

Thematics

LaZone

LaZone is trying to mould a space-in-between the limited zones of the experiential:

a space where behaviour, speech and movement have not been negotiated yet, a place where misunderstanding is the basis of communication, the environment that drives our principles of hospitality to their breaking point, showing us simultaneously the impotence and the potential of our cosmopolitan/ transcultural hopes and desires.

LaZone

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Thematics LaZone ran from September 6 until October 23 2010, with Varinia Canto Vila, Frederik De Wilde, Alain Franco and Isabelle Pauwelyn as artists in residence.

Thematics LaZone was a project by Bains Connective, curated by Lilia Mestre/Bains Connective and Elke Van Campenhout/a.rc, in collaboration with Forest Centre Culturel, Master of Choreography at De Theaterschool Amsterdam and Tanzfabrik Berlin.

Bains Connective thanks the artists and partners.

Thematics Residency **LaZone**

an introduction by Lilia Mestre

This Thematics residency was organized in collaboration with Elke Van Campenhout in the frame of a.rc (advanced research centre)/a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies). Together we invited artists and created a program that could, in a performative way, enhance and question the undetermined spaces and places we called LaZone. During the two months of research we worked on supporting the conditions for the emergence of 'relational forms' in contemporary art and society. We considered the state of 'not knowing yet' as an essential motor in redefining relationships, protocols, connections, allowing us to re-invent the present and the visible. The 'not knowing yet' appeared to us as an area of potentiality, a place that would unfold and manifest changeability.

Looking for LaZone in this Thematics research program was a way of implementing a territory for action that was not predefined, creating a practice in search of itself and continuously in the process of becoming. In the many configurations it took on, LaZone was an ideal place for questioning. It instigated an almost utopian striving to free action from predetermined rules leading to temporary agreement. The experiments that took place emphasized the social and political factors that are embedded in the construction of any kind of human gathering. It led us, for example, to reconsider those factors in relationship to other non-human or extra-human existences as a possible way to create agency. LaZone was about initiating a dynamic of inclusion. It was and still is an invitation to make a mess and allow for the complexity of any act of presence.

During the residency, artistic and discursive practices came together in different formats such as lectures, readings, talks, dinners, dances, karaoke nights, re-enactments, role plays, invisible theatre and structured discussion games ('discussion scores'). All these formats contained the challenge of dealing with the unsettled and reconfiguring patterns of behaviour, speech and movement. These kinds of actions seemed to be interferences, places of disagreement, of colliding forces that could maximize the complexity of democracy as a model for bringing together difference and obvious similarity. We wanted to question the desire for consensus in this coming together: why is this place of conformity the agreed upon vehicle for a prosperous societal order and not the place of disagreement where we don't actually understand each other but cross paths, exchange and produce difference?

LaZone is a necessary paradox. It is a call for united difference, for living alone together and thus unfolding potentiality.

Can LaZone be a way of thinking that enlarges our possibilities of relating to what we don't know yet, to the stranger and to the strange? Can hospitality and generosity be faculties for opening up new relationships? Can the contract of giving and receiving be a tool for unfolding the complexity of inter-relatedness? Can a zone of experimentation be the trampoline for knitting a temporary and ever changing social field? Can this space/time allow us to live through the contradiction between the potential of a community to be united and the necessary conflicts resulting from misunderstandings?

It was very hard to find answers to these questions that would be generally valid. Each time we got closer to a possible definition, we realized that LaZone was no longer there. LaZone remains an unframed place. It remains ambiguous, a place of full potential, of multiple meanings, forms and practices. LaZone can be a lifelong process and in that case it is intimately related to permeability, encounter, learning and change. It supposes a future, a possible place still to be defined.

The artists invited to participate were Varinia Canto Vila (choreographer, dancer), Isabelle Pauwelyn (visual artist), Frederik De Wilde (transmedia artist) and Alain Franco (composer, musician). Each of these artists had a very personal approach to and opinion about the theme and the state of the arts, which you can read about further in the interviews. The choice of artists was made with the intention of NOT coming to a state of agreement but of bringing together several practices that could challenge acquired knowledge and the potential of the group within and beyond the project.

LaZone included several activities in collaboration with the Master of Choreography program at de Toneelschool Amsterdam under the supervision of Myriam van Imshoot, Sher Doruff and Jeroen Fabius, Tanzfabrik Berlin with Ludger Orlok and Forest Centre Culturel under the direction of Roger Burton.

As a workspace it is important to create an environment where one can question what artistic practices are and what they mean in contemporary art today, as well as to bring people together to discuss and confront the different ideas and applications of those practices. In order to open up the working field, BC assembles spaces, professionals and contexts. These collaborations bring another level of visibility to the work without forcing an outcome at the end, but on the contrary, allowing the work in progress to be experienced and to remain a field of exploration, constantly in the process of being offered and shared with others.

ALAIN FRANCO

CS: Can you tell us about your artistic practice?

AF: I am a musician and for the past years I've also been working with choreographers or theatre makers in a dance performance context. For example I worked with Rosas on the performance *Zeitung* and on *Tres Scripturae* with Etienne Guilloteau. At the moment I'm preparing a piece with Thomas Plischke. The essence of my collaboration with choreographers is of conceiving the piece as two parallel processes: the development of the choreographic material on the one hand and my work, which is research into musical scores, on the other.

Both parties, however, are always engaged in the dynamics of exchange during the working process. I'm open to suggestions concerning the music and I comment on the dance as well. In doing so we establish a constant dialogue that intensifies the creative process. This procedure facilitates a coherent development of the material but also enriches it. The music doesn't function as a temporary surface on which we work, like it would if it were just a clock marking time, there is a real articulation between the dance and the music.

That practice is very different from what I'm doing in *Bains Connective*, first of all because there is no choreographer and secondly because this project is based upon issues of hospitality. We have been reflecting on texts by Derrida, Jacques Rancière, Jean-Luc Nancy, Irrot Rogoff and Ernest Laclau

CS: How did those readings influence your conception of LaZone and can you establish any links with your personal artistic practice?

AF: It has been the occasion to rethink the idea of 'hospitality'. It is a very ambiguous, strange and difficult term although I wouldn't say that I am preoccupied with it on a permanent basis. For me, LaZone is a work of circumstances, since the notion of hospitality is rarely present when I work with choreographers. There aren't any political or social implications in what I develop with them. It's more the case in the work I am making with Thomas Plischke but this element was not present with either Etienne Guilloteau or Anne Teresa De Keersmaker.

Nevertheless the necessity of the openness of the work is an idea that will always come back, and that's how I see my own work. I can imagine that there have been times where the notion of enclosure in the artistic field was

evident, if we think about classicism for example, classical dance or even literature and its writing rules. It's clear to me that we can no longer situate ourselves within these aesthetics even if we evoke classicism, like Anne Teresa or Jean Luc Ducourt have done in recent choreographic works. William Forsythe has become the most famous choreographer among them by reintroducing the image of classicism in a universe where it doesn't belong any more. Classicism is no longer useful as an established field, a state of writing, a state of thinking or a political state. If we refer to classical principles today or if we continue to use them, it is from the perspective of what has been developed since and how we live in contemporary society.

I'm mentioning this to clarify that our fields of work are fissured. There are fissures as we can see in contemporary art exhibits where a lot of art pieces are cracked or destroyed. I'm thinking of Anselm Kiefer for example, and the idea of showing simultaneously what is at stake and why it cannot be done in any other way. The ideal of the 'finished form' is almost unbearable. These are the thoughts that occupy my mind in the *Bains Connective* project on hospitality.

Obviously this term also contains the notion of immigration, of the

foreigner or of the person who drops by and turns up without being expected.

These are effects of mobility; people are displaced and meet somewhere else or they must escape and in this case it doesn't really matter where they arrive. These moments of total surprise arise from questions of those who are 'in situ' - texts by Derrida, Nancy and Rancière speak about these issues. What does it mean to welcome someone? What's the meaning of offering something? The issue of the gift was also discussed a great deal in relationship to the 'potlatch' of Native American tribes that brings us to the idea of a perpetual and infinite gift and the presence of rivalry on its economy. Since Levis Strauss and the advent of structural anthropology, we know that functioning rules that were considered archaic or primitive have actually continued to the present day. The logic of the gift is still at work in all dimensions of human activity: in economics, politics, art and in romantic relationships. The notion of giving is always present but what is the meaning of the gift in our time? What are we expecting in return? Is there an exchange or not.

Elke Van Campenhout

(co-curator of LaZone)

Coralie Stalberg: How do you envision LaZone?

Elke van Campenhout: LaZone is a long-term project I've been working on that is related to the topic of 'critical hope'. In this collaboration with *Bains Connective* we worked with the invited artists of the *Thematics*, and organized collective discussions and activities reflecting on LaZone as a space, as an intellectual environment and as a practice. When at the end of the process every member of the group tried to formulate a definition for LaZone, the ideas that came out were very different and personal to each artist - this fits the concept of LaZone somehow perfectly.

The basic concept of LaZone is to propose an environment that is open, not yet specified, where the rules of behaviour, speech and movement are not yet negotiated and recognizable for all the inhabitants. There is no common understanding yet for what you can think and say, for the way you relate to others and the rules for using the space, which makes LaZone a kind of in-between space that is devoid of any function.

It doesn't fit the over-defined grid that governs our idea of public, semi-public and private spaces, or the way we adapt our thinking and behaviour to our understanding of the society we live in. In LaZone we try to experience (the impossibility of) a free zone, of a playground where people can rethink the rules of being together, of hospitality and of communication

CS: The concept of the artwork as a gift was a central theme during your reflection sessions. Can you tell me more about this?

EVC: One of the most important aspects of LaZone is the issue of generosity and hospitality, and how these concepts are both culturally and personally embedded. These rules relate of course to our sense of belonging to a certain group, and in most cases, to different groups. But as we are not restricted to one cultural paradigm, since we live with complex, constructed identities, these rules can be quite volatile, and in that sense, personal. The gift in my view is a concretization or a symbolization of these semi-personal rules of hospitality. What do you give and what does it mean to give something to someone? Are you expecting reciprocity?

And what do you understand by that? Do you assume that the other person will respond to you to the same degree? What is the value of a gift? Is a gift something you always give consciously? We read up on different theories concerning the gift, and out of the thinking of reciprocity on the one hand and the wild, unproductive *Bataillon* gesture on the other, we encountered a third understanding of the gift that we borrowed from Derrida.

CS: Can you tell me about the piece you'll show to the public after this residency?

AF: I can talk about the general concept of what I'm planning to do. A space will be divided into several areas and there will be five characters being oriented through a system of codes. They will be instructed to carry out certain actions, and also to intervene with their own code. Each character will receive a code to start with which will be modified during the performance. The idea is to play with the notion of identification with a code. This code is obviously a metaphor for a function or an identity, and the aim is to generate a link between the codes one receives and the code one becomes. To give you a very simple example, imagine that I'm A and you are B. If A and B execute certain actions and at a certain time we decide that A becomes B and B becomes A, that leads us to consider what we finally inherit. I think systemic changes will blur the level of identification. Do we stay ourselves while receiving something extra or do we try to become someone else? And in these terms we have to refer to the text of Diderot concerning the paradox of the actor which questions if we play who we are or we become what we play.

There is a kind of a blurry zone that remains confused. Through this game of substitution I want to bring out this idea of LaZone being impossible to determine in terms of territory. If it were a territory it wouldn't be LaZone any longer, it would just be another territory. It's an abstraction, but one that can be imagined. We can at least make steps towards it. My project will propose on one hand a system of identification, and on the other hand, because of the amount of information given to the participants, it will confuse the lines of identification. It's a principle to which the spectators will also be subjected, there will be a double field of ambiguity by which I mean an interior ambiguity and an ambiguity of perception.

CS: Is the element of confusion fundamental to the emergence of LaZone?

AF: It is important not only within this particular context – confusion is inherent to all representation. We also know that when we want to make sure that confusion is not at all possible, we are no longer dealing with art but with the politics of imposition and politics of certainty, with all the scary connotations that this implies.

Varinia Canto Vila**CS: How did you get involved in dance, and what does this practice mean to you today?**

VCV: I started when I was still a child and went through different phases related to the various contexts in which I developed. Dance was the reason I came to Brussels when I was 19. For a long time I considered myself to be a dancer who interpreted the wishes of another person by expressing them with my body, rather than initiating my own projects and questioning myself about what I wanted to communicate. The process of developing my own work only started three years ago.

I don't relate my engagement with dance to a desire to change the world. For me personally, dance raises a lot more doubts than it produces enthusiasm! I don't want to make ideological statements about the importance of the body either. Of course I think it's necessary to develop body practices and to explore the relationship between body and society but I don't see dance as a political medium to defend the body. In my view, the function of art in society is something much more relevant than dance practice on its own – dance is an entrance into art as a more general concern. In my work I attempt to unfold a space in dance that I would like to inhabit.

CS: How do you see LaZone?

VCV: For me LaZone is a reality in which different dimensions of experience are interwoven. Nowadays it is very difficult to stick to a value system because we are more aware of the coexistence of different ethical orientations. So we adhere to a value system when it is convenient or good for us – but maybe we don't even recognize ourselves in any of these value systems. We can always circulate in-between these systems, existing in a state of comparison in which we place ourselves centrally. This brings me back to my personal experience of being part of a multi-layered reality as a Chilean immigrant settled here in Brussels.

I was very happy to be invited to participate in this project. The idea of exploring an in-between zone in a very concrete and experiential way interested me on different levels. I associate LaZone with a landscape, rather than with a position. Searching for ways to deal with the landscape leads you into a permanent state of questioning without any solutions or results, because these are not important any more.

The idea of an in-between space was very relevant to the discussion. The project was so open that LaZone, in a way, consisted of the multiple influences of the people inside the group and was affected by

He says that the act of giving is unconscious because it is accomplished without the subject becoming aware of giving or receiving. You can never actually respond to it because the moment it becomes something you can reciprocate, it is not a gift any more. There are a lot of very different notions of the gift that are related to divergent ideological perspectives on society, human contact and the politics of being together. This one, however, maybe corresponded most to our sense of LaZone because it talked about the gift as a kind of event, as something not so much produced by the players, but by the environment itself as a kind of potential opening up which you can only recognize as a gift in retrospect, in the aftermath of what has happened in the ecology of things and people interacting in the space.

The practices we introduced in these weeks were also related to hospitality and the gift. Varinia Canto Vila, for example, proposed an experiment on the rules of hospitality by inviting someone to her own house where he/she became the host while Varinia took on the role of the guest. In her case the guest/host brought someone else as a gift for her, and the situation became very complicated. The gift of a person as an 'object', how to handle this doubleness, and understanding the gift as a gift proved to be very difficult. It led to strained and unproductive communication and eventually resulted in the three of them being unable to share the house. The 'non-understanding' of the meaning of the gift made the experiment go haywire, but in a good way. This shows that the gift doesn't always coincide with the joyous moment of celebration, nor in recognition of the other one's position. It can be a very unsettling object or idea, a destructive gesture problematizing our ways of being together.

For me LaZone is not at all the happy, utopian place where everybody does whatever he wants, a place of unlimited freedom and pleasure. It is actually a space of quite harsh conflict resulting from the frustration of not being able to rely on rules.

It demands a lot of decision-making from the participants in which they position themselves and mark the place they want to occupy if no positions are set from the start. What are you willing to give, where does that generosity stop and when are you actually not willing to be generous anymore at all? When do you consider the other person to be transgressing your personal limits? In the artistic community we talk very easily about migration and nomadism, and quite often, even if we don't acknowledge this position, we have quite old-fashioned ideas on our cosmopolitan state of minds and our humanist multi-cultural beliefs, even if we would never express these thoughts explicitly. There is a multicultural political context grounding these preconceptions, but at the same time there resides a lot of hidden frustrations at the heart of these ideas. For me LaZone is the place where these frustrations can emerge and where the most ugly sides of what we are can appear in a critical environment: our hidden racism, our hidden non-trust in others, the fact that we are willing to share but only if this doesn't devalue our ideas. What happens when these feelings and thoughts come to the surface? LaZone practices the horror of utopia. The only thing that is asked of us is to keep on being open to raising or discussing the problems. I will be working on LaZone for a long time, and would like to investigate further the potential of this harshness that comes to the surface in this way of working, thinking and being together.

their initiatives or non-initiatives. We certainly didn't want to define LaZone as an initial act in order to develop a line of reasoning and a practice out of it. It was more about letting LaZone be specified through the sharing of discussion and practices. We didn't approach it as a concept, but as a motor that produces movement.

CS: Can you tell me more about these collaborative practices?

VCV: The most important practice was discussion. In discussion as a medium you can be in conflict with each other much more easily than when you have to organize yourselves with the aim of realizing something together. We also engaged in the practice of the 'invisible performance': we repeated the same 'performance score' for a week at nine o'clock in the morning in a café, without the owner being aware of it. The idea of invisible theatre was present at different moments during the week in Berlin. The very fact that the audience didn't know that there was a performance going on, created an ambiguity that is characteristic of LaZone.

CS: I understand that you led an experiment on the rules of hospitality that produced an outcome you didn't really expect.

VCV: This was when students from De Theaterschool in Amsterdam joined us to participate in the LaZone project. We started by working together on the notion of the gift and everyone had to formulate a proposal of what our present would be. Meanwhile, I was asked by Bains Connective if I could host one of the participants in my apartment and so I developed my idea of the gift out of this situation. I agreed to host the student on the condition that I would become the guest and he would become the host. I also established a rule that would allow him to rearrange the furniture.

In fact the initial idea didn't originate in the context of hosting someone - I wanted to invite people to change the furniture in my place and make me discover another way of inhabiting my house. Your home is strongly associated with your property and so I was searching for ways to provoke myself by allowing someone else to give me another perspective on my 'land'. I see this as a metaphor of what it is to be an immigrant. I was wondering how I would experience being a stranger in my own place, while the guest would feel that he was in his own territory.

On the arrival of the people from Amsterdam, I took my travel bag filled with some personal belongings and handed the key over to the student. We had already contacted each other by email before and he wrote that he would bring me a gift. It turned out that his present was a friend who he would bring to my house. I felt cheated because I wasn't expecting two hosts at my place and in any case, I would never have brought somebody to someone else's house - it was a very provocative thing to do!

When I went to the apartment at the end of the day, the student opened the door and really behaved as if we were in a hostel. He said, "Welcome, here is your room" and gave me a document, "These are the rules. I hope you enjoy yourself." One of the rules was "This is your room, please don't disturb us." The game was over very fast and lasted only two days instead of one week because we both stuck to our own convictions.

When I imagined how the experience would be, I didn't really take into account that anything could happen. If I tried this experiment again, I would be less narrow-minded and accept what took place. At the same time, however, a desire to welcome the other, of being nice to the guest, is fundamental to the approach and I should

specify this, framing the project more in the context of a relationship.

CS: Did the interactions between multiple cultural backgrounds generate experiences relevant to the discussion in the context of LaZone?

VCV: We talked a lot about misunderstanding generated by cultural traditions. Indeed we were often confronted with these misunderstandings due to the different backgrounds of people in the group. We didn't only share the workplace, a space in which all of us socialized and could interact according to the same codes of behaviour, we also met in other contexts. All these cultural differences came out at events such as dinners at someone's place or during the stay of the students at my house. Out of this we tried to determine how to lay the foundations for tolerance. How do we interpret other people? Do we react immediately according to our own convictions, assuming that our system of thought is central and coincides with what is "correct"? Or can we put our value system into brackets and try to understand the other person from his perspective? This way we allow different value systems to engage in a

CS: LaZone is part of an overarching project you are leading on the notion of 'Hope', and was preceded by Bureau d'Espoir. Can you tell me how this two research fields relate to each other?

EVC: The whole project is called Critical Hope, the choreography of the Social Body in Transformation. The first step in this research was Bureau d'Espoir, which was conceived as a very positive experiment. It was about how you can make hope circulate in the city and how you can involve people in redefining hope for themselves, on the level of the individual as well as on the level of whole communities. How can hope be instigated into the city by making small changes, by marking the architecture and social structures? The project was meant to be naive and it functioned in quite an innocent way, out of a happy green caravan that ejected small notes, interviews and hidden messages.

LaZone explores the flip side of the hope question and is situated in a much darker space. Here, hope becomes truly critical, in the sense of a 'critical patient', in other words, on the verge of dying.

The criticality of this project is the fact that it investigates hope from the perspective of its sheer impossibility of being sustained and out of its necessary impotence to generate change. Not only personal hopes are questioned but also the inherent failure of democratic hope, the hope of ever living in a society or in a group where the rules would be satisfying for everyone. At this stage the necessary conflictual model that drives what we can still hope for or not, is becoming really critical. It is a thought taken from Chantal Mouffe and also from Jacques Rancière: the idea that democracy can only be sustained by placing it again and again before its own impossible demand of equality for everyone. This is never going to be accomplished, but a democracy can only thrive on the unstable grounds of this repeated presumption.

CS: The body as an interface is an important notion in approaching LaZone as a relational space. You previously worked on the idea of the social-affective body, can you talk about this?

EVC: The concept of the social body resulted from the workshop The Emotional Body with choreographer Lilia Mestre, to which I was invited as a dramaturg. The material that was developed there was further explored in the research project Sense Radio, in which we (Lilia Mestre, Pierre Rubio, David Elcharius, Els Viaene and Elke Van Campenhout) worked on the creation of a relational body. We approached this as a body consisting of different bodies and objects in space. We attempted to let this 'social' or 'spatial' body be affected, to let an emotional affect travel through the different components of this relational body by allowing the singular bodies/objects to be affected by the other, and react on the affect or the impulse of the other. In this research sound was considered an important carrier of these affects, but also the change induced by slightly sliding frames of interpretation and recognition. For example: you are in a space which you think is an ordinary living room, but then the sound of the water cooker becomes unexpectedly loud and seems to travel outside the space or the reindeer hide on the floor start purring like a cat. At that point you create a relational body, a body in transformation going through different states. I think I recognize an object and can link it to a certain memory state or an emotional recognition, but before I get there it has again transformed into something else. An object is never what you expect it to be and at a certain point the other spectator becomes a performer in your own narrative.

dialogue.

CS: Can you explain the research you carried out during the residency?

VCV: I was working on the notion of negative space. This was for me a strategy to escape representation, which is always a difficulty when you are working with the body as a medium. In dance you never succeed to be totally abstract because you can't escape the fact that it is always a person that is dancing. I also don't want to work with codes and with information you can read and decipher. I have a rather plastic and sensitive approach to the body.

The 'unfinishedness' of movement is an important motif in my work. Negative space is about existing more in what is invisible. By giving more attention to what is finished, we overlook the rich potential enclosed in the unaccomplished. My piece is a strategy to make this visible, and negative space is a means of giving the spectator a sense of what is outside the assumed. With this we also become more conscious of the fact that we consider things as obvious and then we can start questioning ourselves about why we consider something to be self-evident. Why do we have to imagine that when we do something, the expected will follow? I want the spectator to question his habit of looking. I don't want to realize this by explicitly showing in my piece how limited this routine of

perceiving is, but by letting the spectator think about what habit is.

CS: Is viewing the artwork as a gift an idea that appeals to you?

VCV: When I go to see a piece, I definitely want to receive! What I want to offer through my work is the activation of the imagination of the spectator. I want what I propose to generate thoughts and images but I don't want to tell the audience what to see and think. The way I conceive the participation of the spectator is more situated in that dimension than in any kind of literal contact. For the moment I'd rather follow the normal format of audience and performance, but if I can trigger the imaginations of people then the relationship is not passive at all. The movies of Kiarostami do this all the time. For me there are pieces in which you just read information, while there are other works that really affect you. A performance can make the spectator become more conscious of how he thinks about what he perceives – it is like offering him a mirror that reflects his own mental processes. Getting the opportunity to deepen my understanding of myself, and the way I perceive through a piece is a very precious experience. This manner of conceiving participation is my own way of interpreting Jacques Rancière's theory of The Emancipated Spectator.

Isabelle Pauwelyn

Coralie Stalberg: Can you tell me something about your background and how you came to develop interventions in the city?

Isabelle Pauwelyn: The thesis I wrote during my philosophy studies was a research project on the intelligible conditions of urban space and the critical and cultural potential of its margins. Since the completion of the thesis I have been searching for other means to continue this exploration. The artistic practice I have developed involves imaginative projects outside the existing disciplines. The projects consist of architectural interventions in relegated spaces in the urban fabric. Just by adding and transforming things in space, the frames of readability and perception change. I combine the interventions with the conception of gardens – I make a plan and invite people to carry it out over the course of one day. As such the artistic work becomes a collective artistic practice. What I am looking for in this process of building is the intention and the capacity to empathize with the given; space, design, the ground and material, but also the images and associations we have to modify it with and give it new interpretations.

It's a way of reflecting on reality and imagining new forms in life.

I am searching for an experience, a complete experience in which the senses are involved as much as possible. During the construction, the individual is invited to encounter an ambiguous context outside reality. This brings forth a state of wellbeing as well as a sense of alienation or even threat. This undefined fragility interests me. The act is of no use. In the building together one is left alone with his or her own thoughts. Here, neither purpose nor product is of importance, but forgotten experiences and memories are recollected. Constructing, planting and the rural have a primeval connotation. They refer to the ephemeral but simultaneously to its strong influence over our consciousness and intellectual perception in a hard, regulated contemporary environment. There is always a reciprocal effect and a reflexive element. It leads us to question the sense of our actions and the way we engage with the world. How do we view our involvement, what do we agree and disagree with, why do we make the choices we make?

You think you know what is going to happen, but before you get there you're already somewhere completely different because the other elements of the social body have changed position and focus in the sense that they have shifted from one phantasmal or imaginary framework to another. The combinations are endless and the work of bringing them together is the work of the individual guest/spectator.

We reflected on the state of undecidedness characterizing the 'affect', this moment of awareness of a (potential) change before it crystallizes into an emotion, before it is contextualized in moral terms or reduced and entered into your personal history. As long as you are in doubt of what you are feeling, there are a lot of different possibilities that can develop out of this situation. In this half-conscious moment you can become aware of the potentiality of the choices you can make and of the decisions you can take afterwards. This is what Brian Massumi calls 'hope' and this hope is always situated in the now and is very strictly contextualized in the unfolding relationships of a given situation. It unfolds in my being here now with you in this space where something can happen between us. My understanding of hope is not related to a distant utopia or a far-distant future. In that sense it is not a strictly ideological position, but rather a political-ethical attitude. The relational body carries that kind of openness within it, embodying the ecology of an environment in a constant state of becoming, of potential change. Becoming aware of this opens up a temporal window for hope. In that sense hope is not so much a concept as an attitude. Hope is performed in relation to other things. You need a certain attitude to be able to live in LaZone — you need the openness to be affected by others and to take the risk of whatever that might mean.

CS: There is a strong sense of vulnerability involved.

EVC: Yes, this is very important. For example, when we held discussions we structured them according to rules or scores. One of the discussions demanded that you pick up a piece of paper mentioning a certain subject and develop a talk out of this within a fixed time frame, for example "talk about 'generosity' for 6 and a half minutes". This can expose you and leave you in a very vulnerable position because you can receive a difficult subject and run out of things to say very quickly, leaving you stranded in a deafening silence. It is heavy, you feel stupid but it should be possible in LaZone to bear this collectively. At the same time it should create openings where we can think together by allowing the rhythm of other people to influence you in the structuring of your ideas and in your being there, but without coming to a moment of collective agreement.

In that sense it is exactly the disagreement, the lack of negotiated outcomes, which drives LaZone as a constructive principle.

CS: Could we see LaZone as a rehearsal space for modelling such practices of disagreement?

EVC: I think so, yes. Maybe even a rehearsal zone for society at large! Although the issue of democracy keeps coming back, for me it is not even necessary to freeze-frame our societal experiments on this level. But as a reference point it is off course an important one, since it addresses a concept we consider to be known to us. However, we soon discover at every turn that we don't know the first bit about it since when we actually start discussing it nobody really agrees on what the rules of democracy are. What do we believe in then? What is a democratic practice? What is an essential constituent in our understanding of democracy?

CS: How did you approach the notion of urban space in your thesis? Can your conception of LaZone be understood against this backdrop?

IP: In my thesis I was looking for a contemporary form of strolling ('flânerie') as a key to understanding the way we see and experience modern cities. I was inspired by the painters and writers of the avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century, strolling along the streets to experience an urban landscape that was changing tremendously. As the city became a big machine, they had to redefine their relationship toward it. I was interested in this position of walking as an instrument of analysis, in order to question the availability and cultural production of urban space nowadays, that is undergoing a strong imperialism of all kinds. What reflects and shapes the complex experience of the city and the repressive social regimes governing it? It was a whole reading through spatial metaphors.

I ended up with the notion of 'empty space'. This allowed me to find a way of giving answers in a more poetic language. I would relate it to the notion of 'heterotopia' introduced by Michel Foucault, literally meaning 'other space'. It's a rich concept that describes a space that is on the margins of ordered

or civil society and that possesses multiple, fragmented or even incompatible meanings. Heterotopia can be seen as the intermediary space between the political and the economic, or between the public and the private – thus, it can function as the source of an alternative order or a counterpoise, or simply as an experiment with new forms of meaning and complexity. The concept leads me to a space that is simultaneously inside and outside reality, a woven world where the real and the imaginary lead to stories in which my horizon meets yours.

Foucault refers to Aristotle, saying that there was the place of the economy, related to the 'oikos' and then the public space of politics. The third space was the sacral space, the space of arts, in which theatre took on a fundamental function. If you look at the contemporary world within the frame of these categories, this holy place is now holiday. Sunday, or sabbat as the third space was about not dealing with daily things, the economy or governing the people. What happens nowadays within the third space? Nearly all the spaces are economized, but it can also be seen from a political point of view because there is almost no space left outside the reaches of control. There is a lot of what you could call heterotopizing of politics. Politics and theatre are merging

together, what we can for instance observe in 'media-plays'. The third space is being colonized.

Through the architectural interventions I try to envision the third space, to experience a source of potential qualities. You could say that LaZone coincides with heterotopias. I am still questioning what it is. You can't construct it or imagine it, but it is definitely something that needs an image. We can only create space for LaZone, though LaZone is not a space, a practice or an image as such. It is to be approached by creating, questioning, and putting thoughts on things. In that sense I believe that LaZone is closer to daily life than we think. To me it is not a matter of pure art, although the field of art is seen as this third space where you can negotiate the things that have not been negotiated yet. LaZone is contradictory in not being a location, and at the same time being everywhere and everything.

CS: Can you describe me the practice that you developed to try to investigate LaZone?

IP: My aim was not to treat LaZone as something existing outside myself, as something that could be investigated and understood as such. Instead I tried to envision LaZone as a space that I embodied myself, that I created

as an 'action' as close as possible to my 'being' – a kind of 'doing-being'. My starting point was a territorial displacement. I used the backyard of BrassWeb to put myself in an environment where I could give myself a physical task: walking. Walking attracted me because it is a very common action. I approached walking in this project as a way of wandering, of circulating in space in a non-functional way ('flânerie'). I was searching for methods that would allow me to get closer to what LaZone could be. By doing this I wanted the method to be closer to a position rather than being a framed path.

The French pedagogue Ferdinand Deligny became an important reference point. I was introduced to his work through the artist and architect Wim Cuyvers, who applied the pedagogue's method of registering without intervening in his attempt to make an inventory of public space. Deligny was searching for a means of communicating with his autistic pupils that would not be based on language. He used film to register the archetypical movements, actions and utterances of the autistic children and confronted them with this material. In doing this, Deligny followed the acts of the autistic without intervening or even wanting to learn anything. His attitude

As I said before, we worked with the texts of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in order to develop the notions of critical democracy and critical hope.

To refer to an idea of Jacques Rancière, the moment you keep restating the essence of democracy, you know very well that equality under its rules is a complete impossibility.

Apparently we have to live in this kind of lie, and to bring up the issue of equality time and again to even just imagine what democracy could be. That is an interesting exercise. Most artists don't really want to talk about democracy in a literal sense. They want to discuss politics, but solely from an artistic point of view. But I think it is important to keep on trying to think the impossible in the concrete realm of our political systems, and to return to them from time to time as a reality check, or rather as proof that our basis of reality is even more phantasmatic than our artistic imaginaries.

CS: In order to open up perspectives on the political, Jane Bennett was referred to during this residency. She develops a very peculiar idea — the need to radically open up the space of democracy by giving voice to the non-human.

EVC: Yes, at a certain point the notion of the relational body opened up to objects. Sher Doruff, who is a mentor for the Master of Choreography in Amsterdam, suggested a text by Jane Bennett from the book *Vibrant Matter*. Bennett proposes radically rethinking democracy by seeing it as a system that not only includes human beings, but also objects. Not only organic objects are taken into consideration, man-made things like synthetic bottles are viewed as equally important. All these elements take part in the ecology of a democracy to be, in the sense that they also have a voice in constructing societal rules and an understanding of the social order.

Of course, this is an extreme understanding of democracy. If we consider that with Rancière, rethinking democracy is about giving a voice to those who didn't have a voice in the public forum before, then we are still talking about people with a will and a potential to take part in a democratic system involving communication and negotiation.

In a system where a plastic bottle has as much voice as I have, we come to an absolute zero point of what a democracy might be. Or rather, we enter into an ecology of the democratic system that involves everything that is discounted from our current frames of thinking and experiencing the world that surrounds us. For me this discourse then elaborates on an ecological democratic attitude rather than a sense of democracy.

was to agree to undergo the research rather than conducting it.

I decided to rigidly apply the method of Deligny to document my entire stay in LaZone. I started to make an inventory of the space in a meticulous way by walking, taking pictures and keeping diary notes, I was looking for how close I could get to reality. What would remain after putting the known theoretical frames, questions and images between brackets? Could new zones of comprehension emerge then?

Another way of researching was to follow the borders of the terrain. Along its margins you can discover another reality that escapes control and that is not economized. Wim Cuyvers defines the public space as a non-privatized one. It is a space that is not well kept, a space of transgression, where social codes and normative behaviour cross. Following borders means leaving the path, the self-evident, the expected and the general. You go to the edges, which means also to the other, to the unknown or to the imaginary. I wondered what experiencing these margins would teach me. Was I looking for the limits of my understanding and how far my search for reality and authentic moments would stretch me?

I complemented my exploration with an

investigation of the waste I came across in the backyard. I tried to use this as another way of focusing and concentrating. I also collected my own waste produced during my stay – one could say that it is like the traces of daily life. To me, waste symbolizes mental leftovers. In the creation of our rules, our networks and our communication, we use the things we need in a flexible way but leave behind a lot of surplus from this production of meaning and life. It is actually this waste that is interesting and that can help us to reflect in a critical way.

My stay in the LaZone and the methods I chose to use was about not following the self-evident path, but about going to the spaces (sometimes mental ones) that challenge us by raising questions. Those spaces have a high degree of concentration and confrontation and therefore I regard them as existential spaces.

CS: How did you further develop the material that emerged from this research on wandering?

IP: I noticed that in my diaries a web of thoughts and images were crossing each other, some that connected and others that did not. It revealed a layered process of drawn lines, weaving and making connections. This reflected the way I evolved in LaZone. It

showed a process in the production of meaning by making visible how one thing affects the other in multiple ways as well as the plurality of reality and its complex relationship with understanding and the creation of narratives.

The installation was a presentation of this process. A mental mapping was displayed on a wooden frame, intertwining pictures and excerpts from my diary going in all directions, creating a dispersed web of meanings. My point here was not 'how' to make the presentation understandable for others, but 'how' to create coherence without losing the depth and the dynamics of it, a space for improvisation and personal imagination.

If you want to visualize a process of understanding or investigation in a space like LaZone, you will need to use images as well as mental frames. Words and images are not enough, you need to intertwine them and to explore a 'hybrid zone' that allows you to go beyond and discover new meanings. I used drawings to go with the writing and the photographs. They show an inner dimension, they allow contradictory meanings and carry personal instincts across the shared knowledge, our passions, ghosts and dreams. All these cognitive layers are disappearing in language dominated research.

Taking the position of registering without intervening led me to question the relationship between reality, images, perceptions and the production of meaning. This is a very complex and interesting subject to research. How do we construct our understanding, how do we set limits in order to make things possible? To create space for improvisation and understanding is something you do by choosing. I did it here by choosing the space and the method, and later on determining the material, the language and the images. These are all limits showing the plurality of things, not only of reality itself but also of our behaviour and our ways of understanding. I regard plurality as a very basic element. Everything is already connected, what I do is make the connections real and visible, 'alive' with the aim of making our life comprehensible, meaningful and good. Going back to the gardens, through these practices, through the actualizing of that space, one experiences a relationship to the world in dreams and perception. I ultimately try to create freedom.

It is quite problematic to make it concrete but proposing such an impossible form of equality is very interesting all the same. There is also a clear affinity between Benne's thought and Lilia Mestre's exploration of the object taking over the role of the performer. And if we consider that until quite recently whole groups of people were considered 'objects' or 'commodities' under colonial rule, were not seen or heard — for example in the 'egalitarian' American revolution in which African-Americans were simply not taken into account in the extremely positive appraisal by European intellectuals of the implementation of equality in the social rule-giving system — maybe this idea of an object-inclusive democracy is not so far-fetched after all.

CS: Part of the material for LaZone was Nicolas Bourriaud's theory on relational art and how to apply his ideas in a performative setting.

EV: The idea of relationality interested us not only regarding the perception of the artwork, but actually on the level of the gathering of people within a space in relation to the artworks and also to each other.

We were concerned with the possible shifting notions of the artist, the curator and the spectator, where they no longer occupy set positions, but enter an environment in which their functions could easily be turned around in their appraisal of the situation and what is produced there.

Nicolas Bourriaud was an interesting reference, but we got even more inspired by the text *We, Collectivities* by Irit Rogoff. She talks about the differences that occur once you step out of the role of the spectator as a subject looking at an object, and enter into a mode of what she calls 'criticality'. You then become aware of the fact that it is not so much about the spectator seeing an artwork, but about a spectator being together with other spectators in a very particular space at a certain point in time. The art object is just an element of it. She emphasizes the fact that seeing the same object or going to the same exhibition in another place with different people can potentially become a completely different experience and can produce a social body affected in a totally different way. She takes the relational aesthetics of Bourriaud a couple of steps further by linking it directly to a political praxis of gathering. Irit Rogoff refers to a text by Hanna Arendt that develops a very peculiar understanding of power. Her conception differs radically from the static notion of power we usually have when we view it as being embedded in institutional frameworks. Arendt states that power coincides with the moment people come together to express their thoughts commonly, at which point they develop a sense of being together. Arendt's idea is also very relevant from a performative perspective: the power is only there at the moment of coming together, of constructing a social body, and it is ephemeral because it dissipates when the group spreads out.

CS: LaZone is a space where the desires and the shortcomings of cosmopolitan identity can be expressed. What is your view on this?

EV: Cosmopolitanism is basically a very problematic notion. The danger of cosmopolitan thinking is that it places at its centre a very specific kind of human being and pretends it is a universal model for the whole of humanity. But this is not the case at all, since it starts from the idea of an overly privileged, well-educated, mobile and culturally open type of individual.

CS: The final part of the process was a collective practice you conceived in the backyard. Could you explain what you did?

IP: I wanted to create a common place where we could experience a collective dream. I invited some people for a garden 'moment'. My guests and I constructed a two-dimensional life-sized palm tree. We planted it in the backyard, on top of the hill.

The palm tree is a resonant image for everybody because it contains multiple layers of signification. I was interested to see what narratives could emerge from this image. The palm tree as a symbol emerged during antiquity and was a major motif in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We associate the palm tree with tropical countries, sun and holidays, with paradise, but the tree also functions as a metaphor for capitalism, consumerism and globalization. Putting the tree on top of a hill has a huge ritual meaning. I saw the hill as a symbol of modern times. Since it can be seen from afar, I imagined the hill in relationship to the autonomous individual looking at and experiencing the global landscape. It is an encounter of self-reflection and expansion, and a process where the space becomes an image.

The practice I proposed was neither an utopia nor

a skepsis, but just an invitation to play with the image of the palm tree. By collectively re-appropriating and reinterpreting this image, another space or added landscape was created, a very poetic one.

The construction and planting was filmed and presented in the installation without the sound. It became an image of a foreign action somewhere outside. Showing the film without sound made the image much more predominant and appealing because it referred directly to the visible. I invited Miquel Casaponsa to create a soundscape in order to bring outside reality into the installation. At the other corner of the installation one could enjoy an auditory landscape and make a mental journey to other spaces. A spotlight on the tree through the window showed an imaginary outside world.

Frederik De Wilde

Coralie Stalberg: Can you explain the project that you are developing in the context of LaZone?

Frederik De Wilde: At the beginning I had several ideas, but in the end they crystallized into a very clear proposal. I'm working around the concept of the sphere, in reference to philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and his magnum opus Spheres 1, 2 and 3. That is the background, because if you are looking for the definition of a zone, then you quickly turn to the idea of a sphere, of different spheres, of something that divides up the phenomena based on certain characteristics. Actually there is very little difference between a 'zone' and a sphere - this is what I'm investigating. During an open discussion with my other colleagues, who also participated in the residency project, I came up with the idea of working with soap bubbles. I thought it would be interesting to take samples from different spheres and their ecological environments, for instance a sample of the water from the Senne or even pheromones. It would ultimately be a cocktail of odours and bacterial 'life' mixed in with the bubble. The performative idea around it was to hire a bubble machine since

I also knew that there would be a presentation during a Plankton Bar event, followed by a party. Bubbles undoubtedly create a party atmosphere! The public would walk through the bubbles, until they saw a display of samples and photographs that represented the landscape where these samples were taken. And then suddenly something else would happen when the public suddenly realizes that these playful bubbles just touched their skin. Perhaps they would then ask whether or not they are infected. That's what I think spheres are partly about as metaphors: the implosion of the immune system and its failures. It could be connected to the economic crisis, the personal sphere or the sphere of semiotics.

I've developed this thought further and done some historical research. One of my main inspirations was literary in origin: Patrick Süskind's *Perfume*. I thought it would be wonderful and very poetic to try to trap every smell in the world inside a bubble. I was also inspired by the 'Homo Bulla', an idea that was reintroduced by Erasmus as a sort of icon within the vanitas theme (that emphasizes the ephemeral characteristic of life). I want to make a bubble that exists forever. In order to do so I will be designing a machine called the Süskind machine.

To be multicultural in the sense that you can consider yourself an inhabitant of any kind of city culture in the world is to ignore the localization and the specificity of a cultural, economic and social topicality.

The cosmopolitan feeling indeed refers to the commercial centres of the world, where Richard Florida's bohemian resides, where the arts and the economic value system inhabit the same domain. But such a sense of cosmopolitanism overlooks the remaining 80 % of the territory of these big cities, and does not take into consideration that you can only escape being designated by culture or by belonging if you have the money and the means to do so. In that sense the cosmopolitan dream is a humanist construction that doesn't take into account the ecology of things, people and spaces, and how they relate to each other. It prefers to cut out a very small part of this whole map of extremely complicated and oppositional senses of belonging and pretend that this can be shared by everyone, everywhere. Now I will contradict myself a little:

what I do like about the cosmopolitan stance is the idea that your identity is not made up of the literal belonging to your nation, your social strata or your sexual orientation. It is made up of dozens of different strands of belonging to international communities and circles of interest.

You cannot be pinned down by where you come from or how you grew up. The complex identity is a useful idea, but it is also a problematic one. If you talk to young artists now, one of the points that keeps popping up is exactly this: the complexity of their identities, their sense of belonging to different completely contradictory spaces at the same time and the feeling that this complexity has taken away their agency, their power to act. They can for example belong to the community of struggling artists and feel solidarity with third world countries, while on the other hand also be part of the fashion community and love being seen in vintage Dolce & Gabbana. They have so many different kinds of belonging that they are not able to position themselves any more and they no longer know what they stand for. The necessity of working around hope came out of this frustration I felt working with artists.

An attempt to get out of that deadlock which makes it impossible to act out of what you consider your own agitation to be, not only because we realize we are a social construction, but because we acknowledge we are several.

An important question was of course how to extract odours from their surroundings and so I started to investigate chemical processes. Many of them are a bit dangerous, not easy to achieve and often carcinogenic. It became a study in itself and I doubted if I should continue, knowing that the time I had available for this project was limited.

I started to collect several samples and made photographs of the area where I took these samples. I honestly wondered if it would not be more interesting to keep things imaginary. It seemed like an intriguing proposition – activating the eye of the viewer by making him/her look for the ‘source’ of the presented sample in the picture. The spectator would have fun walking through a cloud of bubble without really knowing what was in the bubbles. And then the potential shock would come. The question is how far I can go and should go with this.

I’m going to really work on the imagination of the viewer and that will add a certain dimension to the work. It already has a poetic and an ecological dimension, but the imaginary will have to be created by the audience. How do you produce an image? Sometimes it’s just by making things absent that they become more present and therefore

more captivating.

There are also some architectural experiments that I would like to do with the bubbles. For example, if you shoot bubbles into a glass they form a very complex honeycomb structure. There are also light experiments I would like to do with lasers, a play with light refraction. The project will continue and I’m in contact with the VUB to see if we could make such a machine.

CS: You often collaborate with universities. How can your proposed artistic approach work with scientific research practice, which operates within different parameters and methodologies? I am curious to know more about the cross-fertilization between academic and artistic worlds through such projects.

FDW: These worlds have been made by people – If you start from this idea, then you’ll meet each other anyway. If you share the same fascination, but from different perspectives then it is inevitable that your paths will cross somewhere. There must be passion and a mutual dialogue. Sometimes it’s a struggle to determine what the purpose of the artistic approach is. All the people I work with love art, but they are not always convinced of its usefulness and functionality. The academic methodology can’t always be applied to the artistic world and

vice versa. Sometimes you really have to convince them of the artistic value of a project, which is also interesting for me personally as it requires me to clarify my position more exactly. When the scientific and the artistic meet, they develop into something else, maybe even into something better. I like those challenges and I like confronting scientists with the challenge of breaking out of their daily operation and adopting another identity. It can be feasible or not feasible, but they will start to question things that they usually do not even consider.

CS: Is the concept of LaZone something that was present in your earlier work and has your focus and approach changed somewhat during this residency?

FDW: I approached this theme before using the work of Marc Augé, who wrote a lot about zones and non-zones, as a reference point. It was as part of a graduation project in Transmedia, a postgraduate degree in New Media, Arts and Design. I worked with a remote-controlled helicopter, equipped with front and rear cameras. I had to ask the city of Brussels for permission to fly over the city and film. The application was not approved but we decided to take a risk and the project happened anyway at MAP, Matrix Art Project which is located

next to a police station! This project was really about the creation of a third eye, a surveillance device that flies around mapping different areas. The area around MAP is of particular interest since it is at the intersection of two very different environments – Molenbeek and Dansaert. We also filmed performers making interventions in the city such as Heike Langsdorf who posed as a statue on the bridge, while people passed by and wondered what was going on.

We filmed both passers-by and ‘witnesses’ (people who knew in advance what was happening). It was interesting to map what can happen in a zone and how many observations and types of observation may arise. The third element I added, were balloons – they were launched to register the sounds of the zone, making a sort of field recording. The balloons floated around and recorded the noises in the same area the helicopter was flying over. You could see the balloon as a metaphor for the bubble, and the helicopter as the panoptic eye.

All this information was brought together in the space of MAP, where the spectators stood between two screens: one screen represented the future and showed images from the front camera of the helicopter and the other the past through the rear camera.

So whatever you do, you will always end up doing something that is oppositional to what another part of yourself believes to be. We are living our lives on the crossroads of divergent value systems that are simply not combinable. I think one of the most striking accomplishments of neoliberalism is that it gave people so much power to construct themselves, that it blew up the frontiers of what you can make of yourself. Ultimately you end up with constructions so complex that they undermine themselves and render you completely immobile. During a workshop someone referred to a well-known joke comparing totalitarianism and liberal democracy. During totalitarianism speaking was forbidden. So, if someone spoke out all the others listened very attentively and tried to make sense of the statement. This created quite a critical audience whereas under a neoliberal democracy, everybody is allowed to speak but no one is inclined to listen. Everyone is producing thoughts, but there’s no place left for someone to pick them up. And if we bring this back to Hannah Arendt’s understanding of power, the lack that this produces is precisely the place to come together and create the power of sharing certain expressions or ideas. It is this enormous free zone of expression in democracy that makes it impossible to get anything said anymore, in the sense of giving a voice to the ones that are not heard.

CS: Another layer of LaZone is the realm of the purely phantasmal. Can you tell me more about this aspect of the project?

EVC: In this regard, one of my great interests is to work on the alien, on figures that are positioned halfway between objects and individuals, between recognition and absolute otherness. These hybrid creatures are situated in-between fantasy, fiction and reality. They are political but in no way effectively so.

I read an incredibly nice book called *Aliens and Anorexia* by Chris Kraus. The author takes Deleuze’s conception of anorexia as her starting point. The philosopher does not psychologize the anorexic position, nor view it as an act of defeat or a refusal to grow up, but as an active resistance to the repetitive quality of consumerist life. Anorexia is about the necessity of stopping the whole machinistic drive of our lives. For me it is so interesting to overturn our notion of what an anorexic is, thus reversing the kind of pathetic femininity portrayed in the everyday understanding of it. *Aliens and Anorexia* produces unlikely figures of hope, in the sense that you reach a different explanation or perspective on what this position actually means – not as figures lacking a defined position, but as those who open up our rigid understanding of things as they are.

In the in-between space moved the here and now, the 'nunc stans', the past and the future. There they were stuck, so it actually represented a bubble moment again. There are certainly parallels that can be made with my current work.

CS: Visualizing the complexity of a context is an important aspect of your work, for instance by translating phenomena for an audience which are not accessible to human perception. In "EOD" for example you converted electrical signals from fish into sound and light.

FDW: The perception of man fascinates me, even its shortcomings. We are actually very limited in our perception, and through the intervention of technology we can at least get a glimpse of what more there is. There are many more dimensions than we think there are. In my present work there is a hunger for other ways of seeing and perceiving: purely cognitively, using the senses, technology or through a combination of all of these. As humans we are limited, and that also limits our thinking. In order to allow ourselves to grow mentally and spiritually it is of fundamental importance that we move in different atmospheres, constantly explore and push against boundaries.



Bains Connective was founded in 1997 in Vorst/Forest (Brussels) as an artistic laboratory that offers residencies in the fields of dance, performance, music and visual arts.

Professional artists can apply for a residency no matter what their experience, age, discipline or culture is. BC tries to create an open atmosphere where dialogue, experiment and exchange are essential for cross-disciplinary research.

Since 2007 BC has been organizing Thematics, a two-month residency program based around a given theme that brings together artists, theorists and organizations in order to share, participate and create critical responses and alternative forms to the existing models of art production.

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