

CS LAB#4

JULY 2-4, 2019



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THE WORD OF...

CIRCOSTRADA

You want to experience an artistic bubble? Co-organised by Circostrada in partnership with Re Riga! and Rigas cirks from July 2nd to 4th in Cesis and Riga (Latvia), this new edition will focus on "Circus Commons", or how circus and the values it conveys and promotes can feed our professional practices. The idea will not so much be about looking outside for new tools but rather to address our professions from an artistic and reflective approach. Hosted in a remote artistic residency in the middle of nature, 100 km away from the lively city of Riga, you will have the opportunity to boost your creativity by taking part in this Latvian edition of the CS LAB !

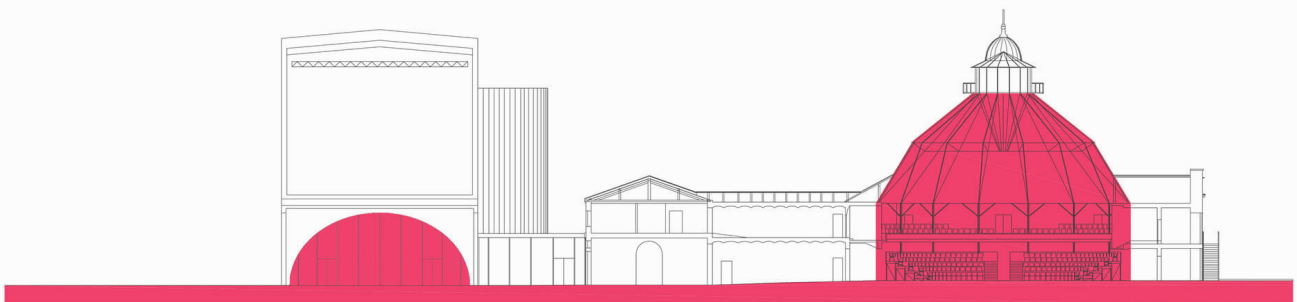
RIGAS CIRKS

Rigas cirks is one the oldest circuses in Europe being built in 1888 and the building is a cultural monument of State significance. It was founded by Albert Salamonsky – German circus artist, horse trainer, equestrian and a director, who was also in charge of design and construction of the current "Nikulin Circus on Tsvetnoy Boulevard" in Moscow. The building was erected from the unique design blueprints of a Latvian architect Janis Fridrihs Baumanis, and used such modern architecture elements as rail road rails as the basis for the building and dome structure, which was an absolute novelty at that time.

Today Rigas cirks is both a historical venue and a state-owned company that provides circus shows, circus education and residency programme. The mission of Rigas cirks is to enhance circus arts development as well as the diversity and availability of stage arts in Latvia and Baltic region.

New creative team started to work in circus in 2016 in order to put in place a national strategy to develop Riga circus as a multifunctional arts center dedicated to creation, programming and education of circus and other art forms.

This is an important time for Rigas cirks on contemporary circus scene in the Baltics. In times of change we see this lab as a possibility to go back to the core of the circus practice and source the energy and inspiration from there.



CS LAB DESCRIPTION

The art of presenting versus the art of decision-making

The purpose of “The art of presenting versus the art of decision-making” lab is to approach circus as a practice of commoning*, to offer new possibilities to participate in, present, distribute, and practice circus. The desired outcome of this lab is for every participant to experience the circus values by engaging with the practice itself, reflecting on the engagement and sharing their reflections.

As the CS LABS are striving to explore new topics representative of the evolution of our fields in a changing environment, approaching circus as a practice of commoning introduces questions around how to digitalise, share, govern and engage with the circus commons.

Is it possible to formalise the informal circus values in the circus economy? How can administrators, artists and public engage in the art of decision-making?

“The art of presenting versus the art of decision making” is an experimental lab programmed to both capture value and un-do business as usual – through being open-ended and experience oriented rather than trying to measure its success through a preconceived return on investment model.

*commoning as a verb refers to the joint action of negotiating, regulating, and conducting ways of living together with the expectation of mutual care, aid, and benefit.”

COMMON RISK-TAKING, TRUST AND COLLABORATION.

by Olle Saloranta Strandberg (Circus artist and Director)

“I like to think about circus as the art of presenting, not representing, a flip is a flip. This is something circus artist and director Maksim Komaro probably planted in my head when I was a young juggler. Back then I used to call these presenting moments “real stuff”. I also love how the sense of wonderment I get from looking at kick ass circus touches me on a deep level. And even better, what happens when I put myself in the risk taking and common trust making that is always included in engaging with the circus practice itself affects me on a completely different level. These are values so easily forgotten when focusing on the macro perspective. Let us explore it all somehow.”



PROGRAMME

Tuesday, July 2nd

DAY#1: What is the circus mindset?

We initiate the CS LAB#4 with investigating the circus ecosystem, its inherent values and different ways of engaging all agents within the field. The goal? To open up for new thoughts around how we could distribute power, resources and decision-making using a circus mindset.

10:00 - 12:00 Visit of Riga's cirks Optional

In line with the new strategy of development of contemporary circus in Latvia from 2016, circus will soon undergo renovation. So this is your last chance to see the circus before it happens as well as to see all the renovation projects!

12:30 - 14:00 Welcome Lunch Optional / Free of charge *@ Riga's cirks, Merkela 4, Riga*

14:00 - 16:00 **The Sphere Lecture by Olle Saloranta Strandberg & Sara de Vylder** *@ Riga's cirks, Merkela 4, Riga*

By engaging in one of the most revolutionary technological innovations of our time, we, as artists, have become involved in shaping the future approach to value. We started an artistic project where we gradually erased the boundaries between performing arts, economics and organisation. A work towards a parallel economy for the cultural sector that initially focuses on the circus. An art form that, by its nature, is cross-border, global and focuses on joint risk-taking and trust-building. The Sphere Lecture is a lecture performance representing an organisation without employees which talks about how it can be to be employed by an organisation without employees and generate art in a sphere that questions cemented images of return on investment and redefines business as usual.

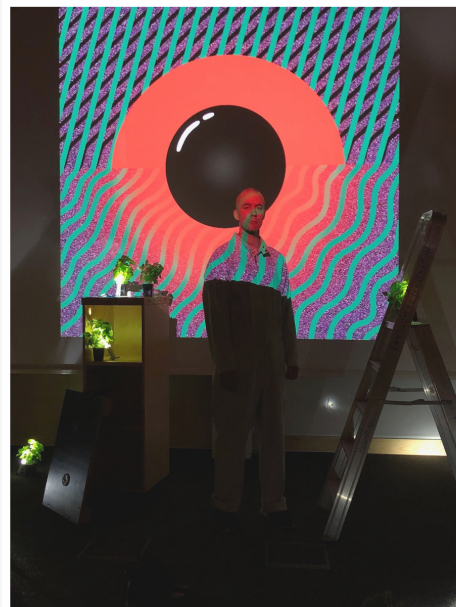


Photo by Sara de Vylder

Infobox on the Sphere Lecture performance - Objectives:

- Introducing an alternative business model for the circus ecosystem.
- Opening up for new thoughts around circus values.
- Imagining how to digitise the creative process.

Olle Saloranta & Sara de Vylder initiated the project in the fall 2018 and soon after that we started collaborating with Economic Space Agency (ECSA), a startup then based in Oakland.

For now, the team, working for The Sphere are:

- Olle Saloranta Strandberg – Initiator, Artist, Project Leader
- Sara de Vylder – Initiator, Producer, Project Leader
- Amy Fee – Producer and administrator with ninja skills.
- Sophie Travers – Independent arts expert, general genius
- Laura Lotti – R&D in cryptoeconomics and product dev.
- Erik Bordeleau – Researcher and fugitive financial planner at the Economic Space Agency.

The Sphere is today a project with several partners from different parts of the world; Lithuanian Dance Information Centre, The Stockholm School of Economics Institute for Research (SIR), Economic Space Agency, La Maison des Jonglages, Steven Bachelder Studio, Feelming, Teatro da Didascália, Berlin circus Festival, Tuscan Art Factory, The Nordic House of the Faroe Islands, LA SERRE – arts vivants, High Acres Farm Vermont, and growing.



Photo by Mats Bäckér

16:00 - 17:30 **Get to know each other during the shuttle bus ride to Cesis**

During the bus ride everyone will receive a number of questions to initiate the conversations and get to know each other as well as to structure the discussion around The Sphere Lecture and the topics of the following two days.

18:00 - 20:00 **Team Building: Preparing a soup together around a bonfire** *@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis*

20:00 **Reflection on The Sphere Lecture** **Discussion led by Olle Saloranta Strandberg** *@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis*

Reflection around The Sphere Lecture and circus values using Socratic Dialogue*.

*Socratic Dialogue is another design process method built on the idea that: we have a life full of habits and assumptions that guide our way of thinking, acting, and feeling. If we want to think differently, we need to step aside of them. Besides, we usually pretend to listen, while we only capture those words that fit in our sequence of thoughts. Socratic Dialogue can be a way of building collaborative and reflective awareness space in which we practice active listening and the art of collective attention leading to a collaborative mind. This method uses different steps and through each of these, the complexity of the challenges increases. "The final objective is to design a new narrative that is future proof with a steady moral compass, a new narrative that incorporates our values, our purposes and a way to create meaning". (Socratic Design Website)

Infobox on the reflection - Objectives:

- Creating an open environment for discussing the nature of value, circus values and the issues within the circus ecosystem.

Wednesday, July 3rd

DAY#2: How does the circus mindset feels?

Engaging and investigating circus practice and its inherent values, we will explore the sphere of unknown potentialities by practicing circus, listening to circus researchers and artists as well as discussing the experience of circus.

08:00 - 09:00 **Breakfast**

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

09:00 - 10:00 **Meditation as a practice of equilibrium - Session led by Olle Saloranta Strandberg**

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

To prepare for a day of engaging with the circus practice, we start with focusing our minds and start working with equilibrium in an experiential level.

10:30 - 13:00 **Becoming Multiple I - Session led by Rolf Hughes and Rachel Armstrong**

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

By viewing different forms of organisation through the lens of the natural world, participants will hear about different ways of thinking about the body: from the soft “machines” of modern science to collectivist collaborations between bodies.

Embarking on workshop of “embodying”, we will discover new ways of understanding our bodies through physical interaction as individuals, within partnerships and through group work. Enabling participants to identify critical values and ethics through new forms of interaction that arise from these explorations, alternative forms of community and organisation will be discussed.



Photo by Experimental Architecture Group

13:00 - 14:30 **Lunch** **Free of charge**

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

14:30 - 15:30 **Becoming Multiple II - Session led by Rolf Hughes, Rachel Armstrong and Madara Garklāva**

16:00 - 18:00 Circus Practice

We will focus on work with equilibrium. By constructing different ways of balancing together, we will explore common risk-taking and trusting ourselves, each other and the material.

18:00 - 20:00 City Quest - Walk and reflect

You will receive a map and indication with places to discover in the city. In each spot, you will receive a task/question related to previous activities carried out during the day to be developed during the walk to the next stop. We will explore how walking and changing spaces changes our way to reflect as well as our perspectives.

20:00 - 21:30 Dinner in the city center Free of charge

Restaurant EPIKŪRA DĀRZS, Raunas iela 12-1, Cēsis, Cēsu nov., LV 4101

Thursday, July 4th

DAY#3: How could we blend it in our organisation culture?

Extracting and integrating take-aways from the CS LAB#4 experience into the everyday work and practice. We will work and reflect on the different issues and thoughts that the lab experience has provoked and find strategies for future outcomes.

08:00 - 09:00 Breakfast Free of charge

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

09:00 - 12:00 The Art of Decision Making

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

Sara de Vylder will facilitate a discussion about the art of decision-making. How to bring the thoughts and the concept of circus commons into the work as a circus admin and creative producer/presenter? Considering alternative ways of distributing power and means, this will be an interactive presentation and discussion.

Infobox on the art of decision-making - Objectives:

- Capturing, clarifying and organising all the inputs from the past days.
- Finding new ways of exploring the circus arts as an administrator or presenter.

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Free of charge

@ Ruckas Manor, Cēsis

13:00 - 14:30 Return trip to Riga

SPEAKERS



Rachel Armstrong is Professor of Experimental Architecture at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University. Her work choreographs matter through space and time, where alternative kinds of living systems to the biology we know, are possible.



Madara Garklāva is a somatics teacher and trainer in Riga circus school. Madara has a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy (University of Latvia, 2003) and a qualification of dance and somatics educator (ISLO, Finland, 2015). She has acquired valuable experience working a year in Finland as an instructor for the future dance and somatics teachers. Together with Māris Portugālis she has developed an Acromatics course, which combines somatics and dance tasks in teaching of acrobatics. Madara herself will largely contribute to building an atmosphere of trust and reliance where there is no place for fear of failure.



Rolf Hughes is a poet and director of artistic research for the Experimental Architecture Group. He develops new transdisciplinary practices spanning architecture, art, craft, design, and performing arts. He was previously Head of Research and Professor of Artistic Research at Stockholm University of the Arts.



Olle Saloranta Strandberg is a circus director and choreographer with a special interest in self-organisation and the creative process. He is chairman of Manegen (a Swedish national member organisation for circus, variety and street performance.) Olle is an educated circus artist from the circus pilots (2002-2005) and holds a MFA in direction and dramaturgy for movement-based performing arts. He is a former acrobat and juggler and used to be an artistic director and artistic project manager for the Swedish company Cirkus Cirkör, 2011-2018, where he established Cirkör LAB (Cirkör's residence and artistic research department). In the self-organisation and the productivity sphere, Olle is a licensed trainer in GTD (Getting Things Done), Scrum master, Holacracy Practitioner and licensed trainer for the 12 Week Year.



Aleksej Smolov is health sports specialist, Cyr wheel artist, and circus trainer. He regularly participates in different contemporary circus creations and collaborates with artists in Latvia and abroad. When leading workshops Aleksejs uses his knowledge and skills to conduct GPP training sessions and classes in certain disciplines e.g. handstand, floor acrobatics, basics of juggling. In his work Aleksejs focuses on the overall training of the body helping people to be aware of their movements, to analyse and understand them. By understanding certain principles of movement, it is easier to perform various tasks which may be helpful not only in the circus but also in everyday life.



Sara de Vylder is an unconventional producer and administrator for performing arts with impossible projects as an area of focus. For the past 20 years she has, among other things, been a project manager for Stockholm's millennium celebration and several large scale community-based productions with 150-200 people on stage, speaking over 20 different languages. She has worked with the establishment and operation of a community-based suburban theater in Stockholm for seven years. Lately she succeeded with the project that in one week sew the first Sweden-made hot air balloon for decades, with the help of parts of the Västerås citizens. During the years 2007-2018 she has had longer positions as a producer at Södra Teatern and Cirkus Cirkör in Stockholm. Sara is trained in performing arts production. She has a great interest in communication and power relations. She is also Scrum master, Holacracy Coach and licensed trainer within 12 Week Year.

TIPS FOR PEOPLE STAYING OVER THE WEEKEND

Riga is a vibrant city. It is the perfect destination to go to for those willing to stay for a weekend. Below are a few suggestions of venues to visit while you are in Riga.

Thursday, 4th evening:

You can visit the creative quartier Tallinas Pagalms at Tallinas 10, Riga and meet with the curatorial team. Tallinas ielas pagalms is a new creative area started by the NGO Free Riga. It has created a new area where popular culture mixes with contemporary art. It regroups several artistic venues, exhibition halls, artist residency, concert hall Tu jau zini Kur!, coworking space Mill and numerous bars and restaurants. Live music and Dj sets are entertaining the growing community almost every evening and there is a surprise around each corner. Launched in 2018 it has become one of the most vibrant places during the summer time.

More info here: <https://tallinaspagalms.business.site/>

You can also choose to visit the Alternative concert hall "Tu jau zini kur" and attend a contemporary dance performance by one of the leading contemporary dance duo in the region: Krišjānis Sants and Ieva Gaurilčikaite.

More info here: <https://www.facebook.com/tujauzinikur/>

More information to come!

Friday, 5th:

Guided visit of the Art Nouveau district in Riga.

The Art Nouveau architecture in Riga makes up roughly one third of all the buildings in the centre of Riga, making Latvia's capital the city with the highest concentration of Art Nouveau architecture anywhere in the world. Mara Pavula used to be tour guide in her previous life and is absolutely in love with Art Nouveau. She is going to bring you around the most surprising corners of the city and make you fall in love with Riga in a second!

More info here: <https://www.latvia.travel/en/article/art-nouveau>



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Arrivals: Please let us know the exact time of your arrival and we will help you organise your transportation to your hotel.

In case you choose to organise it by yourself:

By bus

During the day you can take the bus n. 22. It will take 30 minutes to get to city center. You can buy a bus ticket at the exit of the airport (1,15€) or directly in the bus (2€)

Taxify or Yandex (Uber) / Taxi

During the night we would advise you to take a taxi. The best option is to take Taxify or Yandex (local Uber alternatives). It costs around 8€.

If you take an ordinary cab at the exit of the airport - please make sure to negotiate a fixed price of 15€. If not, they might unfortunately switch to faster counters for foreigners.

Hotel in Riga

If you want to arrive on 1st of July or leave later, please contact us by **June 24th** and we will pre book a room for you in one of our partner hotels near Riga Cirks. You will benefit from a discount price and it will be around 50€ per night to be paid upon arrival.

Food

We will organise your meals during your stay. Please let us know if there is any special diets or food allergies that we should know of.

Staying in the countryside

Please note that the CS LAB will include movement workshops - take comfortable clothes that allow you to move easily.

During the Lab, we will stay in a residency house in the countryside. This means we will share rooms and live in a common space all together.

We will have homemade breakfasts, cook food on bonfire and eat at manor house and try out the residency life in countryside.

Please take some warm clothes – even if the weather is warm in Latvia, it can get chilly in countryside. If you want to enjoy walks in the forest – please take long sleeved jackets and jeans to protect from ticks. If needed we can buy anti-insect sprays.

If you have any special needs that we should know of - please let us know, and we will try to arrange for the best. If it is absolutely impossible for you to share room with other people – let us know ASAP. We will try to find the best solutions.

CONTACTS

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