Dear Friend,

‘Art that pretends to be anything other than itself is bad art. Beauty is freedom in appearance.’ Schiller wrote this two hundred years ago, though at the time he was extremely ill and surrounded by revolutionaries. But no one is troubled by the fact that many people in the governments of European states would now like to abolish art. Because this is an impossibility. One might just as well want to abolish being in love or being ill.

So we are carrying on and it’s going well. All’s well with Needcompany. Excellent in fact. We travel from country to country and are warmly welcomed everywhere. We have never before had so many offers, received so many prizes, and pleased so many people. The art we create is generally considered of a high standard and sometimes even life-changing. And we earn plenty of money from it. That’s what it’s all about in this world.

The front page of De Standaard, a Flemish newspaper, was recently devoted entirely to art and money. On the return gained from the subsidies invested in the Flemish arts sector. Art gets on the front page when money comes into it.

The writers on this newspaper thought the arts sector wasn’t doing too badly. So, even Flemish journalists have finally come to realise this.

(For those abroad: note the word ‘Flemish’ in the above. In Belgium there is no such thing as a Belgian newspaper or Belgian politicians, nor Belgian parties nor Belgian art. On the other hand, Flanders and Wallonia only exist because Belgium exists. If you grasp this contradiction you will grasp the stupidity rampant in this country).

So our little worldwide company is doing well. Until we received that letter from Benjamin Verdonck. Another Flemish artistic creator. And someone close to my heart. A naive jester in a kingdom that’s too small. He wants to create one big green collective work of art in 2012. I quite agree. A little teasing: saving the planet by turning ultra-nationalist. No more travel. Showing only the arts made here in our region. No more trips by air. No globalised sense of peace but acts of tribal violence. Everyone for themselves, in their own back garden. Away with Eurotrash and intercontinental cooperation. No more sets that have to be transported by polluting lorries. No energy-devouring lighting designs. Making theatre in a bare space with just a single light bulb and a performer. It’s alright with me. In fact I’m one of the best at it. And at the same time we would be rid of those irritating djeembs. Art is ecology, art is politics, art is anything but art. After all, Schiller is too ill to turn over in his grave.

In the same way as religion sold well for a time, and every show that had anything to do with the Koran or the Bible sold like organic hot cakes, now it’s ‘ecology’. No electricity. No set. What happens onstage isn’t important. It is ecologically sound, so it’s good, and what’s more it’s cheap!

All into the darkness together. And if you commit an error, against ecological law, you are punished. Such as howling like a dog three times. Every evening for a month. Penance. We’ll always be Catholic and Flemish. Everything’s going very well for Needcompany and we are still green behind the ears, which we close off with the used earplugs we have collected on intercontinental air trips so as not to hear our own crying.

All’s well with Needcompany, but it should be better. Beauty is a freedom that we have to learn to see.

All the best,

JL
THE ART OF ENTERTAINMENT – GERMAN VERSION
Jan Lauwers
A Needcompany/Burgttheater production.
23, 24, 25 April 2011
Akademietheater, Vienna
Tickets + 43 51 444 4145
18, 19, 20 August 2011
Internationales Sommerfestival Kampnagel, Hamburg
+49 40 270 949 49

THE ART OF ENTERTAINMENT – INTERNATIONAL VERSION
Jan Lauwers
A Needcompany/Burgttheater production.
21, 22 May 2011
Teatre Lliure, Barcelona
Tickets + 34 932 289 747
15, 16, 17, 18 September 2011
Kaaitheater, Brussels
Tickets +32 2 201 59 59

THE DEER HOUSE
Jan Lauwers
11 May 2011: Isabella’s room
12 May 2011: The Lobster Shop
13 May 2011: The Deer House

Tickets +33 4 73 290 814

ISABELLA’S ROOM
Jan Lauwers
5-6 August 2011
Tampere Theatre Festival, Tampere
Tickets +35 8 3 223 1066

SAD FACE / HAPPY FACE
Three stories on Human Nature
A TRIOLOGY
Part 1: Isabella’s room (the past)
Part 2: The Lobster Shop (the future)
Part 3: The Deer House (the present)

Jan Lauwers

THE HOUSE OF OUR FATHERS – PERFORMANCES
Jan Lauwers

THE HOUSE OF OUR FATHERS – INSTALLATION
Jan Lauwers
3 – 12 June 2011
16. Internationale Schillertage, Kunsthalle Mannheim
Tickets +49 621 1680 150

AIR ANTWERPEN VZW RESIDENCE PROJECT
OHNO COOPERATION & NEEDCOMPANY

May to September 2011
With: Michael Filir, Fritz Welch, Rachel Lowther, Nicolas Field, Jaime Fenelly, Pontogor, Roberta Gigante, Idan Hayosh, Maarten Seghers, Jan Lauwers et al.
27 August 2011
Concert by OHNO COOPERATION, Peessseye and guest musicians.

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www.facebook.com/needcompany

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
With the support of the Flemish authorities.

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INFO@NEEDCOMPANY.ORG
WWW.NEEDCOMPANY.ORG

also highly enthusiastic. At the end of May it will be on in Bialystok, in June for five nights in Vienna (in collaboration between ImPulsTanz and the Burgtheater) and at the end of September in The Hague.

Isabella’s room. The Lobster Shop and The Deer House are still touring and in the next few months will be at several venues in France, as well as at Tampere in Finland and Mons in Belgium.