

**INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY ARTS
FESTIVAL 2023**

ICAF

MARCH 29TH

APRIL 02ND



WELCOME TO ICAF - 9

For the 9th Edition of the International Community Arts Festival Rotterdam, which encompasses performances from countries and contexts across the globe, covering theatre, performance, dance, visual arts, and music, we are proud to present ICAF 2023 “The Sound of Change”

The time that has passed since the last, planned ICAF of 2020 has caused long-lasting, far-reaching rifts. For some, it has ground their known realities of before to a halt, offering time for pause and reflection, and a significant change of pace. Yet for many more, this same period has only increased existing hardships, tensions, suffering, precarity, and loss, in forms that will last far beyond the pandemic itself. We have been posed questions that relate individually, societally, organisationally and within and between our communities, that will be carried with us into the future. In this sense, as Arundhati Roy states, the pandemic presents “a portal, a gateway between one world and the next”.

Many people working in community arts in very different contexts around the globe share the belief that inclusive, participatory arts can contribute to positive change and transformation in the world. Yet this is an ongoing journey of evolution and transition that is not always linear or predictable in its route. Such transformations can be recognised from large scale to small scale, and in both tangible and intangible forms. This said, all great participatory artworks and processes, regardless of their size, scale, or form, require us to think more deeply and richly about how we share and connect within our communities, as well as the ways in which we form knowledge, build bridges, cross borders, and dig for layers of experience, meaning and perspective beyond our own, as part of a shifting axis.

ICAF 2023 endeavours to explore through diverse community arts practices and performances how such a complex journey of transition can be encapsulated through the medium of sound. Sound demonstrates as equal an importance for embodying the role of the listener, as it does the speaker. Sound is a communicator, a way of empathising, sharing, and expressing. Sound can be a song, a protest, a chant, or complete silence. It can be opera, music, meditation, clapping, percussion, or symphony. It can be footsteps, traffic, or a voice. It is life in action; felt sensorially and bodily. Sound is a vehicle to bring people and contexts together, to communicate with one another within our communities, and between our communities, and to connect across borders, boundaries, and bridges. Through its many, diverse forms, sound offers the option to whisper or to shout, to activate our voices and tell our stories, or make space through silence for those who are not heard, as we embark upon our journeys of evolution and transition, towards positive change.

We welcome you to ICAF 2023, and invite to form part of the sound of change we wish to create over the next five days shared together.

Pre-festival Residencies: 13 - 29 March

Because we are a community-oriented festival, we find it important to step out of our indoor venues and into the urban contexts that surround us. That is why we produce a number of local projects in Rotterdam aimed at improving social cohesion, inclusion, grassroots democracy and artistic exchange. For this purpose, we have invited a number of innovative community artists from abroad to work with local residents - and Dutch artists - over a longer period of time during the weeks and days before the official start of our festival. The results of these collaborations will also be presented in the ICAF workshop programme.

Artist in Residency

Basket Beat (Spain)

One of the most powerful examples of how sound, rhythm, music, and percussion can contribute to positive change is Basket Beat from Barcelona. Basket Beat is a participatory music project, and working methodology, developed by Josep Maria Aragay, that uses basketballs as percussion instruments to help young people in disadvantaged situations or in closed institutions such as prisons, with their personal development and critical thinking skills.

Through workshop formats, Basket Beat facilitate valuable group processes where participants learn to trust each other and feel responsible for one another - because they are all equally responsible for keeping the rhythm alive. With their combination of social-artistic work, sound, rhythm, beats and group work, Basket Beat show how making music together can build bridges between people from many different contexts.

Prior to ICAF 2023, Basket Beat will work with a group of young people and youth workers from Urban Skillsz and a group of young people from Rotterdams Wijktheater. Over an intensive 10-day period, led by Basket Beat, these young people will experience what it means to follow a rhythm together, to make music together, to contribute to the dynamics of a group in which each individual is equally important. After the intensive 10 day working period, they will perform together with a professional band from Barcelona as the official opening performance of ICAF 2023, heralding 'the sound of change' the festival embodies.

Artist in Residency:

Zlatko Paković (Serbia)

As part of the ICAF 2023 Artist in Residency programme, Serbian Theatre Director and Writer Zlatko Paković has been invited to work with local Bosnian diaspora communities across the Netherlands, to explore the ideology of tolerance and openness, as proposed by Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus, in relation to increasing polarisation towards religion and minority ethnic groups, especially in Rotterdam, the birth city of Erasmus.

This working process has taken place over a series of week-long instances, beginning in October 2022, when Zlatko first visited Rotterdam to get to know the diaspora communities, as well in the weeks running up to ICAF 2023. The result of this residency is a performance,

with the community, presented as part of festival's city programme and an in-depth conversation about the process and the context of the work held by Zlatko during the festival.

About

Zlatko Paković has directed theatre plays across Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and in Serbia, mainly outside of institutional theatres, and is best known for his fierce political theatre that emphasises the poetics of theatre with pronounced playful expressions. Theatre, for him, is an inextricable whole of the aesthetic and the social act. Over the course of his career, Zlatko has directed many influential plays for which he has gained recognition, such as the International Ibsen Scholarship 2014, the most prestigious theatre project award in Europe.

His work responds to and reflects upon the political contexts of former Yugoslavia, especially issues concerning censorship, state control, and imposed narratives of the victim/perpetrator divide during, and long after these conflicts. His critical, activist stance, has not been warmly embraced by those that hold political power.

This is because, though the Balkan Wars took place more than 25 years ago, Paković's work highlights that the new countries that emerged from the collapse still bear the traces of the wars. Mass graves, missing persons, unresolved grief, landmine fields and increasing poverty have suspended everyday normality in many of these places. Furthermore, the Serbian-dominated Republika Srpska in Bosnia, as well as the state of Serbia itself, continue to deny the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica. Through his plays and poetic interventions, Zlatko not only seeks to challenge these sustained viewpoints by bringing attention and acknowledgement to these issues, touching on feelings of irrecoverable grief felt by so many, but he also endeavours to inspire feelings of hope and possibility, combined with warnings for future generations within these contexts and beyond.

Zlatko will bring this context and approach to ICAF, and in collaboration with the Bosnian diaspora, will provide further insight and nuance towards issues of polarisation, today.

Artist Residency:

Hobson Street Theatre and Pauluskerk (New Zealand / The Netherlands)

As part of a creative exchange in the months leading up to ICAF, the Paulus Church from Rotterdam and Hobson Street Theatre Company from Auckland, New Zealand have been developing an artistic presentation together. Hobson Street Theatre Company is the first and only theatre company with and for homeless people in New Zealand. It was founded in 2010 as a place where people who experience homelessness in and around Auckland could explore their creativity and share their stories. In The Netherlands The Paulus Church in Rotterdam is recognised as an important sanctuary and safe haven for people that suffer from addiction or psychiatric problems, elderly and homeless people, labor migrants and vulnerable young people. Before the festival, the two organisations have been exchanging artistic material via ZOOM and e-mail.

As a continuation of this exchange trajectory, from Thursday 23rd March, for six days, the two organisations will come together physically at the Paulus Church to produce a full program of participatory artistic workshops ranging from writing, to photography, to music, to theatre, where participants will explore their personal stories, dreams and desires connected to this festival edition's theme "The Sound of Change".

With an emphasis on “encounter”, facilitated by the teachers and artists connected with Paulus Church and Hobson Street Theatre, each of the workshops will provide the space and means for connections, moment of inspiration, and a series of inspirational moments to bring together the methodologies and working practices of these two vital organisations.

Festival Resident

MetX

For the very first time, for ICAF 2023, we will be hosting a Festival Resident. The idea behind our Festival Resident programme came from a larger discussion around how to programme and present organisations who have a broad, and wide-ranging practice that cannot be explored in a single workshop or performance. As such, we decided to select an organisation and/or artist with a diverse range of projects and an expanded community arts practice that merits an array of programmed moments throughout the festival weekend to truly showcase their work and impact.

We are proud to present, in line with this Edition’s theme of “The Sound of Change” MetX as the ICAF ’23 Festival Resident.

Brussels-based MetX is a production house made for and by musicians. In close collaboration with artists coming from the different horizons, they create original repertoires and music bands. Their mission is twofold: firstly, they produce and promote groups like Mâäk, BRUiTAL, Remork & Karkaba or Fanfakids, which each present an idiosyncratic and context-led music practice. Secondly, they share the repertoires and knowledge of the musicians for others to build on it through workshops and participatory performances.

Their acoustic universe integrates elements from both the Western jazz and improvisation culture as well as from Urban Ethno, traditional music sustained by the different cultures you can find easily in a metropole like Brussels. Once merged with mutual respect by our musicians, this artistic material can evolve into a completely new musical culture. Sometimes loud, sometimes soft, sometimes beautiful, sometimes ugly. Never smooth. Always exciting.

For ICAF 2023, MetX will present an array of programme items each of which will focus on a different area of their wide-ranging, musical methodology, including a workshop, a city-based intervention in which everyone can participate, a family-day spectacle with their peer-to-peer group Fanfakids, and they will close the festival on Sunday 2nd of April with a main stage concert in Theater Zuidplein.

WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH: FESTIVAL OPENING (8.30 PM)

MAIN STAGE PERFORMANCE:

Basket Beat Big Band (Spain)

Bounce along to the beats and feel the rhythm of a big band like you've never felt before. Basket Beat from Barcelona will open the International Community Arts Festival (ICAF) on March 29, 2023, in Theater Zuidplein with a concert in which basketball plays a striking leading role. Together with dozens of young people from Rotterdam and a professional band from Barcelona, Basket Beat will dribble up exciting beats and give a sporty percussion performance in which you won't be able to sit still!

Basket Beat is a participatory music project and working methodology that uses basketballs as percussion instruments to help young people in disadvantaged situations or in closed institutions such as prisons, with their personal development and critical thinking skills. Prior to ICAF, Basket Beat works together with young people and youth workers of Urban Skillsz from Rotterdam and a group of young people from Rotterdams Wijktheater.

For ICAF, Basket Beat, their work and methodology fully embody this year's theme of "The Sound of Change". The performance with the group of young people from Rotterdam will not only be welcomed as a joyous and festive moment to celebrate the ICAF community coming back together after so many years apart, but will showcase the power sound and music hold to empower communities, share knowledge, and experience, and connect people across contexts and backgrounds

Concert:

Etoiles électrique (The Netherlands)

Combining Arabic, Kurdish and Persian music with funky pop, Étoiles Électriques create unstoppable shows where Fairouz meets Motown, Gogoosh rubs against James Brown and Barobax flirts with DJ Shantel. With performances that create divergent worlds, colliding in new eclectic sounds, infectious grooves and stomping Kurdish dances Étoiles Électriques guarantee electrifying, festive live shows. The singers will move you with their musical stories, their emotions do not require subtitles. Each song takes you on a journey; from mysterious improvisations to exploding collective energy. Dancing will be your only option!

The Étoiles Électriques singers and musicians are rooted in various musical cultures from the Middle East, and have performed on stages in Damascus, Diyarbakir, Kirkuk or Lebanon. Now they've teamed up with three funky horn players, from bands like Gallowstreet, Chef'Special and Valvetronic. We welcome Étoiles Électriques to our ICAF opening night on 29th of March to produce new sounds that will get all audiences in Rotterdam moving and grooving.

About

Étoiles Électriques is a part of Orchestre Partout, a Dutch based participatory music organisation founded by Ted van Leeuwen and Titia Bouwmeester based on the belief that music is a language that unites, regardless of origin, culture and language. From this idea

Orchestre Partout started the first music workshop in 2010, in refugee centre Alkmaar. Over the years, they have developed a multiple successful programmes.

THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2023

Thursday 26 March: morning (10-12 am)

Lecture

Kerrie Schaefer, Documenting Community Performance Processes (England)

The virtuosity and the aesthetic of community art lies not only in the end product, but (sometimes even more) in the long-lasting processes leading up to a presentation, in the 'safe' and/or 'brave' space that community artists manage to facilitate in which aesthetic encounters between people can take place. Unfortunately, this virtuosity and artistic approach is often hidden within processes of which an audience is hardly ever part. The aesthetics of the processes show an important part of the power and beauty of community arts, and also raise important questions about how we define 'art' and the role of the artist within community arts. Therefore, it is very important to properly document these processes. But how to do that? To gain a deeper understanding of both the practical and ethical roles of such documentation processes, ICAF has invited dr. Kerrie Schaefer to talk on her ongoing research surrounding the documentation of community art processes.

Over two sessions, on Thursday and Friday, dr. Kerrie Schaefer will examine recent developments in transforming community arts processes into film and video documentaries. She will examine the documentary form itself, its history, the relevance of new technologies from film and radio to documentary theatre, as well as political and ethical debates relevant to documentary theatre, film and digital media.

Whilst paying close attention to practical examples, questions such as how video and film documentaries narrate aesthetic and social processes, whose voices are or aren't presented, and how power relations between social actors involved in collaborative making practices are or aren't presented, will arise. Audiences will contemplate how film and video documentaries enable the evaluation of and reflection on community performance processes, aesthetics, and practical methods. What does the field learn about making community performance from watching these documentaries? Furthermore, how might broadcast documentaries influence social policy or create social change?

By the end of the two lecture sessions, participants will have a better understanding of the extension of documentary theatre making techniques in the making of documentary films that increase public awareness of community performance practice and, as aesthetic artefacts, engage publics in social practice, making the lectures vital programme items for all those interested in documentation and the recording of process in relation to community arts practices.

Lecture

Dr. Sruti Bala, “Participate or Else!” & “Do No Harm”(The Netherlands)

What are the pitfalls of participation? And what role do community arts makers take (consciously or unconsciously) when they make participatory art that is part of a not-so-social, neoliberal political policy? For ICAF 2023, dr. Sruti Bala (University of Amsterdam) will build upon these arguments, by presenting two lectures. The first, on Thursday 30 March, will be “Participate or Else!”, in which Sruti will sketch the influence of neo-liberalism on community art in terms of ‘social impact’ and participation as a political instrument, questioning tokenistic calls for ‘diversity’ and proposing a vision of international, inter-species solidarity. This will be followed by a second lecture on Saturday 1 April, “Do No Harm”, where Sruti will dive into the practical consequences of the do-no-harm principle that derives from conflict resolution studies. It may sound like a no brainer, but what do we mean when we say ‘do-no-harm’? What kind of practical consequences does this have? How far does it go? What are the ethical questions you must ask yourself in order to ‘do no harm’? And what is the role of politics and policy in this?

Both lectures will form practical sessions in which makers will be encouraged to go into dialogue with each other after an introduction from Sruti, to explore the ideas presented further, and apply them directly to their own contexts and practices.

dr. Sruti Bala is Associate Professor at the Dept. of Theatre Studies, University of Amsterdam. She has previously presented at ICAF NWE MKRS 2021 and 2022 on the topic of the “Pitfalls of Participation in Community Arts”. Click [here](#) for her introduction to these topics in ZOOM, during ICAF NWE MKRS in 2021.

Lecture and Workshop

Health Action Training: Care and Connection (England)

While we were applauding for nurses and healthcare professionals during the first peak of the corona wave and realized more than ever how important healthcare professionals are, we also realised under how much pressure healthcare is. Due to a lack of financial resources and therefore time, there is an increasing workload, whereby healthcare professionals can no longer do what they are so good at; taking care of their patients with a personal, human approach. At the same time, we see more and more community artists embracing ‘care’ as part of their aesthetic form. In this presentation and workshop by Health Action Training from Northern Ireland, the two worlds, healthcare and art, come together.

Health Action Training (HAT) are a unique and innovative company who use techniques that draw from actor training and applied drama to teach improved person-centred communication for health professionals, offering a fresh and up-to-date approach to communication training. This methodology includes a blend of improvisation games, applied puppetry, actor training, role play, practice of communication frameworks, exploration of evidence-based practice, and more. HAT courses are designed to enhance learners’ understanding of attention, objectives, and intentional action.

HAT’s mission is to help people to connect with themselves and each other, as individuals and communities, and support a global network committed to an ethics of care and meeting the needs of all people everywhere. HAT achieve this by teaching skills of attention, collaboration, and respect, building on the relationships, courage and compassion that make us human and help us grow.

For ICAF 2023, Health Action Training will present an introductory lecture discussing their work, process and methodology. This will include reflections from participants, and opportunity for in depth discussions and Q and A.

Accompanying the lecture will be a workshop that takes a deeper dive in the Health Action Training process with a taster session from their course. The introductory lecture is open to all who have an interest in healthcare and the ethics of care in community art, whilst the workshop is designed specifically for healthcare professionals and practicing community arts practitioners, for whom it will have the most meaningful impact.

Slow Start Intervention Series

Merel Smitt, how to start a movement (The Netherlands)

When you join how to start a movement you become part of a temporary gang.

As a collective we come together in public spaces, institutions and venues. We conquer train stations, restaurants, city offices, parks, libraries, waiting rooms, academies, squares and laundromats to reclaim our spaces by playing with the rules.

In how to start a movement we depart from the idea that we all know what we can and cannot do in public space. Everywhere we go there are social norms to follow, unwritten rules to obey and scripts to perform. Most of the time we don't even question them but what happens when we decide to go off script for a change?

how to start a movement is an artistic practice, a methodology and a toolbox all at the same time that can be used to experience ourselves, others and the world in a new or different way.

For the Slow Start Intervention Series across the festival mornings of Thursday and Friday, Rotterdam based artist, Merel Smitt, will take you on an adventure in public space. Together we will take a closer look at our direct surroundings and make an attempt to go off script, to make a little bit of trouble, respond to the harsh reality of our direct environments, and re-claim our ground.

About

Merel Smitt is an interdisciplinary artist based in Rotterdam and works as a director, organizer, curator, social designer, researcher and educator. Her live-art projects take place at the intersection of performative interventions, socially engaged art and cultural activism. Her work is developed site-specific in public spaces, in collaborations with different communities, activists, fellow citizens, academics, philosophers and experts, and is carried out through active participation of different groups of audiences. The projects can be seen as methodologies to reclaim spaces and build platforms in which strangers come together to experience themselves, others and the world in a new and different way.

Her artistic practice has been supported by several platforms in the European contemporary art scene such as SICK! Festival (UK), Metropolis København (DK), Oerol (NL), Over Het IJ Festival (NL), Productiehuis Theater Rotterdam (NL), Giungla Festival (IT), STORMOPKOMST (BE), IN-SITU European Network, ACT (Art Climate Change) and other venues and institutions in The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Bucharest, New York, France, Belgium and Italy.

Thursday 30 March: afternoon (1.30 - 5 PM)

Conversation

ICAF Singapore HUB (Singapore)

The most inspiring and successful community arts projects are deeply rooted in local communities and are therefore not so easy to find when working in such an international arts field. Moreover, community arts is a context-bound practice and must therefore be understood from within this same local context such organisations are based.

From the need to better understand the different contexts this work is taking place in and to support and connect to our partners in different parts of the world, we started developing ICAF Hubs. ICAF Hubs are our satellite organisations, our eyes and ears and critical friends. Each Hub is a manifestation of ICAF, outside of Rotterdam.

Our very first ICAF Hub has been developed in Singapore, established in partnership with Drama Box in 2020. Drama Box is a socially-engaged theatre company known for creating works that inspire dialogue, reflection and change. By shining a spotlight on marginalised narratives and making space for the communal contemplation of complex issues, they seek to tell stories that provoke a deeper understanding of Singapore's culture, history and identity.

As part of our ongoing ICAF Hub partnership, in the run-up to ICAF 2023, Drama Box have been facilitating a series of online conversations that seek to explore, and give depth and nuance to the community arts field in the context of South and South East Asia. The series of organised panels, discussions and presentations ran from January 2023, monthly, and included presentations from organisations across Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan and Australia, covering topics from ecology along the Mekong River, to inclusivity in relation to performers with differing abilities in Singapore, to navigating political climates across South Asia.

During the festival, Drama Box will facilitate the following conversation:

Crisis & Challenges: a dialogue with TO practitioners from 3 Asian cities (Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand)

The practice of TO had been blossoming in Asia, with practitioners forming informal networks of exchanges and support. This panel seeks to strengthen & bring together practitioners from Singapore, Taiwan & Thailand in sharing how the practice of TO is applied within their cities' socio-economic political contexts and hopes to unpack the challenges they face in trying to create TO & Forum Theatre performances with their direct communities.

Moderator: Han Xuemei (Singapore)

Panel Speaker: Kok Heng Leun (Singapore), Lai Shuya (Taiwan) and Sonny Chatwiriya (Thailand)

Workshop

Corpo Maquina (The Netherlands)

Corpo Máquina was founded in 2017 by choreographer Guilherme Miotto. Miotto had a rough upbringing and are now putting his street experience to good use in the northern suburbs of Tilburg, a Dutch city near the Belgian border. There, Corpo Maquina creates fascinating dance projects with local youths in which social and artistic ambitions go hand in hand. Their work is based on the notion that every human body is a depository of memories and lived experiences. This determines from deep down in our subconsciousness how we move. It applies to both trained professional performers and untrained movers. Corpo Máquina is convinced that there is a dancer in everyone and that this dancer is capable of tearing down all manner of barriers between people (social, linguistic, cultural, age, etc.).

In this workshop, Guilherme Miotto, will take you on a journey to discover the dancer inside of you. Prepare to be moved.

Performance

Hobson Street Theatre and Pauluskerk (New Zealand / The Netherlands)

Following their creative exchange prior to ICAF 2023, Hobson Street Theatre and The Paulus Church will physically join forces, for the first time, in Rotterdam ahead of ICAF 2023. Over the course of six days of intensive workshops with a focus on “encounter”, starting from Thursday 23rd March, participants from both organisations will explore the theme of “the sound of change” through a variety of artistic disciplines and mediums and centring personal stories.

The results of this series of encounters and workshops will then come together on the afternoon of Thursday 30 March for a public audience as part of a Paulus Podium, especially arranged for ICAF. The Paulus Podium will begin with a presentation from Pauluskerk and Hobson Street Theatre to offer context into their organisations and ways of working, followed by a screening of a short film production, made on-site during the six-days intensive workshops in Rotterdam, before the Podium of performances will begin.

Performance

Humor y Vida, Nacer/Birth (Ecuador)

Nacer / Birth is the staging of a birth, with the wisdom of ancestral knowledge of midwives from the Imbabura region (province of Ecuador). The performance is a form of experimental theater in which rituals, different generations, time and space come together. Inspiring views on birth, motherhood and the role of women in building a community are made visible with insights from the Andes, but also through Western perspectives.

The script of Nacer/Birth is based upon personal testimony and is presented with the use of puppetry, video and dance. Humour is used throughout the performance as a way to address the painful and continuous battle between ideologies between westernised and indigenous populations. As a result of the colonial past, homebirth is associated with primitiveness due to deeply embedded prejudices surrounding indigenous culture. The result is that Ecuador now has the highest number of caesarean deliveries in the Americas, not in the least because such medical interventions have become lucrative activities for hospitals.

This intimate, ritual performance was created by Corporación Humor y Vida (Ecuador), in collaboration with Berith Danse of Theater Embassy (NL). Humor y Vida, translated to

'Humour and Life' is composed of a collective of female artists from Ecuador and Colombia who work on the contested borderlands between their two home countries, an area frequently used for illegal crossings and also by guerrilla fighters.

Workshop

Emilie Diouf and Amina Seck (Senegal)

For ICAF 2023, dr. Emilie Diouf and Amina Seck join forces to combine their academic, artistic and activist work to present a workshop exploring creative responses to gender-based violence in Africa, with particular attention to how cross cultural and transnational collaborations between artists, scholars and marginalised communities can be conducted as an ethical collaboration, informed by decolonial perspectives and an awareness of scales of privilege. For this, Emilie and Amina will draw particular attention to the practices of ubuntu and gender justice.

Assistant Professor at the Department of English at Brandeis University, Boston, dr. Emilie Diouf's research and teaching reflects her interdisciplinary background in African Literature, African American and African Studies, as well as Women's and Gender Studies. Emilie is interested in the relationship between narrative, migration, trauma, and human rights, and particularly in expanding the field of trauma studies to include more substantially the voices of African women refugees. Emilie uses trauma theory to explore the ways in which African women survivors of civil war and genocide narrate the large-scale violence inflicted upon them. Alongside her academic work, Emilie is also an active feminist activist, particularly in her own context of Senegal. There, Emilie is part of a feminist collective, contributes to feminist platforms, and has organised the Festival of Women's Writing and first Women's Book Fair.

Amina Seck is a specialised author and screenwriter. She published her first novel "Mauvaise Pente" with Diaspora Académie editions in 2017, participated in the collective work on the Queens of Africa "Martyr Luther Queens" in 2018 and wrote and directed a short film on the practices of female genital mutilation; "Impure", filmed in Ségou, Mali in 2018.

In 2021, she founded "Les Cultur'Elles" which is an agency for the promotion of women's art and culture. Her agency aims to highlight all women who evolve in the cultural milieu, by organising training, capacity building workshops, artistic residencies, symposia, and the production of collective works of art for women. She is the initiator of the Dakar Women's Book Fair, which will be in its second edition in May 2023 A feminist activist, she is a founding member of the Platform of Feminists of Senegal and the Diaspora.

Thursday 30 March: evening (7 pm)

Performance: Compagnie 21

Relations (live), An Instant Relational Choreography by Jordy Dik (The Netherlands)

Step in and become part of an instant choreography... in the making. Relations (live) is a performative gathering of all those present. All bodies, in one shared space. From the moment you enter, we will begin to create something completely new together with people you don't know, and might otherwise never meet; a so-called Relational Choreography.

Led by choreographer Jordy Dik and accompanied by dancers from Werkplaats Tiuri (NL), Compagnie 21 (NL), professional musicians and music and dance students from Codarts University of the Arts (NL), we become part of a magical encounter that connects us in a unique and poetic way, through movement, sound and beauty.

In preparation for this instant choreography, the group, consisting of Tiuri, Compagnie 21 and Codarts, worked intensely together for three days as part of a learning exchange. Tiuri is a place where people with disabilities are trained to become performers, and where their unprecedented talent comes to the surface. Jordy Dik is a community artist and resident choreographer of Compagnie 21, Tiuri's professional dance and theatre company. Four years ago, he co-created a choreographic method with these unique performers called Relational Choreography. The goal was to be able to quickly and collectively make dance art with 'anyone' and 'everyone' who is present. In the now-moment, impulse-following movements emerge, which soon fills the performative space with meaningful relationships and stories. This method turned out to be a bull's eye within the inclusive dance landscape as the autonomy, creativity and playfulness produced are packaged within the poetic structures of clarity. Theaterwerkplaats Tiuri (Theater workshop Tiuri), believes that everyone has talent, and that those talents must be made visible. In particular for people with disabilities.

The Tiuri performers, Codarts students, live musicians and, soon, you too will be inspired and flourish through this relational process. Especially for ICAF 2023, this live art performance will be staged for the first time to discover how we can reforge the life, stories and creativity of this shared moment into a free (inner) world for all of us!

Film Screening & After Talk

Encontro MEXE Associação Cultural, Fall (Portugal)

Fall is a short film, produced by MEXE Associação Cultural, that focuses on the impact the pandemic has brought to members of Portugal's younger, and lower economic communities. Precarity, job insecurity and the right to safe housing were already some of the main concerns found within these communities, yet all have worsened since the onset of the pandemic.

Fall tells the story of two people, yet represents thousands of citizens across Portugal, drawing attention to the pandemic of poverty that we will see continue long after the virus has gone. In co-production with EAPN Portugal - European Anti Poverty Network, this short film has continued the work developed with the Local Citizens Councils throughout 2020. CLCs (the Portuguese abbreviation) are groups that bring together citizens who live or experience situations of poverty and/or social exclusion.

Using MEXE's methodology, participatory procedures were developed in the design and implementation of the project, meaning that the script has been jointly constructed and written with the communities it represents, evolving further in the recordings, and opening up space for a participative interpretation, production and post-production.

The screening of Fall will be accompanied by a facilitated after talk, sparking wider discussion about how the pandemic has only exacerbated problems like poverty and inequality of opportunity for those in lower socio-economic and younger communities, making it an essential and timely viewing for ICAF 2023.

About

The MEXE Associação Cultural (MEXE) is a non-profit association that organises a meeting point in the context of the Portuguese national and international cultural panorama. Their programme creates as a space for the appreciation and dissemination of artistic projects that cross different languages and communities based on the dialogue between creation, public space, and civic participation.

Thursday 30 March: evening (8.30 pm)

Main Stage Performance

Dançando com a Diferença, Gabo (Portugal)

GABO is a moving dance performance about the question of what it means to be 'different' and the prejudices that surround this. One day, the magical doll Gabo suddenly comes to life. He soon begins to wonder what the world would feel like if we no longer thought in terms of differences. Who determines what is beautiful or ugly? Who is 'different' or not? Who gets more or less opportunities and who is limited? Together with two dancers, he embarks on a wonderful journey of discovery in search of the answers.

The dance performance was created by Dançando com a Diferença, which translates to 'Dancing with Differences'. The company, that originates from the Portuguese island of Madeira, has been making dance performances with people who experience limitations and diverse possibilities for more than 21 years. Under the inspiring leadership of the dance pedagogue Henrique Amoedo, Dançando com a Diferença has gained national and international recognition.

The group regularly tours Europe and is considered the most important art organization on the island of Madeira itself. Through its work, which also includes formal and informal dance education at a community level, the company endeavors to break down the stigmas attached to people with other abilities and promote social inclusion.

Dançando com a Diferença's ambitious strategy is to move beyond the traditionally limiting boundaries of the dance/ability sector and to be accepted within the regular international performing arts scene. To achieve this, they frequently work with established national and international choreographers, that help to further push the boundaries towards inclusivity.

FRIDAY 31 MARCH 2023

Friday 31 March: morning (10 - 12)

Lecture

James Thompson, Care Aesthetics (England)

For his lecture as part of ICAF 2023, James Thomspson, Professor of Applied and Social Theatre at the University of Manchester will depart from his current research surrounding care aesthetics and his recent publication *Care Aesthetics: For Artful Care and Careful Art*.

What if the work of a nurse, physio, or homecare worker was designated an art, so that the qualities of the experiences they create became understood as aesthetic qualities? What if the interactions created by artists, directors, dancers, or workshop facilitators were understood as works of care? James Thompson will explore these questions and examine the work of carer artists and artist carers to make the case for the importance of valuing and supporting aesthetically caring relations across multiple aspects of our lives.

Theoretically and practically, James' research outlines the implications of care aesthetics for the socially engaged arts field and health and social care, and for acts of aesthetic care in the everyday. Making the case for careful art exploring the implications of care aesthetics for participatory or applied arts, and arguing for artful care and how an aesthetic orientation to care practices might challenge some of the inadequacies of contemporary care. This lecture is essential for audiences interesting or working with socially engaged arts or social and health care practices on an academic or professional level.

Slow Start Intervention Series

Merel Smitt, how to start a movement

When you join how to start a movement you become part of a temporary gang.

As a collective we come together in public spaces, institutions and venues. We conquer train stations, restaurants, city offices, parks, libraries, waiting rooms, academies, squares and laundromats to reclaim our spaces by playing with the rules.

In how to start a movement we depart from the idea that we all know what we can and cannot do in public space. Everywhere we go there are social norms to follow, unwritten rules to obey and scripts to perform. Most of the time we don't even question them but what happens when we decide to go off script for a change?

how to start a movement is an artistic practice, a methodology and a toolbox all at the same time that can be used to experience ourselves, others and the world in a new or different way.

For the Slow Start Intervention Series across the festival mornings of Thursday and Friday, Rotterdam based artist, Merel Smitt, will take you on an adventure in public space. Together we will take a closer look at our direct surroundings and make an attempt to go off script, to make a little bit of trouble, respond to the harsh reality of our direct environments, and re-claim our ground.

Slow Start Workshop Series

Comicdom Press/ Athens Comics Library

Over the course of Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning, Athens-based organisation Athens Comics Library will facilitate Slow Start Workshops to offer the opportunity to produce personalised, context-specific Take Away Art Packs that will be gifted directly to the local community of children in the neighbourhood surrounding Islemunda (one of our headquarters) during our ICAF family day on Saturday 1 April.

Each morning twenty participants will have the opportunity to work directly with dr. Lida Tsene and Dina Ntziora, the initiators behind Athens Comics Library to create takeaway arts packs relating to this years' festival theme "The Sound of Change". Alongside sharing their Take Away Art Pack methodology, dr. Lida Tsene, researcher and teaching associate at the MA Program Communication and New Journalism at the Open University of Cyprus, will facilitate a talk, introducing participants to the work of Athens Comics Library and sharing her expertise around the value and impact of creative arts in early education for trauma healing and community engagement, as well as the development of psychosocial skills for healing, storytelling and community-based practices.

At the end of each workshop, the Take Away Art Packs will be collected together, in preparation to be gifted and shared with the children of the IJsselmonde neighbourhood during our Saturday family day. Participants of the workshops are encouraged to attend this Saturday afternoon session to join in the facilitation and opening of the Take Away Art Packs directly with the communities they are made for.

About

Athens Comics Library, provides a safe and creative space for local, refugee and migrant children and their caregivers through their broad, participatory cultural programme that includes activities around art, storytelling and sports.

Athens Comics Library's vision is to showcase the power of comics and storytelling as an educational, healing and community engagement tool that boosts a love for reading, teaches multimodal literacies and promotes self-directed knowledge through the medium of comics. For Athens Comics Library comics teach soft skills such as collaboration, creative problem solving, intercultural understanding, empathy, as well as social skills through gaining a better understanding of our surrounding complex societal environments.

During Covid lockdowns and in order to stay connected with their communities Athens Comics Library started creating a series of creative Take Away Art packs for preschool children, part of their Baytna Hub program. The Take Away Art is a DIY creativity pack that children can enjoy at home together with their caregivers that stimulates creative storytelling through a do-it-yourself, empowering approach.

Friday 31 March: afternoon (1.30 - 5 pm)

Conversation/workshop

Theatre of reveal, an in-depth conversation with Zlatko Paković (Serbia)

Zlatko Paković has directed in theatres across Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and in Serbia, mainly outside of institutional theatres, and is best known for his fierce political theatre that emphasises the poetics of theatre with pronounced playful expressions. Theatre, for him, is an inextricable whole of the aesthetic and the social act. His work responds to and reflects upon the political contexts of former Yugoslavia, especially issues concerning censorship, state control, and imposed narratives of the victim/perpetrator divide during, and long after these conflicts. His critical, activist stance, has not been warmly embraced by those that hold political power.

This is because, though the Balkan Wars took place more than 25 years ago, Paković's work highlights that the new countries that emerged from the collapse still bear the traces of the wars. Mass graves, missing persons, unresolved grief, landmine fields and increasing poverty have suspended everyday normality in many of these places. Furthermore, the Serbian-dominated Republika Srpska in Bosnia, as well as the state of Serbia itself, continue to deny the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica. Through his plays and poetic interventions, Zlatko not only seeks to challenge these sustained viewpoints by bringing attention and acknowledgement to these issues, touching on feelings of irrecoverable grief felt by so many, but he also endeavours to inspire feelings of hope and possibility, combined with warnings for future generations within these contexts and beyond.

As part of the ICAF 2023 Artist in Residency programme, Zlatko Paković has been invited to work with local Bosnian diaspora communities across the Netherlands, to explore the ideology of tolerance and openness, as proposed by Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus, in relation to increasing polarisation towards religion and minority ethnic groups, especially in Rotterdam, the birth city of Erasmus.

In this in-depth conversation Zlatko will zoom in on the context of his work, his vision on theatre and the process of working with the Bosnian diaspora in Rotterdam.

Workshop

Embracing complexity, a masterclass with Adrian Jackson (England)

For ICAF, theatre director, playwright, educator and founder of Cardboard Citizens (UK) Adrian Jackson will conduct a workshop in which he shares his expertise. The workshop will be a mix of practice and theory, looking at how to create Forum Theatre that goes beyond the simplistic and seeks to embrace the complexities of the real world, recognising the intersectional nature of people's modern lives whilst being playfully serious, and seriously playful. Through doing so, participants will explore how they might develop their own pieces.

There will be time for games, exercises and questions and answers about the methodology that Adrian has developed over the years. Adrian's story, his view on art/theatre in

society, and his energy are exciting and inspiring for practitioners interested in Theatre of the Oppressed methodology, but certainly also for every other rebellious and creative spirit that wants to make a positive change in the world by creating art with and for people living in the margins of society.

About

Adrian Jackson, MBE is an English theatre director, playwright, teacher and trainer. He was the founding director and executive director of the theatrical company Cardboard Citizens, founded in 1991, in which the majority of the members were homeless, refugees or asylum seekers, participating in the cycle of Nosaltres organised by the Teatre Lliure.

In addition to being the artistic director of Cardboard Citizens and the designer of a large number of plays with the company, Adrian Jackson is a teacher and translator who has travelled a lot and taught in over thirty countries worldwide. He has worked as a translator of Augusto Boal, including his most recent work: “The aesthetics of the oppressed”, and collaborated with him on many occasions. He has taught the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed in many contexts, throughout Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa and América Latina.

Adrian Jackson places a high premium on the quality of the theatre he makes, whether forum or epic theatre like the RSC productions. In 2022 he directed a major new musical, the Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency for The Belgrade Theatre Coventry as part of Coventry City of Culture. Recently he has started STOP (School of Theatre of the Oppressed) in London while also preparing a version of King Lear with Hobson Street Theatre in Auckland for 2024.

Performance

Šančiai Neighbourhood Community Opera “Cabbage Field” (Lithuania)

Welcome to this musical gathering; a community opera with 30 residents of the Šančiai neighbourhood in Kaunas, Lithuania, performed for ICAF in the middle of the Tarwewijk neighbourhood, Rotterdam! Reinforced by a team of professional musicians, local residents from Kaunas bring the story of their neighbourhood Šančiai, to which they feel an intrinsic sense of belonging, to Rotterdam.

The “Cabbage Field” Opera is the story of a former military site in Šančiai that has been reclaimed by the local community. Together they have dived into the generational history and stories of the place they reside. What they found and translated into this opera are stories surrounding love, war, community, and reconciliation. Following the moving musical performance in the courtyard of the local community centre (Cultuurwerkplaats) Tarwewijk, the cast and community of the opera invites you for an informal gathering at the community table with a bowl of cabbage soup, made by the group themselves.

The participatory “Cabbage Field” opera process began in 2018. The residents of the neighbourhood were invited to join the creative process at any stage. The opera rehearsals took place in public, so that everyone could take part. The libretto was created during community writing workshops by 11 writers. The music was composed by Vidmantas Bartulis, a recipient of the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts, who sadly passed away before the last part of the opera was finished. The director and choreographer is Lina

Puodžiukaitė-Lanauskienė. The idea authors and producers are community artists Vita Gelūnienė and Ed Carroll.

“Returning home from work I got off at my bus stop and saw a colourful community bus parked at the side of the street. I heard the sounds of music in it. Someone called me from within: “Come in, sing with us!” I jumped onboard and I sing ever since.” (Dangira Pikšrienė, community opera performer)

Workshop

Bonface Beti, Sound is at the heart of African creativity (Kenya)

“Sound is at the heart of African creativity”. Departing from this statement and responding to the ICAF '23 theme The Sound of Change, researcher, and theatre maker Bonface Beti (Kenya) provides a workshop for those interested in the ways in which sound and music are intertwined in the culture and history of Kenya in the way that contributes to the formation, identity, and communication of its communities. Drawing from his current PhD research on “Soundscapes of Peace”, Bonface will look at processes of learning, listening, sharing, and reflecting through sound and art as part of peace building and conflict transformation, whilst focussing on the deeply rooted relationship between the Kenyan context and sound. This includes sound being at the heart of all African creativity, as well as being a way of passing down knowledge, communication signals, and storytelling from one generation to the next. As such, sound can be considered language of its own, and “a way of knowing”.

Furthermore, Bonface has been working for over 20 years with Theatre of the Oppressed methodologies and techniques, and will bring a selection of these exercises to his workshops to engage in a play-based workshop to dig deeper into trauma healing and peace building processes.

About

Bonface Beti has an established background in theatre and arts, trauma healing, peace building, and social justice, particularly in his own context of Nairobi, but also as part of an active engagement within the wider contexts of Kenya, Africa, South Africa, and further afield in the US and Canada.

Workshop

Excavate, Promoting Mental Health Literacy in Rural and Urban Kerala (India, England)

Promoting Mental Health Literacy in Rural and Urban Kerala, is a mini-conference on how applied theater can contribute to issues around mental health literacy, in this case in the context of Kerala, India. Connecting directly with professionals in India, the session tells the compelling story of a major action research project led by De Montfort University in Leicester (UK) that took place between 2019 and 2021.

The size of this research is impressive, but it all started with a community theatre play that was staged on the streets in a basti (a crowded neighbourhood) in Pune, India, in 2018 and is continuing through the establishment of the MeHeLP foundation in Kerala. This research is a unique collaboration between two major state organizations running mental health clinics in Kerala, the theatre companies Excavate (UK) and Lokadharmi (India), and local filmmakers from Kerala.

Taking the form of a mini-international conference (part in-person, part online) the workshop will bring together different practitioners and clinicians from the UK and India, to explore how community and applied theatre approaches were used to develop conversations across the state, bringing to the forefront the voices of those who are often stigmatised.

The workshop will be presented by Dr Sanjana Kumar, from the Indian theatre and research teams, alongside the artistic director of Excavate, Andy Barrett. We will also have the honour of being joined in person by Dr. Raghu Raghavan, the project investigator of this project with an established health background in India and the UK. We will connect to clinicians based in Kerala who have been involved in the project, to hear their perspective of how the use of theatre and drama may be of value in addressing issues around mental healthcare in India.

Participants will gain an understanding of how community and applied arts may be of help in addressing issues around the perception and treatment of mental health, and of mental health and well-being as a developing global issue. This workshop will be of value to those who are interested in understanding social issues and applied theatre practice in India, are engaged in health-based practices, and are interested in the role of art and theatre in health care.

Excavate and De Montfort University in partnership with the Mental Health Literacy Project India Foundation, with Lokadharmi Theatre, MHAT (Mental Health Action Trust) and Mehaac (Mental Health Action).

Showcase and Workshop

Getrude Vimbayi Munhamo Pfumayaramba, Withered (Zimbabwe)

This session begins with the compelling and emotionally raw performance of ‘Withered’ created and performed by Zimbabwean artist, playwright, and life coach Getrude Vimbayi. ‘Withered’, is a theatre production that takes the audience through a journey of loss, joy, fond memories and death- all in complete silence, or is it? It is a story of the devastating cyclone Isai, and the effects it had on communities in Zimbabwe leaving not only death and displacement, making many children orphans, but has long-term mental wounds.

‘Withered’ will be presented as part of a longer workshop and discussion, where Getrude will present more broadly on her practice, working methodologies, and context of working with communities in Zimbabwe with a particular focus of the methods, style and tools of storytelling and theatre in the African context in comparison to European models. She will also touch on how art can be used for a multitude of purposes: for healing, for protest, for giving a voice, firstly by being able to speak about things you cannot speak about otherwise through the safe space that art and storytelling creates where one is able to speak about certain issues, but also what can still be heard and listened to, even when there is no sound or noise.

This combination of the performance and an in-depth conversation is a deep dive into the nuances of storytelling within the African context, and gives richness, texture and perspective towards our theme of sound of change.

About

Getrude Vimbayi Munhamo Pfumayaramba is a multi-faceted Zimbabwean arts practitioner and award winning certified and licensed Life coach, playwright and storyteller. She is currently the chair for the Zimbabwe theatre association, developmental officer for the

International theatre institute (Zimbabwe chapter) and past treasurer for the Arterial network (Zimbabwe chapter).

Workshop

Matemurga, Lack of Air (Argentina)

For ICAF 2023, Matemurga, the community theatre group of Villa Crespo, Buenos Aires, Argentina, founded by Edith Scher, will facilitate a hands-on workshop that focuses on methods for composing community-based stories and narratives as part of community formation and facilitation, with a focus on Argentinian and South American community arts contexts.

The workshop will centre around the most recent film of Matemurga “Last Air”, an audio-visual version of their latest work, to give further context and insight into their working methods. From there Edith Scher will lead an interactive workshop around her methodology.

Matemurga was founded in August 2002. Its founder and director, Edith Scher, is an Argentinian writer, musician, academic and actress. The works of Matemurga centre community singing and music, with the use of orchestras and puppets. For Matemurga, community theatre is theatre created specifically by neighbours and performed for neighbours. Through her approach and methodology, Edith Scher not only conducts and facilitates participatory art practices with groups and communities, but also creates community in the process of doing so.

This workshop is for those wanting to gain a richer insight into the Argentinian community arts context as well as those who align with or are interested in Edith Scher’s methodology around community arts processes that creates community through its very making.



Friday 31 March: evening (7 pm)

Performance

Nantea Dance Company, Onyesha Thamani / Showing Value (Tanzania)

ONYESHA THAMANI / SHOWING VALUE is an intimate, evocative performance that uses dance as a voice and as language to offer new perspectives towards gender equality in Tanzania. It showcases the complex reality towards gender relations and the treatment of women in Tanzania, whilst offering a perspective of hope. With this performance Nantea Dance Company wants to break the cycle of indifference and absence, and to encourage connection through love, kindness, patience and empathy.

Nantea Dance Company is a Tanzanian based, non-profit contemporary dance company. Their performances are community-based projects and stem from the themes that are important for the local community in which they work. Despite their international tours,

they always present their work to the local communities where they hope to contribute to positive change and hope to promote and develop the contemporary dance scene in Tanzania, inspiring youths to become ambassadors of development and social change.

Performance

TG Signum, Stille Vlucht, Silent Flight (The Netherlands)

Silent Flight is the intimate story of a young man that has to leave his country, family and culture behind for his safety. An autobiographical tale by actor Ali Shafiee, who fled Iran at the age of 19. The story is told completely in Dutch Sign Language, supported by a voice interpreter and subtitles in English. A range of visual tools, including dance, projections, and visual poetry, are used to spark the imagination of the audience to join Ali on this journey of his escape from Iran - leaving Tehran behind and walking across the border to Turkey, with forged papers, in the dark, searching for an unknown destination...

This poetic and visual yet raw and emotional performance will captivate audiences and is essential for those working with or interested in furthering disability awareness and accessibility, as well as giving a platform to the stories of migrants and refugees. In recent years there has been a significant increase in disability visibility, all over the world, and yet we hardly hear or see any stories of refugees with disabilities. This performance thus poses the poignant questions: what extra challenges are posed to Deaf refugees? And which obstacles might they face that hearing people may not?

The performance can be followed in Dutch sign language, spoken English and English surtitles and is accessible to deaf, hard of hearing and hearing audiences.

About

Theatre Group Signum, the Latin word for 'sign', is a Dutch company that make performances in which the deaf and hearing cultures are brought together. The exchanges and clashes between these two worlds provide their main sources of inspiration. Their goal is to make theatre more accessible for deaf audiences and deaf performers. Stille Vlucht, Silent Flight, is TG Signum's latest project, performed by Ali Shafiee and Arthur Massoers, as interpreter, directed by Steef Kersbergen and project managed by Fonge Frieling.

Friday 27 March: evening (8.30 pm)

Main Stage Performance

The Whistleblowers (South Africa)

Five women from Johannesburg storm onto the field, ready for their decisive hockey match. Today they can become champions. But haunted by memories of sexual assault and harassment, it soon becomes apparent that there is more at stake than a medal. Gradually, the line between the competition and social reality disappears and the women find a collective voice against sexual violence and harassment against women in Johannesburg. The team must decide; will they attack or defend? Whistleblowers is a powerful war cry for the soul. A mix of physical theatre, surrealist dream images and impressive storytelling.

In the performance, the women interpret the rules of the game, which are all against the players, switching between dream sequences and dance scenes, the players make the

experience of what it is like to be a woman in South Africa tangible for audiences, especially in accordance to various statistics which deems Johannesburg the “rape capital of the world”.

The Whistleblowers is co-created and performed by five female actors and makers from Johannesburg, South Africa: Reabetswe Gaentswe, Boitshepo Maile, Kgaogelo Makgoba, Modipadi Mokgohloa, and Phindiwe Qakoshe, and contains the spoken languages of English, Afrikaans, Zulu, and Xhosa, and directed by Rob Murray and Quintijn Relouw. The performance has won awards at the National Arts Festival (Africa's largest arts festival), and will have a lasting impact on all audiences, helping to contextualise and give voice to one of the most urgent societal issues facing women across South Africa today.

SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2023

Saturday 1 April: morning (10 -12 am)

Lecture

James Thompson, Care Aesthetics (England)

For his lecture as part of ICAF 2023, James Thompson, Professor of Applied and Social Theatre at the University of Manchester will depart from his current research surrounding care aesthetics and his recent publication Care Aesthetics: For Artful Care and Careful Art.

What if the work of a nurse, physio, or homecare worker was designated an art, so that the qualities of the experiences they create became understood as aesthetic qualities? What if the interactions created by artists, directors, dancers, or workshop facilitators were understood as works of care? James Thompson will explore these questions and examine the work of carer artists and artist carers to make the case for the importance of valuing and supporting aesthetically caring relations across multiple aspects of our lives.

Theoretically and practically, James' research outlines the implications of care aesthetics for the socially engaged arts field and health and social care, and for acts of aesthetic care in the everyday. Making the case for careful art exploring the implications of care aesthetics for participatory or applied arts, and arguing for artful care and how an aesthetic orientation to care practices might challenge some of the inadequacies of contemporary care. This lecture is essential for audiences interesting or working with socially engaged arts or social and health care practices on an academic or professional level.

Open Round Table Discussion

Voices of African Women: Reshaping the narrative of gender-based violence and the role of theatre/community art with: dr. Emilie Diouf

Following Friday's emotive main stage performance of The Whistleblowers (South-Africa), which explores the lived reality of women's experience in Johannesburg with the rapid increase gender-based violence, the cast of the performance will be joined by Emilie Diouf (Senegal and USA), Getrude Vimbayi (Zimbabwe), and Nantea Dance Company (Tanzania) to

engage in a wider discussion of gender-based violence, gender justice and conflict transformation in different African contexts.

During this discussion, perspectives from Johannesburg, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe will be come to the fore to provide context, texture and nuance to the realities each of these individuals and groups are working in, with a larger discussion on the role of art, community arts and how it can contribute to a future that centres gender justice.

The relationship between gender-based violence and African contexts can be identified as as a running thread within this years' ICAF programme. This programmed Morning After Round Table Discussion aims to bring direct attention to this issue by providing space to engage in a larger conversation that centres different African contexts and the lived realities of those experiencing these issues face-on.

dr. Emily Diouf, Assistant Professor at the Department of English at Brandeis University in Boston, and Amina Seck will lead the round table discussion, departing from her extensive background in Women's and Gender Studies. Emily's work focuses on the relationship between narrative, migration, trauma, and human rights, and particularly expanding the field of trauma studies to include more substantially the voices of African women refugees and survivors of civil war and genocide, and how they narrate the large-scale violence inflicted upon them. Emily has an established background in both academic and activist work with a firm focus on women's representation and gender justice.

Amina Seck is a specialised author and screenwriter. She published her first novel "Mauvaise Pente" with Diaspora Académie editions in 2017, participated in the collective work on the Queens of Africa "Martyr Luther Queens" in 2018 and wrote and directed a short film on the practices of female genital mutilation; "Impure", filmed in Ségou, Mali in 2018. In 2021, she founded "Les Cultur'Elles" which is an agency for the promotion of women's art and culture. Her agency aims to highlight all women who evolve in the cultural milieu, by organising training, capacity building workshops, artistic residencies, symposia, and the production of collective works of art for women. She is the initiator of the Dakar Women's Book Fair, which will be in its second edition in May 2023 A feminist activist, she is a founding member of the Platform of Feminists of Senegal and the Diaspora.

Saturday 1 April: afternoon (1.30 - 5 pm)

Workshop

Power of the (basket) beat in Barcelona (Spain)

Basket Beat is both a project and a methodology which works with young people to facilitate their personal growth, especially those with fewer opportunities, through the creation and learning of music in groups and with basketballs. The project was born in 2009, and, since then, has visited 120 community arts projects and conducted more than 75 workshops.

The raison d'être of Basket Beat is to carry out socio-educational workshops in schools, institutes, prisons, public facilities, etc. The content they generate during these workshops leads to research and publications as well as the providing of training for students and professionals on the social use of the arts and the Basket Beat methodology.

During this workshop, founder of Basket Beat, Josep Maria Aragay, together with his colleagues, shares their vision, mission, methodology and places it in the context of community arts in Spain.

Workshop

Dançando com a diferença, “We Dance with our body and not despite our body” (Portugal)

“We Dance with our body and not despite our body” is the motto that inspires the work of Dançando com a Diferença, translated to “Dancing with difference”. A company founded in 2001 on the Portuguese island of Madeira by artistic director, Henrique Amoedo.

The company's primary aim is to create high quality dance productions with people with different abilities. Over the past 21 years, and under the inspiring leadership of the dance pedagogue Henrique Amoedo, Dançando com a Diferença has gained national and international recognition. Through its work, which also includes formal and informal dance education at a community level, the company endeavors to break down the stigmas attached to people with other abilities and to promote social inclusion.

Dançando com a Diferença's ambitious strategy is to move beyond the limiting boundaries of the dance/ability sector and to be accepted within the regular international performing arts scene. To achieve this, they frequently work with established national and international choreographers, that help to further push the boundaries towards inclusivity.

Together with Henrique Amoedo and select members of the company, you are invited to share the dreams, passions and practices that underline Dançando com a Diferença, in a workshop where each person will be taught to explore their own bodily limitations and interact with one another's limitations too. Like in the company motto, a safe space will be established, where we shall dance with our body, not despite of it.

Film and Workshop

Jaśmina Wójcik, King Matt the First: The Process of Making a Movie with Children (Poland)

Jaśmina Wójcik is an artist, activist, film director, and mother. Her films and documentaries often work directly with communities in their process and as their subject matter. Jaśmina's newest film work, King Matt the First is no exception to this, where Jaśmina's focus is on giving voice to children. King Matt the First is based on Janusz Korczak's novel, and is made in collaboration with children based on the principles of grassroots education. Through the film the themes of failure, mistakes, misunderstandings, unlearning, improvisation, listening and observing and meditated upon.

The workshop King Matt the First: The Process of Making a Movie with Children will not only show sections from the film, but will dive deep into Jaśmina's process of making a movie with children. With particular attention to exploring tools that give children voice by withdrawing from our own sense of "adulthood" to equalise our positions, such as the use of children's games and activities and the felt and unfelt presence of the camera person with the children.

Jaśmina has established experience working with children, where she employs an ethos and methodology that rejects the primacy of the adult having authority over children. For several years, she has been involved in empathetic education by developing original practices for the creation of children's artistic expressions. She gives agency and subjectivity to children, treating them as co-creators and inviting them into dialogue.

City Programme: Family Day

PS Theater, WE ARE THE CITY (The Netherlands)

WE ARE THE CITY is a life-size board game in which you are the pawn. With the passport of a newly born baby in one hand and a dice full of opportunities in the other, you walk the life of this new city dweller. Step into the shoes of Fleur, Edino, Isaya, Hayd or one of the other characters, directly in the city of Rotterdam, and discover whether there is such a thing as "equal opportunities".

Because the character stories are based in Leiden, they give context to the Dutch system of (in)equality of opportunity. Though the character stories are based in Leiden, they can be considered somewhat universal, in that the aim is to engage in different bubbles of lived experience and hear stories that may be very different to your own.

In a playful yet confrontational way, WE ARE THE CITY exposes the systems of inequality that underpin society. While playing WE ARE THE CITY, a wider discussion will take place on the opportunities these people receive and the bumps they encounter. In this way the numbers and statistics - which play a significant role in the game - receive a human face, making WE ARE THE CITY an informative, interactive and palpable game that will spark conversation, contemplation and perhaps a change in perspective for all those who chose to play. WE ARE THE CITY is suitable for all audiences who wish to delve deeper into the systems of equality and inequality in contemporary society.

The playing of the game will be followed by an after talk with Pepijn Smit, founder and director of PS|theater, where he will share the process and methodology of creating WE ARE THE CITY, and the wider vision and mission of the city ensemble that the game sits within.

PS|theater is the city ensemble of Leiden and makes theatre, music, games and audio. In their projects and productions, they offer a new perspective towards living together in the city now. They have developed a distinctive social-artistic working method over the past twelve years. As theatre makers they place themselves in the middle of the city and ask fellow citizens about living together in the here and now. As a result, they not only involve people from our own 'bubble', but hear differing ideas, opinions, doubts, and desires.

City Programme: Family Day

MetX, Fanfakids (Belgium)

We are excited to welcome MetX' Fanfakids together with the SKVR Brassband school in Rotterdam for our Saturday Family Day. Fanfakids are a group of youngsters, ranging from 6-16 in age, from Brussels who transform their youthful energy in an explosive concoction of rhythms.

Their groove is a metropolitan mix of dance and music, which they can unleash anytime and anywhere! Created during MetX's 1st Zinneke Parade in 2000 as a collaboration between MetX and Centrum-West - D'Broej, Fanfakids, ever since, have built up a unique reputation as a cross-over between an urban training program and an artistic production.

Despite their young age, they have an impressive record of achievements in Belgium and abroad. They feel at home at various festivals and have created a close bond with various drum, dance and theater groups from Africa and Europe. With contagious energy, and inspiring rhythms, expect to move and groove all afternoon long with our Fanfakids and Brassband school family performance.

City Programme: Family Day

Matemurga, Scene Creation (Argentina)

During our Saturday ICAF Family Day on April 1st, Matemurga, the community theatre group of Villa Crespo, Buenos Aires, Argentina, founded by Edith Scher, will connect with a local Rotterdam-based choir to create a public performance.

Ahead of the performance, Edith Scher will work with the selected choir over a three-hour period, where together they will collectively reflect and respond to the history of the neighbourhood. Participants will then be split into four groups to focus on different themes and focuses, before coming back together to perform. Audiences are welcomed to witness this beautiful choral performance that connects with the local histories and stories of the area.

Matemurga was founded in mid-2002. The works of Matemurga centre community singing and music, with the use of orchestras and puppets, making them perfect for the ICAF Family Day programme. Edith Scher is an esteemed Argentinian writer, musician, academic and actress.

City Programme: Family Day

Comickdom Press/ Athens Comics Library

As part of the ICAF Slow Start series, over Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning, Athens Comics Library, a comics library and community space based in Athens, Greece together with ICAF participants will produce personalised, and context-specific Take Away Art Packs.

The Take Away Art Packs are DIY creativity packs that children can enjoy at home together with their caregivers that stimulates creative storytelling through a do-it-yourself, empowering approach. For ICAF, this collection of Take Away Art Packs will be made specifically for the children of the IJsselmonde neighbourhood to receive.

During Saturday afternoon, as part of the ICAF Family Day, dr. Lida Tsene and Dina Ntziora, the initiators behind Take Away Art Packs, together with some of the participants of the Slow Start Workshops will gift the Take Away Art Packs to the local children, and be present to help with the opening of the packs.

About

Athens Comics Library, provides a safe and creative space for local, refugee and migrant children and their caregivers through their broad, participatory cultural programme that includes activities around art, storytelling and sports.

Performance

Lleca Teatro, Macondo 1984: The Museum of Infamy

Persecution, imprisonment, exile. From these lived experiences, Lleca Teatro have created a sensory landscape filled with their own memories. Memories of social struggle and political violence in Latin America. Memories that are not only of the past, but that are of the now. Animating this landscape, Lleca Teatro have rebuilt the magically violent location of Macondo - the fictional place of Gabriel García Márquez 100 Years of Solitude -- and locate it in George Orwell's 1984. Both settings are analogies and metaphors for the violent political systems the collective have fled from, yet cannot leave behind. Engaging in their own modality of largely non-verbal storytelling, Lleca Teatro invite the audience into these landscapes of being and not-being.

Lleca Teatro is a theatre group from Nicaragua that are composed of, and make theatre with, people from communities "trapped" in unconventional spaces riddled by violence. For this reason, violence in its multiple forms as well as its undoing/contestation are the main issues that inform their work. Over the years of their work through and on imprisonment, they have developed a distinctly corporeal theatrical methodology that draws on the body as a creative source of imag(inari)es, text(ure)s and sensory experiences/experimentation. The collective had to flee Nicaragua following the violent repression of massive anti-government protests. Amid the pandemic restrictions in the Netherlands, Lleca Teatro began rebuilding and internationalizing their community arts collective. This collective is now composed of Nicaraguan refugees scattered across the Netherlands, as well as solidary artists and young students. Together, the group have developed "Macondo 1984: The Museum of Infamy" merging memories and experiences of absence experienced directly by the group (through imprisonment, exile and/or lockdown) with our continued struggle for social change especially for ICAF 2023.

Workshop

Bonface Beti, Sound is at the heart of African creativity

"Sound is at the heart of African creativity". Departing from this statement and responding to the ICAF '23 theme The Sound of Change, researcher, and theatre maker Bonface Beti (Kenya) provides a workshop for those interested in the ways in which sound and music are intertwined in the culture and history of Kenya in the way that contributes to the formation, identity, and communication of its communities. Drawing from his current PhD research on "Soundscapes of Peace", Bonface will look at processes of learning, listening, sharing, and

reflecting through sound and art as part of peace building and conflict transformation, whilst focussing on the deeply rooted relationship between the Kenyan context and sound. This includes sound being at the heart of all African creativity, as well as being a way of passing down knowledge, communication signals, and storytelling from one generation to the next. As such, sound can be considered language of its own, and “a way of knowing”.

Furthermore, Bonface has been working for over 20 years with Theatre of the Oppressed methodologies and techniques, and will bring a selection of these exercises to his workshops to engage in a play-based workshop to dig deeper into trauma healing and peace building processes.

Saturday 1 April: evening (7 pm)

Performance

‘WHAT’S ERASMUS TO US, OR WE TO ERASMUS?’ Zlatko Paković (Serbia)

The performance *WHAT’S ERASMUS TO US, OR WE TO ERASMUS?* is the result of an artist in residency of the Serbian Theatre Director and Writer Zlatko Paković, who has been invited to work with local Bosnian diaspora communities across the Netherlands. Starting from the personal perspectives and stories of the Bosnian local community, the group explores the ideologies of tolerance and openness, as proposed by Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus, in relation to increasing polarisation towards religion and minority ethnic groups in the Netherlands. Is Erasmus only a symbol of his birth city Rotterdam, or is his ideology still alive today? And what can we learn from communities that have experienced devastating consequences of polarisation in their personal lives, like the communities from post-Yugoslavian countries? Expect a thought provoking and urgent performance in which personal perspectives and philosophy merge together tackle one of the most important issues of our times: polarisation.

Zlatko Paković directed theatre plays across Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and in Serbia, mainly outside of institutional theatres, and is best known for his fierce political theatre. His work responds to and reflects upon the political contexts of former Yugoslavia, especially issues concerning censorship, state control, and imposed narratives of the victim/perpetrator divide during, and long after these conflicts. His work also discusses how the new countries that emerged from the collapse still bear the traces of the wars.

Saturday 1 April: evening (9 pm)

Main Stage Performance

Corpo Maquina, It takes a Child to raise a Village / football meets dance (The Netherlands)

Let yourself be carried away by the imagination and playfulness of children during this heartwarming dance performance and rediscover the child in you.

It takes a Child to raise a Village / football meets dance is a performance with 16 performers, dancers, (freestyle) football players, sports coaches and musicians, as well as a cast of children. With this ensemble, choreographer Guilherme Miotto creates a performance that offers space to celebrate the zest of life and the importance of play, not only for children, but for their wider communities too. In the words of Miotto, "make the children the centre of attention, for they know the way."

Driven by the belief that theatre is a public space and art is a public service, Corpo Máquina has been working since 2017 under the artistic direction of founder and Brazilian born choreographer Guilherme Miotto. The common thread and essence of all their activities is "Instinctive Performance", as developed by Miotto. Though based in Tilburg, Corpo Máquina Society feels at home everywhere, preferring to settle in neighborhoods in the city that are often seen as problematic. They activity work in Breda and Hoge Vuuche but are increasingly reaching more cities in the Netherlands.

The ICAF team was fascinated by the relationships we witnessed on stage, especially the interaction between the children and adults who worked together with a balance of playfulness and earnestness, with the imagination present in childhood truly being celebrated.

It takes a Child to raise a Village is performance is for audiences of all ages, backgrounds and contexts, that will both move and warm the hearts of all those who witness the relationships and imaginations come to life on stage. This performance is healing for every soul in these difficult times.



SUNDAY 2 APRIL 2023

N.B.2 SUNDAY LOCATION IS ZUIDPLEIN THEATRE, NOT ISLEMUNDA!

Parade

Parade in Rotterdam

Vital Schraenen en Jo Zanders of Met-X will lead a special Zinnode they have been creating together with locals and ICAF-delegates before and during the festival out into the public space before Zuidplein Theatre. It will be a colourful, cheerful, rhythmic and undoubtedly somewhat funky farewell ritual for ICAF-9.

Main Stage Performance

The Sheikhs Shikhats & B’net Chaabi, MetX (Belgium)

Alluring melodies, enchanting vocals, breath-taking brass instruments and an explosive chaabi groove, The Sheikhs Shikhats & B’net Chaabi propose a multi-vocal adaptation of popular songs from Morocco accompanied by daring jazz arrangements and continuous rhythms. For the final Main Stage Performance of ICAF 2023, we present the final instalment of our Festival Resident, MetX's programme: The Sheikhs Shikhats & B’net Chaabi.

This project, led by Laïla Amezian with Laurent Blondiau as an accomplice, pays tribute to the Ghanayats and Shikhats, female musicians who fought for freedom of expression through their art. It also highlights a cultural heritage that these singers have popularised throughout Morocco since the end of the 19th century, and which is perpetuated in Belgium.

Fascinating in all its strength and audacity, this project brings to the forefront a vocal and musical tradition little known to the general public: that of the Ghanayats and Shikhats. Emblematic figures of traditional Moroccan culture, these artists were as much adored as despised and stigmatised. Their songs based on the art of Aïta (literally ‘call’ in Arabic) were practised as a means of transmitting a collective and sometimes revolutionary message. The Chaabi (lit. ‘popular’) became an urban style of popular and traditional songs specific to Morocco, practised during traditional festivals and dedicated to dance.

To reinterpret extracts from these chaabi and traditional repertoires, Laïla surrounds herself with vocalists and top musicians from very different horizons, including some members of the Mâäk collective. In order to be as close as possible to the power and energy of these repertoires, the project also invites the female singer-percussionists from B’net Chaabi.

To coincide with this performance as part of ICAF 2023, as well as a tour covering Flanders and Brussels, the group will release its first album on the Zephyrus label. Join for this spectacular closing performance that will affect, enchant, and embody the sound of change.

ORGANISATION

The International Community Arts Festival is a production of the Rotterdams Wijktheater in association with Theatre Zuidplein and Islemunda. ICAF 2023 receives structural funding from the Netherlands Fund for Cultural Participation and project funding from the Arts and Culture Division of the City of Rotterdam. We are also grateful for the additional subsidy we have received from the Netherlands Performing Arts Fund, VSB Fund.

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