

COMMON BODY/IES IN CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS AND OUTDOOR ARTS



ABOUT CIRCOSTRADA & ARTCENA

Circostrada

Circostrada is the European Network for contemporary circus and outdoor arts. Created in 2003 with the core mission of furthering the development, empowerment and recognition of these fields at European and international levels, over the years the network has become an important anchoring point for its members and a key interlocutor in the dialogue with cultural policy makers across Europe. In a few words, Circostrada is:

- A community of contemporary circus and outdoor arts professionals linked together by common values and aspirations, who advocate for greater recognition and more structured cultural policies.
- The voice and reference network of contemporary circus and outdoor arts in Europe.
- A group of passionate and committed individuals who meet several times a year at the network's events.
- A network dedicated to its members, engaged in facilitating the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and good practices at European and international levels.
- A digital resource platform that provides thematic publications, observation tools and news on contemporary circus and outdoor arts, available to all free of charge in English and French.

www.circostrada.org

ARTCENA

ARTCENA is the National Center for Circus, Street and Theatre Arts, supported by the French Ministry of Culture. It coordinates Circostrada and is a permanent member of its steering committee. It works in close collaboration with professionals in the sector and offers them both publications and digital resources via its web platform. It also develops mentoring and training actions, tools and services to help them in their everyday practices. It supports contemporary creation through national support programs and encourages the international development of these three sectors.

www.artcena.fr

FOREWORD

Common Body/ies is the thematic focus of Circostrada's activities that took place between September 2023 and August 2024, which sought and contributed to "explore, promote and adopt more solidary, resilient and resistant frameworks and practices". The authors of the following articles were either suggested by the Circostrada members and partners who co-organised activities during the Common Body/ies thematic year (My Body My Space Festival, TOLLHAUS | Karlsruhe, zweiffelos.net, ATOLL extra, tête-à-tête festival, ISACS, Spraoi International Street Arts Festival), by the participants of the different activities, or by the members of the Common body/ies internal committee. In addition, a special attention was placed on artists and projects supported by [ARTCENA](#), [circusnext](#), [IN SITU](#), and [Perform Europe](#) (the last three initiatives being co-funded by the European Union).

With this publication, we aimed to give space to a multiplicity of voices and share some food for thought, while also summing up a part of the discussions held during the Common body/ies activities. Needless to say, we are aware that the topics of "swarm intelligence, collective relations and actions, communities

engagement, working bodies, well-being and mental health" are broad and extensive, which is why this publication does not pretend to be an exhaustive source of information (nor inspiration, or maybe just a bit) on the topics around the Common body/ies.

While we recognise the geographical limitations of this year's network activities, focused in South Africa, Germany, and Ireland, we felt necessary and valuable to add value to stories based in the countries of our co-organising members and partners.

Finally, this publication contains as well the "Circostrada Charter on the Commons", which is the result of a nearly year-long collective process between members of the Common Body/ies internal committee, Circostrada coordination team, and external experts working around questions of solidarity, mutuality, and reciprocity in the arts. We hope you enjoy and continue the reflection around the Common body/ies thematics through this publication. For more information about the general red thread of CS BODY/IES — Circostrada's latest project — and yearly thematic focuses, we suggest you to check its website or to get in touch with us by email at

infocircostrada@artcena.fr.

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CREDITS

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- Layout: Kinga Kecskés, Max Desvilles

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SEARCHING COMMON GROUND - ORGANISING COMMON GROUND

“We, Andreas, Emma, Evertjan, Zinzi, Marius and Lisa, form the collective Common Ground. We take decisions together about artistic choices as well as about all organisational questions. Tasks are shared between us and every one of us supports the group in the best way possible, doing what each is best at. [...]

So reads the official text on our website. Now, let's talk about the reality!”

© Common Ground



By Common Ground

Common Ground is a collective of six internationally acclaimed artists, Andreas Bartl, Emma Laule, Evertjan Mercier, Zinzi Oegema, Marius Pohlmann, and Lisa Rinne who produce stage pieces in the field of contemporary circus (former members were Iris Pelz and Christopher Schlunk). In addition, the members have many years of experience in other fields, like theatre in public spaces, variety, and traditional circus,

but also organisation of festivals, directing shows, teaching, rigging, music, and so on. The first show of the Collective is called Common Ground, the second show is in preparation.

“We, Andreas, Emma, Evertjan, Zinzi, Marius and Lisa, form the collective Common Ground. We take decisions together about artistic choices as well as about all organisational questions. Tasks are shared between us and every one of us supports the group in the best way possible, doing what each is best at. We all met at the Academy for Circus and Performance Art in Tilburg, the Netherlands, where most of us did our circus studies. For quite some years we have performed in different shows, projects and companies as solo or duo artists. In 2015, we decided to bring together our experiences, visions and skills to create a performance

based on the common ground of this specific group.” So reads the official text on our website. Now, let's talk about the reality! To avoid false expectations, this text focuses on our functioning as a collective. Artistic vision, our actual main concern, is only of secondary importance in this framework. Our collective is made up of three female and three male members, all of them white, middle-class, academically educated persons aged between mid-30s to mid-40s. Coming from three neighbouring Western-European countries, we have very limited cultural differences. We have all passed through the same circus school one way or another.

We have also all formed our own companies and shows, therefore have at least an idea about what it all entails. You could hardly say we have many differences to overcome to achieve consensus. So, what could possibly be our struggles?

Creation and responsibility, organising and collaborating

Emma: Creating something together, like an article for this magazine, how does that go? We approach the task similarly to develop a new show concept and the associated dossier: first, there are common brainstorming sessions. Almost endless video-calls in which anything can happen. Wild ideas, more or less utopian in nature, are thrown into the room. Fantastic stage design creations and special effects are devised. Little by little, a red thread emerges. Some things are repeated, others are ignored. We agree on a basic idea. Then it becomes more concrete. No one has the final say. Decision-making processes are just that: processes.

Andreas: As far as I can tell, there is neither a stated nor an implicit structure, no organisational principle that we have exchanged ideas about, no shared and communicated model on which we base our collaboration. Rather, we react as flexibly and independently as possible to requests, requirements, obligations and opportunities that arise from the common goal of playing our show in front of and with an audience as often as possible. Who takes on which task depends on the one hand on the external or self-attribution of individual competencies, on the other hand on the individual desire or sense of duty to take on this or that activity. The combination of competencies, motivations, and the nature of the challenge determines the size and composition of internal working groups. These groups form organically based on the task at hand and disband once the goal is achieved, rather than following a fixed structure. Of course, shared experiences lead to the emergence of certain reflexes that lead to individuals engaging in certain types of tasks together more naturally than in less experienced constellations. Since the respective collaboration depends significantly on the availability of the individuals due to the spatial separation of the members of the collective (Antwerpen in Belgium, Amsterdam in the Netherlands, Berlin, Gees and Großenkneten in Germany), and their diverse involvement in a whole range of other artistic projects in addition to Common Ground, as well as numerous private obligations, shared experience does not necessarily define a regularity in the distribution of tasks. The degree to which everyone contributes to the collective varies greatly over time, without the input of everyone being systematically offset against one another. Of course, frustrations arise time to



Common Ground at Theater op de Markt (Belgium)
©Katelijne Boonen

time due to various challenges, but in my opinion, these were always expressed to the group in a timely manner so that the collaboration remained constructive and the expectation or demand to formalise the work as a collective was never formulated.

Emma: Not everyone is responsible for everything, there are many shoulders who share the burden, but trust in the group also means trust in the individual. Perhaps it fits circus artists particularly well to work collectively because that trust is already at the basis of our craft: a catcher cannot simply decide not to catch the partner's body flying through the air. This applies on stage as well as when it comes to administrative tasks or logistical matters. Costumes, lights, production, advertising, acquisition, customer communication, contract negotiations, clarification of technical requirements, logistics, budgets, rigging, laws, sales, taxes, PR, organisation. All of this is part of the work of a circus collective. Having such wide knowledge is rare compared to other job profiles, but again it is relatively common for circus artists and simplifies functioning as a collective. It is much easier to divide these tasks if everyone knows what they entail.

Priority and equality vs. inequality and pragmatism

Lisa: We are trying to realise as far as possible the utopia of a collective with equal rights. It is an attempt to establish ways of collaboration based on equality,



Common Ground at TOLLHAUS Karlsruhe (Germany)
©Bernadette Fink

freedom and self-responsibility that are not dominated by competition, exclusion, or toxic management structures. For me, the choices we make amongst the before-mentioned principles are a counter-project to the shift to the far-right in politics in many regions of Europe. We want to re-imagine a democratic community. Performing and touring the result of our collective creations is an invitation to our audience to take the ideal lived out on stage into their everyday lives.

Zinzi: All Common Ground members have their own shows and other ambitions and activities that run alongside the company. We see this as a strength and an added value for which there should be time and space. But as a result, there are planning and priority issues. Besides, it is practically and legally impossible to fit an idealistic hierarchy-free company into the democratic society we live in, especially since we are spread over three countries. We just try to get as close as possible to equality.

Lisa: However, in our day-to-day company life, we are constantly coming up against the limits of the utopia of equality. Following the cliché of equal community life, long rounds of discussion seem to be a tool of choice to find a common denominator and to guarantee the involvement of everybody, but are in our experience not necessarily effective, economical, or ultimately expedient. Especially on tour, the latter principals: effectiveness, economic viability, and expediency are necessary for success. And when the success is shared a pragmatic way to it can

easily be accepted even if on paper a certain degree of equality might be missing. Compromises are often needed to reconcile many opinions. I have the feeling that these compromises carry the risk that nobody must leave their comfort zone, and more radical and courageous artistic approaches are rarely pursued. In this case, the equality of the members of the group and the artistic relevance of the piece are at odds with each other. Being aware of the latter problem, we have collectively decided to try working with an artistic director for our next creation. We hope that person will be able to push for a clear direction without creating an imbalance in the group.

Keeping it fresh: new members, challenge, and support

Andreas: Fundamentally, there is an asymmetry within the collective due to its history: two of the six members replaced two original founding members in the ongoing touring business long after the first creation of Common Ground and their legal and entrepreneurial status is not equivalent to the status of the other four members in terms of the official existence of Common Ground as a GbR (civil law partnership). This results in differences concerning liability, and eventually also finances, which we try to compensate for as much as possible and which have so far only played a subordinate role in practical work. Nevertheless, the psychological effects of this imbalance should not be underestimated. Since this situation has rarely been verbalised, I can only speculate about its impact on individuals' experiences.

Marius: I joined the company only in 2023, the show was running, and the organisational structure was shared between the four founding members. My task was to learn the show and perform it, to help build up and down and be part of the group. But the collective way of work is part of our group. When we work, we work together. From my perspective, the one and most important piece is that the members share a common drive and motivation. In respect to this well-developed show this means: the fun of conveying emotions to the audience, the joy of the group / friends travelling and working together; but also the wish to create something new and the excitement of possibilities along with the desire to be on stage, the thrill to perform our own creation, to see how it is received and to develop it further.

Emma: When I joined the company, I didn't know anyone in the group very well. I didn't really know why they had picked me, but well, here I was. The show is very physical, high energy and a lot of adrenaline with all those things I had never done before, and I worried about. But I like

challenges, I was excited and that's why I agreed to it. The group was very supportive. Although we only had little time together before the first show, we somehow managed it. Generally, I felt a lot of trust in me: "Ah, you will be fine!". I am quite a doubtful person, but there was little space for doubt. Sometimes I felt overwhelmed, but in general I think it was good pushing me to just do things without wasting too much time questioning if I can do them. What I felt there I felt many times after, and I think it's somehow the company motto: "Just do it!" And you don't even need a Nike T-shirt to tell you that! Whether it's raining until five minutes before the show, injuries, extremely tight schedules, or days of car rides for part of the company to transport the scenography: They will just do it, and they'll make it work. That is inspiring. As a new member of the group, I am finding my position very luxurious. The show has already been created. The tour is organised, I just must be there and do my part. I can get involved in tasks when I have time and feel I have something to contribute. Maybe a few years ago, I would have wanted a totally equal position in the group. But I now very much appreciate the functioning, respectful group dynamics that are already established.

Family and collective

Zinzi & Evertjan: When we started this collective, we were all in similar stages of our lives and careers. Having experienced a good number of years travelling with our work, we felt ready for a new step, which would eventually be in our case, starting our own company. It could be whatever we wanted it to be, a mix of the best of all those previously lived situations. Now, years later, we still feel the same way about our work, but our personal lives have completely changed. We have started a family. We have the same enthusiasm, but nowhere near the time and energy to invest into our work. Within the collective we have always had to deal with differences and with the limited time we spend together there is a lot of goodwill to enjoy performing and touring as a group. So, it still kind of works. Until we start thinking about a future (creation) from a practical perspective. Being rather inflexible about touring, let alone planning residencies for creation around a school schedule. Having to stick to plans made rather than running with a spontaneous idea or creative outburst. Weighing the cost of a late night versus the fun on a different scale entirely. The fact that work can no longer take priority. Those are just some examples of changes in our lives. But how much can, will, or should the collective change in response? Is it up to us to try to fit as much as possible into the original set-up we made years ago? How can we discuss a new kind of functioning without asking too much of the others to adapt to us? If we feel that we

can no longer manage the needs, can we imagine fulfilling what we can and having other artists supplement? If yes, how can we keep the workload low for those who are always there? Is it perhaps more interesting to take on a totally different role to still support the collective? Discussing these matters is asking our colleagues for an investment of their time. In our past, we rarely invested time into how we function as a collective, but here we seem to have hit the limit of organic functioning solutions.

Sharing a privilege

In sum, one could say that the collaboration within our collective is generally quite smooth, which isn't surprising given the widely shared common ground provided by our upbringing and education in a similar cultural and societal context, as well as our successful individual careers. Still, looking closer into it, the complexity of each single life and the diversity of the involved personalities raise the stakes and turn an effective collaboration sometimes into a surprisingly difficult challenge. In our case, though, a shared sense of pragmatism, the manageable size of the group and lots of good will and sensitivity let us luckily overcome the various challenges without major problems and hurt feelings. In general, we experience our collective as a huge privilege. From our perspective, privilege comes with responsibility, and sharing this experience with the audience in our shows is a way for us to make a positive contribution to society in a wider sense.



Common Ground performance ©CAPE/Pierre Weber



How common is the ground? Quite normal if you stand on your feet. But what if you are doing circus? When you stand on your partner, your ground is two hands. For us, the ground is not common, but an unusual tool to work with. It's what gives us a reference in space, but also what breaks us if we fall. It's not the height that brings us in danger, it's the ground. It's often a place in the air that we share, and once we are back on the ground, we go different ways. We want to define the ground we share. The ground we build our trust on, the ground we communicate on, the ground where we can be both: individuals and a group. It's ours, and it's yours"

Iris Pelz, former member of the Common Ground company.



Common Ground at Tollhaus Karlsruhe ©Bernadette Fink

I SHOOK HANDS WITH RIHANNA (ALMOST)

There is a theory, called six degrees of separation, that says that you are at most six handshakes away from every other person in the world. So yes, I (almost) shook hands with Rihanna. If we believe this theory to be true, in the age of internet, overflowed by (an illusion of) proximity with millions of people, literally connected to each other, I want to bring attention to what Maggie Nelson has to say about freedom in her book “*On Freedom, four songs of care and constraint.*”¹

© Justine Demolder



By Camille Paycha

Camille Paycha is an all-round artist based in Oostende, Belgium. She makes her own work under the organisation Boegbeeld. In 2021, Camille is circusnext laureate with her piece *Ice Skates And Other Cruelties*. She is now creating her latest piece *60 degrees of separation* that premieres on the 4th October

2024 in Oostende, Belgium. She is currently touring with *PERMIT* from the company Side-Show and is involved as pedagogue at the Academy of Circus and Performance Art in the Netherlands, and at Centre National des Arts du Cirque in Châlons-en-Champagne, France.

Maggie (I call her Maggie, as I am only six handshakes away from her) emphasises the collective aspect of freedom. She ends the introduction of her book with: “And while this sometimes means more protest and puppets, it can also mean the development of more understated practices by which one develops a greater tolerance for indeterminacy, as well as for the joys and pains of our inescapable relation.” Maggie sees freedom as a practice happening actively now and together, not as something which happened

in our nostalgic mind in a greater past nor in a magic moment in a hopeful future.

I cannot help thinking about circus practices when I read “the joys and pains of our inescapable relation”, with each other, with our environment, with objects. While emphasising awareness on “indeterminacy”, contemporary circus can be a lens or a microcosm representing the world, happening now, with others, objects and environment. Practising and staging a sustainable circus becomes then urgent matter. Let’s

¹ Ed. Graywolf Press, 2021



60 degrees of separation in June 2024 at Miramiro
in Ghent (Belgium) ©Justine Demolder

be a good circus artist and enhance “the joys and pains of our inescapable relation” to better resist, as Paul B. Preciado lyrically says, the “technopatriarchy”, “necropolitics”, “technoscientific capitalism” and “pharmacopornographic industry”.

60 degrees of separation

One of my practices, to resist the “technopatriarchal” and capitalist society, consists in making up a temporary theory in the form of a circus performance: *60 degrees of separation*. In this theory, we are not shaking hands with Rihanna (Unfortunately. But what I am proposing is also fun, I promise). We are shifting the theory to the realm of contemporary circus where circus artists and audience members shake hands. That is not the purpose in itself. What interests me is how a participatory circus performance can embody and embrace paradoxes around the concept of violence and thus challenge the binary thinking of good and bad, moral and amoral, active and passive, dominant and dominated. I’ll elaborate on the paradoxes I’m referring to, but first, let me provide a brief overview of the performance *60 degrees of separation*.

In *60 degrees of separation*, the audience is invited to share a moment with two circus performers and a drummer. Everything, and everyone, moves around them. The drummer is on a rolling podium. The acrobats are in the air, hanging on one aerial strap only. These two acrobats are holding hands and will need yours. Guided by the driving sound of the drums and thanks to the audience being present, within reach of the action, impressive tricks will come to life. Let’s explore, together, the intimacy linked to circus movements and the joy of the collective.

As said earlier, six degrees of separation is the name of the theory that says you are at most six handshakes away from every other person in the world. 60 degrees is approximatively the angle needed to lift someone off the ground if the person has one hand in the aerial strap and one hand pulled by someone else away from the hanging point.

60 degrees of separation is the combination of both and the name of this circus performance.

I am developing *60 degrees of separation* as a continuity and in contradiction with my previous work *Ice Skates and Other Cruelties*. In *Ice Skates and Other Cruelties*, a lonely character is staged, far from and frontal to the audience, in a world made of glass. The aesthetic beauty of glass clashes with the danger that this material provokes. The character does not perform violence but explores all the paradoxes inherent in that fictive reality happening from a distance. In this next performance, *60 degrees of separation*, I turn everything around. I surround myself with a fellow circus performer, live music and an audience. The settings of both performances are radically opposed, from solitude and distance to the collective and proximity, but are both part of my quest for a sustainable world where virtuosity, care and pleasure coexist and where no assumption around the concept of violence goes unquestioned.

Technique, violence, and intimacy

This is my way into the paradoxes I introduced earlier. As contradictory as they may seem, the settings of my last two works are a good illustration of my belief in the power of paradoxes for the rise of nuanced thoughts. I will go on by explaining the paradoxes I explore in *60 degrees of separation* in particular, and how shaking hands comes into play. My dramaturgical approach for this piece is based on the following questions: at which point does the care at the heart of intimacy shift to the violence inherent in the extreme physical actions of a circus technique? When does a technical movement become intimate?

The exploration of the in-between of intimacy and technique thus guides my choices for the creation of this piece. The technique used in this piece is violent insofar as it is about being pulled away from the hanging point by someone else if you have one hand in the strap. The performers are thus literally quartered. My dramaturgical approach or a list of paradoxes for a nuanced world in *60 degrees of separation* are about:

1) The way we practice the aerial strap (I purposely do not put an “s” at the end because we only use one strap and not a pair of straps in this piece) is pleasurable and violent at the same time. I find the fact of considering

the strap as a collective practice very joyful, as it was until now a technique I was practising on my own. The rule for this performance is that you are not allowed to hang in the verticality. You always need someone or something to pull you away from the hanging point to execute movement in the diagonal. This technique implies a collaborative and transversal way of dealing with our surroundings. Contradictory to that joy, this way of practising aerial strap is in my opinion even more painful than how straps are traditionally practised. It is difficult to align the body weight so that it does not destroy the skin of your wrist. The pressure on the shoulders is also high. Nevertheless, the body gets used to it and the joy of the collective experimentation prevails.

2) The pleasure and pain of performing 60 degrees of separation is real within the fakeness of representation and is used as a dramaturgical tool. We, for example, play with duration. We stay longer floating in the air, just pulled by the hand, so that the audience can see and feel the pleasure and pain at stake in a simple position which lays at the core of our physical vocabulary. We thus use different choreographic strategies like slow motion, repetition in different places of the room, duration, variations of a simple movement, to slowly let the violence appear within the beauty of the movement.

3) Which brings us to the necessity of care in the exploration of violence. The complicity of the performers does not only allow appearing accessible to the audience, but also contributes to the both visible and invisible care needed to explore violence. We indeed need for obvious reasons a very caring context to make sure violence is framed and remains in control by everyone involved.

4) Consent being inseparable from care, it is practised between the artists each day but also in a concrete way with the audience through a clear physical language. The way we move in relation to the audience is an invitation and never an obligation. The audience has thus part of the agency on how the performance will unfold. During the creation process, we also regularly invite audience members for work in progresses and have conversation on how they experience consent in the context of the piece.

5) The performers are being very casual on stage, very relaxed, but the piece is choreographic, cautiously written. The relaxed state of being is fed by the real friendship the two circus performers share. This friendship and complicity is purposely visible on stage. We are thus



60 degrees of separation in June 2024 at Miramiro in Ghent (Belgium) ©Justine Demolder

fully embracing a staged authenticity (term introduced by The Circus Dialogues²) to appear accessible for the audience and in control by executing a set choreography.

6) The use of audience participation. My colleague who shares the stage with me, Sofie Velghe, calls it an “engaging performance” instead of participatory. The engagement of the audience allows us to blur the active vs. passive binary. It makes the audience both directly responsible for the violence and part of the intimacy present in the space. We develop a simple physical language based on the handshake, which acts as an invitation for the audience to help us unfold the choreography. The handshake has alternatives for accessibility purposes, and the mere fact of being in the room is already engaging. Traditionally, in circus, audience participation implies the isolation of one person, for example a clown using an audience member in their act to provoke laughs by putting that person in awkward and often ridiculous situations. The process in our case is reversed. The engagement of the audience is made to enhance the feeling of being a collective. The dramaturgy of the piece is thus not based on a crescendo of technical difficulty, but on a crescendo of feeling being part of a group, a collective. That feeling of togetherness contributes to the care necessary in the engagement of the audience.

Being necessary and being enough

The exploration is ongoing and the performance 60

² The Circus Dialogues is a two-year artistic research project (2018-2020) funded by KASK School of Arts that investigates experimental encounters and exchanges between circus practice and theory. The project is led by Bauke Lievens, Quintijn Ketels, and Sebastian Kann, and accompanied by Vincent Focquet.

degrees of separation still has to meet more and different audiences, but if I had to conclude, I would put the emphasis on being in control. As artists, we grant ourselves the privilege of determining what the norms are for the time of a performance. Being aware of the power dynamics at stake is vital, and challenging them are necessary. Let's thus use the power of representation to stage alternative realities to better inspire ourselves in the creation of the world we would want to live in. In *60 degrees of separation*, we humbly explore the political power of a participatory, or engaging performance. We embark with the audience in a quest for collective care where violence is not only exposed, but also slightly shifted away from the binary between good and bad. We attempt to make the violence more tangible thanks to the proximity between artists and audience but also to create, thanks to that same proximity, joy between everything and everyone present in the given space. The joy comes from the pleasure of being part of a group and the feeling of both being necessary and being enough. Part of being in control is also to not take any movement for granted. The simple Western social code of the handshake or whatever social acknowledgement you use, carries meaning and each movement, when staged, has political potential. So even if we (I) do not shake hands with Rihanna, we do carry magic by being in connection with each other, with objects and with our environment. So, let's not be scared of paradoxes and in-betweens to provoke nuanced thoughts, that are necessary now more than ever.

INHABITING BODIES - DIARY OF THE *HABITAT* PERFORMANCE BY DORIS UHLICH

Engaging the audience in performance has always been in the DNA of RedPlexus. For several years now, the Plexus Rouge festival in Marseille has been developing immersive artistic forms that offer audiences both individual and collective experiences and strengthen social ties. Hosting the *Habitat* project by Austrian choreographer Doris Uhlich within the context of Perform Europe¹ is a challenge that allows us to deepen our relationship with audiences by placing the citizen, the body, nudity, and dance at the heart of the project.

© Christian Palen



By Christine Bouvier

Christine Bouvier is the artistic director of RedPlexus. RedPlexus is a space for research, experimentation, confrontation, and reflection on the newest forms of performance writing. She is also the co-founder of the Ornic'art collective and a resident at the Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille, France. Between 2007 and 2019, she participated in the Festival

Préavis de Désordre Urbain, blending performances that incorporated body, politics, and social dimensions. Since 2020, she has organised the Plexus Rouge festival in Marseille. In 2024, she participated in the Festival Les Plus Belles de Mai, which took place in one of Marseille's poorest areas.

One of the challenges is to share this extraordinary participatory experience on a large scale with European partners and to imagine new sustainable models of working together. Seventy local participants were recruited through various networks to form a transgenerational group of nude dancers, ranging in age from 19 to 70, with a third between 50

and 70, respecting gender parity. The group consisted of two-thirds non-professionals and one-third professionals. Although inclusive, there was unfortunately very little racial diversity, making the group unrepresentative of the cosmopolitan nature of Marseille. Nudity, particularly in performance, is a sensitive and taboo subject in the Arab and African communities and among

¹ Perform Europe is a forward-looking funding scheme for the European performing arts sector. The first edition of Perform Europe took place in the period 2020-2022. It supported 19 inclusive, diverse and green touring partnerships, comprising more than 85 partners, showing 45 artistic works from all performing arts disciplines more than 250 times across 27 Creative Europe countries and the UK. For more information on the second edition of Perform Europe, go to performeurope.eu



Habitat in Marseille at la Friche Belle de Mai during the Les Plus Belles de Mai festival in May 2022 ©Woodman

artists in exile in Marseille. Although the call for entries first circulated within Marseille's networks, it was also relayed on national and European networks. In the end, just under 50% of the participants were actually from Marseille, but this mix of geographical origins enriched the exchanges and performances. *Habitat* takes on its full meaning when shared with the public: in Marseille, 300 people attended the performance on Saturday evening, and 250 on Sunday evening. Audiences chose their degree of involvement and connection throughout the performance. Sharing values around the body and nudity is far from trivial and leaves a lasting impact.

AN ARTISTIC AND HUMAN ODYSSEY

A long journey into unexplored lands. It's a journey from which you won't emerge unscathed, whether you're a participant, an audience member, or a narrator. A powerful odyssey that still resonates in bodies and minds.

Boarding

Monday, 9 May 2022, 6 PM. The 70 participants go through the boarding formalities at the RedPlexus offices at the Friche la Belle de Mai: participation contracts, authorisation for image rights, antigenic tests. Smiles, furtive glances, snatches of conversation, emotional glances. There's a definite sense of excitement mixed with slight apprehension. Some participants meet up with friends, while others wait alone for the start. First stage: I welcomed the participants as director of RedPlexus and the Festival Plexus Rouge in the 300m² Dunes studio. Presentation of the European and local context of the *Habitat* project. Choreographer Doris Uhlich then took over, explaining her approach

to *Habitat* and giving the first instructions for the workshop. Although they all came with enthusiasm and motivation, some participants dreaded the moment when they would have to undress in front of unfamiliar bodies. One 70-year-old participant realised during years of analysis that she had never been able to take the risk to be without money and that with this project, she was taking the risk of being without cloths. Doris Uhlich put on some warm-up music and asked them to dance freely and to gradually undress. Naturally, the 70 participants found themselves naked without feeling any embarrassment or discomfort. But emotions bubbled to the surface and had to be accepted. In the next exercise, she asked them to connect with their primal, animal energy. With her assistants, she took an interest in each person and gave advice on refining movements and enriching each person's body vocabulary. Gradually, she invited them to come into contact with the bodies of other participants. From the very first evening, the participants' sense of well-being, confidence, and infectious joy were the keywords of the evening.

The itinerary

The itinerary consisted of five four-hour workshops each evening, from 6:30 PM to 10:30 PM. From the second evening onwards, the workshops took place in the Place des Horizons, a magnificent and atypical outdoor and covered space in the heart of La Friche. It offers a beautiful view of the rooftops of the Belle de Mai district. This was the space chosen to share the *Habitat* creation with the public during the two shows on May 14 and 15. Each evening, the performers inhabited the space with their naked bodies, exploring the architectural possibilities of the space and enriching the choreography. The music chosen by Doris played an essential role. Each session began with a festive dance warm-up that helped to bring the bodies together, create complicity and pleasure, and break down barriers. On the second evening, a power cut plunged the Place des Horizons into darkness from 9 PM. After a slight lull, the group's energy took over, and new choreographic complicities were born between the bodies. On day three, the collective energy was low; the bodies were tired and aching. Some needed to settle down and watch the other bodies in movement before plunging back into this ocean of flesh and tenderness with relish. On the fourth and fifth days, the emphasis was on looking at the different parts of the choreography with an open, benevolent gaze that encouraged sharing with the audience. Energies rose and mingled, connections were refined, and bodies exulted. The pleasure of naked bodies and vibrant flesh became contagious. Audiences were greeted by a short speech setting out the rules of the game.

PARTICIPANTS' WORDS

"Her beat is a drug. I love connecting with the ground and waking up the Ancestor".

"At first, we didn't dare to approach girls our own age, because it seemed ambiguous to us, we were still in the representation of sexualised nudity, conveying desire. So we opted instead for older partners with ageing bodies. And then we quickly realised that we could dance naked with any body without the erotic dimension coming into play."

"Every night, we weave something at the level of energy, even if we're not in it"

"It was from the third day onwards that we got into real dance work and started to find a space to work in."

"I am discovering the desexualised naked body, nudity without exhibition or voyeurism, devoid of eroticism. I'd never felt the waves of other ages. There's an alchemy

Uhlich leads us to break down the barriers between generations, between representations of different bodies. We're breaking with aesthetic patterns of seduction, exhibition and voyeurism. We're giving power back to the body. It's about humanity. The performative space is very political. Here, it's embodied in flesh and feeling. It's rare to meet so many different people and have the impression of being one body, a small particle of this great body. I have the feeling that I'm all cells in the same body. People don't look at me as me, but as an organ of a body. The resonance we have created between us is unique."

"I reclaim nudity, the ageing of the body, the fact that I'm not hot, the freedom to have hair, the freedom to be and move with our limitations and disabilities. All these bodies, ours, take the risk of assuming their imperfections, their deformities, their ageing, and that's the hymn to freedom we're offering the public."



Habitat in Marseille at la Friche Belle de Mai during the Les Plus Belles de Mai festival in May 2022 ©Woodman

between what you discover about your body, what you accept, what you can and can't do.

Something very powerful happens when 'the flesh vibrate' - it's a leap into the unknown. You touch your soft parts, your bulges, you make them vibrate instead of hiding them. Not only are you doing it with pleasure, but you're agreeing to make the flesh of someone you don't know vibrate. Making flesh vibrate is both ugly and sublime. The beauty of chaos. I'm discovering the possibility of reinventing the way I look at myself and the bodies of others, and of reformulating my body in space with the world."

"I wanted to go through a process across the body. I'm delighted by what I'm going through. It's a process that's physically nourishing and bound to extremely bodily feelings. We put up barriers to ourselves, and Doris

AUDIENCE'S WORDS

"I was expecting to have a unique experience, but I wasn't expecting to find myself in an open space with no distance from the audience. At around 8 PM, before the show started, I observed the 300-person audience waiting. We were taking up the whole space. "What's going to happen? We're obviously in the performance space." I was both excited and slightly tense. In order to wait, I looked at this magnificent space bathed in natural light and said to myself, This is surely going to be a shock to see raw naked bodies in daylight with their flaws."

"Although I had been warned, the solemn entrance of the 70 naked participants is a shock. They pass very close to you, very concentrated. They pass right through us, creating a surprise. I wasn't expecting to see them so

close, I thought there would be more distance between them and us. They were neutral, impassive. This attitude creates a kind of distance. You don't dare move too much. For the first ten minutes, I feel like a complete voyeur. I dare to look at the sexes, the buttocks, the breasts and not just the faces. Right from the start, it's all about the ambivalence between the aesthetic gaze and the voyeur's gaze. The first instinct is to look at naked bodies, which creates a feeling of guilt and shows off your complexes: am I attracted to this pretty body? And what about this ugly body, does it remind me of my bulges etc? You get used to them, they're all so impressive, from the youngest to the oldest. These bodies aren't beautiful or perfect, they're far from magazine images that don't reflect reality. I didn't see any sexualised bodies, but I did see bodies that I'm not used to seeing. They move, they don't stand still, they deform. It's all about accepting your body as it is. And as the show goes on, all these bodies become more and more beautiful and powerful, and the barriers come down. We, the audience, are dressed, in our comfort zone. We're in a position of ascendancy. But very quickly the balance of power will reverse. It also forces us to work on what is purest: the state of the naked body (with which we were born and in which we will die). This mixture of sensations (attractive, upsetting, disturbing, troubling) overwhelms you for 10 minutes, and then you shake it off and let yourself be completely carried away. Very quickly, you take this community as your own. The music is very present, and the many beats help you to enter the universe, to feel the collective aspect and to feel in symbiosis. The music is in harmony with the magnificent setting. There's something poetic about a place that's open to the city and out of sight. At sunset, the light was magical."

"You're free to choose how much you want to participate and how you want to share.

In this venue, there's no fourth wall, so you can't just be a spectator. You're on stage with them, but you can decide to be either more present or more observant. I decided to accompany the performers with my energy. I followed the movement and their energy. It was very exciting, and I quickly felt a contagious effect. I stayed with the score the whole time, wanting to feel the different states they were going through (on the floor, running, reversing, etc.). I was impressed by their anchoring. I would have liked to slow the group down, especially during the collective images of the crossing or the bodies lined up in front of the balcony or the bodies standing on the crates. But I didn't dare. It was very choreographed and staged; it might have disturbed them. I went looking for them and they responded. I felt real moments of sharing through their eyes. I, on the other hand, had a very occasional or furtive connection



Habitat in Marseille at la Friche Belle de Mai during the Les Plus Belles de Mai festival in May 2022 ©Woodman

with the performers in small ways. I felt their state of benevolence, complicity and tenderness. I felt more of a connection with the audience: we were looking at each other, the music was inviting you to dance. We wanted to move together. I wanted to touch the performers, to be in contact with them, but I didn't know where to draw the line. As the barriers came down, I felt more immersed and I felt the collective aspect. At a certain point, you feel caught up in this group energy, which is very animal and tribal."

The finale

Each performance receives a ten-minute standing ovation. After the performances, the audience can't leave Place des Horizons. They return to the performers' footsteps, perhaps to soak up their power and energy. They've passed into another world where they've explored what's possible, and they want to bring a little of that world back into their everyday lives. It's a journey that broadens horizons and opens up new perspectives. The challenge of deepening our relationship with the public has been embraced. Many participants and audience members have expressed the desire to connect with participants and audiences from the European partner towns of Bristol and Nordheim to share their experiences, the values conveyed by this creation, and the upheavals and utopias it explores. What if the next challenge was to bring these new worlds together?

THE INTERVIEW CORNER

INTERVIEW WITH NATASHA BOURKE

©Natasha Bourke



Natasha Bourke is an interdisciplinary artist of Irish/Dutch descent with a fine art and extensive movement background. Her practice spans performance, film, photography, installation, archive, text, drawing and sound to muse on themes in a surreal, playful and sincere way.

Bourke is an Arts Council Next Generation Artist and has created a large body of live/filmic works including recent sell-out swimming pool-based performance vision, *Kilter, Matter and Ghosts* and feature film *Concrete Keys*. Pending funding, she will develop a new 16mm film work.

How does the expression “common bodies” resonate with you?

When I hear the expression “common bodies,” I initially think of an ordinary body, in contrast to something extraordinary or sculpted in a particular way. It’s the standard, everyday body you might see on the street, without any notable differences or impairments. However, the term “body” in English isn’t limited to human form; it can also refer to a body of water or other materials. This broader interpretation leads me to consider “common bodies” as encompassing more than just human beings. Perhaps it reflects our tendency as humans to differentiate ourselves from the rest of the world, yet it could also signify a commonality with other materials or elements around us. This perspective intrigues me because it challenges our usual human-centric viewpoint and suggests a wider range of possibilities.

Your practice embraces performing arts, visual arts, sound, and film. How do all these disciplines intertwine in your creations?

It depends on the project and its specific requirements.

My recent major work was a feature-length film *Concrete Keys*¹ that integrated performance and recorded sounds, responding to various sites. It was shot in a large, old building housing many artists, exploring themes of closure and demolition. Film, like puppetry, fascinates me because it combines different skills and techniques—movement, light, and sound. Currently, I’m preparing for a premiere in less than four weeks²—a performance based in a swimming pool, blending live performance and filmed elements. This solo piece challenges me, raising questions about ego and the significance of a single body in a vast space populated with many human figures. The use of film in my work serves both practical and conceptual purposes, allowing me to transition between live and recorded elements while honouring the space and its materiality. My background in fine art informs my approach, focusing less on formal techniques and more on activating space through interdisciplinary means, which, while rewarding, can also present challenges in maintaining focus and coherence.

In your work, you often explore the effects induced by institutional frameworks, such as prisons, hospitals, and workplaces, on bodies

¹ *Concrete Keys* was made with the support of Arts Council Ireland.

² This interview was made before the presentation of Natasha Bourke’s *Kilter, Matter and Ghosts* performance between the 18th and 21th of June, 2024, in the frame of Cork Midsummer Festival in Ireland.

through site-specific performances. Could you share more about this approach? How is the audience engaging with these types of performances?

I'm deeply intrigued by institutions—they are forms of both resistance and necessity in our lives. Institutions shape our societal structures and provide frameworks for survival. However, they also carry histories and systems that can be restrictive.

My recent works have explored the concept of institutions in various physical settings, responding to specific sites and their institutional histories. For instance, *Concrete Keys* integrated performance to camera, engaging audiences in cinematic or gallery settings rather than live environments. Yet, I have also ventured into live performances, where the immediacy of interaction allows for a different kind of engagement.

In these live art settings, I often create characters born out of specific contexts, drawing from my background in fine arts and a desire for artistic freedom. Live art, to me, represents a space where artists can challenge conventions and explore political themes without censorship. One significant experience that shaped my work involved attempting to suspend myself from the ceiling of an old church, formerly a mental asylum and prison. This site's dark history intrigued me, yet practical barriers, such as insurance regulations in Ireland, hindered the realisation of this performance. This experience highlighted the irony of trying to create meaningful, sometimes political art within institutional constraints.

As an interdisciplinary artist, I navigate between worlds and mediums, seeking to address themes of institutionalisation, particularly in my latest work *Kilter; Matter and Ghosts* through the damaging effects of ballet on both women and men. Having experienced vulnerability within such structured environments as a youth, my work often explores themes of liberation and healing from institutional norms.

Would you say that resistance and common action are topics addressed by many artists around you at the moment? If so, why?

In a way, focusing on the institutional world can also be seen as an act of resistance.

In my current work, *Kilter; Matter and Ghosts*, set in a swimming pool, I explore character voices through video that act as unreliable narrators, addressing themes of institutional abuse and my personal experiences, particularly the physical abuse inherent in intense training environments and the abuse of power. It's about the vulnerability of humans and the desire to be loved and recognised, navigating the dangers of virtuosic training.



Natasha Bourke: *Kilter; Matter and Ghosts* (chapter II - a sigh).
Swimming pool-based interdisciplinary performance
©Jed Niezgoda

This exploration serves as a tool to break through personal resistance and challenge systemic norms. Growing up, resistance was ingrained in me as a means of self-preservation and maintaining identity amidst a culture that often commodifies individuals. My work resists being easily categorised—it's not circus or a display of virtuosity, and expectations of such would miss its nuanced exploration. It's a complex interplay of resistance to societal expectations and an exploration of what it means to exist authentically. It confronts the pressure to conform to ideals of beauty or performance, reflecting my own struggles with shyness and self-perception. In the context of ballet and gymnastics, where conformity to a specific body type is often prioritised, there's little room for what I refer to as a "common body," one that doesn't fit conventional norms. This dichotomy informs my artistic inquiry into identity and resistance, striving to honestly explore these themes through performance and film.

Do you believe artists who create in the public space can make a difference in raising awareness on these issues? If so, how?

Considering these issues we've discussed—about institutionalisation, control over bodies, and so forth—I think it's important to recognise their complexity. These topics provoke varied responses and opinions, often sparking ongoing conversations among performance makers.

Personally, I appreciate humour and physicality in my work. These elements allow for a direct engagement with audiences, reaching deep into societal issues. Traditional practitioners may view my work as pretentious because it diverges from classical norms. However, the approach to such themes varies greatly, and I find value in a softened, less confrontational approach, one that avoids excessive anger.

Reflecting on other artists' work, like that of Kamchàtka, a European outdoor arts collective based in Barcelona (Spain), I admire their sensitive approach to public spaces. They use simple yet effective devices to provoke thought and engagement, tackling difficult subjects like the Second World War across various European contexts. Their work exemplifies a blend of simplicity and profound commentary, something I aspire to in my own practice.

As I prepare for a one-woman show in a swimming pool setting, I confront the challenge of maintaining artistic



Natasha Bourke: *Kilter, Matter and Ghosts* (chapter IV - Angry baby). Swimming pool-based interdisciplinary performance
©Enrique Carnicero

integrity amidst broader societal challenges. This endeavour requires both bravery and vulnerability, akin to the contradictions inherent in navigating personal and artistic growth.

Ultimately, my artistic journey is about exploring and expressing complex themes with sincerity and integrity. It's a continuous process of questioning, evolving messages, and finding meaningful connections with audiences. While I may not have answers, I believe in the power of art to provoke thought and inspire change, even in the face of great uncertainty and complexity.

THE INTERVIEW CORNER

INTERVIEW WITH KYLA DAVIS

© Jieli Wang



Kyla Davis is a theatremaker, educator, and activist based in Johannesburg, South Africa. She is the founder and director of Well Worn Theatre, an independent physical theatre company best known for creating trailblazing plays around eco-social justice themes and whose productions have so

far been seen by over 100 000 audience members across South Africa. She is also the co-founder and co-director of the Johannesburg School of Mask and Movement Theatre (JMAM), a training programme dedicated to the development of artistic excellence in the medium of mask and movement theatre.

How does the expression “common bodies” resonate with you?

Firstly, I think of shared space, or of *sharing* space. In particular, public spaces where lots of bodies gather to use the facilities and resources. I'm thinking about urban settings such as streets, squares, markets, taxi ranks, parks, playgrounds, and paths and public buildings like libraries, museums, swimming pools, community centres, etc. It seems to me that these kinds of inclusive spaces - that technically belong to everyone who visit them and, importantly, where no one is asked to leave - are in sharp decline. As public spaces and services become increasingly privatised and restricted, I wonder where people will be able to gather and simply be without needing to justify their presence. Or, worse, where they have to spend money in order to justify their existence there - I am thinking specifically of malls here, which in South Africa are more and more becoming a substitute for genuine communal space. In Johannesburg, especially, public space is heavily surveilled and, more often than not, policed by private security in an attempt to keep out any ‘undesirables’ or, in other words, ‘those who do not look like they *belong*.’

It's against this backdrop of ‘unbelonging’ that we are even more determined to occupy space with performance, creativity, art, activism, and joy. How are we, as humans, meant to connect and practice empathy

with one another if our usual places of assembly - those ‘commons’ where we are allowed to meet on relatively equal terms - are rapidly diminishing? We have heard of ‘echo chambers’ online, but they also exist in everyday life. As society retreats further and further into so-called ‘safe’, private zones, we move ever-inwards and away from the everyday places that tie us together in human activity. As we do so, we are less likely to come into contact with the other, i.e. bodies, faces, voices, expressions that are different from our own. We are less able to perform the very simple act of mirroring each other, something which outdoor arts and performance achieves so well. Activating common spaces through performance and play re-invites people into those spaces in a non-judgemental way and asks the audience-participant to Look! See! Wonder! And feel!

The phrase “common bodies” resonates in relation to our natural world as well. In our production *Burning Rebellion* - which we describe as a climate justice protest poem - there is the following line:

*‘Every body dies
every body of water
every body of trees
every body of bugs, seeds and bees.
This is the body of evidence of our blind negligence...’*
This line stands as a reminder that our bodies are not

separate from those found in nature, and that both kinds of bodies are, as we understand it, in crisis now. In my opinion, the intersecting crises of climate change and social justice struggles are, in many ways, directly related to the lack of opportunities (spaces and places) for us to connect meaningfully and freely with ourselves, with nature and, more importantly, with each other.

The Well Worn Theatre Company is defining itself as theatre and public art activists. What kind of changes do you want to see put in motion?

It may be interesting to note that Well Worn Theatre Company did not originally set out to be an advocate for outdoor arts. When we began touring our productions in 2010, we made a few discoveries that informed and fundamentally changed the way we made theatre. The first of these was that ours is an enormous country, filled with people from widely diverse cultural backgrounds. Our country has 12 official languages (including sign language). Of course, we already knew this - in theory! However, the lived experience of performing for such a wide range of audiences led us to realise that if we wanted to make theatre that could be appreciated by all, we would need to find a common language that could be understood in many different contexts. We leaned in heavily to our physical theatre background and created image-based theatre using masks, puppets, larger-than-life characters, and universal stories that could be accessed by a wide range of audiences. Also, lots of songs! Secondly, we discovered first-hand the real lack of formal performance spaces in our country. We adapted our productions to be able to perform anywhere: soccer fields, corridors, amphitheatres, under trees, in classrooms, and in every variety of hall you can imagine! This also influenced our style - we reconsidered theatrical elements that you usually rely on in a theatre, i.e. lights, amplified sound, costume, 'backstage', audience seating, etc.

All this to say that, as our years of touring went on, we became more adapted to performing and making work in and for public spaces. What began as a necessity soon turned into a love and then a passion for creating theatre (especially activist theatre, that speaks to eco-social justice issues) that can be performed anywhere and be accessible to everyone. Our wish is to see more of our colleagues embracing the freedoms that this



Earthlife Africa Climate Justice March in Johannesburg (South-Africa) in 2018 ©Kyla Davis

style of theatre offers. Given the lack of formal theatre spaces, as well as the prohibitive cost (nevermind the nepotistic gate-keeping) that often plague access to traditional theatres, my hope is that more artists recognise that they do not need to wait for anyone to give them permission or access in order to make art. Theatre can happen anywhere and everywhere and should be available for everyone, where they live.

In the creation *Burning Rebellion* (2019), which you have recently toured with in South Africa, you address themes such as climate change, ecological and social justice, activism. What kind of reactions and/or conversations with the audience this performance has brought up?

We devised *Burning Rebellion* in 2019 in response to the 'School Strike 4 Climate' movement¹ which at that point was sweeping the globe. Having made work that responds to eco-social justice issues for over a decade, we were impressed by the new energy that young people were bringing to the conversation. They were (are) demanding their voices be heard in an issue of profound importance that will directly impact their (our!) future on Earth. I was moved by the sentiment of the protests,

¹ 'School Strike 4 Climate' is an international movement of school students who skip Friday classes to participate in demonstrations to demand action from political leaders to prevent climate change and for the fossil fuel industry to transition to renewable energy. Publicity and widespread organising began after Swedish pupil Greta Thunberg staged a protest in August 2018 outside of the Swedish Riksdag (parliament), holding a sign that read "Skolstrejk för klimatet" ("School strike for climate").

which I took to be full of righteous rage, though never violent. I remember watching footage and reading articles coming out of these protests and thinking: yes! That feeling is exactly right!

It was this impetus that led to the style of *Burning Rebellion* as a protest poem. The poem is performed 'raw' by the performers, who are also the co-writers of the piece. By this we mean no costumes, props, set or anything to mask the clarity of the words and the sincerity of the emotion. It is, we feel, a powerful piece that speaks directly to the hearts and minds of young South Africans and their critiques and concerns about climate justice right now.

On tour, the performance is directly followed by an activism workshop on 'Theatre-making and Climate Justice'. We designed the workshop as a way for the 'rawness' of the poem to have a place to land in the audience's body. The workshops have revealed more detailed feedback about the audience's reaction to the poem. What we draw from these reactions is that young South Africans are no longer speaking about climate change as though it is some irrelevant topic, separate to their lives. They

What challenges lie ahead for performing arts in South Africa, particularly those who create in the public space and try to make a difference in raising awareness on these issues?

At the risk of sounding like a stuck record, arts and culture, no matter the theme, is not meaningfully or financially supported by our government. Too many of our leaders view theatre and the arts as a luxury, rather than the fundamental human need that it is. It is exceedingly difficult to make a living as a theatremaker, leading many artists to take on work outside their profession in order to get by. The unfortunate consequence of this being that artists can't afford to take risks with their work. The reasoning becomes that if an artist is to invest time and money into making work, they need to know that audiences will pay to see it. To make work that is outside the mainstream (and by this I mean work that is political or activist in nature) or experimental in form, is risky business. It is my hope that, in this global moment of struggle, contemporary audiences are choosing



Swarm Theory in Joza (South-Africa) in 2019 ©Daylin Paul

are speaking now of climate justice and how it intersects with a myriad of other social justice challenges that they are confronting within their communities on a daily basis. For example, a common fear that we hear is about water: namely, access to drinking water, toxic water, water scarcity etc. This, like many of the issues raised in the poem, is something that affects all of us, no matter where we live. 'Water is life' is a theme we can all understand and something which ties us together in a rallying call for survival.

to watch theatre that is provocative and thought-provoking, however, sadly the opposite is often the case. It would appear that for many paying audiences, the world is challenging enough as it is, and so they seek escapism and 'guilt-free' entertainment that does not ask us to examine our privileges too closely. Perhaps, then, our task now as theatremakers is to devise work that surprises audiences by being both entertaining and enlightening and to devise message-driven theatre that is not didactic, but that stands on its own as being excellent art and fabulous storytelling.

INTERVIEW WITH ANNA SERLENGA

©CESURA



Anna Serlenga works in both theatrical and performative practice and theoretical research. She graduated from IUAV University of Venice in Performance Studies and holds a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of Palermo. As a director, she was a finalist for the Kantor Award (2010) and a semi-finalist for the Scenario Award (2013). From 2012 to 2018, she lived in Tunisia, founding the artistic collective Corps Citoyen. She taught at the University of Sfax and

collaborated with the Institut Supérieur d'Art Dramatique and the Institute of Italian Culture in Tunis. Returning to Italy in 2018, she worked with MOTUS and IUAV. Now in Milan, she is a post-doctoral research fellow at IUAV and artistic co-director of Milano Mediterranea and is associate artist through Corps Citoyen at IN SITU – European Platform for artistic creation in public space, in the frame of the (UN)COMMON SPACES project (2020-2024).

How does the expression “common body/ies” resonate with you?

We chose in 2013 to call our artistic collective CORPS CITOYEN, or ‘citizen bodies’, in a clear reference to the collective practice of bodies that, in the streets of Tunis only two years earlier, had acted out a revolution by manifesting themselves together in public space. An alliance of bodies, quoting Judith Butler, which becomes the common body of a generational instance pressing for rights but above all dignity and freedom.

As artists, we therefore felt part of the same cultural and political tension, where the body and the bodies are at the centre of a broad, common and collective movement: a “battleground” where the body is both the object of a tension of control and the space of a subversive and creative movement of the new.

Our first show was entitled *MOUVMA! Nous qui avons encore 25 ans*. Mouvma in Tunisian dialect is literally translated as “social movement” but also, at the same time, “choreographic movement” in a work that had the necessity to express with bodies the power of resistance and collective action. In 2005, the French suburbs were ablaze, with cars burning and the voices of angry youths screaming their rage throughout the night. Ronan Chéneau was publishing a play entitled *Res/persona*, leaving suspended between the lines a stinging question:

what is the minimum condition of acceptance? Which one is the life that does not need to be changed? In the first weeks of 2011, Tunisia gets inflamed in an uprising that, as a rapid contagion, goes beyond its confines and spreads until touching all countries in North Africa and beyond. Riots that too early have been called “Arab spring”, and that we sometimes see today detonated in the multiple forms of radical and chaotic situation, from Syria to Egypt. Yet amid the dust it remains the dignity for an action felt, even for a moment, as needed. *MOUVMA!* wanted to be the story of this necessity. So it seems clear to me that the term ‘common bodies’ resonates significantly in our practice and also in our history.

Through the collective Corps Citoyen you are an IN SITU associate artist on the (UN)COMMON SPACES project. What is your role in it? What is it bringing to your practice?

We joined the European IN SITU network as emerging artists, presented by the Italian consortium in 2023. Our role was to take part in an international meeting where we were able to present our work and our conception of art in public space to a network composed of insti-

tutions, festivals, and theatres from different European countries and, at the same time, to confront ourselves, divided into working tables, with the network of associated and emerging artists who, together with us, build the network.

Participation in the network was very important for us because it allowed us to come into direct and relational contact with European partners, which is very difficult for artists working in the Italian context.

Starting from this first participation during the Hot House in Pristina¹, two collaborations were then developed with the Scène Nationale de L'Essonne (Evry, France) and with Lieux Publics (Marseille, France) which will take shape in two site-specific productions between June and October 2024.

In 2023, you have conducted a workshop around the topic of the political body during the FAROUT Live Arts Festival at the venue Base, in Milano. Can you let us know more about this project, and what was your aim to achieve with it? How did the audience engage with it?

The political body is the main subject of our latest performance project *Gli Altri* (The Others). The work seeks to question the narrative power of self and other representation, on the one hand, and the political nature of bodies in their very presence and positioning within the representation, through the lens of irony and the oscillation between documentary reality and declared fictionalisation.

"Can the subaltern speak?" asked Gayatri Spivak² in 1988 in a famous speech on Marxism and the interpretation of culture. Defining who has the right to speak in the public sphere is now more than ever a central theme in the redefinition of the roles of power that characterises the relationship with subjects who are considered minors. Western narration has a precise agency of power, which defines the other, starting from its own categories: for this reason, defining who speaks and the authorial's space that it occupies are central themes of a performative practice that wants to be contemporary and political.

In the frame of the project, we aim to open spaces of representation for subaltern communities, misrepresented by the major narrative: we address the afro-descendant community through an open call in



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each territory to participate in an open workshop that will end with a video-set. The video materials produced in the frame of the workshop will be then integrated in the performance's dramaturgy, anchoring the project in each territory in which we will present it.

The political body is an open workshop where, through some devices of performance - reenactment, documentary work, practices on presence, fictionalisation - we will try to enhance the political nature of each body and its power through the representation par excellence, the stage fiction, which helps to create and strengthen the narratives of the present, but which can also be a subversive place to sabotage the major narratives through the insertion of another body, a presence that exposes itself to the public in its own fragility and power.

For the 2023 edition of FAROUT Live Arts Festival, the political body is transformed into an interactive performative event, where the experimentation of performative techniques and devices leaves room for an experience that sees the public as the protagonist of a game around bodies, their presence and representation. We chose to offer the public an experience that had a reflective and sensitive impact, in a much more concentrated time than the intensive workshop lasting two or

¹ Organised by IN SITU, the Hot House is a safe space designed to give European artists and programmers the opportunity to discuss artistic works-in-progress. In April 2023, the Hot House was hosted by ODA Teatri in Pristina (Kosovo) on climate change and sustainability.

² Gayatri Spivak is an Indian scholar, literary theorist, and feminist critic. She is a University Professor at Columbia University and a founding member of the establishment's Institute for Comparative Literature and Society.

three days, with a different sense of belonging to the group and of trust to the mentors.

The experience was evocative, in the rooftop of Base Milano where it is also possible to have an overview of the city skyline, from the centre to its periphery.

A reflection around the city's dynamics of power, intended itself as a common body, was pointed out.

Would you say that the “commons” are a topic addressed by many artists around you at the moment? If so, why?

I believe that the topic of the commons is very important at this moment of high disintegration and conflict on a global level. We also imagined a participatory project in 2018 entitled *#COMMONS*, an art project of nomadic research that investigates public space as a space of change, resistance and collective imagination.

The core issue of the project is “the common”, intended as the space of transformations and negotiations acted by a community to operate a change and a proactive development of what belongs to itself and, at the same time, inhabits the territory. Through participated art residencies in different places of the Mediterranean area, *#COMMONS* aims at making visible the voices, stories, desires and conflicts of the spaces and people living there. *#COMMONS* was born as a platform for discussion and artistic action on what it means to inhabit public space in community: for this reason, the first stage of the project was realised in Gabès, in the south of Tunisia, to give visibility to the contradictions and potential that the territory expresses.

Do you believe artists have a responsibility in raising awareness on these issues? Do you believe creation in the public space can make a difference? If so, how?

In a famous essay by the theatre historian professor Erika Fischer-Lichte, “*The transformative power of arts. New aesthetics*”³, is pointed out that theatre (and performing arts in general) has a powerful transformative capacity, given by two fundamental and constitutive factors of the discipline itself: being conveyed through the body, embodied in the most intimate sense possible, and being built within a liminal relationship, where then the rules, codes and hierarchies of everyday life are suspended by virtue of the creation of a safe space in which the creation becomes possible.

As Bauman⁴ argued, culture, in its interaction with society, is moving from a focused and hierarchical model

to a diffuse and shared one. The issue of participation involves the testing of a dual hypothesis. The first is that of a radical transformation of the hierarchical model, implying a lack of power on the part of the audience to decide on the content of whatever event it attended. The second hypothesis speculates on the extent to which it is now possible to consider a new model of participation which overcomes such hierarchies.

If we follow this comparative approach, it is undeniable that participatory art, precisely because of the mechanisms of rupture thanks to which it places the public at the centre of the performative discourse, is a socio-cultural practice that can have a wide-ranging impact in helping citizens to live and exercise their active and critical role in other areas of their public and private lives. At the same time, it can teach institutions new ways of relating to and involving the public.

Moreover, participatory art practices increasingly touch on themes that simulate or metaphorically lead the citizen back to issues of public management: the city, public space, the ability to be a narrative protagonist of one's own environment and experience. It is therefore not an isolated process, but one that is influenced by and capable of influencing similar processes in other areas of common life, so that the citizen, the person, can play a leading role in relation to his or her own needs: allowing citizens to own the problem, to be aware of it and, I would add, for institutions to develop skills for dialogue with citizens.



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³ Ed. Routledge (Jun 5, 2008)

⁴ Bauman, Z. (May, 2011). Migration and identities in the globalized world. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 37(4).

INTERVIEW WITH JUAN IGNACIO TULA

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As a circus artist and dancer, trained at the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (France), Juan Ignacio Tula developed his personal work at MPTA-Mathurin Bolze's company between 2015 and 2019. Back in 2019, he established company 7bis, an independent company based in Lyon (France). Since then, he creates, performs and produces his own shows.

His research mainly focuses on the Cyr wheel and reflects upon the cooperation practices between Europe and South America in the promotion of contemporary circus. The repertoire of the 7bis company is recognised both in France and internationally.

Can you tell us what 'common bodies' means to you?

This expression makes me think of the idea of sharing. If we all had only one body to share, how could we take care of it? It's an open door to the notion of empathy and to the idea that once we're out in the world, there will be someone else. This common body is the representation of this world that we share, unfortunately, from my point of view, quite badly.

You are a circus artist and dancer who trained at the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC - National Center for Circus Arts) in Châlons-en-Champagne, France, where you chose to develop your skills on the Cyr wheel. What possibilities does this apparatus bring for you in your artistic research and approach?

For me, this metal hoop is the basis of my work and the starting point for every creative process. I immediately found it really enjoyable and easy to discover this

apparatus, which brings together movement, acrobatics, and an understanding of space. I see it as dance, or at least I've had this dancing approach since I started practising in 2010.

However, this object questions and obsesses me, because it had a life before us, it already has an ancestral existence. The wheel was created around 3500 BC. Everything can be expressed through it. Paradoxically, as a recent circus practice that appeared in the 2000s, it offers many opportunities for invention. I have succeeded in making this object the point of convergence of my knowledge of Lindy Hop, tango, contemporary dance, object manipulation and acrobatics.

The possibilities in my research and my artistic approach are numerous and become clear with each creation. Whether in 2015, in a relationship danced on the ground by manipulating the wheel with the feet, which marked a change in the use of the apparatus, or in duet with Stefan Kinsman in Santa Madera in 2017. In my solo *Instante*¹, created in 2018 as part of the Festival utoPistes¹, I turn with the wheel raised and parallel to the floor like a dervish dance. *Tiempo*, created in 2021 with Justine Berthillot, is a huis clos where we spin the

¹ The utoPistes festival is a biennial circus arts event organised by the MPTA company and the Association de Préfiguration de la Cité Internationale des Arts du Cirque in Lyon (France), an organisation advocating for the creation of an international center for Contemporary Circus, the "Cité internationale des arts du cirque".

wheel at arm's length, turning it into a scenographic space. *Pourvu que la mastication ne soit pas longue*, created for Vive le sujet at the Festival d'Avignon in 2021 with Hakim Bah, Arthur B. Gillette and Mara Bijeljic, the wheel becomes the medium for a story about the death of Amadou Diallo, shot 41 times in the Bronx. And in 2022, in collaboration with Marica Marinoni in *Lontano*, we developed a work based around combat and the manipulation of objects.

Finally, this practice allows me to merge different artistic disciplines into a single continuous and fluid movement, and to explore both conceptual and narrative relationships. It provides fertile ground for experimentation and creation, allowing me to push back the boundaries, because this object inhabits me and carries me away.

Whether through your co-creation with acrobat Marica Marinoni, *Lontano* (2022), or *Pourvu que la mastication ne soit pas longue* (2021) developed with Hakim Bah, your artistic work focuses on the body's relationship with commitment and resistance. Could you tell us more about this collaborative approach and these concerns?

The idea of commitment resonates deeply within me. I come from a fairly politically committed family and, naturally, commitment is always accompanied by a form of resistance. I grew up in Buenos Aires at the height of the Argentine crisis, where getting involved in the cultural sector required commitment and resilience. Cultural centres, streets and parks were the places where this culture was forged. Perhaps that's what drew me to these themes.

As for the way we work, every creation is an adventure to be shared, and every meeting is an opportunity to learn from each other. Each collaborator brings something that makes the encounter unique. I believe that behind every director lies a great artistic team. I've discovered that I prefer to work in this form of collaboration, where I nurture my work while bringing out the best in others. It's not easy in this profession, where ego is often paramount. But I think it's a great way of moving forward together and becoming 'one common body'.

You are currently developing the project *Sortir par la porte, une tentative d'évasion*, in which you explore very personal themes around resilience. Why was it so important for you to include your life experiences in your circus creations? How do audiences engage with this kind of performance?

Integrating my life experiences into my work is



Instant T during ConTempo festival in Kaunas (Lithuania) in 2023 ©Martynas Plepys

fundamental to me. Each work inevitably reflects a part of my story. In the project *Sortir par la porte, une tentative d'évasion*, I felt the need to share a story from my teenage hood, during which I was unjustly placed in a detox centre for two years. But this didn't happen by chance, it was when I looked back at my last three creations that I realised that the themes of confinement, oppression, resistance and resilience are omnipresent. I can't explain it, but my body and my unconscious are guiding me towards these thematic choices, revealing aspects of my experience that I hadn't fully recognised at first in my research. It was through the physical materialisation of this memory of confinement that I decided to use this experience as raw material.

The audience's involvement is central to this new creation. After making *Instante* in 2018, a piece in which I spin without stopping for 25 minutes, the most frequent question from the audience was about what I felt inside the wheel. Using video became a way of inviting the audience to share my feelings. Opening up this personal story and sharing it in the form of fiction contributes to the transparency of what I experience. I find that when you tackle sensitive and authentic subjects, it touches the audience deeply. Sharing personal truths allows for a stronger connection and emotional engagement with the audience, getting them to feel and live the experience with me.

In any case, it's a great adventure with quite a lot at stake. We're halfway through the creation schedule and the final proposal will be presented on 14 May 2025 at Le Prato, in Lille, France, on 23 and 24 May 2025

at Les SUBS as part of the Festival utoPistes in Lyon, France, and during the Multi-Pistes festival which will take place between 12 and 17 August 2025 at Le Sirque, Pôle National Cirque in Nexon, France.

Do you think that contemporary circus artists can make a difference on raising awareness of these issues? If so, how?

Artists can certainly make a difference on raising awareness of various issues. They have the power to reach a wide audience through images and performances that transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries. The contemporary circus, which is still evolving dramaturgically, now offers a platform where different art forms can intersect, but with an approach that is unique to the circus.



Instant T performed by Juan Ignacio Tula
©Gregory Rubinstein/Collectif Des Flous Furieux

As for how these artists can effectively raise awareness among audiences, that depends on each creative process. That being said, I think it's important that this work is being done. We're living in very turbulent times, with a strong resurgence of the extreme right, poverty and war. The artist must represent reality, give a different reading of things, shift the narrative of the world in order to open up new perspectives. It is through this reinterpretation of reality that artists can raise awareness and encourage reflection, creating a space for dialogue and awareness-raising.

COMMON BODY/IES CHARTER

CIRCOSTRADA CHARTER ON THE COMMONS

Introduction

The Circostrada Charter on the Commons is the result of a collaborative process between members of the Common body/ies internal committee, with support from the Circostrada coordination team, and facilitated externally by Chiara Organtini.

Developed over the course of 2023-2024, the Charter sets out the initial parameters for the network - as well as its affiliate members and all actors involved in its activities - to take concrete and measurable actions that enhance the solidarity and mutuality of Circostrada's resources and membership. In doing so, the Charter lays the groundwork for an ongoing open dialogue about our shared responsibility for a stronger and generous community of performing arts professionals. The network strongly stands in favour of shared-responsibility between all players from the field and will strive to foster solidarity, mutuality, and reciprocity within its international ecosystem.

The network focuses on the commons as a means of fostering collaboration, equitable access, and sustainable management of resources related to contemporary circus and outdoor arts, in order to stimulate innovation and collective growth. Being part of a larger capitalistic system, Circostrada is aware of the utopia of being a fully democratic community and a collective with equal rights. However, in recognition of the ongoing injustices and disparities inherited from colonial and geopolitical history, the network is vigilant to not reproduce harmful power relations in its international collaborations. It will strive to foster a common ground and a culture of reciprocity through its governance, programmes, and activities. The commons should be inherent to any network and must be at the heart of Circostrada's objectives.

The suggestions and best practices presented in this Charter shall be recognised and approved by all members, artists, festival organisers, participants, and other guests involved in Circostrada's programme of activities. As a European network, however, Circostrada appreciates the great diversity of political environments and cultural contexts that its members operate within. This analysis also implies an understanding that its members have varying levels of access to information and necessary public infrastructure, and that meeting our defined goals carries an unequal burden for some actors.

The Circostrada Charter on the Commons is a work in progress. The internal Common body/ies Committee will meet annually to assess the network's progress according to the stated objectives, and to enrich the content of the Charter.

1. Sharing resources

What to focus on:

- Facilitating the dissemination of best practices across various domains including production, project management, programming, distribution, and stakeholder communication
- Establishing a secure and collaborative platform for knowledge sharing to foster a culture of innovation and holistic sustainability

What can the network do about it:

- Enhance the resources section of our network website, focusing initially on toolkits and funding guides
- Diversify content and perspectives by incorporating a broader range of toolkits and practices, while considering the varied profiles of our members, from small organisations to large institutions, to avoid perpetuating unequal power dynamics
- Foster a culture of reciprocity among members by creating time and spaces where partners can mentor and support each other, promoting solidarity, and collectively addressing operational gaps

2. Connecting space and developing (transnational) bridges

What to focus on:

- Connect or reconnect (post covid) global areas (Europe, Africa, America, Asia, Australia)
- Disseminate regionally what we learn in the international dimension
- Acknowledge differences and enforce solidarity (among artforms, organisations, individuals)
- Break the “bubble”: learn to create bridges with people from diverse backgrounds

What can the network do about it:

- Forge partnerships with existing international networks to facilitate increased interaction, connection, and knowledge sharing both within and outside the EU
- Invite members to bring awareness and facilitate, in their countries, the dissemination of Circostrada initiatives and resources
- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration by breaking down “silos” and promoting exchanges with other fields and networks
- Extend invitations to groups of organisations based in the same country to join as a consortium (no legal body needed) in case they do not meet individual admission criteria (rules set by the network)
- Supplement physical mobility with regular and accessible online meetings and events, open to both members and non-members, to provide consistent opportunities for connection and collaboration.

3. Publicness

What to focus on:

- Engage in critical reflection on the civic use of artistic practices
- Assess the impact of these practices on the communities and territories of our members
- Recognise and leverage the significance and influence of cultural policies

What can the network do about it:

- Engage members to foster cultural engagement beyond traditional enthusiasts through processes of co-creation and co-ownership and encourage their audiences to be active participants
- Highlight cultural practices that utilise public spaces strategically to promote social change, while counteracting urban gentrification
- Enhance facilitation skills and tools to attune to emergent needs and priorities within communities and audiences
- Advocate for an evaluation framework that emphasises on qualitative indicators, to avoid falling into the trap of solely quantitative metrics, recognizing the limitations of a data-centric culture

4. Artistic development and creative processes

What to focus on:

- Supporting emerging needs and questions in artistic production
- Fighting precarity in the field
- Redefining programming and producing as sustainable and integrated
- Encouraging and supporting projects that are outside any public support or markets
- Understanding that treating culture as a product takes away its political power

What can the network do about it:

- Highlight new formats and collaborative approaches as a horizontal system, fostering communities of interest that include artists and organisations
- Encourage collaboration with artists on equal footing, overcoming hierarchical structures by establishing protocols, contracts, or access arrangements that prioritise their needs and voices
- Introduce practices as long-term residencies that immerse artists in the local context, facilitating the exchange of practices and the creation of extended formats beyond traditional performances
- Strengthen performing arts ecosystem where partners collaborate to develop joint touring projects or exchange visits for the same artists, moving away from the paradigm of exclusivity and national premieres toward collective growth and collaboration

5. Communication

What to focus on:

- Strengthen external communication efforts to convey identities and values of the network effectively to external stakeholders.
- Enhance internal communication channels to facilitate seamless information flow and collaboration within the organisation.

What can the network do about it:

- Enhance online communication accessibility, especially in alignment with the Circostrada Diversity Charter, by incorporating neurodivergent communication tools, insights from artists with disabilities, and against eurocentric approaches.
- Diversify communication formats to broaden audience reach and engagement, such as written publications, blog articles, podcasts and video interviews.
- Implement comprehensive online resources about contemporary circus and outdoor arts, leveraging existing archives such as Circostrada's with expanded coverage of national contexts and potential translations into multiple languages (through digital tools).
- Strengthen internal connections through regular digital meetings and small group discussions aimed at fostering knowledge sharing without too strict agendas.
- Explore a "rotation" system where members take turns managing social media communication channels, promoting a shared ownership model and diverse perspectives.

6. Resources

Informative website, encyclopaedic and multi perspectives

- www.onthecommons.org/about-commons/index.html
- iasc-commons.org/about-commons/

Current development oriented mostly to cultural ecosystem

- culturalfoundation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Commons.-From-Dream-to-Reality.pdf
- ccqo.eu
- casco.art/activity/pascal-gielen-and-nico-dockx-commonism-a-new-aesthetics-of-the-real/
- www.researchgate.net/publication/343385764_When_Commons_Becomes_Official_Politics_Exploring_the_Relationship_between_Commons_Politics_and_Art_in_Napels

Practical tools for organisations to rethink themselves according to commons

- www.reinventingorganizations.com
- ccqo.eu
- adriennemareebrown.net/book/emergent-strategy/
- www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fgxrd

COMMON BODY/IES CHARTER

CIRCOSTRADA CHARTER ON THE COMMONS

Internal Common body/ies Committee members

SABRINA ABIAD - circusnext
ELEONORA ARIOLFO - Federazione Nazionale Arti in Strada
RACHEL CLARE - Crying Out Loud
JOHANNES FRISCH - TOLLHAUS Karlsruhe
ARTUR GHUKASYAN - High Fest
MATTEO GIOVANARDI - Dinamico Festival
MARIA GIULIA GUIDUCCI - Ass. Tutti Matti per Colorno
KATE HARTOCH - Circus City
ANTONIA KUZMANIC - ROOM 100
JARKKO LEHMUS - CIRKO – Centre for New Circus
TELMA LUIS - Imaginarius
LUCY MEDLYCOTT - Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle network (ISACS)
JULIA SANCHEZ AJA - CEDACIRC / MICC
HEIDI JOHANNE ENGSIG - Helsingor Teater/Passage Festival
MICHIKO TANAKA - Setouchi Circus Factory
ALESSIA TROVATO - Fondazione Cirko Vertigo

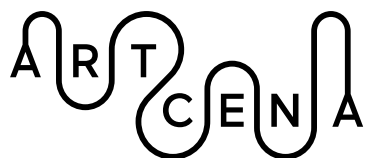
External experts

CHIARA ORGANTINI - Lavanderia a Vapore
GIULIANA CIANCIO - Researcher, cultural manager, curator, lecturer.



EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR
CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS
AND OUTDOOR ARTS

Circostrada is the European Network for contemporary circus and outdoor arts. Created in 2003 with the core mission of furthering the development, empowerment and recognition of these fields at European and international levels, over the years the network has become an important anchoring point for its members - 162 organisations from over 45 countries - and a key interlocutor in the dialogue with cultural policy makers across Europe.



ARTCENA is the National Center for Circus, Street and Theatre Arts, supported by the French Ministry of Culture. It coordinates Circostrada and is a permanent member of its steering committee. It works in close collaboration with professionals in the sector and offers them both publications and digital resources via its web platform. It also develops mentoring and training actions, tools and services to help them in their everyday practices. It supports contemporary creation through national support programs and encourages the international development of these three sectors.



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MINISTÈRE
DE LA CULTURE

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*