

It takes a village...(*)

(manifest)

**(Follow your shadow.
Embrace darkness.
Ground yourself to soil and stars.
Let all life live.
Touch the cheek of your ancestors.
Be humble. Be vulnerable.
Walk through muck. Wash your shoes in the river. Walk the river.
Offer shelter. Offer your dearest treasures.
Lift your fear.
Get drowned in the rain.
Never ignore what a tree, a bird or the wind has to tell you.
Don't plow the soil.
Light a candle.
Allow yourself to soak in the sun.
Sing out loud. Breath deep.
Embrace wilderness.
Connect to your soul of fire.
Walk to a circle of hands.
Feel the heat.
Walk the light.)**

**(*)...to raise a child.
(inspired by Peter Handke)**

This is what you came for.(*)

Une rencontre. Een ontmoeting. An encounter.

Art as a meeting place for communication, desire, (exchange)and transformation.

“Els Dietvorst is interested in how we, as people, engage with each other and our environment. With her work she makes visible things that go unnoticed. She has an eye for the unwanted and strange, or for what is at risk of disappearing. She has a consistent practice of working in dialogue with others; she creates places for encounters. Inspired by Joseph Beuys’ ideas, Dietvorst questions the boundaries between art and life: she, too, approaches art as a spiritual exercise. What can art mean, as ritual, as particles of energy? “(Indra Devriendt).

‘This is what you came for’ (opening April 27th 2022) is conceived as an encounter and an invitation, questioning the form of the traditional exhibition, the process is more important than the endproduct. ‘This is what you came for’ in De Centrale and Bozar creates a fluid wave between the two places. The proposal grew out of the almost ritualistic actions and creations that Els Dietvorst started during the C19 period in lockdown. A parade will connect the two projects at the opening: stones that will be collected in Ireland will be carried during a ritual moment and placed in the altar-shaped installation of BOZAR. This movement will be repeated during the time of the exhibitions. Performances, music, situations will be co-created with the public.

(*)”The title of the exhibition came to me in the aftermath of C19. Rethinking what we could have learned, rethinking what we could have won. Thinking...what if we missed the turning point?”(ED)

This is how I imagine it.

‘*This is what you came for*’ is a free and open space.

‘*This is what you came for*’ is a continuous stream between the two places, someone might share a meal someone might share a conversation someone might share a smile someone might sing a song.

‘*This is what you came for*’ recognizes the soul of fire(*) and cherishes collectivity.

ME.

For my work everything has to fall in place. I try to create a humus, a fertile soil where diversity, experiment and fluidity is key. These are moments where the experience of the threefold: the artwork, the artist (and non artist), the public, the passer-by falls together. It’s an artwork of a total kind.

If the elements are set right something mysterious, profoundly human can happen. As a magic spark. Intuition and creativity are enlightened to make transformation possible.

I trigger those moments by creating a healthy chaos, taking care of the soul of fire, respecting the strengths in everyone and **ignoring the order and control** hyperconsumerism/capitalism urges us in.

The forces at work in ‘*This is what you came for*’ are the same as those that are at work in people or in nature. These forces are in a constant organic and holistic movement. This is an extension of the notion of art in an anthropological sense that transcends the conceptual limits of modern art in so far as its fundamental principles apply to humanity in general.

We must try more to construct those situations, that is to say, collective ambiances, ensembles of impressions determining the ‘quality of a moment’. Following Debord these moments are *passageways*, without a future, discontinuous moments or events that try to tap into real life.

We have to take time to allow us to be a ‘*dérive*.’

Debord defines the ‘*dérive*’ as a mode of experimental behavior, a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. It is an unplanned journey through a landscape, in which participants drop their everyday relations and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find, to reach the same level of awareness.

It links back to Beuys's concept of participating in the whole: ...whether people are artists, assemblers of machines or nurses, it is a matter of participating in the whole.

We are interconnected through a collective memory, through a collective goal, through a collective necessity. It is about what people can do together, about the added value of their cooperation, it transcends the individual.

The emphasis is on the process, on the moment where art meets life, where people, place and objects gather and energy is freed. It has the character of an extended happening, '*a passageway*'. Which is articulated by an ephemeral outcome.

So all these themes: necessity, collectivity, plasticity, participating in the whole come very close of what can be called regenerative art. This term, stolen from regenerative agriculture, can be translated to my way of working. Regenerative art focuses on the creative processes of making art that restores, renews and revitalises. Regenerative Arts contribute to build resilient and flourishing communities by connecting people through the experience of meaningful and purposeful art.

(*)Soul of fire is a man or woman who has a burning fire within that has to manifest into the world in terms of creativity. A soul of fire is something that burns with a very clear frame. Some kind of a fire which is not coming from the mind but from the centre of your body(the dantian). It is fragile and most of the times society tries to choke it. It is in everyone . It is unstoppable, holistic and has some kind of power to cut through opinions, to cut through obstacles. It focuses like a laser beam, that is the power of the firesoul. It awakes the curiosity for each other.

YOU.

"Els Dietvorst changes to stimulate a new ethical consciousness, a form of spirituality in which man does not dominate our society, but is a small link in deep nature. In that view, the same person then gets the possibilities to transcend his physical and sensory experiences by living less rationally and more intuitively."

To see that ethical consciousness as part of a worldchange, as part of the workprocess of '***This is what you came for***', to see and make a better future this change starts with you, the individual. Because it is only when you do the work that the base is created to start thinking on this encounter as an the holistic work of art.

Self discovery is a component how to relate to others, because it is always a reflexion on how you relate to yourself. Plasticity as an evolutionary process. It strengthens the social backbone. We have to create new 'organs of perception' to be able to interconnect through a collective memory, through a collective goal, through a collective necessity.

So which tools do you need? What are the skills? How do you, as an individual connect to this kind of working.

Radical empathy is one. Applying radical empathy means we have to fundamentally change our way of thinking from judgmental to accepting, in an attempt to more authentically connect with ourselves and others. We have to create a space where this is possible. We have to make space for a creation places, where without pressure of capitalist systems, a dialogue is reassured.

Inner silence(is the new luxury) is another one.

We have to connect to our inner stream of consciousness to be able to connect as a free and open person. You have to connect with the world that surrounds you as it is sometimes the wind, a stone, a smile. Man is fulfilled only when unseparated from his surroundings,

Connecting to our *natural intuitions* is another one. I am sure that intuition is a muscle we can stimulate. By connecting to it we come closer to express the inner nature of things. When this area is not held and open, we also have trouble connecting to our heart. Our ability to experience, receive and express love becomes reduced. Finding inspiration becomes difficult as we lack a sense of connection.

The key objective is to disconnect from our conscious mind and begin thinking with our entire body, allowing our intuition to take over.

You have to think of '***This is what you came for***' as a sphere of life where one can be playful and live without external compulsions, as a kind of a free space where one can undergo and try out experiences that are helpful and strengthening for each individual in practical life, therefor enhancing the personal.

WE.

"Whether people are artists, assemblers of machines or nurses, it is a matter of participating in the whole. Everyone will be a necessary co-creator of a social architecture, and, so long as anyone cannot participate, the ideal form of democracy has not been reached." (Beuys)

In this post Covid life WE, not only artists, but also art houses are challenged to make change possible. We will have to reach out for other values to create, connect and share. We have to use other values than profit, market value and the individual artistry.

Which means we also have to introduce another working patron that is **not based on powerpoints, deadlines and the pressure of having a result.**

Resilience, fluidity and plasticity are key here.

What can you, as an ART organisation, do? How can you support art practices like mine that are ephemeral, transversal and collective?

Collectively we will have to re-discover the levels between intuitive knowing, extra sensory perception and artistic creation. These boundaries should be continuously crossed and at the same time newly established. Experiment and failure are part of this process. We have interconnected through a collective memory, through a collective goal, through a collective necessity. Collective values, is a way of bridging our own culture with others.

So what does that mean practical?

This means the focus is not only on making an artwork but more important on dialogue, on sharing, we share '*real life*': meals, coffees, thoughts, the time in between. The place which is in this case the Centrale. The Centrale becomes the workspace where this connection and humus is established. Which in a later stage can be shared with the public. There is a constant flow between the two places.

This means that when the seeds are sowed in the beginning of the workprocess they have to be able to grow through a contant generous flow and adaption. Which means when the work is in full growth we might need all what is necessary to make it comfortable in its growth. It might mean a change of working hours(longer), it might mean following new ideas and changing the old ones, it might mean going back to a zeropoint. We need to work together to make this happen.

The focus is on participation in the whole. A small example from Frie Leysen/Kunstenfestivaldesarts where I was invited with the process of the Swallows for 3 years in a row.

Frie's motto was '*participation in the whole*'. Frie's second motto was everything and all for the artist's needs. That meant that when you were invited as an artist for her festival you were invited in the middle of all her staff. That included the delivery boys, the cleaning staff, as well as the production and artistic staff to explain your workprocess. Everyone had to be with it, everyone had to feel the connection.

When I decided that I wanted to show my film not in the festival center but in the neighbourhood(Anneessens) I worked in, she said we never did it but we will do now. It's the first time the KFDA went outside its borders. On top of it we decided to make the youngsters of the neighborhood security staff which ended up that my mobile phone was stolen immediat but also found back immediat to prove how good they were.

'*This is what you came for*' requires from an arthouse another way of working which is not vertical but horizontal. And that's where **empowerment** comes in.

As Berger puts it: "...it is actually those without power without any hope of power who understand more about life. More about the enigma what is shit in life and also about its beauty. People with power understand far far less. We have hierachic societies like a tower, the degree goes from top down. The degree of a story teller&artist is pretty much down in that hierarchy and for that reason perhaps closer to life and more profound.

Also the communication is crucial and works different. This form of arts focussing on processes needs to communicate this process clearly for the participant, the accidental passer by, the press to understand the in-between from A to B. It requires another way of working because the process is key, which means images and texts are created during this process and can't be given in advance.

One cannot not bound by space or time or money when the focus is on human relationships. Which requires from an art house a flexibility in looking for solutions. A flexibility in looking beyond the classical excell sheet with pre-prepared models. It needs another way to look at budgets to include instead of exclude.

This also means taking empowerment as a guiding key.

FI. Why not include from the beginning Brussels' organisations that work with newcomers. A small group can be part of the process and can help out with practical things as being a guard or to build up, making meals, making coffee and maybe becoming part of the

FI. Why not include masterstudents from the Brussels artschools? They can help with logistics, communication, preparation?

So how can WE in this present day create something radical that offers alternatives for a world dominated by capitalism, inequality and an ecological/ethical crisis?

'This is what you came for' is a new step and experiment in my artistic path to see art in a different way, to create change through art, where art is the catalyst that can make this change possible!

If plasticity meant a return to the lived world of human experiences rooted in creativity we will have to add more plasticity. Plasticity demands resilience. Just like an 'act de révolte'. Resilience is something that artists that stand in and with the world have and need. It takes courage. It requires elasticity. Fluidity. Working with nature, but also in nature – whether land or sea – asks for precisely this kind of flexibility. You never know what lies ahead, whether the wind will change or the clouds darken, or if the river might flood. You are never prepared enough. You must face eternity, or the lack of it, each day.

ME.YOU.WE.

Dialogue, interaction and bridging boundaries is integral to the holistic artprocess of **'This is what you came for'**.

That means we not only have to do this work individually but also collectively.

We have to be more alert.

We own it to ourselves, to our children, to the earth we live on.

We have to find a way to live, to survive, to discover forms of mutual aid, to place ourselves in the lives of the Other.

We have to make stories productive.

We have to make secrets productive.

We have to make dialogue productive.

We have to work more holistic.

We have to add more fluidity to plasticity.

More humbleness can be the answer.

More humanity can be the answer.

Plasticity, fluidity can be the answer.

Tenderness(*) can be the answer.

Tenderness is always an answer.

()Tenderness is an expression about a refusal to judge, tenderness is a free act, it has to do with liberty, freedom. One chooses to be tender. (Berger)*