

Intercultural Dance for Social Cohesion in Rotterdam: A one-day Test Project

Background to the workshop

The following project is conceived as a “*proef*”, a test project for Rotterdam, intended to demonstrate and unleash the potentials of intercultural dance for the city of Rotterdam, in the framework of the continuing efforts to improve social inclusion in its urban area and among its many different cultural groups.

The underlying ambitions in the concept of this test project are wider, though: They are to foster the development of a number of intercultural community dance projects with a potential at the European scale, starting with Rotterdam and including a growing number of participating cities. Ultimately, the dance projects that will be fostered by this first day *proef*, will constitute the core for further building a European network.

The project is co-organized by the Erasmus Genootschap voor Cultuurmanagement and the Master Programme “Cultural Economics and Cultural Entrepreneurship”, Art and History Department, Erasmus University Rotterdam under the supervision of TJB Noordman.

This project is realized in partnership with: ‘t Klooster and RISBO.

Three target-groups

Choreographers: Heighten their interest into social sustainability in urban communities, with the creative potentials this could bring.

Community-workers and NGO activists: Heighten their interest in (intercultural) dance, with the cohesive force it can bring _beyond the language-barrier_

Civil servants and administrators: Heighten their interest in the concept and engage them into conceiving its translation into support for projects, appreciating the integrated approach it offers for urban cultural policies.

Learning-goals for the participants

- (1) To engage the participants into a conversation about the general concept of the project, i.e. how dance functions as a language, instrument of understanding; why it’s both cultural and universal; why it could be integrated into a political objective of sustainable social cohesion /social sustainability.
- (2) To discuss the artistic potentials of direct contact and crossovers between dancers from a diversity of cultures within the city, *and the special role of the choreographer in bringing these potentials into a meaningful new language with its own identity.*
- (3) To be able to formulate goals for possible projects.
- (4) To learn how to work together for concrete results on such projects, understanding the goals of the other groups.
- (5) To materialize these insights into realistic simulations, *and to learn about some relevant elements of project management through a critical view on these simulations.*
- (6) To experience the rich potential of intercultural dance, in terms of artistic diversity and quality, empowerment of participating volunteers, social cohesion among participants and audience, and the *special role of the choreographer in practice.*

The energy of Dance for Social Sustainability in urban communities

For the last decades, cities have sprawled into amorphous urban areas, losing sight of local context. With those changes in urban patterns of development, the people have been struck with loneliness and isolation, and emptiness of public space. Different social and ethnic groups have been segregating each other, being separated from each other within different parts of the city.

For the EU as well as for cities across Europe, an important commitment is being made to strengthen or restore the role of Europe's cities as places of social and cultural integration. Meanwhile, artists and community-workers are working together in many experiments, bringing their contributions to fostering a more sustainable cultural development in the communities.

Urban culture is indeed an essential urban infrastructure which is necessary on the long-run in order to improve the citizen's quality of life and sustain a flourishing urban identity. The cultural expressions and cultural practices of the inhabitants can be enhanced through community arts, developing self esteem and local identity, but also through inspiring experiences of diversity with cross-cultural exposure.

Inter-cultural, Inter-stylistic and International crossings

Each cultural group in a diverse city has its own cultural roots living through the expression of its own dance forms. Crossing the bodily grammars of these different dance forms can foster not only the development of an inter-stylistic new form of dance specific to the city, but also the development of a cultural dialogue between communities in the city.

This can also foster international relationships in a glocal context, if the opportunity is taken to relate to the countries of origins of the different cultural groups in a city, and to relate specifically to the dancers of these countries. Further relationships could be brought about in a European network of cities engaging into similar dance-projects, between communities (of common or of different cultural backgrounds).

Grass-root, Artists and Dance-lovers participation

Dance is a direct form of expression, transcending the barriers of spoken languages. Dance allows a direct exchange of experience among participants (and between participants and audiences). A dance project can bring together people from different backgrounds that would hardly cooperate with each other in a normal urban setting: grass-root activists and dance-making youngsters in the (urban and suburban) communities, dance-artists, amateur dance-lovers (from city-centre and suburbia).

Permeable Border Space urban place

This encounter thus calls for a special place, which is welcoming to all those different participants, and can serve as a bridging place between people and between cultures, a space of interaction in the city. The dance project will participate to the permeable and border characteristics of that particular urban space.

With such a perspective, dance projects can play a high-leverage role in sustaining social coherence in a city. This is why such a perspective contributes to social sustainability.

Experiences in dance for social inclusion and in intercultural dance in Rotterdam

Dance for social inclusion

The SKVR in Rotterdam has developed a series of projects under the heading *Kunst Onder Andere*: The initiative was launched in 2001, to reach children and youngsters who were left out of, or not reached by, the regular offer of the SKVR in the practice of art and culture. This initiative is targeted at “problematic neighbourhoods” (probleemwijken) in Rotterdam. The SKVR aims to work with other partners in the neighbourhoods of Rotterdam in the framework of this initiative. Within this initiative, the SKVR wants to work *with* its target-group and not just *for* its target-group of youngsters. The stated goal is to stimulate the cultural thirst of these youngsters, bringing them in contact with diverse cultures and “widening their horizon”. Another goal is to “scout” those creative youngsters, with adapted forms of arts education.

Hereunder are examples of dance projects involving dance (hiphop forms of dance essentially) within the *Kunst Onder Andere* initiative¹ in 2003:

X-mas Sportsevent:

Op 23 december vindt er van 12.00 u tot 18.00u een groot sportevenement plaats voor jongeren in de Topsporthal naast het Feijenoordstadion. In de benedenzaal zal er vijf tegen vijf worden gevoetbald. Boven is er een *Urban Sampling Tour*, die bestaat uit streetdance workshops en basketballrythm ('tricks and moves') Verder zijn er 'double dutch ropeskipping' workshops en een 'Panna Kooi-voetbal' competitie. Kunst Onder Andere gaat participeren en zal het culturele gedeelte op zich nemen. Er zullen demo's en workshops breakdance en rap worden gegeven. Hoogstwaarschijnlijk gaat er ook gebattled worden. Partners in dit project zijn Stg. IJsselmonds Welzijnswerk en Sportzoomeren.

Boyz 'n Bubbles: hiphopparty in Waterfront een gigantisch succes!

7 november organiseerde Kunst Onder Andere in samenwerking met Waterfront de eerste editie van Boyz 'n Bubbles. Met meer dan 250 bezoekers en hele goede optredens kregen de artiesten heel de tent op zijn kop. Vooral de tien mensen van On Tha Move zorgden voor een georganiseerde chaos en lieten zien dat ze heel wat geleerd hebben het afgelopen jaar. Een gecombineerde line-up van breakdance met rap komt niet vaak voor in Rotterdam en dat was dan ook de grootste uitdaging. KOA heeft laten zien dat deze twee verschillende disciplines heel goed samen kunnen gaan! Thumbs up voor On Tha Move, BS-One, Streetknowledge, Got Skillz, VSOP, Rise 'n Shine en Farah! Boyz 'n Bubbles is tot stand gekomen door hulp van de Rotterdamse Kunststichting.

Hiphophuis Foundation:

Vorig jaar heeft Kunst Onder Andere het eerste hiphophuis van Nederland geopend aan de Coolhaven. Het wordt gerund door een aantal voorname personen uit de Rotterdamse breakdancewereld. Er is een breed scala aan breakdanceactiviteiten die doordeweeks op inschrijving gevolgd kunnen worden. Er zijn workshops, masterclasses, vrije trainingen en lessen op maat. Zo is er bijvoorbeeld een 'boys class' voor jongens van 10 tot 14 jaar, een bgirls-workshop speciaal voor meiden, lessen voor beginners en lessen in powermoves en stijl voor de gevorderden. Kortom, voor ieder wat wils op elk niveau.

Daarnaast zijn er vrije trainingsavonden, waarvan gretig gebruik gemaakt door verschillende breakdancegroepen uit de nationale én internationale scene!

Kidsparade:

Kidsparade is een totaaltheatercursus, waarin kinderen van basisscholen in Delfshaven toewerkten naar een eindvoorstelling met spel, rap, human-beatbox, breakdance en streetdance. Na een prikkelactie in de klas, waarbij de klas overvallen werd door een aantal spelers, konden geïnteresseerde kinderen zich opgeven voor een vervolgcursus in één van de bovengenoemde disciplines. Onder leiding van enthousiaste en inspirerende workshopdocenten werkten de kinderen naar een voorstelling toe.

¹ Taken from the website of the SKVR.

Tijdens het STAMP!festival, dat in juli 2002 op het Heemraadsplein gehouden werd, streden honderden kinderen tegen elkaar om bekens in de verschillende categorieën.

Freebirds: een openlucht muziektheaterproductie in de vorm van een illegale danceparty...

'Freebirds' is een eigenzinnige voorstelling met muziek, dans en videobeelden die het Waterhuis in 2002 maakte in Zuid-Afrika, in samenwerking met theatergezelschap Eager Artists uit Durban en met studenten van de theaterschool in Amsterdam. De voorstelling gaat over de problematiek rondom aids en de dood. Het aangrijpende verhaal wordt met veel humor en door middel van een spetterende show verteld.

Deze openluchtvoorstelling vond 3 tot en met 6 juli plaats op het Heemraadsplein. Kunst Onder Andere participeerde hierin en zorgde voor de logistiek, de culturele randprogrammering, werving en een gedeelte van de publiciteit. Daarnaast organiseerde Kunst Onder Andere gedurende de week van 30 juni tot 6 juli workshops en culturele uitwisselingen.

Apart from the SKVR, the neighbourhood municipalities in Rotterdam are also in the process of fostering projects for social inclusion in their neighbourhoods, including through intercultural exchanges. For instance, the “deelgemeente Noord” launched the project 'Noord aan de Rotte' in this perspective (in Agniesebuurt, het Liskwartier and Oude Noorden).

These projects more generally take place under the heading of the nation-wide programme *Cultuurbereik*.

Intercultural dance

Previous experiences in intercultural dance have been limited in number (making no confusion with multicultural dance, for which many initiatives exist at the neighborhood level). As Laurien Saraber noticed in the case of dance education (in *Tussen rasa en redoble, werelddans in de Nederlandse Kunsteducatie*), by far the largest part of the practice is *monocultural*; by the 1980's *multicultural* dance was developed (a form that segregates groups inside their own traditions); For Saraber, *intercultural* and *transcultural* (a further step of cultural fusion) dance are still underdeveloped.

In Rotterdam, some attention has been given to the future development of “Werelddans” (inter and transcultural dance) in dance education. In 2000, 2 conferences were organized at the Dansacademie of Rotterdam, around the theme of world dance and cultural diversity. The LOKV, which led the larger ‘project Werelddans’ nationally, published the book by L. Saraber (mentioned above) that discussed the development of intercultural dance in dance education.

These actions were integrated with projects for “Wereldmusic” education (in June 2003 the Dansacademie hosted a one-day research conference on community music). The Dansacademie, the SKVR, the Stichting Dunya and the neighborhood-municipality of Delfshaven are jointly preparing the project of a *World Music Center* in Delfshaven (which may open around 2006) within which intercultural dance education would be established.

In Amsterdam, research in intercultural choreography has been and is still being conducted by some choreographers: Danswerkplaats for instance has just realised a research project with Kalpana Raghuraman, bharata natyam dancer, and Dutch modern dance choreographer Anouk van Dijk (the latter as a coach). (Kalpana mainly worked on deconstructing the Indian vocabulary and finding new directions to perform it.)

Most of the attention on intercultural dance in Rotterdam has been focused on preparing future education, while the project which is being proposed here focuses on practice, on the practice of intercultural dance through dance workshops and performances.

Furthermore, most of the existing practice through institutions such as the SKVR, remains in the field of the multicultural most of the time, whereas the project which is being proposed here moves into the intercultural, not satisfying itself with the juxtaposition of a diversity of different traditional dance forms but aiming at the transcultural: creating a new shared identity across cultures (and thus moving much further towards social inclusion across the communities, not simply within one), as a platform for more sustainable exchanges between cultures in the city.

The guest choreographer of the workshop: Jean-Francois Duroure

The guest choreographer will be Jean-Francois Duroure, from France: His experience in intercultural dance for social inclusion is highly relevant to this project.

Jean-Francois Duroure danced with Merce Cunningham, Pina Baush, and he created contemporary dance choreographies with Mathilde Monnier in the 1980's. He then founded his own company in 1988.

In the following years and all through the 1990's, Duroure explored intercultural dance choreography, often working with immigrant youngsters in problematic neighbourhoods and working with them as with cocreators of a new choreographic language (taking elements from the cultural richness of all participants and building together _thus truly an intercultural interaction). For example, he created in Talence-Pessac, a suburb of Bordeaux (France) the "Parade" in 1994: a dance project performed in the streets of the suburbs of Bordeaux, and in other cities; a choreography project involving the participation in its creation of both professional contemporary dancers, more amateur traditional dancers and young immigrant boys from the suburbs with school difficulties but having experience in HipHop; and a project in which the very participants to the choreography also animated dance workshops in elementary schools in suburbs _short before each ' parade'.

After that, Jean-Francois Duroure worked on several intercultural urban dance projects, including one with people living in townships in South Africa, which gave rise to the European tour of the choreography "What are you doing here", a choreography realised with 10 South-African artists in the townships of Johannesburg and Durban.

A film has been realized on the work of Jean-Francois Duroure in Belgrade ("Bombardan - la paix"), together with French, Italian and ex-Yugoslavian dancers and the musician Goran Bregovic. A video documentary of Duroure's work in 1993 is also available (which will be shown partly during the workshop).

Right now Jean-Francois Duroure is responsible for dance education at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg in France. He is also active in the network *Banlieues d' Europe* ("Suburbs of Europe").

Jean-Francois Duroure confirmed his willingness to be the guest choreographer in this *proef* project, to lead its dance workshop and share his experience with the participants in the workshop.

Workshop Programme

A one-day encounter

Place: 't Klooster, Ruivenstraat 81 (Oude Noorden, Rotterdam)

Date: Thursday May 27th 2004.

People: The workshop will host 40 participants: 20 community/NGO/administration participants; 5 choreographers, 10 selected dance volunteers, 5 organizers (including 3 observers from the EGC). In the last session, they will be joined by the members of the EGC (about 20 art managers).

Provisional Timetable

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| 10.00 - 11.15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General presentation of the concept to all participants and speech by the guest choreographer about his experience.• Screening of video-extracts. |
| 11.30 - 12.45 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops in 3 specialty-groups: Community and NGO's; Civil servants and administrators; choreographers.• The three groups will formulate their goals for projects in the perspective of the concept and of the insights shared by the guest choreographer. |
| 12.45 - 14.00 | Lunch |
| 14.00 - 15.15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops in simulation-groups. The groups will be crossed into 2 to 4 mixed groups.• These mixed groups will each realize a simulation of a concrete project. |
| 15.30 - 17.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the simulation-projects by one speaker for each mixed group.• <i>Criticism by the EGC observers on project management and closing exchange on what has been learnt in terms of project management.</i>• Small 'performance' by the dancing group.• Discussion with the guest choreographer about the special role of the choreographer in intercultural dance projects. |

Timetable for dance workshop

During the morning and afternoon sessions, a group of selected volunteers from the wide variety of cultures of Rotterdam will follow a dance workshop led by a guest (French) choreographer with a confirmed experience in intercultural (community) dance projects. The precise organisation of the dance workshop is left to the expertise of the guest choreographer.

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| 9.30 - 12.45 | The group will use the diversity of its members as leverage for a multicultural dance-improvisation session. |
| 12.45 - 14.00 | Lunch |
| 13.45 - 15.45 | The group will work in the afternoon on a small performance-presentation to be given at the end of the day. |
| 16.30 - 16.45 | Small performance. |