Dear Friends,

I was recently standing in front of the statue of Leonardo da Vinci in Milan, musing on how important artists were in dragging Europe out of the darkness of the Middle Ages. And how quickly it happened. From the naive, almost clumsy frescos of Piero della Francesca, to the subtle art of the Renaissance in just a few decades; it is almost incomprehensible.

And then I received a text message from Belgium notifying me that we had a new Minister of Culture. In her first public appearance this new minister said that she did not know anything about art. Yet another politician who has no worries about heading a department about which they know nothing. We have been used to it for years in Flanders. There’s hardly any use getting angry about it. But one thing that is worthwhile is to note that the arts are doing very well in Flanders. Despite the almost complete lack of respect for artists shown by our successive Ministers of Culture, things are going well. And yet, just try to imagine a capable Minister of Culture who is passionate about art. Someone who has a high estimation of the importance of art to our society.

A visionary who is an inspiration to everyone who has anything to do with art. Which means everybody, because whether we want it or not, art is to be found in every nook and cranny of our society. Art has always been there and will always be there, good or bad, megalomaniac or modest, provocative or gentle, art makes life livable. Bach, da Vinci, Shakespeare, to name just three of the greatest. But even they were only able to exist due to the countless failures of all artists together. And that is perhaps the most important quality a Minister of Culture needs: to understand that all these failures are necessary in art.

Or as Hugo Claus once said: ‘It is just as hard to write a bad book as a good book’.

It is said that we have to give the new Minister of Culture the benefit of the doubt. The problem is precisely that artists are happy to doubt, but politicians are not.

Kind regards,
JL

Brussels, September 09

There’s a busy autumn in store and that’s the way Needcompany likes it. After a much-appreciated spell at the Avignon Festival and a beneficial holiday, we are all raring to go. Here’s a selection from the reviews:

‘In a space invaded by white polystyrene fallow deer, a moving ritual unfolds that is reminiscent of a particularly tender love-song. As always in Needcompany performances, acting, song and dance alternate with a flourish and full of humour, as if to ward off tragedy.’ Les Inrockuptibles, HLT

‘It is the art of creating little islands of emotion on stage and at the same time setting up action that disrupts their progress. Once again, Jan Lauwers excels in this subtle interaction between sympathy-thising and icy detachment.’ Mouvementavignon.wordpress.com, EB

This season, Jan Lauwers and Needcompany are artists in residence at the Burgtheater in Vienna. The largest theatre in the German-language area (with a company of 140 actors), headed by Matthias Hartmann, has called in the Needcompany ensemble to develop a new artistic course. The Needcompany repertoire will be incorporated into the regular programme. As a debut, Jan Lauwers and the ensemble will be presenting Needlapb 16, which includes a foretaste of the feature-film-to-be, Dead Deer Don’t Dance. In addition to the repertoire, new productions will also be created over the next few seasons.
THE DEER HOUSE
Jan Lauwers
Joint production by Needcompany and Salzburg Festspiele. Coproduced: Schauplatzhaus, Zürich; PACT Zollverein (Essen). With the assistance of deSingel (Antwerp) and Kaaitheater (Brussels).
27, 28, 29 August 2009
Internationales Sommerfestival Kampnagel, Hamburg
Tickets +49 40 720 949 49
1 September 2009
Stadschouwburg Amsterdam
Tickets +31 20 624 23 11
29, 30, 31 October 2009
Porcelain Project, Antwerp
Tickets +32 9 267 28 28
2, 3 December 2009
Teatre Lliure, Barcelona
Tickets +34 90 210 12 12

SAD FACE / HAPPY FACE
Anneke Bonnema, Hans Petter Dahl, Viviane De Muynck, Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Tijn Lawton / Eléonore Valère / Sung-im Her, Maarten Seghers, Inge Van Bruystegem
20 December 2009
Teatro Lliure, Barcelona
Tickets +33 3 248 48 48

THE PORCELAIN PROJECT
Grace Ellen Barkey
With: Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Benoît Gob, Tijn Lawton, Maarten Seghers, Taka Shamoto / Yumiko Funaya, Lemm&Barky
A Needcompany production, coproduced by Théâtre Le Quai (Angers), La Rose des Vents (Séne Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d’Ascq), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Kaaitheater (Brussels)
6 September 2009
TANZTHEATER INTERNATIONAL 2009, Orangerie Herrenhausen, Hannover
Tickets +49 511-1684 12 22
17, 18 November 2009
Dance Festival Jena “Theater in Bewegung”, Theater Jena
Tickets +49 3641 498060

NEEDLAP 16
With the whole ensemble
8, 9 September 2009
Academieetheater, Vienna
Tickets +41 51444-4145

THE LOBSTER SHOP
Jan Lauwers
A Needcompany production, coproduced by Festival d’Avignon, Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), Théâtre Grenier (Tourcoing), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Camargue Dom (L’Isle-Jourdain), La Rose des Vents (Séne Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d’Ascq), Autonome en Normandie (La Havre), La Figurice (Séne Scène Nationale de Mulhouse), Kaaitheater (Brussels), deSingel (Antwerp)
With the support of the European Union’s Culture 2000 programme.
11 September 2009
TANZTHEATER INTERNATIONAL 2009, Schauplatzhaus, Hannover
Tickets +49 511-1684 12 22
16, 17, 18 October 2009
Academieetheater, Vienna
Tickets +43 1 51444-4145

ISABELLA’S ROOM
Jan Lauwers
With: Viviane De Muynck, Hans Petter Dahl, Anneke Bonnema, Benoît Gob, Lulde Hagberg / Misha Downey, Tijn Lawton / Sung-im Her, Julien Faure, Louise Peterhoff / Yumiko Funaya, Maarten Seghers, Jan Lauwers, Elke Lemm, Inge Van Bruystegem
A Needcompany production, coproduced by Festival d’Avignon, Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), Théâtre Grenier (Tourcoing), La Rose des Vents (Séne Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d’Ascq), Brooklyn Academy of Music (New York) and the welt in basel theaterfestival. In association with met Kaaitheater, Brussels.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE APPLAUSE - ROBAIX
Happening/group exhibition compiled by:
OHNO COOPERATION
With installations, performances and music by:
Rombout Willems, Nicolas Field, Fritz Welch, Eglil Saebjörsisson, Liquid Architecture, Jan Lauwers (OHNO COOPERATION), Maarten Seghers (OHNO COOPERATION), Production: OHNO COOPERATION/Ma Direction Publique (Roubaix). Produced by Needcompany/OHNO COOPERATION/Ma Direction Publique (Roubaix) in association with NEXT festival.
26, 27, 28 November 2009
La Condition Publique, Roubaix
Tickets +33 3 28 33 48 33

THE BALLAD OF RICKY AND RONNY – A POP OPERA
MaisonDahlBonnema
With: Hans Petter Dahl and Anna Sophia Bonnema
A Needcompany/MaisonDahlBonnema production, with the assistance of Kaaitheater (Brussels) and Intuit (Vienna International Dance Festival).
9, 10 October 2009
4+4 Days in Motion, Prague
Tickets +420 224 809 125

THE PORCELAIN PROJECT / INSTALLATION
Lemm&Barky
With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Lot Lemm
A Needcompany production, coproduced by Théâtre Le Quai (Angers), La Rose des Vents (Séne Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d’Ascq), PACT Zollverein (Essen) and Kaaitheater (Brussels).
3, 4 October 2009
BRXLBRAVO, Prado-building
With thanks to the VanhaverbekeArtCollection
Information www.brxlbravo.be

KEBANG !
Book launch
1 3 December 2009
Passaporta.be
Information www.passaporta.be

Agenda

After 12 years of warm-hearted and intense collaboration, Tijn Lawton is leaving Needcompany to seek new horizons. We wish her much creativity and happiness.

At the end of November, OHNO COOPERATION is presenting ‘The Tragedy of the Applause – Roubaix’. During this happening-cum-exhibition, OHNO COOPERATION and the artists it has invited will ask why pop music has never questioned itself. On 26, 27 and 28 November, the artists will give a performance of their own, and the traces of it – sounds and images – can be seen in the form of an exhibition until four weeks after the performances.
What the artists taking part have in common is that they observe pop music. The questions they ask are those that real pop musicians never ask: ‘What is the meaning of a microphone? What is the meaning of feedback? Why do pop musicians all use the same lighting? Why do we all know the first three words of a pop song, but never what comes next? OHNO COOPERATION is inviting the artists to perform new songs, compositions and improvisations, playing the music themselves.

In December, the calendar year will be brought to a fine close with the Belgian premiere of the Sad Face / Happy Face trilogy at deSingel. This trilogy, whose subtitle is ‘Three stories on Human Nature’, comprises Isabella’s room, The Lobster Shop and The House for a Deaf Dawn. ‘The uncannily closed trilogy And the action on stage has never been so lively on the subject of death. In Sad Faces / Happy Face, Jan Lauwers plays a game of “try one minute and laugh the next” with the audience, also taking them back and forth between side issues and the main point.’ La Marcelianne, CB

November sees the publication of the first Dutch-language publication of the collected work of Jan Lauwers. It is called KEBANG! and is published by Valkenswaard. The official launch will be at Passa Porta, Brussels’ international house of literature and creativity, also taking them back and forth between side issues and the main point.’ La Marcelianne, CB

We welcome two new performers to Needcompany: Sung-im Her and Eléonore Valère.

This door 1 3 December 2009 Passaporta.be Information www.passaporta.be

www.needcompany.org T +32 2 218 40 75 - F +32 2 218 23 17

At the end of November, OHNO COOPERATION is presenting ‘The Tragedy of the Applause – Roubaix’. During this happening-cum-exhibition, OHNO COOPERATION and the artists it has invited will ask why pop music has never questioned itself. On 26, 27 and 28 November, the artists will give a performance of their own, and the traces of it – sounds and images – can be seen in the form of an exhibition until four weeks after the performances.
What the artists taking part have in common is that they observe pop music. The questions they ask are those that real pop musicians never ask: ‘What is the meaning of a microphone? What is the meaning of feedback? Why do pop musicians all use the same lighting? Why do we all know the first three words of a pop song, but never what comes next? OHNO COOPERATION is inviting the artists to perform new songs, compositions and improvisations, playing the music themselves.

In December, the calendar year will be brought to a fine close with the Belgian premiere of the Sad Face / Happy Face trilogy at deSingel. This trilogy, whose subtitle is ‘Three stories on Human Nature’, comprises Isabella’s room, The Lobster Shop and The House for a Deaf Dawn. ‘The uncannily closed trilogy And the action on stage has never been so lively on the subject of death. In Sad Faces / Happy Face, Jan Lauwers plays a game of “try one minute and laugh the next” with the audience, also taking them back and forth between side issues and the main point.’ La Marcelianne, CB

November sees the publication of the first Dutch-language publication of the collected work of Jan Lauwers. It is called KEBANG! and is published by Valkenswaard. The official launch will be at Passa Porta, Brussels’ international house of literature and creativity, also taking them back and forth between side issues and the main point.’ La Marcelianne, CB

We welcome two new performers to Needcompany: Sung-im Her and Eléonore Valère.