pour qu'il puisse trouver le chemin aux endroits de présentation belges.

LES 4 GROUPES D'HABITANTS

Dans chacune des quatre zones d'ENTER Festival BXL (Laeken, Haren, Woluwe-Saint-Pierre et quartier du Béguinage), un coach a accompagné un certain nombre d'habitants motivés pour composer un programme de festival spécifique sur base du catalogue. Le budget de programmation par zone s'élevait à 12.000 euros. Un grand merci à Benoît De Wael, Ewout D'hoore, Ilyas Mettioui, An Vandevelde et les participants enthousiastes des groupes d'habitants.

BATTLE OF THE ZONES

Le 30 janvier 2018, les représentants des quatre groupes d'habitants se sont réunis afin de se présenter leur sélection. Quelques doublons se sont avérés durs à trancher.
A moins de trois mois avant le festival, le programme définitif d'ENTER Festival BXL a pris forme. Cependant, il y avait encore de nombreux défis à relever au niveau de la production.

ENTER AFTER WORK APÉRO

L'ENTER Festival est non seulement passé entre beaucoup de mains, mais également par bon nombre d'estomacs. Afin d'établir le contact entre les participants des quatre zones et les collaborateurs, un apéro after work a été organisé à chaque saison du processus, et ceci toujours dans une zone différente. C'était l'occasion d'explorer les possibilités concrètes du terrain de manière ludique et après, on a mangé, bu, dansé et bricolé ensemble. Inviter et continuer à inviter était de règle et savourer l'énergie des différentes zones, afin de savoir où l'on en était.

LES 4 RÉSIDENTS

4 zones et autant d'artistes en résidence qui ont créé avec les citoyens. Karlien Torfs et les habitants d'Haren ont ouvert le magasin ChiCon, avec des produits de beauté basés sur le chicon. Jovial Mbenga et les habitants de Woluwe-Saint-Pierre se sont inspirés du passé de la commune, rassemblant les gens autour d'un spectacle et de l'amusement. Kito Sino a ouvert un atelier dans le quartier du Béguinage avec des invités fixes de Globe Aroma, des écoliers et des passants. Le collectif de Manœuvre s'est inspiré des rideaux et des tissus pour créer une chaîne de production artisanale dans le centre communautaire Nekkersdal. Les femmes du quartier se sont réunies pour crocheter et tricoter ensemble, après quoi leur travail a été moulé en silicone et en carreaux de béton.



DE OPEN CALL

In juni 2017 schreven we een open call uit in drie talen (NL, FR, ENG). Gezocht: artistieke producties uit 2016 of recenter waarbij kunstenaars burgers betrekken in het maakproces en vers Brussels talent dat nog te weinig te zien is op Brusselse podia. Alle disciplines welkom. Dat leverde 209 inzendingen op in 6 google sheets. En marche!

STRAATACTIES

Om bewoners te rekruteren voor de verschillende participatieve processen in ENTER trokken we de straat op. Breien en haken in Laken, een zetel voor het gemeenschapscentrum, badges maken uit landkaarten met de expats in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, verkleed als verpleegsters met Halloween de straat op…

DE REDACTIERAAD

In oktober 2017 vroegen we 18 mensen een harde noot te kraken voor ons: een werkbare en relevante preselectie maken voor de bewonersgroepen van ENTER Festival BXL. De werkmethode was even simpel als ingewikkeld: in drie bijeenkomsten werden de 209 inzendingen met groene, oranje en rode post-its herleid tot de 78 producties in de catalogus. Heel veel dank aan Alex Deforce, An Vandermeulen, Ann Overbergh, Ann Van de Vyvere, Angela Tillieu, Anja Van Roy, Els Rochette, Hans De Witte, Hamid Al Riahi, Ilyas Mettioui, Ingrid Vranken, Jan Wallyn, Joon Bilcke, Kris Kaerts, Salim Haouache, Sofie Joye, Wim Embrechts en Xavier Daive!

DE CATALOGUS

De preselectie van ENTER Festival BXL werd een straffe verzameling aan artistiek talent. Omdat ENTER Festival BXL ook een statement is dat meer zichtbaarheid wil geven aan participatieve kunstpraktijken en vers talent besloten we de preselectie uit te geven in een mooie catalogus. Garage64 en Chez Rosi klaarden de klus met verve. We stuurden de catalogus de wijde wereld in zodat die zijn weg kon vinden naar Belgische presentatieplekken.

DE 4 BEWONERSGROEPEN

In elk van de vier zones van ENTER Festival BXL (Laken, Haren, Sint-Pieters-Woluwe en de Begijnhofwijk) ging een coach aan de slag met de catalogus om samen met een aantal gedreven bewoners een eigen festivalprogramma samen te stellen. Het programmatiebudget per zone: 12.000 euro. Heel veel dank aan Benoît De Wael, Ewout D'hoore, Ilyas Mettioui, An Vandevelde en de begeesterde deelnemers van de bewonersgroepen.

BATTLE OF THE ZONES

Op 30 januari 2018 kwamen afgevaardigden van de vier bewonersgroepen samen om hun selectie aan elkaar voor te stellen. Enkele dubbele boekingen bleken lastige knopen om door te hakken. Op minder dan drie maanden voor het festival kreeg het definitieve programma van ENTER Festival BXL vorm. Met nog vele productionele uitdagingen voor de boeg.

ENTER AFTER WORK APÉRO

Het ENTER festival is niet alleen door vele handen gegaan maar ook door vele magen. Om deelnemers van de vier zones en medewerkers met elkaar in contact te brengen, werd in elk seizoen van het proces een after work apéro georganiseerd, telkens in een andere zone. Er werd op een ludieke manier verkend wat het terrein concreet te bieden had, waarna er samen gegeten, gedronken, gedanst en geknutseld werd. Uitnodigen en blijven uitnodigen was de regel en proeven van de energie in en uit de andere zones, om te weten hoever we stonden.

DE 4 RESIDENTEN

4 zones en evenveel kunstenaars in residentie die met burgers creëerden. Karlien Torfs en inwoners van Haren openden de winkel ChiCon met schoonheidsproducten op basis van witloof. Jovial Mbenga en inwoners van Sint-Pieters-Woluwe tapten uit het verleden van de gemeente dat mensen met spektakel en vertier wist bijeen te brengen. Kito Sino hield een atelier open in de Begijnhofwijk om sculpturen van boeken te maken met vaste gasten van Globe Aroma, schoolkinderen en voorbijgangers. Gordijnen en stoffen waren de inspiratiebron voor het collectief van Manoeuvre om een artisanale productieketen in gemeenschapscentrum Nekkersdal op te zetten. Vrouwen uit de buurt kwamen er gezellig haken en breien, waarna hun werk werd afgegoten in silicone en betonnen tegels.

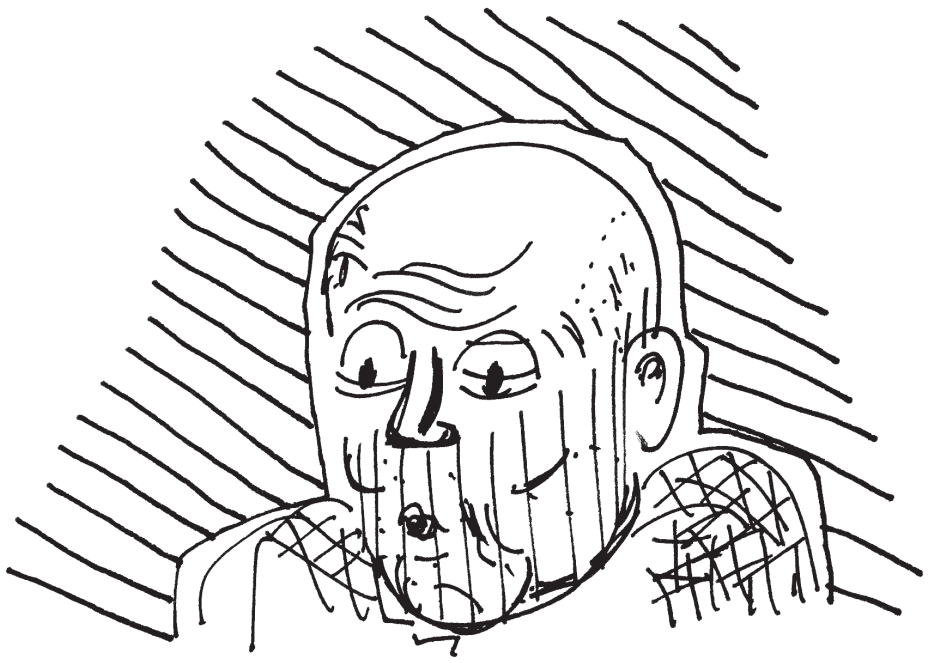




c'est muziqe



... et danse







je mooqt mee vergaderen



il faut regarder le budget



1

It's July. We're on the street, knitting. Not that we need woollen sweaters, it's 32 degrees in the shade. We're looking for neighbourhood participants, so we ask everybody: Do you want to learn how to knit? We have a lot of chairs with us, cookies and ice tea. We explain that in a few months time we will start with a knitting workshop. And that it will become an art installation. By the end of April there will be a whole arts festival, multi disciplinary and participational. For a long time I'm talking with a psychiatrist who works in Kashmir. She says the situation there is very volatile. Most teenagers and young adults are only interested in violence. And they are easily manipulated by different political fractions. But the country's beautiful. She's trying to build schools for kids and extending programs for traumatised adults. She says the vast majority are traumatised. We talk about trauma, war. In Kashmir, Congo, Syria. About the safe haven that Brussels is. She's probably not going to be there in April, but we should keep her informed. A lot of people seem to have a temporary foothold in Laken, but it's only that. The majority of their life seems to be happening somewhere else.

2

It's October now and we're having our first meeting. We contacted all sixty eight people whose number we had from our knitting-on-the-street- week in summer, but only one person shows up. Either there's been too much time between our summer campaign and now or people are shy of coming in to the community centre. Or maybe people simply turn up and disappear easily in Laken.

3

Tonight we're having a three course dinner. We cook together, we talk, we eat, we talk some more and after dessert we talk ourselves into doing the dishes together. People tell me about the concentration of organisations in Laken, about people buying a house here because the property is cheap and then move to the flemish country side when they have a chance to. People say Laken is the neighbourhood of snack bars and night shops and of grand old shopping streets that fade away. And people say again and again that a good family bar or neighbourhood restaurant is dearly missing. One of the ladies is saying that she actually doesn't mind. Because now people need to go to the moroccan tea houses and mix in. She worked as a volunteer for a greenhouse/ cafe/ neighbourhood organisation that tried to get people together to re-claim public space around the old railroad tracks. Their activities have come to a temporary halt. She sounds kind of relieved. She says she doesn't miss the pressure of always being a shining-super-connecting-only- positive-all-welcoming-forever-understanding-beacon-of-light-and- connectedness when she runs into people on her way to the supermarket. She admits it can be tough to keep people committed to neighbourhood activities. People come, people go - there's only a few who stick around. I sense that there's a risk of offering people an empty box. And then you tell them, "we can decide together what to put in there, we can decide everything together". And then they run away.

4

We had a great meeting today! By now we have all the proposals for projects. About ninety in total. Some badly written and unclear, but sympathetic. Some very articulate and simple. We took time to read the proposals individually and then we started talking. Who likes it? Who doesn't? Who says maybe? Do we understand what's supposed to be happening? Do we understand the moral perspective of the project? Do we need more information? Do we think it will work in this neighbourhood? Can we make sure to attract an audience that will connect to this? How certain are we about this? It went really well. Everybody seemed able to connect to the task at hand and even though it was a mixed group with a lot of people who didn't know each other, everybody seemed to feel that they were permitted to voice their opinions. When we shared our thoughts people didn't go for the easy criticism, but rather seemed to defend the project on the table. Not to be polite, but to make sure we wouldn't squander the potential. And then something happened that I didn't really expect; everyone seemed to enjoy doing this. Somehow everybody seemed perfectly able to set aside their individual preferences and find a space to be able to disagree and discuss without politeness or conflict. I guess it won't be all moonlight and roses from here, but today was an inspiring day.

5

We decided to extend our circle of participants a bit and I'm going on a couple of reconnaissance missions. First on my list is Lionel from Bravvo. He works with the purple people patrolling the streets and tries to get people excited about vegetable gardens, winter parades, neighbourhood projects and keeping the neighbourhood clean. Getting people interested to participate is a dance he says, sometimes it goes very slow and people are shy and other times it goes fast and easy. You can prepare a good venue and put on the right music, but you're never sure if people will dare to get on the dance floor. Even if they don't, the only thing you can do is plan for the next night. He admits that keeping people involved, interested or even informed can be challenging around here. But he's not afraid to get disappointed, he's in it for the long run. He talks about the figure of the shepherd, leading from behind, making sure all the sheep keep moving around steadily. He gives me the contact information of a couple of people I should meet and he says he'll try to keep the festival days free in his agenda.

6

The next day I'm visiting a group of country dancers. There's only three people and they all have to run somewhere else afterwards. They want to talk though, so we reschedule for next week. They promise to take some time for me, I promise to take my dancing shoes.

7

One of my last missions this week is to visit a group of seniors at Pavillon Leopold. I'm taking a couple of project descriptions with me. There's only three seniors around. One of them comes from the city centre, every day. He tells me he doesn't like the food in the centre. So he escapes to Laken during the day and in the evening he commutes back to the centre. His friend is an old Moroccan gentleman, 86 years old, he used to be an actor. They still ask him to play in movies. There's also a lady who comes in later, distrustful, opinionated and very articulate. There's some 'back in the old days' bitterness and clear hints of racism, but they also seem very eager to overcome this. The project they like the most? A participational dance project about the big turning points in life. In my wildest dreams I wouldn't have guessed that contemporary dance and seniors could be a match made in heaven.

8

Today is Illona's birthday. She's was born in the thirties in Hungary, became a ballet dancer, married a famous soccer player and divorced him when they lived in Brussels. She's been attending every meeting since the start. I brought three pies to celebrate. She took one too. There's only seven of us. We also have enough appetisers to feed a small army. Today we have videos for all the projects we want to talk about. Axel is there too, documenting the process with drawings. We are voting on every project. We're armed with green, orange or red stickers. There's a movie about a community in a far away corner of Flanders. Is this interesting to us? Is the opposition with this neighbourhood interesting? Do we have the same/different problems? How do we relate to that reality? Maybe there should be a place where we can show all videos? Maybe this is more interesting in Haren? The issue of Down's syndrome comes up and it's one of the issues that resonates very differently depending on the cultural context. We're lucky to have El Houaria with us, she's the Moroccan receptionist of the centre and not afraid to share her point of view. For most projects we have video's documenting the company's work, which makes it so much more immediate, but it also makes it more likely to be judgemental and dump projects without much discussion or consideration. Previously we were having a discussion based only on

the written information and that was a bit hard, but this feels way too easy. It also feels fundamentally unromantic. But that might be an advantage.

9

Today only two people show up. Illona and Mohammed. In every process there's the day that only two people show up. But it might be a good idea to change tactics and wrap it up. I'll have to figure out a strategy with Ilse, the head of the community centre. I contacted Mohammed through Lionel. He's taking care of teenagers in the neighbourhood and making them tea, keeping open the lines of communication, anything to keep them from trashing the place during the night. He is frustrated by the lack of initiative on behalf of the authorities. He's working on a little plot of land in the neighbourhood, a communal garden, where kids can play, parents can barbecue. He's suggesting we should have parades with musicians and spectacular stuff happening in the street. In that way people wouldn't need to know, wouldn't need to understand, they can just be part of things, come together as a neighbourhood in an way that's accessible and festive. I appreciate his request for popular entertainment - I fundamentally agree.

10

Today's our secret meeting. Nobody's invited. Only me and Ilse. We're trimming down the amount of projects from ninety to about twenty. Based on the input everybody has given us, Ilse made a selection. I made another selection. We check with each other if our arguments for trimming things out is clear and is not just serving our individual agenda. I don't doubt we have one. But it's a desire for debate and surprises that drives us now. We decided to have the last twenty proposals up for a monster meeting next week Thursday. Based on the votes, opinions and arguments that will come up, we'll have our program.





11

Hurray hurray, it's finally Thursday! For the very last day of selecting, programming and blabbing, we have not ONE but TWO meetings set up. The first one is with people working for the community centre. It's Ilse who came up with the idea. It's her team. But it's also a very obvious group of stake holders. They count as experts in knowing the community centre and the surrounding neighbourhood. Also, they will be our first allies in whipping the festival into existence. In the afternoon there's a new batch of neighbourhood experts. They're mostly from organisations around here. Mohammed's here. Ilona too. Same exercise, different results. People seem to agree again, but this time on other things. I'm making a back of the envelope budget that doesn't go over the threshold of 12.000 euro's and there are already promising signs it might work. After six months the task at hand seems less impossible by the minute, people are excited and energised. We have the first contours of a final program! I'm pretty relieved and feeling grateful.

12

Battle Royale - We are all gathering for the final battle. Four teams, all of us with our own wish list. And now's the moment to see if we can combine those lists and make sense of them. There's something too competitive in the air, too much male energy. I'm trying to act as if I'm not strategic. But armed with seeming unpreparedness, naivety and an act of selfless preoccupation for doing the greater good I'm as guilty as anybody else. At the end of the meeting we seemed to have secured most projects that we wanted. There's a backlash of course. People are a bit sad, mad and frustrated, but luckily there's a party at the end of the week so that we can all get slightly too drunk and wake up all feeling equally guilty and forgiving the next day.

13

Today we talk about how to implement the selected program in the neighbourhood. Two young artists are setting up a spiritual, creative and participational beauty salon. It's not clear what's going to happen exactly but they seem crazy enough to pull it off. We're looking for a nice window and an empty space in the big shopping street of the neighbourhood. We're also trying to get permission to project a film in the swimming pool, but finding the right person in Brussels to get special clearance for organising something in a government building can be challenging, if not impossible. We hope to put up a projection of a girl with Down's syndrome posing in a bikini. It's a very quiet video, barely anything happening. Very open, seductive and uncomfortable. A couple of productions can't take place thanks to impossible agendas. We're late with asking, the festival is in two months.

14

We're inviting a project with women from Afghanistan who developed a board game. They invite the audience to play with them, only women allowed. During two and a half hours they talk, drink tea, eat cake and exchange stories, no taboos. We're still looking for a nice context. I'm meeting up with people from a co-housing project in the neighbourhood. They show me their communal space, with a little mezzanine for the kids to play. Now they're using it to host refugees, but only during the week, during the weekends they reclaim the space for communal activities. I tell them about the project. About the additional value of having



a festival of participational art practices coming together with participational social practices. Everything seems to make so much sense. Everything is easy. I'm walking back through the rain, it's dark and cold, I'm waiting for the tram. And I'm having an organisational orgasm.

15

It's International Day for Women's Rights. I'm on the tram with my long time friend and colleague Frederique. We're congratulating ladies left and right. We're talking about how superior women are compared to men. I have my rainbow socks on, which makes it easier. Frederique's presenting one of her shows on the festival. About social cohesion and why the authorities suddenly want to spend a lot of money on it. About the hype and about the real need. About us all being different and very much the same. We look at the big chimney towering over the community centre. "That's what we use to burn the francophones" I tell her (Frederique is french speaking). We talk with the woman who's in charge of the centre. We make more bad jokes, evacuate details that could spoil the fun, everything's easy. Frederique's great. I love her. After Frederique's gone we continue with the loose threads of the festival. A location has probably been found for the beauty salon and we'll have a real beauty salon in the community centre. With refugees from Baghdad. Pedicure and beard trimming with Fairuz playing in the background! Brunch for an extra couple of euros! Dance party opening nights by the water! Riksha tours! Thank god for the existence of *straffe madammen**.

16

We're having a talk with all the coaches of the programming groups. Without exception all groups talk about the commitment and seriousness with which people participated. In 'Hope in the Dark' Rebecca Solnit is writing about communities coming together to get their hands dirty and the pure joy it gives. It's not a civil duty, it's simply satisfying and fun. What surprised me most in organising this participational programming is to have come out of my own isolation. I learn that everyone has a critical perspective on society, and a personal perspective on works of art. I never realised that you could break open the isolated experience of this; that you could be together in having a drastically different take on things. We all have specific considerations but we can create a space where they all matter. It turns out Solnit is right, it's not an exercise in civic duty, it's one of the most gratifying things you could possibly imagine.

note :

*fierce/awesome ladies





Again I have the feeling the heart of the festival is not in the black box or in the community centre, but here on the public square. Where people put something together themselves. There's no artistic genius here, only a relatable work of art made by many hands and voices. I have no idea how to define or analyse the artistic process that led up to this. And I have no wish to do so. I have been part of something I'd rather keep secret.





The girl here has Down's syndrome and an already voyeuristic set up becomes nearly intolerable because of it. I feel like it's not decent to look, but then again I feel bad for denying the girl her femininity. I try to step outside of my good intentions/feelings of guilt and try to simply see the girl in all her vulnerability. And then I relate to her, she's not able to keep still, the bathing suit is uncomfortable here and there.







There's something a bit schizophrenic about the festival. We try to combine new talent from Brussels with participational art practices and we should be clear that those are two very different ambitions. Participational art practices are usually opting out of the romantic idea of the theatre maker as a creative genius and try to step out of the black box and blur the line between audience and performers. But then there's this whole new generation of young performers who still want to claim their space within the arts and they want a black box and professional lighting and an audience that praises them for the artistic quality they manage to produce. It's like people abandoning ship while others are still desperately trying to get in. And who are we to deny people their own dreams?









The ladies that set up shop here went super far to make people feel welcome. I'm taken care off in the most considerate way. They ask me to take off my shoes and socks.







bla, bla, bla, invulling van het idee, ... bla, .. interpretatie ... bla, bla, bewustzijnsveld, duiding, interactie, besef, .. bla, bla, denkbeeld, blik, deleuziaans, rizometisch, bla, concept, relationeel, ...



We badly wanted them to perform in public space, but that's their usual turf, so of course they want to be on a professional stage, getting some artistic recognition, being legit. The mix of people in the audience is refreshing, a lot of teenagers, a lot of them not so white.









Nearly arrived, we suddenly encounter human life forms that light up just by seeing us appear and soon enough they try to sell us some beauty products made of chicory. The store is beautifully set up, the costumes are spotless and I have never been tempted more to buy beauty products but when I ask people where to go for withdrawing cash, their faces light up once again and proudly share with me that Haren has NO banks, not even an ATM, no sir.

I am totally out of my comfort zone but then again I feel very safe and pampered. We are having a dialogue just by drawing in the sand. I feel like a shiny sea pebble



encased in red velvet. Soon enough my alarm goes off. I have the biggest trouble accepting that I have to stop doing this, stop being here. I put on my socks and shoes, I thank them and get back to reality.

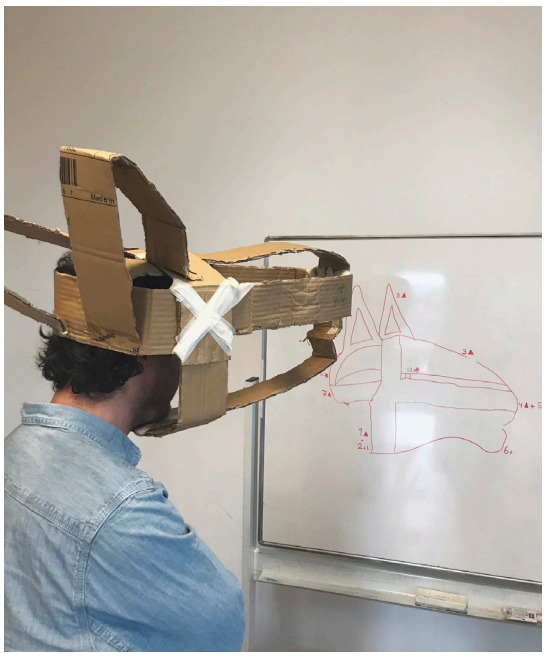






The nicest thing about tonight is that the whole requirement of quality doesn't even show up. It's meaningful and humane and generous. There's no need to explain, whatever is there is experienced by the mixed community we are. There seems to be no distinction between performers/ organisers/audience/nationality/generations. We are the people of here and now, and maybe we could be the owners of our collective future.

















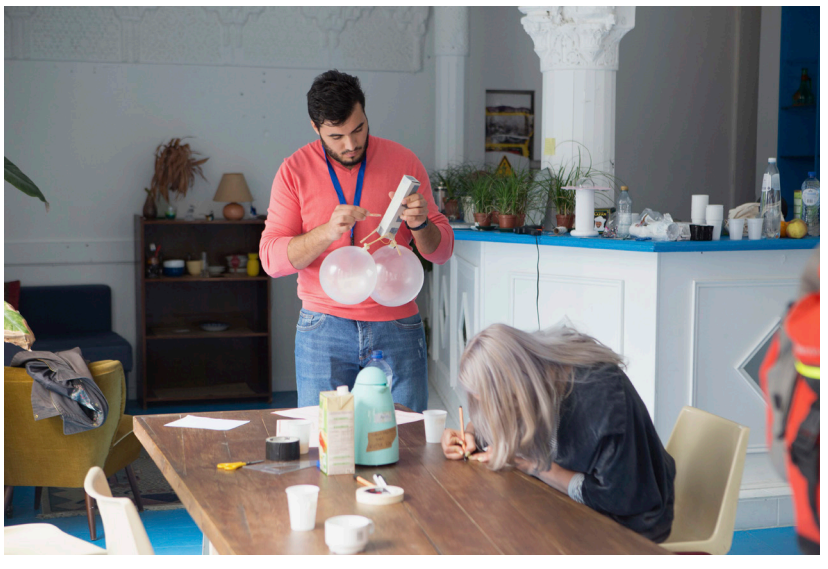






She deeply believes that there's so much more we share as human beings than what divides us and when the show's over I don't think anybody would think any different. At the end Illona comes to me and is overcome by pure admiration. She tells me 'this is very important! It's very humanistic! The director, she's really a very, very, very big force!'





If we invite young talent, maybe we should make sure we can take the responsibility for them, be honest and help them out. If we don't, it's a poisoned gift and we're failing them.

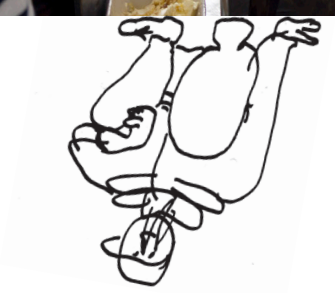




Today I'm having a harder time getting into it. Maybe it's the fact that I'm locked into this black box and forced into a passive position again for an hour and a half. In the context of a participational festival it feels weird and heavy, even if my favourite dish is on the menu.











Did we get everybody we wanted with the open call? Maybe the most interesting participational artists are not looking for open calls, but are working on a local level with organisations they trust? Maybe putting up a festival for participational art practices is in itself a contradiction? Maybe the black box or the cultural centres are not the ideal partner for participational practices? Maybe the shortlist was not short enough? Maybe mixing participational art projects with young and local talent is not ideal? Or could be done in a better way? We can hardly say we're not happy with what was accomplished, but if this was an exercise in putting art in many hands then the most essential part must be to have an open and honest conversation about past, present and future.



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