



ART IS NOT A MATTER OF AGE BUT OF CURIOSITY

BALANCING BETWEEN THE ABSTRACT AND THE CONCRETE

**ENCOUNTERING ART AS A VERY YOUNG HUMAN BEING (0-3 YEARS)
AMONGST OLDER GENERATIONS**

'I share D. W. Winnicott's vision (Playing and Reality) and equally convinced of a child ability of taking an interest in something that is independent of his or her person and thus forging his or her own identity outside of the relationship with his or her mother or other carers. Discovering and appropriating objects through play has a positive effect on communication skills and helps to overcome the anxiety of being alone. All this is particularly important in the current international context, with some children growing up in very difficult circumstances, most often unaccompanied, without parents or stable homes. Others face fragmented attention and complex communication situations from birth. The need to listen is more and more pressing.'



In this workshop we investigate together how our artistic expression can be an instrumental way to communicate with this very particular audience. Through music, sounds and silence, through musical patterns and rhythm but also through objects, forms, images, body movements and the acoustic qualities of the surrounding space and materials and by manipulating these parameters in connection with every spectator (no matter how young or old he is) we can sharpen everyone's imagination.

By this organic, hands-on way of doing research, by literary 'playing' together, we focus on non-language based, emotional links between all people involved: the player, the spectator and the observer.

Interaction with the audience is crucial for this research.

Where does your artistic focus lie?

How, or how far can you take a young child in your discourse?

How far can you take the adult(s) that accompany the young audience? What are their connections with the child?

How can your artistic language be used to cross interdisciplinary and intergenerational boundaries?

Being an adult yourself, you more or less know how adult spectators view and experience things and you can anticipate. These strategies often do not work in artistic work for the very young ones. Young children do not have a systematic view yet. They do (still) have a talent to read non-verbal signs, though. If children notice the performer's mind is on something else, if the focus isn't really there, they disconnect and drop out.

On the other hand, young children can cope with much more complex artistic languages than most of us expect. Even with more than adults. With children, there is no system and you cannot pretend, because they see through that immediately. The child notices if your mind is on something else, if your focus isn't there and so he switches off.

Children can sometimes cope with much more complex music than adults. In the beginning you think: it must be nice music. No, above all, it must be good music. You have to narrate something, there must be a thread running through it- that can be very abstract, atonal even.

Sometimes they even find that much more exciting because you make new sounds, things they have never heard before. Already for many children, but for adults as well, it is the very first time they have come across these instruments and experience them so closely. It inspires you to do totally new things, it may take a little longer before you get reaction but this reaction is often greater or better.

It is a natural and direct research method, through collective play with objects, shapes, sounds, body movements, the acoustic characteristics of a space, etc. By manipulating these parameters, we emphasize the emotional relationships, independent of language, between all parties involved: the performer, the spectator and the observer.

WORKSHOP FOR MAXIMUM 15 PARTICIPANTS

The workshop consists of the following elements:

- Viewing recorded excerpts from shows/game environments by Theater De Spiegel (CABAN and LABOTANIK)
- + an interactive introduction to the creative process.

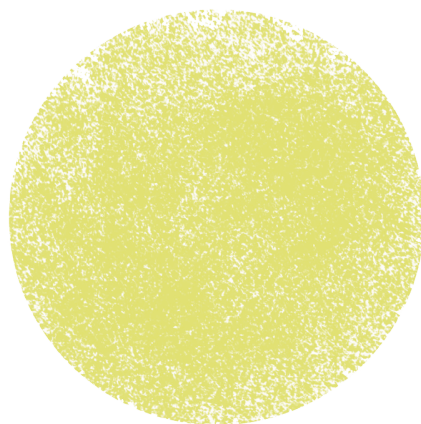
- Exercises in manipulating objects (sound and others) and the artists' own instruments or bodies, in order to achieve a purely artistic and musical mode of communication with toddlers and their carers.
- Exploring the influence of the surrounding space on the show and the audience. What is the best way to position yourself as an interpreter or to place the audience? How can the acoustic characteristics of space and various materials be combined?

ART IS NOT A QUESTION OF AGE, BUT OF CURIOSITY

As an artist, human being, I find much pleasure in being as curious as the very young ones in my audience (often accompanied by their anxious parents or adults). When they enter my secret garden -a world of wonders, surrealist thoughts, intuitive emotions, absurd actions and concrete dreams- they feel themselves at home immediately, open up their curiosity to absorb as much as possible, to come to a common dialogue, in looks, feelings, smells, sounds, words, play.

As the small ones instantly let go of their fears, they open up and become real researchers and discoverers, even in this very early stage of their life. In this intense and wonderful moments the adults –in turn- can let go of their caring responsibility, their problems, their daily routines, to become surprised, astonished and happy to feel this common connection.

As an artist, I am very grateful, to have met this incredible attentive audience (and to meet them time and time again): always present 'in' the moment: being, thinking, but above all feeling. The more artistic dialogue there is, the more interesting, renewing and rich my artistic garden becomes. The less I focus on the distance and delay caused by age difference and the more I focus on the magical connections with the very young ones, the more curious I get.



KAREL VAN RANSBEECK

(°9/8/1963) obtained a professional degree at the National Puppet Theatre in Budapest and at the University for Theatre, Film and Television in Brussels. He also completed courses in Neerpelt (BE), Tilburg, Amsterdam, Dordrecht (NL) with amongst other under Yang Feng and Frank Soehnle. He worked for several Belgian puppet companies such as Taptoe, De Maan, Welle, Vlinders en Co, Froe Froe. During 7 years he taught at the School for puppetry in Mechelen and he gave workshops puppet theatre and puppeteering in various colleges in the Flanders and the Netherlands. As a puppeteer he also worked for the Belgian National Television. From 1994 onwards Karel Van Ransbeeck is the Artistic Director at Theater De Spiegel, the company founded by his father in 1965. He changed the company's course and placed the emphasis on the unique relationship between objects and music. Since 2001 Theater De Spiegel receives structural support from the Flemish Government as Musictheatre. In 2004 'De Rode Draak' was created, his first production for a very specific public: children younger than 3 years old. In 2010 he decided to, successfully, specialize solely in music theatre production for the very young.



<https://player.vimeo.com/video/120777431?title=0&byline=0>