

FRESH
SEMINARS


FRESH CIRCUS#3



On April from 13 to 15 2016 in Paris, Circostrada Network, in partnership with La Villette, organised FRESH CIRCUS#3 - European Seminar for the Development of Circus Arts. The third edition of this flagship event brought together 400 international professionals, artists and policy makers for a key focus on Circus Arts. Open panels, geographical round tables, thematic workshops and an artistic programme were on the agenda of this 3-day seminar, which addressed the theme 'Moving borders'. The objective? To explore in all latitudes the geography of circus arts to draw a picture of the development of contemporary circus across the globe.

ARTCENA

ARTCENA is the French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theatre. It works towards its missions in three main areas: the sharing of knowledge through a digital platform and activities of documentation, the support to professionals via mentoring and training, the development of these three artistic fields by providing funding to authors and carrying out international development. It coordinates the Circostrada network and has a permanent seat on its steering committee.

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CIRCO
STRADA

• European Network
Circus and Street ArtS

**This publication
was coordinated
by Circostrada
Network and edited
by John Ellingsworth**

Since 2003, Circostrada Network works to develop and structure the fields of Circus and Street Arts in Europe and beyond. With more than 80 members from 25 countries, it contributes to build a sustainable future for these sectors by empowering cultural players through the production of resources and actions of observation and research, professional exchanges, advocacy, capacity-building and information.

FOREWORD

In *Alphabets*, Italian writer Claudio Magris, a major figure of European humanism, wrote: “Our identity is the way we see and encounter the world: our ability or inability to understand it, love it, tackle it and change it.”

What will be the identity for the circus arts of tomorrow, in a world of rampant globalisation yet with increasingly tighter borders? How will we meet our neighbours, build bridges and develop meaning? Who will be able to sit around the table to share, connect and invent new forms of togetherness? This is a major challenge, and understanding what is happening beyond our borders is key to gaining a better understanding of what is happening at home.

Initiated by Circostrada Network and realised thanks to its members and the support of its committed partners, this international seminar will be an opportunity for debate and discussion, for exchanging ideas, asking questions, discovering other practices, experimenting new ideas and – last but not least – meeting the world.

This third edition of FRESH CIRCUS will not just provide space for reflexion, it will also be a chance to generate concrete inputs that will contribute to structuring and developing contemporary circus creation in Europe and around the world.

The theme “Moving Borders” will cut across all eight workshops, which will take place simultaneously over the second day. Participants will tackle the key challenges facing the arts sector every day: mobility, innovation, audience development, art education and public policies that promote the arts, to name a few. Finally, there will be dedicated moments for informal exchange, to make sure you come away full of refreshed enthusiasm and buzzing with new ideas!

The Circostrada Team

Since its first edition in 2008, FRESH CIRCUS has been a special event for contemporary circus players from around the world, providing an opportunity for artistic programmers and producers, artists, administrators, trainers, institutional partners, technicians, researchers and journalists to get together and discuss the issues and questions they encounter in their work.

Societies have undergone dramatic changes over the last decade. The circus landscape has become richer and more complex. New projects have been springing up around the world, new movements are forming, information is circulating and international collaborations have become more frequent. We are faced with new issues and new demands and our needs and aspirations have changed too. Artistic processes are also changing and the boundaries of circus arts are moving and often elusive.

This third edition of FRESH CIRCUS is an invitation to explore the sources of inspiration for contemporary circus around the globe, by sharing thoughts and ideas. We will draw from the experiences of participants from diverse backgrounds to develop a comprehensive picture of contemporary circus today. We will take the time to compare our perspectives, share practices and examine the issues at the very heart of our work. »»

» We have had a great time preparing this third edition with Circostrada Network. We hope that it will be an enriching experience, packed with discoveries, new encounters, and opportunities for sharing opinions and impressions and learning from others – and that you will take home a few new ideas, as well as a sense of renewed passion for circus and our professions.

The FRESH CIRCUS#3 Work Group

FRESH CIRCUS#3 is brought to you by Circostrada, the European Network for Circus and Street Arts, with support from the European Commission's Creative Europe programme. ARTCENA, the French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theatre acts as general secretariat of the network and coordinates its actions. This third edition will be held in partnership with La Villette, and with support from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, Onda (French Office for Contemporary Performing Arts Circulation), the Institut français and the City of Paris.

FRESH CIRCUS#3 IN A NUTSHELL

400 PARTICIPANTS

40 COUNTRIES FROM 4 CONTINENTS

22 FACILITATORS

54 SPEAKERS

7 CURATORS

3 FULL DAYS OF SEMINARS

1 CITY

2 MAIN PANELS AND OPENING NOTES

'Some thoughts on the purpose of stuff and other things'
'Universality of circus arts: from utopia to reality'

6 GEOGRAPHICAL ROUND TABLES

'Asia: New Projects Shaping Territories'

'Germany, Switzerland: New Generations, New Models, New Energies'

'Central and Latin America: The Artist's Path: From Social Circus to Circus Creation'

'South Europe: Artistic Mobility or Emigration?'

'North Africa: Tradition and Change'

'Central Europe: The Emergence of Contemporary Circus'

8 THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

'Artistic Paths: The Different Steps in the Life of a Circus Artist'

'International Mobility'

'Education in the Circus Arts'

'How to Support Creation'

'How Do We Work with Audiences?'

'Innovative Business Models for Contemporary Circus'

'Everybody Talks About Circus'

'Public Policies for Contemporary Circus'

2 ACTIVITIES TO MEET AND SHARE

A FULL PROGRAMME OF PERFORMING ARTS

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PARTNERS



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OPENING
KEYNOTES

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PURPOSE OF STUFF AND OTHER THINGS

Lucho Smit
Galapiat Cirque

So I am an artist, and sometimes people ask me: "Where do your ideas come from?" I then sort of translate this question to: "What is it that inspires you?" The answer to that is usually something quite normal and boring of course, like "the beauty of nature", "Stravinsky's music" or "the greatness of Silvio Berlusconi". But the real question asked was: "Where do ideas come from?" And that is a very good question.



Lucho Smit / Galapiat Cirque

A brain scientist would tell us that an idea or a thought is like a network of neurons firing electronic pulses to each other in a certain configuration. And then a new idea, or an original idea, would be exactly the same thing. The only difference is that this network of neurons is firing electronic pulses in a configuration that hasn't been used before – a new configuration.

So how do we get our brains into this new configuration? If it were enough to go to the store and buy some new neurons, or to wait for an apple to fall

on our heads to get the neurons firing or something like this, we would have known by now. Scientists don't have the answer, and the truth is they never will, because science isn't the right tool for this question. That's right, science is a tool like a hammer; and "when you're a hammer, then all problems will end up looking like nails", right?

Science is commonly defined as being the art of describing things that exist. Whereas art would be the science of producing new stuff to describe. This pretty chiasmus leads down a slippery semantic slope I'll not bother you with, and instead I'll skip to a conclusion, which we've all heard before: the purpose of art should be to make life more interesting than art.

Back to networks being involved in having ideas. We can think of Circostrada as a network (and this is actually the case here), in which every person represents a node, sharing information. But if this were all we did, in the end we would all possess the same information – which seems like a good beginning, but it's actually a very scary thing because it isn't the beginning of anything, it's the end of it. Once all the information has been shared there's nowhere else to go.

As individuals nodes in this network we have the moral obligation to come up with new stuff. Otherwise – to make a long story short – it would be the end of the world. So we have to think outside of the box.

Let us define this box first: this box is not our minds, because we cannot think outside of our minds. This box is more like a boundary inside our minds. The boundary between what we know and what we still haven't thought about. And this is how I would like to interpret this edition's theme: moving borders, as in moving the borders that exist inside our own minds.

Inside this box we have our experience, including all the stuff others have thought before us, which we spent years learning in school, as well as religion, our genetic heritage, the feeling of security that a safe environment provides, etc. Outside of this box everything is invisible; we cannot see there, and we're all a little bit afraid of the dark.

Science is commonly defined as being the art of describing things that exist. Whereas art would be the science of producing new stuff to describe.

It is the well-known story of the man who's looking for his keys under a lamppost – but he didn't lose them here, he lost them in the park over there. So even though he lost them somewhere else, he is still looking under this lamppost. Why? Because there is some light. He's looking here because he thinks he would not be able to find them in the dark, right? Seems absurd, but we all do this all the time. This observational bias, where we tend to look for things where it is easiest to look, is called the streetlight effect: we are thinking inside the box.

The thing is that dominant ideas guide our thinking: whenever we have to think about a specific subject we have ideas of how things should be. So to think outside of the box we have to add something more, some spice, something to go beyond all this reassuring and convergent information, something wrong, something

absurd, something, which apparently is not relevant. I call this divergent information: we need a little bit of divergent information to move the borders within our minds.

We need a little bit of divergent information to move the borders within our minds.

In an environment where mistakes are punished we'll not likely think outside of the box. If we want a creative environment, we need to allow the existence of divergent information, we need to allow irrelevant information, we need to disagree. We humans are social creatures, and new ideas create adversity and progress against conservation or the sorts of continuity that are opposed to breaking from historical ideas.

So here is the first obstacle: we're faced with the moral obligation to think outside of the box, but we're afraid of having to argue about it with others (or of just coming off as ridiculous) and risking our reputation.

As a circus artist, I risk a bit more than just my reputation every day, and I see no reason why everyone else shouldn't also. Please get rid of your egos and say things that seem ridiculous and controversial. Here is a start: for instance, I'd like to say that there is no such thing as a new idea: it does not exist. There is only stuff that already exists, which we recombine endlessly into new technologies or products that only have the appearance of being innovative. With circus, it is the same: the sad truth is that every new circus production today is just more of the same thing, over and over again.

Just remember that with the liberty of speech comes the obligation to think about what we say...



LUCHO SMIT
(France / The Netherlands)

is an artist and founder of the Galapiat Cirque collective. After training at EN-ACR and CNAC, he created numerous performances, launched the festival Tant qu'il y aura des Mouettes in Langueux, and set up a local project in Brittany. He is also a member of ACaPA's artistic board (Netherlands) and an advisor for the ACLAP Circo Social company (Argentina).

UNIVERSALITY OF CIRCUS ARTS: FROM UTOPIA TO REALITY

Pascal Jacob
Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain / Cirque Phénix

“There’s something universal about circus” Gilbert Houcke

It is hard to tell whether it comes from the heart or the mind, from form or substance, but circus mixes simple yet ingrained pleasures, probably because it conjures up our childhood nostalgia and our adult longing for spontaneous wonder. Behind the scenes, the air is haunted by the scent of the past...

Circus was created in the 18th century by a cavalry officer. His galloping performance told a luminous story of strength and agility, delicately sparkled with blood, glitter, sweat, sensuality and persistence.

Circus provided a democratic vision where every spectator has an equal right to see and be seen, and where the spectators and performers are all equally valued.

Modern circus can be traced back to the Enlightenment, and was born at the climax of a quest for visibility. These were all-seeing, all-knowing times – times when knowledge was propagated by the Encyclopaedists, and the King could be executed on a public square in the middle of a captivated crowd. The circus ring was the exact opposite of the Italian theatre setting, where the performance was delivered above all to the monarch and seating was arranged according to a symbolic hierarchy. Circus provided a democratic vision where every spectator has an equal right to see and be seen, and where the spectators and performers are all equally valued. Following in the footsteps of Elizabethan theatre, circus elaborated the concept of a circum mundi, creating a performance space that combined all levels of reference with equal intensity, acting simultaneously as an observatory, a microscope, a magnifying glass, an enlargement, and a close-up...

Evoking the history of circus means telling a history of the world, a universal saga of conquests and abolished borders, the adventure of a singular diaspora that swarmed from one end of the world to the other. Circus is a universe that embraces its own imbalance. Its development could be compared to the ability of acrobats to get up after they fall, to control their own fragility and to make up for it through their raw ener-

gy and unquenchable thirst to live faster and harder. It brings a formidable response to the destruction and rejection of community. In this respect, circus may be one of humanity’s most beautiful creations: another better-grounded, more intuitive Tower of Babel... Every artistic form contains a symbolic crease, a set of lines and footprints that remain ingrained forever. As a reincarnation of Babel, circus is a sort of magical chaos full of transgressions, ardour, energy and rebellion.

Evoking the history of circus means telling a history of the world.



P. Jacob / Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain - Cirque Phénix

Other artistic forms have allowed people to gather in front of a stage or a podium, but circus naturally creates a metaphorical playground that brings people of all walks of life together around a central space. It can also be a refuge, where clowns and acrobats come together to create emotion, surprise or entertain those who have chosen to come and see them, and to encourage them to make the world more beautiful. They make the world stronger, too, summoning up the image of a pyramid where the young and the old, the vulnerable and the strong, with no distinction between race, culture or ideological stance, can work together against all odds to build the most beautiful symbolic edifice there is: an architecture of bodies, where everyone is able to perceive each other’s strengths, giving flesh and soul to an incredible alchemy, meant to radiate through all of Humanity...

Circus should be seen as a potential template of the world with its strengths and its currents, its quiet moments and its outbursts of temper. It should be understood as an experiment in community and wondrous sharing. It should be experienced through the generosity of its performers, through their consistent skill and talent. It should be appreciated for what it is: an artistic gesture to match our fantasies of lightness and our desire to believe in a more close-knit humanity. Circus shared here and elsewhere knows no

It is universal because it talks to all of us without any barriers, walls or boundaries of meaning or language.

borders. It is universal because it talks to all of us without any barriers, walls or boundaries of meaning or language. It belongs to no-one but can be loved by all, perhaps because it explores some of our societies' founding myths,

summoning up symbolic protective figures like Circe, Icarus, Sisyphus or Orpheus, who have accompanied these nomadic families in their everyday quest for the absolute.

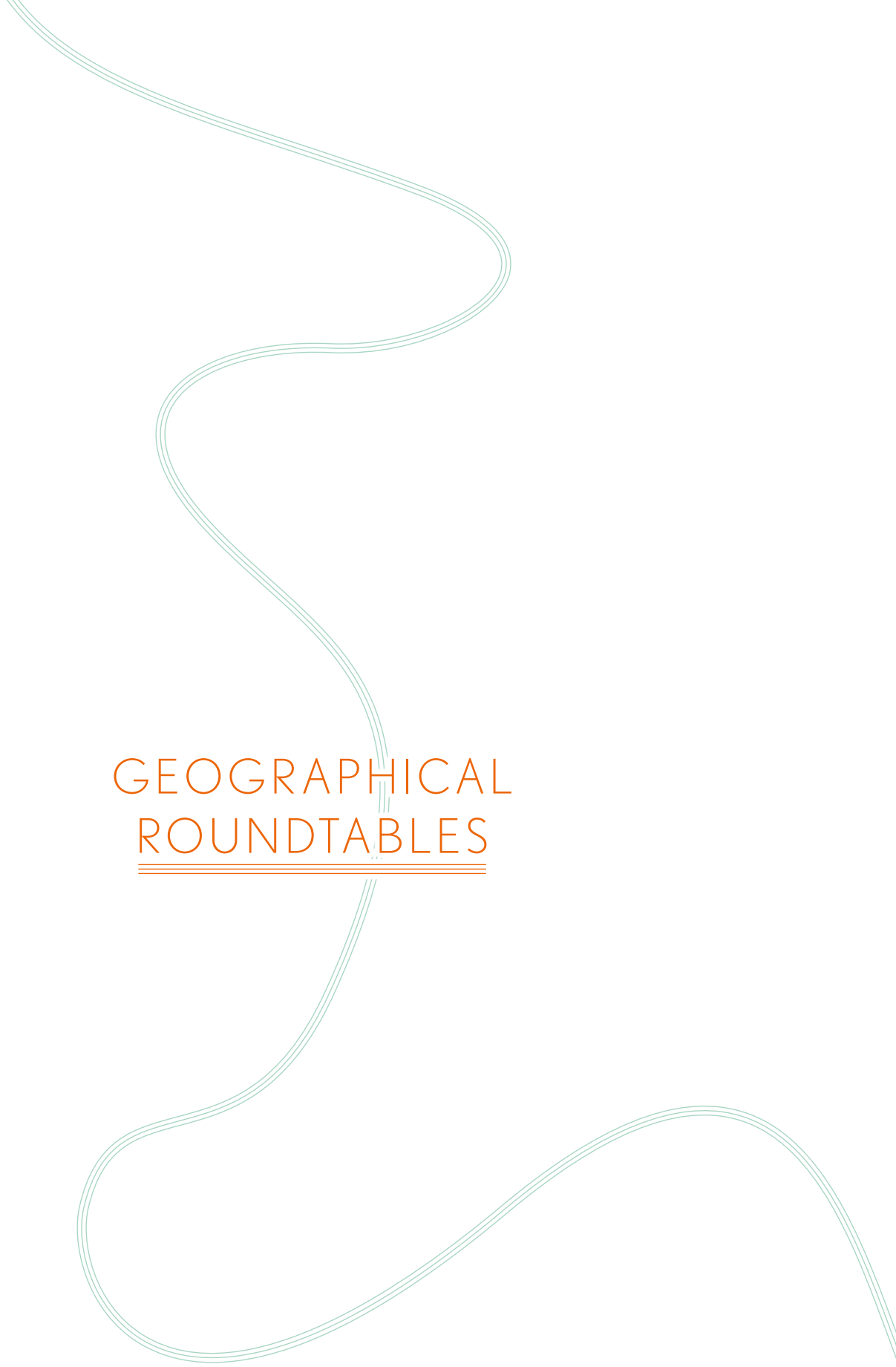
Creativity has shaped circus in its perpetual evolution. Eroded, pared down, fractioned, shaken and cracked, but also recomposed, to become stronger and more powerful, an inspiration to the successive generations who have carried on searching and finding, paving an artistic path with endless possibilities. Circus challenges us, is responsible and necessarily social, playing all its cards without ever really laying them down. An

endless source of joy and anger, resolutely anchored in life, circus is a secular art form that knows no limits and breaks the rules. Its heart beats where you least expect it; its commitment alongside the disadvantaged provokes admiration; its creative power amazes, and it can ultimately only be appreciated in one specific context: eyes to eyes, face to face. Alive.

Circus is about sharing: coming together, exchanging and confronting ideas, and constantly enriching us with fusional encounters where time appears to stand still, but contributes to focusing our eyes and minds on the performance in the ring. FRESH CIRCUS international seminar reveal itself as an echo chamber for the chamber, an echo chamber for the sector, but also as a way of modelling circus' manifold facets through seminars, workshops, working sessions and discussions. But more than anything else, it is a true inspiration to everyone taking part. These words and ideas carry meaning as well as hope: the hope that the utopia of a fair and united world – an ideal that has been haunting humanity since the beginning of time – can become, by virtue of a somersault or a handstand, a reality.

PASCAL JACOB (France)

is Artistic Director of Cirque Phénix and of Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain. He is also a set and costume designer. He is a researcher, teaching circus history at Montréal's École Nationale de Cirque and at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III. He has written around thirty books on circus arts and opera



GEOGRAPHICAL
ROUNDTABLES

ASIA

NEW PROJECTS SHAPING TERRITORIES

MODERATOR:	Vanessa Silvy - Institut français (France)
SPEAKERS:	Pascal Jacob - Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain / Cirque Phénix (France) Dong Hee Cho - Seoul Street Arts Creation Center (South Korea) Nhat Ly Nguyen - Scène du Vietnam (Vietnam) Michiko Tanaka - Setouchi Circus Factory (Japan)
CURATORS:	Raffaella Benanti - La Villette (France) Marc Fouilland - CIRC'a (France)

In the West, we closely associate Asian circus arts with traditional forms. But the Asian circus scene is complex, varying a great deal from one country to another. While there is a strong acrobatic tradition in China, other countries on the continent have only discovered circus relatively recently. The challenges around the creation and dissemination of shows, and the issues faced by artists and professionals, are therefore very different.

The development of initiatives to support creation, the transition from a State circus to a circus developed with private partners, the brokering of international exchanges, the development of new training projects, the work of raising awareness amongst public institutions and businesses are just some of the dynamics involved on the continent. By focusing on four countries – China, Vietnam, Japan and South Korea – and

four flagship projects being developed there, this round table tried to draw out some of the threads of a tapestry so rich and diverse that it defies a one-size-fits-all approach.



Michiko Tanaka /
Setouchi Circus
Factory

China – Between tradition and modernity

The term “circus” has no resonance in China – the equivalent word is a recent creation bringing together the symbols for horse and show, a simplified reference to Western circus...

When the circus first appeared in Europe in the 18th century, it was a purely commercial art form, obsessed with risk-taking and death. In China, however, where yin and yang philosophy encourages complementarity rather than op-

position, falling is unacceptable and explicitly associated with an error or clumsiness. Chinese acrobatic theatre, presented in stage performances, originated in its most accomplished form 5000 years ago. It was an art of the court, and its development was interrup-

ted in the 18th century when the national school, founded eleven centuries earlier, was closed. A number of acrobats then left China and settled elsewhere, particularly in Russia. It wasn't until the 1949 Revolution that the Party decided to turn it into an art of propaganda, devoting significant resources to it.

The artistic landscape has long been the prerogative of the State, and is now undergoing extensive change. However, while private companies are springing up for dance and theatre, this is not yet the case for acrobatics, which is still strongly linked to official troupes.

Nevertheless, a number of major cities has now chosen to invest in enormous concert halls designed for huge shows. Franco Dragone has been commissioned to design theatres and performances in Ma-

Chinese acrobatic theatre, presented in stage performances, originated in its most accomplished form 5000 years ago.

cau, Wuhan and Xishuangbanna, with water as a key feature. One of these performances, *The Han Show*, plays in a new building designed by the architect Mark Fisher; inspired by the image of a red lantern, it contains 2000 moveable seats that can vertically lift

and descend during the performance. The troupe, mainly made up of Chinese performers, had to be trained in purpose-built studios.

The artistic landscape has long been the prerogative of the State, and is now undergoing extensive change.

Vietnamese circus: Struggle between the public and private spheres

Vietnam has no acrobatic tradition. The circus first appeared in the country in the 20th century, with the arrival of foreign troupes, and in the 60s a new National Circus School was founded in Hanoi. Forty classes have been graduated since the creation of the school

and now, around 300 circus artists are working in Vietnam. The State Circus, which draws little interest from the general public.

The show *My Village (Làng Tôi)* was created in 2005 through a collaboration between Nhat Ly

Nguyen, a graduate of the second class of the Hanoi school, his brother Lan Maurice, one of the founders of the Cirque Plume School in France, and Viet-

namese artists from State Circus troupes. Over three weeks, around 100 artists developed the first version of *Làng Tôi*. A show including twenty artists was then assembled by the French producer Jean-Luc Languier. Ten years later, at the request of private investors who wanted to offer shows to tourists visiting Vietnam, a second performance of the New Vietnamese Circus, *A Ở Làng Phô*, was created. Since it was a private production, the Federation's artists were not authorised to take part in auditions, so half the show's performers were recruited off the street. In November 2015, the artists on the team that remained part of the Federation resigned from their civil servant status. With both *Làng Tôi* and *A Ở Làng Phô*, the artists played an active role in the creative process.

With some forty classes since having graduated from this institution, there are now around 300 circus artists working in Vietnam.

Japan - A difficult beginning for contemporary circus

The development of circus and street arts in Japan is linked to a few major street festivals, and to the foundation of the Sori International Circus School in 2001.

The Japanese word *Daidoge* is used to refer to street arts. There are currently 20-30 street festivals in Japan, and this number is growing. However, the artists just perform individual routines. Circus does not really exist in Japan. In the past, there were around thirty circus companies in the country. Now, just two remain.

Despite the fact that European companies are invited to come to perform and despite local interest in their work, contemporary circus is struggling to develop in Japan. Michiko Tanaka, author of an important work on contemporary circus arts, founded the Setouchi

Circus Factory (SCF) in 2014 to support Japanese circus artists. A first show in collaboration with the French company L'Immédiat was created the same year. L'Immédiat's founder, Camille Boitel, worked for three weeks with around ten Japanese artists to create a show which was presented at Takamatsu Theatre.

Since there are few Japanese circus artists, SCF draws on artists from various backgrounds. The organisation is not subsidised and applies for funding for each individual project. Michiko Tanaka is convinced that circus could give a new dynamic to small cities with dwindling populations, and is working to persuade cities in the region to include circus in their cultural programmes.

South Korea – First steps for the circus

South Korea does not have a circus tradition to speak of, so artists interested in circus come from other backgrounds, in particular the street arts field, which is growing and holds around fifteen companies today.

South Korea does not have a circus tradition to speak of, so artists looking to get involved come from other backgrounds, in particular the street arts field.

The Seoul Street Arts & Circus Creation Centre (SSACC) project was founded in 2012 in a former water intake station in Seoul, with the renovation project fully funded by the city. After an initial test year in which a number of events were organised, and following eight months of renovation work, the SSACC was officially inaugurated in April 2015.

The first stage of building work cleaned the site and created space for developing and performing shows, while the next planned stages involve the construction of accommodations for artists and improvements to the site's accessibility.

Circus and street arts are on different playing fields in South Korea today, so this place has a dual mission – to support street arts and organise circus training. To this end, the French National Circus Arts Centre (CNAC) in Châlons-en-Champagne (France) is currently collaborating with the SSACC.

To go further

Franco Dragone <http://dragone.com/en>
Setouchi Circus Factory www.setouchicircusfactory.com/english.html
Seoul Street Arts Creation Center <http://ssacc.or.kr/en/design/index.asp>

VANESSA SILVY (FRANCE)



is responsible for Circus, Street Arts and Puppetry in the Artistic Exchange and Cooperation Department at the Institut français. She acts as an expert and artistic adviser for the French cultural network abroad and for many partners across the world.

PASCAL JACOB (FRANCE)



is Artistic Director of Cirque Phénix and of Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain. He is also a set and costume designer. He is a researcher, teaching circus history at Montréal's École Nationale de Cirque and at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III. He has written around thirty books on circus arts and opera.

DONG HEE CHO (SOUTH KOREA)



is Director of Seoul Street Arts Creation Center (Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture) and Artistic Director of Hi Seoul, a street arts festival that takes place annually in early October. From 2005 to 2010, he worked as Director of Festival Planning and Production for Gwacheon Festival Foundation.

NHAT LY NGUYEN (VIETNAM)



is Artistic Director of Scènes du Vietnam, and co-author of the shows, Làng Tôi and À Ô Làng Phò. He is a French citizen of Vietnamese origin and trained at Hanoi National Circus School in Vietnam. He also holds a degree in musicology and was President of the Art'Ensemble association from 1995 to 2008. He founded the Phu Sa Lab musical lab in 2013.

MICHIKO TANAKA (JAPAN)



is Director of Setouchi Circus Factory (SCF), an organisation for the development of contemporary circus in Japan. Since its creation in 2012, SCF has supported creation, promotion and training in circus arts, working towards consolidating a dedicated contemporary circus festival and creating a specialised venue that would be the first of its kind in Japan.

RAFFAELLA BENANTI (FRANCE)



is Artistic Advisor for Performing Arts and Project Manager at La Villette. She was born in Syracuse (Italy) and studied in Rome and Milan. After graduating, she worked with Festa del Circo, Metamorfosi Festival, Auditorium Parco della Musica, the Italian Department of Culture, and the National Academy of Dramatic Arts of Rome.

MARC FOUILLAND (FRANCE)



is Director of CIRCa, one of France's twelve National Centres for Circus Arts. In 2012, Marc contributed to the creation of Le CIRC (Centre d'Innovation et de Recherche Circassien) in Auch, a venue dedicated to professional circus creation in France. He is a member of various networks, including Réseau Chaïnon (until 2005), Territoires du cirque, Apemsac, Réseau Sud, and Circostrada.

GERMANY, SWITZERLAND NEW GENERATIONS, NEW MODELS, NEW ENERGIES

MODERATOR: Tim Schneider - Netzwerk Zirkus (Germany)
SPEAKERS: Valérie Marsac - Raum für neuen Circus e.V. (Germany/France)
Roman Müller - Compagnie Tr'espace / Festival Cirqu' / ProCirque (Switzerland)
Jenny Patchowsky - Initiative Neuer Circus (Germany)
CURATOR: Ute Classen - Ute Classen Kulturmanagement (Germany)

In both Germany and Switzerland traditional circus and cabaret have a strong reputation among the ge-



Tim Schneider /
Netzwerk Zirkus
et Valérie Marsac /
Raum für neuen
Circus e.V.

neral public and look back on a long history. Germany in particular offers artists an important labour market through its huge number of cabarets, circuses and theatres. But when it comes to contemporary circus these two countries have always seemed both artistically and structurally underdeveloped. In recent years, however, just under the radar of the international community, things have started to change – a new generation of circus activists has begun to explore fresh models to produce and distribute contemporary circus. This round table drew together a variety of examples to paint a picture of the current scene: a diverse, cooperative community that balances artistic experiments, social projects and new business models.

Public policies and independent effort

In Germany, circus is not officially recognised as an art form. As a result, it is mostly excluded from cultural funding, while local councils lack the awareness or expertise to programme circus productions. Outside of formal education, free spaces for creation and artistic exploration – and more broadly support schemes for contemporary circus artists and authors – do not exist.

In Switzerland, due to the country's federal organisation, there is a strong need for communication at both national and regional levels – and here there are some signs of progress. The Wallis region has been the first to put circus on the same level as dance with respect to cultural funding, and Pro Helvetia, Switzerland's national Arts Council, has now officially recognised contemporary circus as an art form.

Neither country has a developed public policy for circus arts, and so the circus communities have been left to steer their own course and find new models to create work outside of the funding system. Inevitably this often means compromising aspects of their artistic vision, but it also forces artists to stay open and collaborate, and there is an intense spirit of teamwork in contemporary circus in Germany and Switzerland.

There is an intense spirit of teamwork in contemporary circus in Germany and Switzerland.

Taking initiative – The rise of networks

In the last decade, networks like the Initiative Neuer Zirkus (“Initiative for New Circus”) and the Netzwerk Zirkus (“Network Circus”) in Germany, alongside ProCirque in Switzerland, have arisen to campaign for the circus arts.

Initiative Neuer Zirkus (INZ) represents the independent contemporary circus scene in Germany, operating with private funding and voluntary contributions from members. Gathering artists, companies and institutions, the Initiative works towards the recognition of circus as an art form, and organises new structures such as a system of five city poles in Berlin, Cologne, Munich, Hamburg and Essen. There are also regularly organised meetings, masterclasses and festivals. All of the Initiative’s projects aim to address the lack of differentiated education in Germany, as there is only one national circus school in the country and it focuses on preparing students for the German cabaret market.

A second organisation, Netzwerk Zirkus, serves as an umbrella organisation for all forms of circus in

Germany. Alongside organisations such as Initiative Neuer Zirkus and the National Circus School of Berlin, members are institutions, companies and associations from social circus, traditional circus, cabaret and education. Netzwerk Zirkus’ first function is to act as an advocacy association that communicates the interests of the circus community to policymakers. Alongside this, the organisation provides resources and news of the sector on its website, organises conferences on topics like health and safety in circus, and runs other educational projects (for instance giving artists advice on how to write folders applications for financial support).

Launched in 2014, the Swiss association ProCirque was founded to advocate for contemporary circus, focusing on networking, promotion, cross-sector partnerships, and the development of circus residencies and opportunities for continued training. The organisation is currently preparing a directory of companies, residency spaces and performances in Switzerland.

Coexistence and collaboration

Contemporary circus, cabaret and traditional circus all coexist in Germany and Switzerland. More and more often unexpected collaborations between contemporary circus artists and commercial cabarets (or artists from other art forms such as urban arts, media arts, music or dance) shape German and Swiss contemporary circus. Productions such as *Urbanatix* in Bochum, *Tangram* from Stefan Sing, *Cyclope* in Basel, or *Dummy* from the Chamäleon Theatre in Berlin are just a few examples of this trend.

Another characteristic of the circus community is the strong mobility of artists, as they move between contemporary circus productions and work across other circus forms such as cabaret or dinner theatre. Especially in Germany – where there is a strong commercial circus landscape, including big players such as the GOP Entertainment Group, which owns six theatres throughout the country, or Palazzo, which

has five dinner theatre tents – circus performers often make a living in well-paid commercial shows and afterwards spend their savings on mostly unpaid contemporary circus projects. This way of working is a big challenge – in terms of financial security, and also often in terms of personal fulfilment – but it puts the different circus forms into close contact and leads to a fruitful mutual influence. A good example of expanding horizons is the Chamäleon Theatre in Berlin, which started as a classical cabaret and now programmes contemporary circus companies like Cirk La Putyka or Circus Cirkör without receiving any arts funding.

More and more often unexpected collaborations between contemporary circus artists and commercial cabarets (or artists from other art forms such as urban arts, media arts, music or dance) shape German and Swiss contemporary circus.

Blurring boundaries – A hybrid identity

Does contemporary circus need to distance itself to set a clear contrast to traditional circus and cabaret? Different points of view bring different answers to this question. The Initiative Neuer Zirkus is working towards a new policy for contemporary circus specifically, whereas Netzwerk Zirkus is stressing the common factors of all circus players. In Switzerland the same question arises, but with less impact as cabaret is not so established. ProCirque is mainly promoting a 'Cirque de Création'.

A trend that can be observed in Germany and Switzerland is that contemporary circus is often experienced as dance. With its strong commercial circus

landscape, German society often associates the word circus with big shows, glittery costumes and entertainment. Circus productions that don't match these expectations aren't recognised as circus, but rather as contemporary dance.

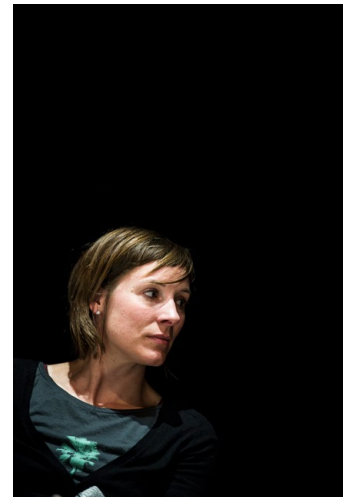
This tendency has been increasing as many dance festivals and venues, realising the power of contemporary circus, programme circus productions from abroad and label them as dance.

A trend that can be observed in Germany and Switzerland is that contemporary circus is often experienced as dance.

On the whole, there is still a long way to go in Germany and Switzerland, but there is an optimistic spirit and a willingness to work with few resources, while fighting for more.

The attitude of the scene might be typified by a group of young artists who wanted to base themselves in Switzerland but found there was no space where they could create and perform. Rather than move on, they decided to buy a tent that had been standing in Basel for two years, and to open Zirkus Fahraway, a meeting point for the community and a space for rehearsal and performance. Such initiatives promise a strong future for circus in Switzerland and Germany.

On the whole, there is still a long way to go in Germany and Switzerland, but there is an optimistic spirit and a willingness to work with few resources, while fighting for more.



Jenny Patchowsky /
Initiative neuer
Circus

To go further

Initiative Neuer Zirkus www.initiative-neuerzirkus.de

Netzwerk Zirkus www.netzwerk-zirkus.de

ProCirque www.procirque.ch

TIM SCHNEIDER (GERMANY)



is the Founder of Netzwerk Zirkus, an umbrella body for circus arts in Germany. He trained at Berlin National Circus School and, after pursuing a career as an acrobat and a dancer, retired from the stage in 2014 to work for the German Arts Council.

VALÉRIE MARSAC (GERMANY/FRANCE)



is a Franco-German artist and manager of the association Raum für Neuen Circus. After studying sport in Munich, Valérie trained at the Circus Space school in London. In 2011, she was awarded the title Kultur/Kreativpilotin (Creative Pilots for Culture), which recognises outstanding German organisations and individuals working in the cultural field. As an art events organiser, Valérie is committed to promoting New Circus ('Neuer Zirkus') in Germany.

ROMAN MÜLLER (SWITZERLAND)



is Artistic Director of Cirqu' Festival, Vice-President of ProCirque and a member of the CircusNext jury. After training at Scuola Teatro Dimitri (Switzerland), he founded Tr'espace, winning many international awards.

JENNY PATSCHOVSKY (GERMANY)



is a founding member of Initiative Neuer Zirkus, a network for circus artists that advocates for the recognition of new circus as an art form in Germany. Jenny is also Manager of Labor Cirque Research and of Atemzug e.V, a German contemporary circus company.

CENTRAL AND LATIN AMERICA THE ARTIST'S PATH: FROM SOCIAL CIRCUS TO CIRCUS CREATION

MODERATOR/CURATOR:

SPEAKERS:

Jean-Marc Broqua - La Grainerie (France)

Mónica González - CENART, Centro Nacional de las Artes (Mexico)

Zezo Oliveira - Ville de Recife (Brazil)

Gabriela Ricardes - Polo Circo (Argentina)

Fernando Zevallos - La Tarumba (Peru)

For many, the image of Latin American circus is strongly associated with social circus, and it's true that a run of successful projects in this field has led a better structuring for the circus arts in Central and South America, and brought them international exposure through the establishment of touring companies. But this image is at risk of becoming a caricature, offering as it does a simple, standardised template for an entire continent. Listen to the artists who actually work in Latin America, talk to them about their artistic work

and their careers, and you might end up with a more nuanced picture.

To open the discussion, this round table invited contributions from the representatives of four different countries. Their insights provided a starting point to explore some of the big issues: mobility and training pathways, the role of informal learning in the network age, public and private investment, and the emigration of talented artists to Europe and Canada.

Mixed influences - Art and popular culture

Popular culture has a significant influence that varies from country to country, but in Latin America it is the continent's history that seems to have left an indelible mark on circus culture and the imagination of artists. Indigenous and pre-Columbian cultures, colonisation, slavery, immigration and the resulting melting-pot of people and cultures have had a significant impact on

the performing arts, and in particular the circus arts. The influence of popular culture on the circus can be felt from an artistic and aesthetic perspective, but also from a political and social point of view.

For Fernando Zevallos, two main factors create the identity of Tarumba (Peru). The first one: peruvian culture, rich, influenced by its geography, a desert alongside the sea, as well as its scars and the debt left by the confluence of Precolombian, Spanish and African culture. If we take this history from the point of view of cultural richness, it becomes a reason for celebration, party, therefore also creation.

The second source of inspiration is classical culture, which illustrates or denounces social or political facts.

In Pernambuco (Brazil), popular cultures dominate, influencing the cultural and artistic dimensions of circus arts, as well as their political and social perspective. For example, the music and dance of the Maracatu have been a shaping force, but have also its political forms, particularly influencing social organisation methods in the circus. The acrobatic approach of traditional cultures to dance and movement, like the Frevo or the dances of indigenous people, encourage crossover. For example, the Pernambuco circus school created a street show with Maracatu artists. Zezo Oli-

Popular culture has a significant influence that varies from country to country, but in Latin America it is the continent's history that seems to have left an indelible mark on circus culture and the imagination of artists.



veira draws a parallel between carnival's organisation and social circus because it seems they are close.

The position of traditional circus arts varies depending on the country. They have a very important place in Brazil, and in particular in Pernambuco, because traditional circus companies provide employment and play a significant role in the careers of young artists, providing an extensive to their training.

According to one artist speaking out from the audience, traditional circus in Mexico is unaffected by new influences and remains very family-focused. Crossover is rare, and contemporary circus artists create their own businesses, companies and shows.

However, he talked about his own influences and those of his artistic community, which still draw heavily on music hall, cabaret and silent film. Many of his colleagues go into circus after formal training in dance or theatre.

The situation seems fairly similar in Buenos Aires, which is a very cosmopolitan city. "Popular culture doesn't really come into it here," says Gabriela Ricardes, the director of Buenos Aires Polo Circo. "Circus is fed by other arts like theatre, and audiences are prepared to contemporary arts."

In Pernambuco (Brazil), popular cultures dominate, influencing the cultural and artistic dimensions of circus arts, as well as their political and social perspective.

Communications technology

Both in Buenos Aires and Mexico, information and communication technologies play an important role in transmission and influence the imagination of young artists. YouTube and social networks provide a real avenue for passing on practices, techniques and aesthetics.

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Monica Gonzales, who runs a circus and street arts training programme at City of Mexico's National Arts Centre (CENART), noted, for example, strong influences for jugglers and clowns, which makes for a kind of self-taught education, a "circus of imitation". This mode of transmission also involves technical risks, because

many artists do not have sufficient knowledge to copy acrobatic moves, and end up getting injured. For Gabriela Ricardes, "social networks and the spirit of circus, made of liberty, universality, circulation of huge possibilities of expression throughout a diversity of languages" open up considerable opportunities to feed the imagination of young artists. However, they do not seem to properly understand the full meaning of these influences because they lack sufficient artistic references. There is a real need to expand artistic horizons and identities.

For Gabriela Ricardes, "social networks and the spirit of circus, made of liberty, universality, circulation of huge possibilities of expression throughout a diversity of languages" open up considerable opportunities to feed the imagination of young artists.

Career pathways – Social circus and emigrant artists

Various corners highlight the fact that while social circus seems to have enabled the development of circus arts in South America, artists now tend to go beyond

and look towards contemporary circus. However, questions surrounding the role of these schools and the purpose of the courses are being raised: should there be a training offer for professional artists or is it best to stay focused on the ideals of popular education, centred on individuals and their personal development?

Ease of access to social funding may have had a significant influence in the structuring of the sector, underlines Gabriela Ricardes. It feeds a vicious circle, where many artists fall

into because it offers more stable resources than other funds that are more focused on artistic work.

Many artists travel to continue their careers, for example to Europe or Canada. Monica Gonzales highlighted the influence of the United States and Canada for Mexican artists. For Zezo Oliveira, Artistic Director of the Contemporânea de Circo Company, television remains an important medium for Brazilians, for whom "the circus on television is the Cirque du Soleil".

The fact that a lot of trained artists emigrate does not seem to be considered as a drain, but as a real opportunity. The ability of the artistic community and its institutions to move forward with those who come back is one of the major challenges for the coming years.

Ease of access to social funding may have had a significant influence in the structuring of the sector, underlines Gabriela Ricardes. It feeds a vicious circle, where many artists fall into because it offers more stable resources than other funds that are more focused on artistic work.

New resources – between private and public initiatives

Members of the various circus communities are looking for collective and individual ways of developing contemporary circus arts and taking a step forwards towards research, creation and dissemination, using public or private resources.

In addition to providing artistic training, La Tarumba (Peru) offers its students courses in management. According to Fernando Zevallos, it is important to help artists get beyond their close circle of friends and develop sufficient tools for autonomy and development. He talked about the culture of entrepreneurship,

which is very strong in Peru, where “you have to make your own way to live” and where a number of micro-businesses are being started. The school hopes to make this know-how available to artists.

In Brazil, public policies can also reinforce private initiatives. Zezo Oliveira evoked the key role played by Festival de Circo do Brasil in Recife, led by Danielle Hoover, an audiovisual film producer who is passionate about contemporary circus. She has created a festival that brings together various in-

fluences from contemporary Brazilian and European circus, financed by public institutions together with individual donations and private backing from organisations such as Petrobras, which provides significant funding for culture in Brazil.

The place of circus arts in public policies seems to be moving forward, and specific policies are being developed. In Brazil, for instance, the Federal Government is investing €8 million in circus arts for dissemination and training, with the various states also making an important contribution, as for instance the Pernambuco's investment of €1.5 million in training, research, creation and dissemination.

In Mexico, circus arts have also been integrated into targeted policies. In Argentina, a circus bill is being drafted. However, as it requires a huge administrative hassle, Gabriela Ricardes recommends opening support mechanisms from other art forms to circus.

In the words of Gabriel Ricardes, after several years of development, the circus arts have reached a key turning point. The capacity for entrepreneurship, social organisation methods, and the return of artists who have been trained abroad all offer real opportunities for unprecedented development of contemporary circus arts on this continent.

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Gabriela Ricardes / Polo Circo

To go further

Buenos Aires Polo Circo <http://www.polocirco.org>

La Tarumba <http://www.latarumba.com/tempo/>

Festival de Circo do Brasil <http://www.festivaldecircodobrasil.com.br>

JEAN-MARC BROQUA (FRANCE)



has been General Secretary in charge of international projects at La Grainerie since 2004. After working as Director of Aquarock Festival and Head of Cultural Action in Pays Mélusin, he is currently responsible for coordinating a range of projects, including Cirque ol, Pyrénées de Cirque, Autopistes and Circus Incubator.

MÓNICA GONZÁLEZ CASTRO (MEXICO)



is responsible for the International Circus Arts and Street Arts Training Programme delivered by the Academic Development Department of the City of Mexico's National Arts Centre (CENART), where she manages workshop coordination and circus programming.

ZEZO OLIVEIRA (BRAZIL)



is Artistic Director of the Contemporânea de Circo Company, founder of Pernambuco Circus School, and Adviser for Circus Arts at the City of Recife's Department of Culture. From 2005 to 2013, he directed Brazil's National Circus School in Rio de Janeiro. Zezo also wrote several publications on social circus and contemporary circus in Brazil.

GABRIELA RICARDES (ARGENTINA)



is Founder and Director of the first Ibero-American degree focused on circus at Tres de Febrero National University in Buenos Aires. Since 2009, she has been the director of Buenos Aires Polo Circo and the International Circus Festival of Buenos Aires. Between 2012 and 2015 she was also Director of El Cultural San Martín and she is now Secretary of Contents at the Federal Public Media & Contents System in Argentina.

FERNANDO ZEVALLOS (PERU)



is the Founder and Artistic Director of La Tarumba, a project that combines the creation of performances with the development of a school targeted at young people. He is a self-trained actor and worked as a theatre director from an early age. He actively promotes innovation through research and the values of Peruvian culture.

SOUTH EUROPE ARTISTIC MOBILITY OR EMIGRATION?

MODERATOR: Donald B. Lehn - École de cirque Carampa (Spain)
SPEAKERS: João Paulo Dos Santos - Compagnie O Último Momento (France/Portugal)
Joan Ramon Graell - La Persiana Collective (Spain)
Filippo Malerba - Quattro4 - Laboratorio di Circo (Italy)
Pedro Miguel Nascimento - Ecole de cirque Chapitô (Portugal)
CURATOR: Roberto Magro - Artiste (Italy/Spain)

The emigration of young circus artists has become a striking phenomenon in Italy, Spain and Portugal. Since the late nineties, with the foundation of the first

circus schools in these countries (Carampa, Rogelio Rivel, Flic, Vertigo and Chapitô), it is estimated that more than 2000 students have graduated from their professional programmes. On completing

their studies, many of these young artists then chose to leave their home country and continue their education and training abroad. While complex causes will underlie any individual's decision, the scale of the movement suggests the existence of common factors

that characterise the sectors in these southern countries. What drives young artists to leave their country – and what happens next?

The emigration of young circus artists has become a striking phenomenon in Italy, Spain and Portugal.



Portugal – From Chapitô to the world

Over the years there has been significant growth in the number of students who, after graduating from the circus school Chapitô in Lisbon, leave Portugal to study circus abroad. This outflow could perhaps be stemmed if Chapitô's curriculum were adjusted and directed toward establishing the competencies needed for entry to the 'superior' circus schools – a handful of accredited higher education institutions, which many students consider the end goal of their formal circus training. But the emigration also reflects the desire of some artists to be physically closer to the centres of circus activity and to participate actively in international networks.

In fact, there are many factors that motivate emigration. On an educational level, the absence of supe-

rior education in circus arts in Portugal, the need to expand technical skills, and the chance to enlarge one's artistic vision and cultural identity all lure people away. On a cultural and political level, there is little funding for artistic creation in Portugal, and most of what exists is channelled to well-known companies. The circus arts also lack a strong national infrastructure of festivals and networks, incomes are generally lower than in other countries artists may work in, and there is little social recognition of this art form. As an additional influence, some artists, who have become renowned abroad, recognise that to go away from their country could

Over the years there has been significant growth in the number of students who, after graduating from the circus school Chapitô in Lisbon, leave Portugal to study circus abroad.

Students see a move abroad as their chance to learn different ways of working and improve their technical and artistic skills, and are willing to struggle against financial difficulties or language barriers to win a spot at a prestigious school or a place with an international company.

be a useful and relevant asset on a professional level. For instance, João Paulo Dos Santos, who, after graduating from Chapitô, went on to study in France at l'École Nationale des Arts du Cirque de Rosny-sous-Bois and the national school CNAC, and has forged a strong career with his company O Último Momento. Students see a move abroad as their chance to learn different ways of working and improve their technical and artistic

skills, and are willing to struggle against financial difficulties or language barriers to win a spot at a prestigious school or a place with an international company.

What could persuade more Portuguese artists to stay? After years of disinvestment and restructuring, the country now has a Ministry of Culture that can play a decisive role in providing financial support and helping to establish structures for the development of the arts. Portuguese cultural habits are also changing, and audiences are increasingly interested in new artistic languages and international circus shows.

Barcelona - Two-way traffic of artists

In Barcelona, artistic mobility goes both ways: while many Catalan artists do leave in order to work with international companies (such as Baro d'Ével, Compagnie XY, Crida Company, and Circus Roncalli), other international artists (including Karl Stets, Duo Laos, and Cris-Iris) have relocated to Barcelona in order to live and work there.

At the school Rogelio Rivel, located on the northern outskirts of the city, only 35% of the students are Catalan – probably because of the high tuition fees. Among the Catalan students at the school, after graduating 30% go on to continue their studies abroad – a phenomenon driven by the search for better em-

ployment prospects, improved cultural recognition, and opportunities to gain knowledge of the artistic market. Those who eventually return to their home country do so either for emotional reasons or with the desire to improve circus in Catalonia.

50% of the users of La Central del Circ, a training and rehearsal space in Barcelona, are not of Spanish nationality; some are from other Spanish-speaking regions, but many are not. These international artists choose to stay in Barcelona, are foreigners.

Those who eventually return to their home country do so either for emotional reasons or with the desire to improve circus in Catalonia.

Italy - A disposal to travel

The biggest factor pushing circus artists to leave Italy and move abroad is the need for specialised training in their discipline.

According to data collected by FEDEC, supplemented by interviews with Italian artists and the census report 'Censimento Circo Italy', the school with the highest percentage of Italian students is ESAC in Brussels (9%), followed by Académie Fratellini (8%) in Paris and DOCH in Stockholm (5%). Among the many secondary and professional schools, Lido in Toulouse, and Carampa in Madrid are the most frequented by Italian artists.

Despite the high number of Italian circus artists studying abroad, the need for a specialised training programme in Italy isn't considered a big issue in the national field – a reflection of the fact that circus artists like to move, and happily accept

The need for a specialised training programme in Italy isn't considered a big issue in the national field – a reflection of the fact that circus artists like to move, and happily accept the need to go to other countries in order to train and further their education.



the need to go to other countries in order to train and further their education. And of course, if artists leave their home country this doesn't cancel out their cultural background; perhaps it can even open them up, make them more receptive to new ideas and approaches, and ultimately strengthen their artistic individuality.

But after leaving their country, more or less by choice, why do these artists decide to stay abroad? The main reasons are better conditions for creation, enhanced professional standing and increased cultural acknowledgement. By moving abroad, artists access the possibility of making their living purely through artistic work – something which is not possible in Italy.

This seems to create a situation where artists must choose between taking advantage of the stronger parts of circus culture, or working on the margins to

promote it. Working as a well-known artist or creating shows to be recognised – but this is a view that risks oversimplification. A stable sector needs strategic development as well as good will and hard work, and artists need institutional support if their work is to be sustainable and effective. According to Claudio Stellato, an Italian artist who lives and creates in Brussels: “The problem in Italy is structural.

There is no developed, well-structured network. We don't earn enough to make a living through experimentation and innovation. Circus in Italy doesn't yet speak the right language to broaden its horizons. Now it's a necessity to programme international shows. In order for interest to grow, people need to see a lot. Then we will be able to work and develop our own creations!”

By moving abroad, artists access the possibility of making their living purely through artistic work – something which is not possible in Italy.

To go further

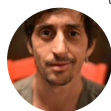
Ecole de cirque Chapitô (Portugal) <http://www.chapito.org>
 Censimento Circo Italia www.facebook.com/censimentocircoitalia/
 La Central del Circ (Barcelona) <http://www.lacentraldelcirc.cat>
 Ecole de cirque Rogelio Rivel (Barcelona) <http://www.escolacircrr.com>

DONALD B. LEHN (SPAIN)



is Director of Escuela Carampa in Madrid, President of FEDEC – European Federation of Professional Circus Schools and Co-Founder of FIC – Federación Iberoamericana de Circo. He is the author of a book on the art of juggling and has been performing for more than 35 years.

JOÃO PAULO DOS SANTOS (FRANCE/ PORTUGAL)



is a Portuguese artist specialised in the Chinese pole. He trained at Escola de Circo Chapitô in Lisbon, Ecole Nationale des Arts du Cirque in Rosny, and CNAC – Centre National des Arts du Cirque (France). He co-founded the company O Ultimo Momento and has co-created several shows. He also teaches Chinese pole in various European schools.

JOAN RAMON GRAELL (SPAIN)



is an aerial catcher trained at ESAC in Brussels, and a member of the Persiana collective. As former President of the APCC (Association of Catalan Circus Professionals) and expert in the field, he plays an active role in drawing up cultural policies for the circus arts sector in Catalonia.

FILIPPO MALERBA (ITALY)



is the Founder of Quattro4, an association that promotes circus in Milan. He set up the first Italian data survey for companies identified as practitioners in this field. He is currently drawing on his extensive experience both as a producer and a performer to write a PhD thesis on performance direction in contemporary circus.

PEDRO NASCIMENTO (PORTUGAL)



is Educational Coordinator at Escola de Circo Chapitô in Lisbon, where he also worked as Technical Director. Pedro is a world-class gymnast, who was previously part of Portugal's national acrobatic gymnastics team.

ROBERTO MAGRO (ITALY/SPAIN)



is a circus artist and a teacher. Roberto worked as Artistic Director of Barcelona's La Central del Circ, and of Turin's FLIC Circus School. He has also directed performances for various circus schools and several international companies. Roberto is the Founder and Artistic Director of the International Circus Festival Brocante in Valcovera (Italy).

NORTH AFRICA BETWEEN TRADITION AND CHANGE

MODERATOR:	Alain Laëron - École nationale de cirque Shems'y (Morocco)
SPEAKERS:	Nordine Allal - École du Cirque Jules Verne, Centre de formation du Pôle national cirque et arts de la rue - Amiens (France/Algeria) Yassine Elihtirassi - Collectif Colokolo des arts de la rue (Morocco) Sanae El Kamouni - Scènes du Maroc / Groupe acrobatique de Tanger (Morocco)
CURATOR:	Claire Peysson - La Cascade (France)

The regions of North Africa have long traditions of circus arts. In recent years, a handful of collaborative and touring projects have brought this heritage greater visibility on the international stage, however, there remain branches of local activity that are less

well-known at home. As North African organisations attempt to create infrastructure for the sector or to pursue artistic work, they must overcome a lack of official recognition for circus as an art form, as well as the absence of a strong domestic market for their performances. Gathering speakers from Morocco and Algeria, this round table sought to present an overview of the region's activities today, and to identify the way forward for a field that is unified in spirit but materially under-resourced. The speakers discussed common issues, such as: What is the role of artists in these changing societies? What are their means of expression and which financial and technical means are available to them? How are they taken into account by the State?

As North African organisations attempt to create infrastructure for the sector or to pursue artistic work, they must overcome a lack of official recognition for circus as an art form, as well as the absence of a strong domestic market for their performances.



Salé - A citizen's artistic platform for the Mediterranean

Salé circus school, located near the Moroccan city of Rabat, was established in 2000 with the active support of Rosny-sous-Bois National Circus School in France. It began as a social project that sought to support struggling young people, but from 2008 on, the school became more professional. In 2009, it received national recognition as a professional institution. It then started to offer a three-year course, with graduates receiving state diplomas in the circus arts, issued by the Moroccan Ministry of Professional Training. Today, student selection to the programme is increasingly diverse and the school now has many female students.

In addition to this school, Karacena, a circus and travelling arts biennial, was created in 2006. Founded as a platform for presenting artists trained at Shems'y National Circus School, it is of vital importance for the Moroccan circus arts and a place of vigorous intercultural exchange. Presented shows bring together artists from a variety of professional backgrounds and cultural origins, though with a notable Mediterranean influence that encompasses France, Morocco, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

Tangier - Pursuing recognition while inventing a language

In Morocco, and especially in Tangiers, acrobatics is a well-established physical form that traces its roots back to a warlike tradition. The discipline was traditionally passed down from generation to generation and has

only recently become an artistic form. One decisive turning point came in 2003, when at the initiative of the Institut français, Sanae El Kamouni met Aurélien Bory (Cie 111) at Théâtre Garonne in Toulouse.

This encounter eventually led to the 2004 performance *Taoub* (Arabic for 'Fabric'). Directed by Bory and made with the collective of artists that would later become the Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger, *Taoub* was a high-profile hit on the international scene, playing over 300 times in ten years.

The Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger has continued this momentum, conducting highly innovative research into contemporary circus and producing a second performance, *Chouf Ouchouf*, with the directors Martin

Zimmermann and Dimitri de Perrot, as well as a third piece, *Azimat*, with Bory. Increasingly independent in its artistic planning, project creation and show production, the Groupe's latest performance, *Halka*, is self-produced. In this show, they return to the roots of their art and culture.

In the midst of this growth, structural problems are the biggest challenges that the collective has to face with. It includes a lack of institutional support from Moroccan public authorities - who struggle to recognise circus as an art form in its own right - and the absence of a stable workplace. With no alternative facilities, artists from the company have no choice but to rehearse on the beach. In general, structural instability means that the group must often choose between dedicating time to artistic creation and finding solutions to everyday logistics.

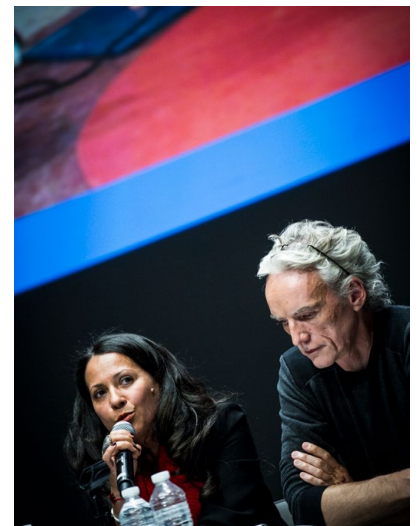
Structural instability means that the group must often choose between dedicating time to artistic creation and finding solutions to everyday logistics.

Casablanca - Seeing circus differently

The Colokolo association was founded in the Moroccan city of Essaouira in 2007. Two years later, the collective moved to Casablanca and established themselves as a core group of a dozen circus artists, who use various cultural actions to actively promote circus arts in Morocco. All their activities are part of a participatory strategy formulated by local citizens to boost the Hay Mohammadi district, through the provision of permanent residencies at a cultural and community centre housed in a former slaughterhouse.

The association gathered pace in 2013 with the recruitment of an administrator responsible for production and cultural mediation. 70% of the collective's creations are financed using income from shows or their own funds, while the remaining 30% come from the French Embassy's Department of Coopera-

tion and Cultural Action and the Moroccan Ministry of Culture. The collective members are working to popularise their art, but also hope to bring about a change in the way artists and creative professionals are perceived. To this end they have created a school programme for creative and artistic professions; work to raise awareness by offering artistic workshops around Casablanca and Morocco; and have instigated Fatw'art, an annual circus arts festival in public space.



Sanae El Kamouni / Scènes du Maroc - Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger and Alain Laëron / Ecole nationale de cirque Shems'y

Common issues, straitened resources

Access to the labour market is still the major problem for circus artists in North Africa.

Access to the labour market is still the major problem for circus artists in North Africa. There is currently very limited institutional subven-

tions, and almost funding come from private sources. Material conditions are difficult, but in spite of a lack of support and publicity from public authorities and the

media, there is nonetheless a palpable new momentum in the sector.

Circus arts have only been officially recognised since 2013, and artists struggle to get by if they don't have a second job or work in Europe. There is also a striking lack of skilled professionals to support artists, and there are very few administrators, production and distribution managers.

Balancing these challenges, there is however a great solidarity between artists of all disciplines. Their cooperation is helping to gradually move things forward, as they find solutions to material shortages and create new models adapted to the North African territories.

Balancing these challenges, there is however a great solidarity between artists of all disciplines.

Next steps

Creating networks between the different North African countries is crucial, despite travel restrictions that impede movement from one country to another. Increased mobility would allow the countries to share experiences and pool essential knowledge – the kind of professional exchange which is actually common between individual North African artists, but which, ironically, most often occurs during their European tours.

Another possible route to develop the field would be to create projects that are co-initiated by profes-

sionals and local artists. Such projects are very common in Morocco and help change perspectives and mindsets, by promoting the circulation of shows and artists across several cities, sometimes even across the entire North African region.

* The Tunisian artist Mohamed Djobbi, one of the guest speakers of this event, failed to obtain a visa and was therefore unable to talk about the difficult situation faced by circus artists and cultural projects managers in his country.

To go further

Karacena <http://www.karacena.net>

Colokolo <http://colokolo.unblog.fr>

ALAIN LAËRON (MOROCCO)

is General Director of Shems'y National Circus School and Karacena Biennale of Circus and Traveling Arts in Salé (Morocco). Prior to this, he held positions of responsibility in the circus arts (Académie Fratellini, CNAC), professional training (Lyon Education Authority) and international cooperation (Institut français in Fés, Morocco).



NORDINE ALLAL (FRANCE/ALGERIA)

is educational Director at Pôle National des Arts du Cirque et de la Rue in Amiens (France). After graduating from Centre National des Arts du Cirque in Chalons en Champagne, he embraced an international career (Cirque du Soleil, Gosh Cie, Cirque Zanzibar). Along with his artistic career, he teaches in various national and international schools and has been working in North Africa for several years.



YASSINE ELIHTIRASSI (MOROCCO)

is the Founder of Colokolo street arts collective, created in 2013 in Casablanca. The collective is based in the city's former slaughterhouse and provides workshops, residencies and performances. It is also the organiser of the FtWArt festival, which showcases Morocco's emerging circus talents. Yassine collaborated with the Awaln'Art festival (International Festival for the Arts in Public Space) in Marrakech and worked as a mediator for Karwan's in Marseille (France).



SANAE EL KAMOUNI (MOROCCO)

has been Director of Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger company and the Scènes du Maroc association since 2002. Sanae worked as Cultural Officer at Institut français in Tangier. She is currently living in Tangier and working to improve the conditions of Moroccan artists. She also founded the Halka association with Jean-François Pyka and Roselyne Burger.



CLAIRE PEYSSON (FRANCE)

is European Projects Officer of La Cascade - Pôle National des Arts du Cirque in the Rhône-Alpes region, which she has previously co-directed from 2008 to 2015. She took an active part in the creation of the Union for New Forms of Circus Arts as the organisation's president, and in the Territoires de Cirque network.



CENTRAL EUROPE THE EMERGENCE OF CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

MODERATOR/CURATOR:

Veronika Štefanová - Cirqueon - Center for Contemporary Circus (Czech Republic)

SPEAKERS:

Elena Kreusch - KreativKultur (Austria)

Marta Kuczyńska - Kejos - The-at-er (Poland)

Šárka Maršíková - Cirqueon - Center for Contemporary Circus (Czech Republic)

György Szabó - Trafó - House of Contemporary Arts (Hungary)



Elena Kreusch /
KreativKultur

Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are all Central European countries, where contemporary circus began to take root at the start of the new millennium. This common origin can make for an easy grouping, and it is true that these four countries share an important circus history. However, Central Europe is itself hardly a clearly defined

geographical region. Instead, it is a concept based largely on shared historical experience, and its influence on the contemporary circus scene is multifaceted and complex. Delving into questions of origin, perception, viability and influence, this round table discussed the social and cultural milieu surrounding circus' development and examined the obstacles it currently faces.

Central Europe is itself hardly a clearly defined geographical region. Instead, it is a concept based largely on shared historical experience, and its influence on the contemporary circus scene is multifaceted and complex.

New techniques and approaches

Contemporary circus gradually entered Central Europe from the West. At the turn of the millennium, dramatists, dancers, athletes and street performers first began to include new artistic techniques from circus in their work. In each country, this meeting of forms created a unique style of contemporary circus.

To this day, Hungary and Poland still offer professional education in state circus schools through the Baross Imre Circus Arts School in Budapest, and the State School of Circus Art in Julinek near Warsaw. However, these institutions have no vested interest in spreading the idea of 'contemporary' circus. In contrast to countries such as Austria or the Czech Republic, the Hungarian contemporary circus must actively fight

traditional circus to capture the interest of both the public and cultural and political institutions. Contemporary circus in the Czech Republic, on the other hand, is closely associated with theatre, and many contemporary circus artists hail from backgrounds as actors, puppeteers and physical theatre performers – a situation which, especially in recent years, has influenced the form's aesthetics and expanded the public perception of what circus is. In Poland, contemporary circus is significantly associated with theatre, and especially the outdoor arts, while also being closely linked to sport.

In contrast to countries such as Austria or the Czech Republic, the Hungarian contemporary circus must actively fight traditional circus to capture the interest of both the public and cultural and political institutions.

Cultural markets

Circus events in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria are primarily centred around capitals and large cities with substantial cultural markets.

The development of contemporary circus in Central Europe has been closely tied to the existence of specialised festivals dedicated to inviting circus professionals from abroad.

The development of contemporary circus in Central Europe has been closely tied to the existence of specialised festivals dedicated to inviting circus professionals from abroad. In Austria, the multi-genre festival La Strada in Graz lasts one and a half weeks and showcases street theatre, acrobatics, pantomime, puppet theatre, children's theatre, dance and clown acts. The position of contemporary circus in Austria is

further bolstered by the Salzburg-based Winterfest. A total of five Czech festivals focus primarily on contemporary circus: Letní Letná – International Festival of New Circus and Theatre, Cirkopolis and Fun Fatale (all taking place in Prague); Cirk UFF – International Festival of Contemporary Circus (Trutnov); and Fresh Manéž (Brno). In Hungary, the circus arts are now featured at the Sziget music festival in Budapest. In addition, the Hungarian capital also hosts the International Circus Festival, an event which has been held every two years for two decades, and while contemporary circus is not its key focus, it showcases a large number of technically brilliant traditional circus acts. In Poland, a key contemporary circus event is the Carnaval Sztukmistrzów festival, organised by the city of Lublin.

An incomplete picture – Circus for young audiences and training

Social and circus intended for young audiences enjoy something of a privileged status throughout Central Europe, partly due to support provided by state budgets and partly thanks to sustained interest from both individuals and various institutions. These forms

of circus education are usually presented as leisure activities for children and young people. In Austria, the Österreichischer Bundesverband für Zirkuspädagogik (ÖBVZ – the Federal Association for Circus Pedagogy), a network for circus schools, regional associations and circus teachers, was established in 2012. Its goal is to support the pedagogical work of

circus schools and teachers, and to advocate for circus as an independent art form. In Hungary, social and circus for young audiences are best represented by the Hungarian Juggling Association. The association provides its members with scholarships and exchange opportunities that allow them to travel in order to ac-

cess expert training or to take part in various courses abroad. This year, the organisation managed to open a circus centre in Budapest – a facility dedicated to training, development and education. In the Czech Republic, social and circus for young audiences have been the domain of Cirqueon – Centre for Contemporary Circus (Prague) and Cirkus LeGrando (Brno).

The question of professional training and the professionalisation of the entire contemporary circus field in Central European countries is still an open one. Traditional circus artists have achieved some recognition, especially in Hungary, but circus in Poland, Austria and the Czech Republic remains first and foremost a symbol of popular entertainment.

A professional circus school dedicated to educating contemporary circus professionals in Central Europe is still missing. Talented individuals are thus forced to enrol at foreign schools.

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The limits of state support

In Hungary, circus and circus schools are both still sponsored by the state. In 2016, a significant amount of state support – along with the necessary funding – has been provided to contemporary circus institutions in Austria. A great deal of new activities and vigorous development may thus be expected there in the coming years. However, interdisciplinary communication between contemporary circus, dance and theatre still poses a problem. In the case of the Czech Republic, while contemporary circus has been recognised as an art form by the government, no allowances have been

made to fund it through the state budget. Contemporary circus projects must therefore seek funding through theatre or dance. The task of promoting Czech artists abroad has been delegated to Cirqueon – Centre for Contemporary Circus, and also the Arts and Theatre Institute. The situation is similar in Poland, but there, promotion remains local rather than functioning on an international level.

Contemporary circus projects must therefore seek funding through theatre or dance.

Next steps

An open debate with artists, programme directors of additional European circus festivals and centres led to the conclusion that, while the Czech Republic, Hunga-



ry, Poland and Austria have created a range of strongly defined festivals, active training and residential centres, educational programmes for children and youth, some crucial elements are still missing, such as an “official” recognition of the circus arts from the ministry of culture of each country and increased financial support from state budgets. Future steps should also include the establishment of professional schools and state-recognised degrees dedicated to providing a standardised education for contemporary circus artists.

While Central European contemporary circus may be young, it has amassed a great deal of experience and knowledge of international contexts at the same time as undergoing a gradual institutionalisation and professionalisation. Now that the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria have developed vibrant independent scenes, a Central European collaboration may be necessary.

To go further

Cirqueon www.cirqueon.cz/en
KreativKultur www.kreativkultur.org
KEJOS <http://en.kejos.org>

VERONIKA ŠTEFANOVÁ (CZECH REPUBLIC)



is Editor-in-Chief and Head Librarian at Cirqueon - Centre for Contemporary Circus in Prague. She writes for various Czech and international journals. In 2016, she completed a PhD in contemporary circus studies at Charles University of Prague.

ELENA KREUSCH (AUSTRIA)



is Director of the Austrian association KreativKultur, currently coordinating the first observation programme of the Austrian circus sector. She is a freelance curator, producer for international festivals and co-director of the contemporary circus company Squarehead Productions. Elena is a recipient of a PhD fellowship in the field of Circus Mobility.

MARTA KUCZYNSKA (POLAND)



is Co-Founder and President of the Kejos The-At-Er association. She took an active part in the creation of the Middle European Theatre-Circus meeting, Poland's first theatre and circus festival. Marta is also Artistic Director of the Sztuk-Mistrzów carnival in Lublin, one of Poland's largest contemporary circus festivals.

SARKA MARSIKOVÁ (CZECH REPUBLIC)



is Director and Co-Founder of Cirqueon - Centre for Contemporary Circus, an organisation that seeks to support and develop contemporary circus arts in the Czech Republic. She is also Director of Artistic Programming at Cirkopolis International Contemporary Circus Festival in Prague and a member of the CircusNext jury.

GYÖRGY SZABÓ (HUNGARY)



is Director of Trafó - House of Contemporary Art, in Budapest. For more than 30 years, György has been working for the development of contemporary dance and theatre in Hungary. He is an internationally recognised expert on the issue of collaboration in the arts.



THEMATIC
WORKSHOPS

ARTISTIC PATHS: THE DIFFERENT STEPS IN THE LIFE OF A CIRCUS ARTIST

FACILITATORS:

Cécile Provôt - Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe / Circus Next (France)
Alexandre Fray - Compagnie Un Loup pour l'Homme (France)

The path of a circus artist - whether an author, an interpreter, or both - is rich. It begins with amateur practice, leads to the development of a professional "calling", and carries the artist through stages of initial and vocational training, touring, research, creation, further training, directing, outreach work, and perhaps finally career change. The body, on its own path, initially launches into the work with an attitude

of total commitment, then changes slowly through injuries and the effects of ageing. Amid all this, artists must devise their own projects, run their own company, claim strong values, and find a position from which to question their artistic sector, the wider society, and the economic and political context of their work. Why do artists start doing circus? Why do they continue? What makes them stop?

The calling: making the decision to become a professional

We often disregard the question of how an artist first discovers their vocation, yet this is always the first step. What is there before professional training/school? How does an individual encounter the circus world and what draws them into it?

Some individuals are inspired by the examples of other artists, whether from traditional or new circus, and resolve to follow their example; for others, circus is entered as a physical discipline and the artistic drive develops later in their circus practice.



People often get into circus by chance: by joining a recreational circus school for the physical exercise, by happening to meet the right people, or by discovering circus at a moment when they need or lack a community. In some countries, it can also be because circus enjoys a certain freedom of speech after periods of oppressive government.

The routes into circus have also changed over time. Many of new circus pioneers came to the discipline through the street and had their early experiences in a performance context: they learned as they went, putting on shows, rather than perfecting their skills in schools and training halls. Today, leisure and amateur schools have multiplied and, to some extent, replaced a more ad hoc system of skills sharing.

In spite of this, the artistic calling is not always well accepted by family, even though the development of high-level training in some European countries has made circus a more reputable, and seemingly stable, career.

Many of new circus pioneers came to the discipline through the street and had their early experiences in a performance context: they learned as they went, putting on shows, rather than perfecting their skills in schools and training halls. Today, leisure and amateur schools have multiplied and, to some extent, replaced a more ad hoc system of skills sharing.

Life as a professional artist

We can ask whether the circus practitioner is an author or an interpreter, but in many cases he is both – an 'author-interpreter' – since even under direction, the circus artist is the author of his own circus language. In spite of this blurred boundary, the status of author is often exalted over that of interpreter, and is given more cultural legitimacy and visibility.

Even under direction, the circus artist is the author of his own circus language.

However, one missing link in circus school education is training in stage directing. Some think that the schools provide artistic tools, but that these alone do not allow an individual to become an author straight away. Others consider this appropriate as authorship is a life-long process, and there is a need for time and maturation between school and life as an author.

Authorship is a life-long process.

Professional trajectories though are seldom straight, and artists sail from one practice to the next, each new role nourishing those that came before. Some choose to start as interpreters to learn the realities of work after school; others are compelled by a strong personal necessity to instantly begin creating their own artistic projects.

In many countries, often pressured by economic constraints, artists take on multiple professional roles: they are authors, interpreters, teachers, administrators of production, communication and touring, or perhaps have a second job in another field entirely.

Artistic life off the stage

Artists can, and sometimes must, work off the stage. In some cases, an injured or ageing body forces them into another role, and in others it is financial necessity that causes the switch – but even an unwilling change in circumstances can prove useful in bringing new perspectives on artistic work.

The question of how to change careers is always present in a field where the body is subject to such extreme physical demands. Making matters worse, the natural ageing of the body risks being accelerated by an anxiety – similar to that found in athletics and sports – that pushes the artist to play as many shows as they can before going 'out of date'.

While many circus artists suffer anxiety over the longevity of their physical skills, artistic maturity paradoxically follows an opposite gradient, deepening over time.

Is there a place for the injured, disabled or ageing body on stage? At its root, this is a question about expectations – the expectations of audiences, and perhaps of programmers, for what they will see on stage at a circus performance. Traditionally circus is the art of 'being able' to do things; pain is a pride,

injuries are taboo. Some initiatives in the sector have already sought to push the boundaries here, but there is more work to be done, and artists are fighting against both the conventions of the field and wider cultural norms (concerning, for example, the visibility of ageing bodies).

Professional evolution or career change tends to emerge from a process of long reflection. Within the circus field, this means asking how artists can adapt their physical work, how they can find the means (physical and financial) to go on, and which new competences they

Is there a place for the injured, disabled or ageing body on stage?

need to develop. The question of life-long learning is crucial, but there is currently not enough education on either injury prevention or professional career change. The constraints of the body are not well anticipated by our educational institutions: in a sense, artists are not "trained to train". Instead, knowledge concerning physical maintenance and professional development passes horizontally, and perhaps haphazardly, from artist to artist over the course of a career.

To go further

Every year, close to 5% of the 5000 dancers and 1000 circus artists living in France cease their activities as interpreters. Yet, the path to a life "after the stage" is not obvious and career change raises many questions. The three-year research programme *Sortir de scène* (Leaving the stage), directed by Samuel

Julhe and Émilie Salaméro, and carried out by ten social sciences researchers, proposes a comparative analysis of the paths of circus and dance artists, investigating as well the career-change support schemes they can access in France (CND, AFDAS). <https://sociologies.revues.org/5199>

ALEXANDRE FRAY (FRANCE)

is the Founder of *Un Loup pour l'Homme*, a company that he created with Frédéric Arsenault. After many years practicing judo, he trained at Centre National des Arts du Cirque and started working with directors such as Guy Alloucherie and David Bobée. In his work, Alexandre explores a very personal take on acrobatic lifts, which he sees as a "mirror for interpersonal relationships".



CÉCILE PROVÔT (FRANCE)

is Director of *Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe*, the association that coordinates *CircusNext*, a programme that identifies and supports emerging artists in the field of circus arts. She trained in foreign languages and cultural management and has worked for various art organisations.



INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

FACILITATORS:

Fabrizio Gavosto - Mirabilia (Italy)

Eleférios Kechagioglou - Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (France)

In the last decade, there has been an explosion in the number of international festivals, tours, humanitarian projects and social circus initiatives. Clearly, mobility is a part of contemporary circus, now more than ever, but we should also ask what traces, if any, this artistic movement leaves behind. Is there a strategic dimension that leads to the development of long-term partnerships and collaborations? Can we notice new forms of partnerships

between artists from the North and the South? Does an international outlook open the doors to new business models? Do the specificities of circus, both practical and artistic, invite or restrict particular models of mobility? Participants have also raised some issues: visa restrictions, the development of new economic model for international artistic exchanges, how to create a collaborative, sustainable, international mobility.

Taking the long view

Successful cooperation projects require long-term commitment and a combination of different stakeholders and skills. The workshop turned up one example: the several cooperation projects between France and Argentina, including the development of the annual festival Polo Circo, which were founded on collaborative activities initiated by École Nationale des Arts du Cirque in Rosny, France, and El Co-reto School in Buenos Aires, Argentina, backed by

strong support from the Buenos Aires mayor. After this project companies like Galapiat, have been able to develop their own projects of cooperation with Argentinian companies.

Challenging to organise and coordinate, cooperation projects must also consider their long-term presence in the local landscape to ensure they have a lasting impact.

One common approach to this is to establish relationships and synergies with local artists by helping them to develop their professional skills.

Successful projects require long-term investment, alongside commitment from a number of individuals who are active in and supportive of the project. Interpersonal relations are also important – even essential – in these processes. They make it possible to explore new contexts while supporting, developing and/or accompanying cooperation projects.

Cooperation projects must also consider their long-term presence in the local landscape to ensure they have a lasting impact.



Hybrid business models

There is no typical business model for international cooperation projects.

There is no typical business model for international cooperation projects. Each project involves considerable commitment from the people who launch it, with projects funded in a variety of ways: through bilateral cooperation funds (such as the Institut français),

multilateral funds (UNESCO, European Union, etc.), public funds (in countries where public funding exists), private funds (corporate foundations, philanthropists), sales of performance rights, tickets, or the collaborative economy (for example, local residents who provide free accommodation to artists).

Some cooperation projects may also receive funding from other sectors (including the social, security and environmental sectors) – a point raised and covered at FRESH STREET#1 in Barcelona in 2015 (seminar reports are available online).

It must also be underlined that, with the exception of North/South and South/South exchanges (especially between countries in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa), support opportunities are few and far between, and often involve European and Western sources of funding. This can lead to imbalances in terms of activities, project design

and general equality between partners. Furthermore, the fact that some influential areas in southern countries are “covered” better than others leads some artists and structures to question whether they are invited to take part in exchanges and collaborative projects because of their artistic visions and approaches or for their ability to attract financing.

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Mobility – A holistic process

International mobility is more than just the international sale of performance rights. It is a 'holistic' process that can cover several different kinds of mobility:

movement for research residencies, across various performance formats and venues, for technical and artistic exchanges, or for artist participation in social circus projects. It is also useful to view mobility as a tool for developing creative and professional skills in order to increase the sector's overall activity, its long-term presence, and

its ability to influence the local economy. This is the approach adopted by the Deploy programme, run by Brittany's performing arts regional agency Spectacle Vivant en Bretagne, which supports the Galapiat collective, among others. In the case of Galapiat, this two-year support programme seeks to enhance the international dimension of the collective's structure and development, while avoiding short-term or project-based approaches.

International mobility is more than just the international sale of performance rights. It is a 'holistic' process that can cover several different kinds of mobility.



The main conclusion to be drawn from examining the circus field is the inventiveness of stakeholders, especially their ability to use new tools offered by the collaborative economy. Camille Beaumier, producer for the Welsh circus company NoFit State Circus, presented a collaborative project with the Australian company Circus Oz – a simple exchange in which NoFit State is planning an Australian tour using the Circus Oz big top, while the Australian company is planning a European tour using NoFit State's own tent. Meanwhile, the Institut français has developed the Cirkobalkana project, which involves purchasing a permanent big top for Serbia and Croatia to minimise transport costs for circus companies touring these regions, and to encourage greener artistic mobility. Such initiatives are notable for combining international partnerships with social and environmental innovation, and represent strong models for future activity.

To go further

Guides for funding opportunities for cultural mobility, co-produced by On the Move (Europe, Asia, Africa, USA and Arab countries): <http://on-the-move.org/funding/>

Julie's Bicycle's resources and guides on environmental impacts and the circular economy in the cultural and artistic sector: <http://www.juliesbicycle.com/resources>

On the Move's guidance on visas: <http://on-the-move.org/about/ourownnews/article/15837/cultural-mobility-and-visas-information-page/?category=35>

FABRIZIO GAVOSTO (ITALY)



is a founding member of FNAS (Federazione Nazionale Arti di Strada). In 2007, he created Mirabilia Festival and is currently its Artistic Director. Since 2008, he has been working to create, support and develop national and European artistic networks. He co-drafted the framework Law on Street Artistic Expression in Italy.

ELEFTÉRIOS KECHAGIOGLOU (FRANCE)



is Director of Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde circus school, artistic platform and social laboratory, and President of CARAVAN, an international network in the field of social circus. He has developed international projects with partners coming from more than twenty countries (coming from Europe, South America, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and Africa).

EDUCATION IN THE CIRCUS ARTS

FACILITATORS:

Danijela Jovic - FEDEC - Fédération européenne
des écoles de cirque professionnelles (Belgium)
Stéphane Simonin - Académie Fratellini (France)

Today, a national school is seen as a necessary step for any country building a circus sector. But starting

a circus school is a courageous, subversive, crazy and expensive project that requires a clear pedagogical, artistic and political vision on the part of its founders if they're going to win over the hosting city, territory or country. It takes a lot of time and dedication, the right team, and finally the collaboration of the professional sector in order to provide opportunities for the eventual graduates.



This workshop, organised in collaboration with FEDEC, took a fresh look at the interface between training, creation and professional development, as well as geographical differences in the state of circus education, to better understand the role existing institutions can play in supporting future schools.

Where to begin? - The big picture

The majority of the current field of circus schools emerged in the last 15-20 years. From one point of view, their starting point was always the same: each project began with a passionate group of people, usually artists and teachers, who were motivated to found a school by their desire to share knowledge and advance the circus arts in their community.

In reality, however, this ambition was confronted in each case by a constellation of unique practical challenges and pedagogic questions that speak to

the importance and interconnectedness of education institutions. Is a preparatory school necessary? Should we build a complete, sustainable educational path in the country and offer students the opportunity to graduate without international studies? What must be the level of the future school - secondary, vocational or higher education? And what is an appropriate legal status and sustainable economic model to guarantee the various missions within the school? Is a recognised curriculum and a diploma always necessary, or a future step?

There is no “right” path

What is the difference between a circus artist and a circus arts student? It is important for circus students to train hard, but the school must also provide them

with time to conduct their own research, make mistakes, find their inner motivation, and discover what they wish to say within the medium. Undertaking this work puts them on the path to becoming artists but also trains them as professionals, impressing on them that they will soon be earning a living through their art. As other professionals, artists must learn

their work, however some learn by themselves and never follow courses in circus schools.

And here, another question emerges: if a school is, in its ideal form, a collaborative network of dedicated practitioners, how can you deal with the consumer attitude of a new generation of students expecting to be handed a “high quality” education in exchange for their fees? How do you engage them in the building of a collective project?

Such questions are closely linked to notions of identity and uniqueness: all schools may have the same

starting point (“there is no professional circus education in our country, so we need to build one”), but defining the exact educational offering takes years, and the choices made shape the communities that grow around the schools programmes. There are the basic and transversal skills for the circus artist – everything from flexibility through to acrobatics – but it is also crucial to develop the capacity of the artists to research, and to prepare them to bring their work to audiences, and there is no right path here. It is up to the school to construct a programme which, they feel, balances the needs of research, performance and technical training.

In undertaking such a delicate work, one of the major problems is the lack of teachers. Most teachers are former artists who were educated in circus schools and/or are self-taught individuals, who are passionate about pedagogy. Very often, teachers work in several schools, because, while there are no full-time job opportunities, there is still a great need for specialised teachers.

It is also crucial to develop the capacity of the artists to research, and to prepare them to bring their work to audiences, and there is no right path here.

How can you deal with the consumer attitude of a new generation of students expecting to be handed a “high quality” education in exchange for their fees? How do you engage them in the building of a collective project?

Consolidation – Strengthening the circus ecology

All schools develop from a universal need for consolidation – from the need for formal qualifications that put circus artists on an equal level with practitioners in other fields. All schools also start without formally verified experts and without an existing model for teaching, instead gradually developing their own system through constant work and the support of trusted partners. It is therefore important to gain professional recognition in a country's artistic field before raising the question of higher level education.

There is no universal recipe that would help implementing professional circus education in all coun-

tries, but there are lessons to be learned, and the large number of schools and partners (such as associations, federations, syndicates, and national or European networks) in the field facilitates the sharing of expertise.

Alongside this, in recent years a number of multidisciplinary institutions have emerged, especially in western Europe, as well as new types of organisations that support creation.

There is no universal recipe that would help implementing professional circus education in all countries, but there are lessons to be learned.

If a roughly parallel development is not happening in the market and education system, then both face the possibility of becoming dysfunctional.

The most important conclusion to be made is that circus schools and the wider field are highly interdependent. Their relationship goes far beyond the schools being simple “suppliers” of new artists, especially when we consider the ways that education contributes to the recognition of circus as an art form. In the other direction, effective education is dependent on a lo-

cal market that can offer viable career paths to young artists. Therefore, if a roughly parallel development is not happening in the market and education system, then both face the possibility of becoming dysfunctional.



To go further

FEDEC has published a number of guides and resources covering circus pedagogy: <http://www.fe-dec.eu>

The book *Conversations on Circus Teaching* : <http://www.cirkus.hr?p=4765&lang=en>

DANIJELA JOVIC (BELGIUM)



is General Coordinator at FEDEC - European Federation of Professional Circus Schools. She specialised in urban regeneration, in situ and participative projects, as well as residency programmes with a cross-disciplinary dimension. She now applies this background to circus education.

STÉPHANE SIMONIN (FRANCE)



has been General Director of Académie Fratellini since 2012 and is Treasurer of FEDEC - European Federation of Professional Circus Schools. He was director of HorsLesMurs between 2003 and 2011, where he contributed to the foundation of the Circostrada Network and Stradda magazine, and helped develop the French policy for the digitisation of street arts and circus arts resources.

HOW TO SUPPORT CREATION

FACILITATORS:

Riku Lievonen - Cirko - Center for New Circus (Finland)

Lucy Medlycott - ISACS - Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network (Ireland)

In the circus field, there are numerous creation centres, advocacy organisations and producers tasked with supporting artistic creation. But how, in practical terms, can they do this? Artists will tell us that what they most need is time, space and money, but this doesn't answer the question of how to allocate those resources effectively, and ignores under-

lying questions about what sorts of environments and interactions stimulate creative work. Taking a holistic view, this workshop discussed a variety of different approaches, touching on issues surrounding risk, inspiration, and the division of responsibility between artist and support organisation.

Taking risks



From a certain point of view, it is difficult to create policies and strategies that support creativity, because defining creativity is itself not a straightforward process. However, even if the phenomenon of creativity is complex and highly variable, we do know that in order to be creative, an individual needs to be autonomous – and in the art field, this means they need to be capable of taking risks.

The circus sector often talks about the physical risks inherent in circus practice,

but for all artists, there are material and social risks associated with creation – the risk of losing money and the risk of losing reputation or status. There are real consequences to either loss, yet these are risks that must be taken: experimentation is at the core of art-making and artists need to be able to try out ideas without ending their careers at the first failure.

Alleviating the pressure of these risks is therefore one of the simplest ways the field can support creation. On the financial side, we can point to the existence of seed funding projects, as well as larger scale initiatives like CircusNext (a full-spectrum support programme for young creators, which provides a grant, substantial residency time, and mentoring). Reducing the psychological stress of creative work is perhaps a problem to be approached more holistically, and is partly a question of environment, architecture and institutional culture. Of course, it is also a matter of individual preference: some centres and projects emphasise decoupling research and production so that artists are under no obligation to share their findings after a residency, while others advertise the benefits of regular informal showings.

Understanding this point – that conditions which benefit one artist's creative work might be to the detriment of another's – is an important part of grasping the challenge of supporting creation.

Experimentation is at the core of art-making and artists need to be able to try out ideas without ending their careers at the first failure.

Creative differences

The conditions that enable some artists to be productive will be best predicted by the artists themselves, but, given that resources are scarce and competitive, many will be driven to brush aside any doubts and apply to whatever schemes they can find. Therefore, directors of creation centres and residency labs

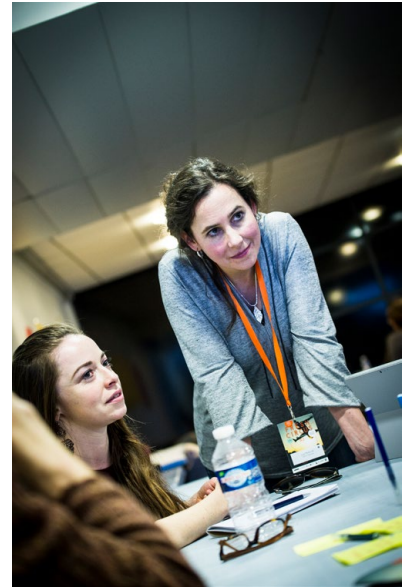
also have a responsibility to host artists who fit with and desire what they can offer.

Rather than offering a standardised creation experience, it is also important for these places to develop strongly defined characters and settings that present artists with a range of choices – urban or rural, social or isolated,

circus-specific or cross-artform. There is also a need for the residency sites across the sector to establish facilities which, taken together, can meet the wide technical requirements of the different circus disciplines: requirements that can never be met by a single institution can be fulfilled by the aggregate

of organisations working across the field.

Recognising the high variance from one project to the next, some residency sites place the emphasis on flexible or modular support programmes. The National Centre for Circus Arts' Lab:time programme (London) launched with four strands: Space:time (use of the school's Creation Studio), Team:time (funds to bring new collaborators into a research process), Tech:time (funds for the purchase or development of new equipment), and High:time (funds to pay for services of a technician to support R&D). Applicants were able to apply for a single strand or to a combination – and even to all four.



Rather than offering a standardised creation experience, it is also important for these places to develop strongly defined characters and settings that present artists with a range of choices.

Crossing paths

On an individual level, creativity emerges from complex networks of past and present experience. In a sense, it is about crossing paths.

Artists are stimulated in their creative work not only by physical environments, but rather by a mixture of environments, people, conversations, resources, materials, and basic human needs (food, sleep, company, etc.). Human interaction is another key factor, and artists are often stimulated when they are around practitioners from different fields or simply with life in the everyday world.

Projects and residencies that invite artists to engage with a specific community or local context are one direct way of creating these connections. Residen-

cies that invite artists to create work in response to a particular landscape/environment are common in the visual arts, but less so in circus – perhaps because of technical needs and the relatively long creation periods for productions. However, some initiatives – like Cirkus Xanti's Circus Village, a travelling festival and residency centre in Norway – have found that the model of the tent is an excellent laboratory for interaction with local communities, and many others have found that the nature of circus, as an intrinsically social form, makes it well suited to creation projects that draw in people from the surrounding area.

On an individual level, creativity emerges from complex networks of past and present experience. In a sense, it is about crossing paths.

LUCY MEDLYCOTT (IRELAND)



is Coordinator of ISACS - Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network, of more than 60 members, which aims to structure the field and increase recognition for these art forms in Ireland. For twenty years, she was a founding member and manager of Bui Bolg Outdoor Arts.

RIKU LIEVONEN (FINLAND)



is Director of Cirko - Center for New Circus. Riku is an expert in artistic expression in public space and contemporary circus in Finland, and previously worked as a producer for the performing arts programme of the Helsinki Festival.

HOW DO WE WORK WITH AUDIENCES?

FACILITATORS:

Gert Nulens - Theater op de Markt (Belgium)

Marc Eysink Smeets - Circo Circolo (Netherlands)

In the cultural sector, “audience development” is high on the agenda and audience numbers are a big deal for all cultural workers, partners and stakeholders. Audience data is often collected to prove the value of a cultural event, and this data might make the difference when trying to convince partners

and funders to come onboard. Next to quantitative data about audience (attendance numbers, tickets sold, etc.), qualitative information can be very helpful for future initiatives, actions and policies. In this workshop, the issue of the impact was a central focus. How can the circus sector have a real impact on its audience? How do we measure it? What are the specificities of the field?

In the cultural sector, “audience development” is high on the agenda and audience numbers are a big deal for all cultural workers, partners and stakeholders.

What does audience development even mean?

Audience development used to be an instrument of marketing: it was all about attracting people to an event and selling tickets. Nowadays, it is a tool to increase audience numbers, to build sustainable relationships with audiences, and to diversify attendance.

In audience development, quantitative data (e.g. the number of tickets sold) is still a very important – even dominant – measure for analysis. Although data about cultural participation in general is widely available, detailed information about circus audiences

is rare. The available research, however, shows some surprising results. It is a common argument that circus can attract members of all social classes and break through the boundaries that enclose other arts such as dance and theatre, but the result of these studies shows that on the contrary the same barriers exist in circus as in other arts. In other words: our circus audiences are also highly educated and originate from higher income backgrounds.

Traditional circus, the neo-classical circus “cirque de nostalgie”, le nouveau cirque and the contemporary circus all come with different codes, different aesthetics, and different kinds of artists (from self-taught individuals to graduates). Making matters more complicated, contemporary circus seems increasingly to be assimilating the cultural codes of other arts.

However, it is important to recognise that these different forms of circus have the potential to attract a broader audience. We have to stimulate, communicate, and convince potential audiences to come to our shows in order to see for themselves that circus, as a primarily physical art with roots in populist forms, has few barriers to appreciation.

It is a common argument that circus can attract members of all social classes and break through the boundaries that enclose other arts such as dance and theatre, but the available evidence shows that on the contrary the same barriers exist as in other arts.



Measuring impact – The qualitative approach

Although quantitative data shows one side of the story, a qualitative approach shows a deeper understanding of the potential impact of circus.

Circus is often associated with the tent and in this case, the first impact is made when the circus company arrives in town. People see the trucks and the trailers, see how the tent is built up, see the activity, see how the area is changing. This ongoing activity

is appealing and attractive for a potential audience; it makes a first connection with them. However, the impact of the tent is also linked to the specificity of each country's "circus culture". Some countries have a culture in which circus is associated with old-fashioned

shows of poor quality, while in other regions circus is respected and appreciated.

Although some circus companies may have a strong impact by means of the iconic tent, contemporary circus is increasingly leaving the the big top and entering the theatre. This may create new barriers and walls, depending on the habits and traditions of each nation. In some countries, such as Belgium, there is a tradition of bourgeois theatre, and the theatre experience comes with certain cultural codes that can be a barrier for people not educated in these codes. But in other countries the situation can be completely different. For instance in Latvia, where there is a tradition of popular theatre, there is no barrier visit the theatre.

Another important qualitative factor is the degree of audience activity. You can have a very passive audience – the kind we are used to in the perfor-

ming arts with seated shows – or you can have an audience that is much more involved. In other art forms, such as street arts, there are many good examples of companies involving the audience in the creation process: the audience become co-creators; they feel responsible, and are genuinely involved.

The tradition in circus is to have a rather passive audience. However, a passive audience does not necessarily mean that there is no impact. A show in a very traditional theatrical setting can still have an enormous impact, can become a show the audience will always remember, or be an artwork that has a huge effect on how they think or feel about something.

When rethinking the nature of artistic impact, it is also necessary to rethink the concept of audiences. For many, an audience is formed only by the people who buy tickets to a show, but there are many more people engaged in and around the work: the volunteers, the digital audience watching videos or reading material online, the participants of educational programmes, the people who dialogue with the artists before or after the event. Taking to heart a broader and more inclusive idea of what constitutes an 'audience' is the first step to effectively developing it.



Circus is often associated with the tent and in this case, the first impact is made when the circus company arrives in town.

To go further

IN SITU, the European network for artistic creation for public space, shares knowledge about artistic projects that experiment with location, audience involvement, and other angles of audience engagement that could inspire the field of circus. <http://www.in-situ.info/en/>

Circostrada's CS Audience working group is currently leading a pilot programme to collect best practices of audience development in the circus and street arts sectors. The focus is on outstanding cases with relevant impact in terms of audience development, looking at examples of innovative or successful strategies to increase and deepen relationships or diversify audiences. The first results will be online soon on the Circostrada website.

GERT NULENS (BELGIUM)



is Director of Dommelhof - Creation centre for circus, outdoor theatre and site-specific arts. The centre welcomes artists for residencies and supports international and regional companies. Dommelhof organises the international circus festival Theater op de Markt in Hasselt.

MARK EYSINK SMEETS (NETHERLANDS)



has been Executive Director since 2013 of the first festival for contemporary circus in the Netherlands: Festival Circo Circolo, founded by Wim Claessen in 2005. He joined the organisation as Head of Marketing and, together with Wim, works to develop the festival and advocate for new circus in the Netherlands.

INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS FOR CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

FACILITATORS:

Gentiane Guillot - ARTCENA (France)

Thomas Renaud - La Maison des Jonglages (France)

The word 'innovation' is often evoked, but it is not always easy to find examples backed by practical plans or concrete measures. In the performing arts especially – where business models remain conservative, based on hierarchical structures and essentially traditional

funding mechanisms of state support – where is the innovation? More precisely, where exactly can experimentation come into play? In diversifying sources of revenue? Reducing costs? Developing new activities? Creating social value? Jumping on the digital technologies bandwagon?



Against the backdrop of ongoing changes in the arts and civil society, which have been marked by sometimes drastic public funding cuts and fast-growing economic vulnerability, innovative business models that actually work are something of a holy grail, surrounded by superstition and fascination. By sharing existing approaches and considering new ones, this workshop aimed to bring concrete ideas and specific actions to light.

Innovative business models that actually work are something of a holy grail, surrounded by superstition and fascination.

What do we mean by innovation(s)?

Of course, there is an ideological dimension to the concept of innovation: it can be a powerful tool of control and is, for example, sometimes used to impose social or managerial 'reforms' in the name of 'modernity'. In such cases, it reproduces or extends the balance of power already in place in a society or organisation. Faced with the ongoing reality of dwindling public resources, innovation can be viewed as a call to accept the inevitable and adapt.

In contrast, a sociological approach (which studies social or organisational routines and norms) could perceive innovation as something associated not with organised, instituted activities reproduced within the current framework of social and managerial control, but a process of disrupting the organisation of the instituted order.

Innovation is then about how some people succeed, even within their professional organisation and normal business, to break free of some of the rules, and think outside of the box to invent new things and ways of working.

Innovation is then about how some people succeed, even within their professional organisation and normal business, to break free of some of the rules.

How do we innovate?

This question is all about creativity (and not just in terms of technological research and innovation) on both an individual and collective level: the challenge for organisations is often less about having individuals with ideas - which they always do - than creating ways to hear, assess and even put these ideas into practice. It is then also about experimentation: in order to use ideas, we have to test

The challenge for organisations is often less about having individuals with ideas - which they always do - than creating ways to hear, assess and even put these ideas into practice.

them (even on a small scale) in order to spot errors, make improvements, and ensure they are appropriate before they are implemented.

This was at the heart of this workshop, which focused on a handful of key questions: What business models have you tested? What have you learned - and what advice can you give? What are the pitfalls to be avoided? What do you dream of testing?

Cutting consumption, boosting collaboration

Inevitably for a cash-poor sector, a lot of innovation is focused on minimising costs - and there are many ways to tackle this. For some larger institutions, substantial savings may be found in reducing energy use, and organisations of all sizes can seek advice/support from green energy initiatives. The National Centre for Circus Arts in London, for instance, implemented an environmental policy in 2014 that set long-term targets for the reduction of energy and water consumption, and an increase in recycling and staff members travelling to work by bicycle. Their project to refit the building included the

installation of solar panels, LED lighting and double glazing.

Another way for organisations to reduce costs is to pool assets and share facilities. In circus, exchanges of this kind may be particularly effective - both because practicing circus often requires specialist training facilities that are expensive to establish and maintain, and because the cooperative spirit of the art form establishes strong connections between individuals.

In fact, the existence of close-knit communities in the circus field may also be the key to unlocking a more sustainable model of mixed funding.

As state investment dwindles, the emphasis is being placed on crowd-funding and social funding, both of which offer opportunities for circus organisations to capitalise their social value. Here there are examples like Circusplaneet, a circus school in Ghent that used the SoCrowd platform to raise €46,000 from 136 investors - an amount which contributed substantially to the costs of buying a church in Malem and turning it into the organisation's headquarters and a community hub.

In fact, the existence of close-knit communities in the circus field may also be the key to unlocking a more sustainable model of mixed funding.



The example of Galapiat company - Organising work around a project

Innovation can also come at an organisational level. The members of Galapiat structured their company as an association, in the conventional way, around their first performance, Risque Zéro. From the beginning, though, they worked as a collective, with no director, no producer, and low equal salaries, sharing the financial resources generated as much as possible. After a number of years, the six artists decided to start developing their own work. In order to stay together, they had to rework the fundamental structure of their organisation and company.

As a result, Galapiat became a cooperative in December 2015. The members are now organised

into 'cells', within which each artist creates their own show, with their own artistic and technical team. Each cell sets its own budget, transfer price, employment policy, internal operation, etc. But the cells form an administrative whole together and with the local project. They share risks and revenue, there is an internal solidarity fund, and coordination and administrative management is centralised. Since they have deliberately chosen not to have a director, decisions are made in formal meetings of varying frequency and nature, and the most important decisions are taken collectively during a quarterly seminar.

GENTIANE GUILLOT (FRANCE)



is in charge of the Development Platform and Delegate for Innovation at ARTCENA, the French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theatre. She is one of the co-pilots of the CS Lab group within Circostrada network, which explores the following issues: How can we adapt to change? How can we think differently? How can we use our creativity to find new solutions?

THOMAS RENAUD (FRANCE)



has been Director of Maison des Jonglages in La Courneuve since 2014. Thomas spent four years working at Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe as Coordinator of CircusNext. He is open-minded and pragmatic, and enjoys coming up with new models to expand the field of what's possible.

EVERYBODY TALKS ABOUT CIRCUS

FACILITATORS: Adolfo Rossomando - Juggling Magazine / Associazione Giocolieri e Dintorni (Italy)
Maarten Verhelst - CircusMagazine / Circuscentrum (Belgium)

Today the circus arts are evolving at a rapid pace, gaining in popularity at the same time as they become artistically ever more diverse and intriguing. And yet, in spite of the art form's increasing presence, sophistication and cultural traction, mainstream media and communication still treat circus in a very old-fashioned way, if it notices it at all, while policymakers and key players within the arts think in

clichés whenever circus arts are on the agenda. This workshop then, starting from a recognition that the complexity of the contemporary form demands a renewal of imagery, language and ideas, tried to outline the obstacles facing communication in the field and to suggest a way forward.

Mainstream media and communication still treat circus in a very old-fashioned way, if it notices it at all.

The image of circus

The 'old' image of circus has been cut deep into our collective imagination: the big top tent, clowns with red noses and long shoes, wild animals, spectacular feats of strength and prowess, an atmosphere of glitter and glamour – such clichés are the residue of a time when one style of circus was immensely popular.

Of course, these archetypes have the 'right' to exist: traditional circuses are still travelling from town to

town, and even many 'modern' circus companies are based on the characteristics of traditional circus (Cirque du Soleil is perhaps the most famous example). But this traditional image no longer encompasses all of circus today; the contemporary form is much broader, with many styles and many formats of presentation.

Circus diversity

As a sector, circus is incredibly diverse: audiences might see a travelling circus family that produces traditional shows without government subsidy; a troupe of acrobats, all graduates of circus schools, who perform at dozens of outdoor festivals with a

comic show made for all ages; or a conceptual artist whose two-hour solo performance could be labelled variously as dance, physical theatre, or contemporary circus. Equally, there are many ways for people to participate in circus, with schools, social circus

projects, team building workshops, recreational activities, and more.

Few people know how diverse the circus field is today, and few realise how many different ways there are for an individual to create a career and a life within it.

This diversity is a strength, but it means that the circus world finds it difficult to send a clear, simple message to the outside world. There is no universal definition of circus that everyone can refer to; instead, there is a confusing gap between the traditional and contemporary modes, while the different styles and visions that collectively make up the contemporary scene defy a shorthand description.

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Claim the word 'circus'

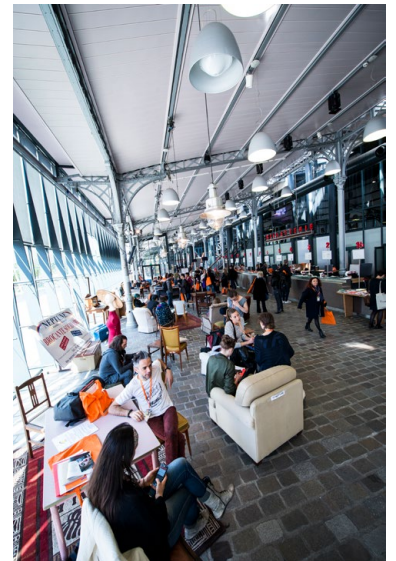
The word 'circus' has a negative connotation in many countries: it's for children, it's entertainment (not art), it's old fashioned, it's a gypsy thing. Moreover, it's often used to describe something chaotic ('the media circus', 'the political circus') or ridiculous ('Donald Trump is a clown'). The connotation is slowly shifting from negative to positive, but we have to admit that it is going too slowly.

This lack of recognition, combined with easier access to funds for other performing arts, is tempting – or forcing – many circus artists to label their creations as dance, theatre, performing arts – anything *but* circus.

Advocacy for the recognition of circus as an art form has been a constant quest for the entire field, and this is still an ongoing process. This lack of recognition, combined with easier access to funds for other performing arts, is tempting – or forcing – many circus artists to label their creations as dance,

theatre, performing arts – anything *but* circus.

The circus sector itself has to foster a new image for itself. Circus artists have to be aware of their own responsibility, as do all others in the field. We shouldn't be afraid to use the word 'circus'; instead we must claim it. Circus is circus, and we should both be proud of belonging to its long history and celebrate its present form and exciting future. Like all arts, circus changes every day.



Communication as a powerful tool

An important key for changing the image of circus is to avoid using the old clichés and tropes as a crutch, and to design instead communication around original pictures and video, modern language, and contemporary graphic design. Even when using circus jargon, or traditional circus graphics with flashy colours and letterpress fonts, communication supports should exude a fresh spirit.

Printed publications, leaflets and posters are all important tools, but circus communication also needs to spread through the web and on social media. Alongside this we should experiment with original and innovative forms of live communication – happenings, flash mobs or edutainment conferences.

An important key for changing the image of circus is to avoid using the old clichés and tropes as a crutch, and to design instead communication around original pictures and video, modern language, and contemporary graphic design.

Next steps

The main conclusion of this workshop is that we have to talk more about communication in the circus field. We need more debate, more discussions, more exchanges, both within the sector and together with the outside world. We need to avoid the common pitfalls (e.g. endless discussions about 'what is circus?') in order to capture and communicate the infinite different styles of circus today. It is with this richness as a

foundation that we can build strong recommendations and in-depth strategies for audience development/engagement, as well as lobby more powerfully for institutional recognition.

It is also true, however, that while we can craft as many messages as we want, the best way to get people into circus is to have them experience it live, with their own senses. We should therefore always work to bring circus into people's lives.



To go further

Unpack the Arts was an interesting project in this area. A total of 120 European cultural journalists took a dive into contemporary circus, seeing great shows and learning about the history and aesthetics of circus. The result (120 articles) can be downloaded at www.unpackthearts.eu

There are a handful of circus arts magazines / media projects, gathered together in the INCAM network, which regularly deal with and try to overcome the challenges of circus communication. An overview can be found on www.circusartsmagazines.net

ADOLFO ROSSOMANDO (ITALY)

has been Director of Juggling Magazine since 1998 and is a founding member of INCAM - International Network of Circus Art Magazines. He is the founder of the Giocolieri e Dintorni association, which works to promote circus arts education in Italy. He is also President of the Italian National Federation for social circus and circus for young audiences.



MAARTEN VERHELST (BELGIUM)

is Communication Manager of Circuscentrum and Chief Editor of CircusMagazine, a quarterly publication on circus arts in Flanders and beyond. In the magazine, he promotes circus as a strong, eye-opening art form which deserves greater coverage and closer attention from the media.

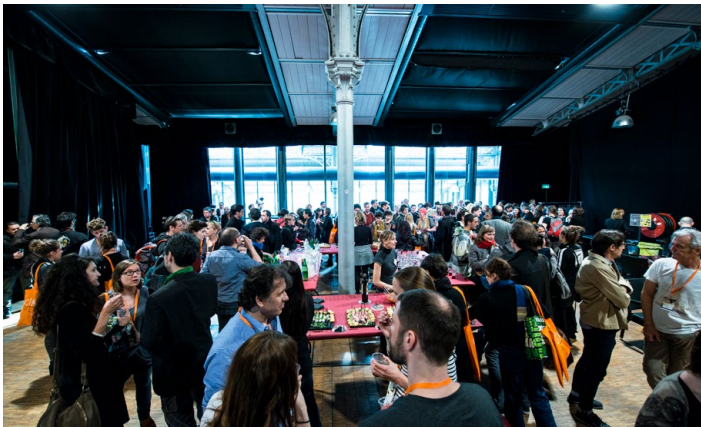


PUBLIC POLICIES FOR CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

FACILITATORS:

Koen Allary - Circuscentrum (Belgium)

Amélia Franck - Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (Belgium)



Today public policies for performing arts such as theatre and dance are well-established. Contemporary circus in all its forms is perceived as a booming industry, and yet few countries have official policies tailored for the field. At the same time, the public policies that do exist are facing serious budget cuts. How can the circus sector fight for more recognition and create new opportunities in times of crisis? Is the battle too big for the field to fight alone? Is it a good idea to outline a European public policy that can be 'translated' for each country?

Contemporary circus in all its forms is perceived as a booming industry, and yet few countries have official policies tailored for the field. At the same time, the public policies that do exist are facing serious budget cuts.

Circus as cultural mediator

Our professional instinct might be to argue directly for money and grants, but in fact the best way to convince politicians and policymakers to invest in contemporary circus is to describe what the art form can offer to society and cultural life – in other words, to explain what values contemporary circus can bring to cultural policy. For instance, circus can be argued as an important tool in terms of cultural mediation – given its accessibility

The best way to convince politicians and policymakers to invest in contemporary circus is to describe what the art form can offer to society and cultural life.

as an art and its inclusive nature as a physical practice, it can build bridges between the cultural and social realms.

As professionals, we have to think and negotiate in this spirit, treating policymakers as partners and allies, and to this end the sector could work to develop an international document or charter which details the universal values of contemporary circus and which could be used to convince policymakers around the world of circus' vitality and impact. The necessary information, studies, researches, facts and figures already exist, but there is a need to comprehensively gather together and distribute the relevant information to all partners.

Doing this work would also facilitate a broad push for all countries to create public policies specifically treating the circus field, and to appoint cultural officers with good knowledge of the sector.

International Touring

The mobility of artists presents many unique challenges for policymakers, but we must also be realistic about where the responsibilities of policy end and the work of individuals and organisations begins. For instance, the circus sector would be-



benefit hugely from a guide for international touring which collects information on practicalities such as working permits and taxes. Such a guide could be enormously useful to touring artists, but it would also be immensely complicated to coordinate and would need to be constantly updated to accommodate changes in regulations and tax law.

Attempting to centrally tackle the logistics of touring might therefore have less impact than raising funds for smaller actions such as translation, the production of high quality promotional materials that can help artists to sell their work, and so on – concrete needs that public policy can more readily address. Contemporary circus needs a specific public policy, and specialised people who are deeply involved in circus.

The mobility of artists presents many unique challenges for policymakers, but we must also be realistic about where the responsibilities of policy end and the work of individuals and organisations begins.

From informal relationships to structured exchange

Circostrada has always believed that it is essential to update the way circus is represented in order to capture its contemporary diversity – and this need to redefine is even more pressing in the context of discussions with cultural policymakers. This is why the network has, for many years, been organising an annual seminar where policymakers are invited to visit one of our European member countries, to discuss issues associated with the circus arts. During this year's FRESH CIRCUS in Paris, Circostrada, represented by Koen Allary, Stéphane Segreto-Aguilar, Gentiane Guillot, Raffaella Benanti and Julien Rosemberg, with the support of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, represented by Frédéric Moreau-Sevin, Head of the Bureau of European and International Action in the Directorate General of Artistic Creation, and his Operations Officer, Fabienne Brütt, invited the attendance of a large number of European cultural policymakers with the aim of creating a network coordinated by Circostrada. During this first working session, participants worked on the proposal put forward by the project leaders:

- Taking stock of current policies and mechanisms around the world for supporting the circus arts, and more broadly, artistic creation in public space.
- Identifying common issues and discussing the impacts of these issues on the way the sectors are structured and are currently developing.
- Creating a flexible and informal network incorporated within the activities of Circostrada, to bring together cultural policymakers to work on issues associated with the development of contemporary circus and artistic creation in public space in Europe and around the world.
- Creating a place for dialogue and the sharing of best practices between international counterparts.
- Creating the necessary conditions for sustainable long-running exchanges between countries and institutions.
- Giving the opportunity to discover new forms and aesthetics in contemporary circus with performances held during the FRESH CIRCUS#3 event.

Two working sessions were held over two days, bringing together 30 participants from fifteen different countries. The benefit of working together and the key topics of the proposed network were also presented: 1) Education, from primary to tertiary and professional integration, 2) Public policies, from traditional circus to contemporary circus, 3) Equipment, buildings and infrastructure, 4) Policy, regulation, planning, law, charters, 5) Quality of art form and terminology, 6) Cultural policy and grants, 7) Professional resources and communication, 8) Help

to the professional sector, 9) Presentation and touring, 10) Local, regional, national and international development, 11) Advocacy and legitimacy, 12) Impact of circus arts within strategic policy.

This kind of event remains on the organiser's strong belief that European scale and reflexions with peers are good framework to think and invent better cultural policies for circus and street arts. The next meeting, FRESH STREET#2, has already been scheduled in Portugal with the Imaginarius festival !

To go further

With the support of its members, Circostrada occasionally organises short seminars for cultural policy-

makers. For details of previous events and upcoming activities see <http://www.circostrada.org/en/activities>

KOEN ALLARY (BELGIUM)



is Director of Circuscentrum, Secretary of Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe, the association that coordinates CircusNext, and a member of the Circostrada network's Steering Committee. He has also produced several editions of the street arts festival De Groote Stooringe in Roeselare, and of the PERPLX festival in Kortrijk.

AMÉLIA FRANCK (BELGIUM)



has been managing the Circus Arts and Street Arts Department within the Federation Wallonia-Brussel's cultural administration since 2010. Strongly involved in the performing arts sector, she works to modernise services and processes, develops international contacts, and regularly collaborates with other bodies (Wallonie-Bruxelles Théâtre/Danse, Wallonie-Bruxelles International, etc.).



ORGANISERS
& PARTNERS

Organisers



Since 2003, Circostrada Network works to develop and structure the fields of Circus and Street Arts in Europe and beyond. With more than 80 members from 25 countries, it contributes to build a sustainable future for these sectors by empowering cultural players through the production of resources and actions of observation and research, professional exchanges, advocacy, capacity-building and information.



ARTCENA, is the French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theatre. It works towards its missions in three main areas: the sharing of knowledge through a digital platform and activities of documentation, the support to professionals via mentoring and training, the development of these three artistic fields by providing funding to authors and carrying out international development. It coordinates the Circostrada Network and has a permanent seat on its steering committee.

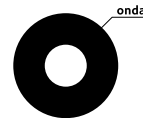


First Parisian cultural park, La Villette combines arts, culture and biodiversity in an urban area. Leading an active policy supporting creation and dissemination, La Villette promotes encounters between public and professionals around all artistic practices. New highlight of the programmation, "Villette en Cirques" explores for three months new circus forms. Artists from different backgrounds, emerging or still unknown in France, present their latest creations in the venues of La Villette and in other partner venues.

Partners



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LE GROUPE DE TRAVAIL FRESH CIRCUS#3

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Cover picture

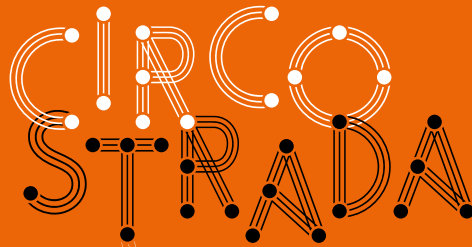
Compagnie Cirquons Flex,
Residence of the show
creation «Dobout an Bout»,
mars 2012, Théâtre du
Merlan (Marseille, France)
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www.circostrada.org



• European Network
Circus and Street ArtS

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