

**P E R F O**  
THE BRUSSELS BIENNIAL  
**R M A**  
OF  
**T I K**  
PERFORMANCE ART  
**17**

**BUILDING CONVERSATION**  
**(LOTTE VAN DEN BERG**  
**EN DAAN 'T SAS)**  
**THINKING TOGETHER**  
**THE AGONISTIC CONVERSATION**  
**CONVERSATION WITHOUT WORDS**

**K A A I**  
**T H E A T E R**

performance • in English  
meeting point: Varkensmarkt / Rue du marché du porcs

**Choose your conversation**

***Thinking Together***

25/03 • 15:00

***The Agonistic Conversation***

25/03 • 15:00

***Conversation Without Words***

26/03 • 20:00

De Nederlandse theatermaker Lotte van den Berg en beeldend kunstenaar Daan 't Sas bouwen met *Building Conversation* een ruimte om tot een uitwisseling van perspectieven te komen. Ze tonen en doorlopen de conflicten in onze samenleving, zonder ze glad te strijken of te radicaliseren. Geïnspireerd door gesprekstechnieken uit verschillende culturen verheffen ze het gesprek tot een kunstwerk. Vanuit hun nieuwsgierigheid naar de ontmoeting, bouwen ze aan een repertoire van verschillende mogelijkheden en vormen om tijd, ruimte en woorden te delen.

• Lotte van den Berg gebruikt theater om verhoudingen tussen mensen zichtbaar te maken. In de plaats van iets waar je gewoon vanop afstand naar kijkt, benadrukt haar werk het leven als activiteit. Eerder toonden we in het Kaaithater *Pleinvees* (Het Theaterfestival 2013), *Cold Turkey* (2010) en *Braakland* (2008).

**“IF WE DON'T DEFEND LIFE IT BECOMES WITHOUT VALUE”**

interview with Lotte van den Berg by Emma Sumner during the Malta Festival and one month after Brexit (The Double Negative, 15 July 2016)

**Making theatre that questions our passive roles in society, politics, and life itself, Lotte van den Berg is no stranger to provocative arts production. She speaks to Emma Sumner about violence, Brexit, and getting the public more involved in making...**

**As a director, you have a reputation for pushing the formal structures of theatre to produce work which borders on the social/artistic research event. This is the case for many of the productions which have formed this year's festival, particularly *Building Conversations*, which brings the spectator into the production. Which is also relevant to Brexit and the need for a conversation in-between the yes or no. Could you explain a little more about how you came to develop this series of productions and what you hope they will achieve?**

It was three years ago in the summer of 2013 when we started developing this project around the idea of participation. I noticed around me that conversation had become a booming business; both at a grassroots level but also within top-down initiatives. For example, politicians wanting us to look after our sick relatives misuse this idea of participation to avoid having to deal with it themselves. We had seen a lot of artistic projects that were dealing with participation, but it felt false, as the concept was always already defined, so the participator was just a person and not a collaborator. It was at this point that I wondered what the result would be if an artist asked a participator to take co-responsibility for the work, and it was from here that *Building Conversations* started to grow.

We held a 10-day public brainstorm at a festival in the Netherlands, which simply asked people to respond to the question: If we were to make a work together next year, what would it be? People didn't feel there was a need to create new work as we already have so much, but the fact that it was being discussed was valuable to them. It was then that we started to explore conversation techniques and how we could invite audiences in and take responsibility for introducing them to new forums for communication.

**As a spectator at your production *Wasteland*, which is set in an open field, I felt a real sense of helplessness in perhaps the same way as I might when I see terrible tragedies on the news; but because of the distance, there is nothing I can constructively do to help. What is it you want the audience to take away?**

When watching *Wasteland*, the audience is unable to influence what they are witnessing, which I think is a situation we are constantly in. Like you say, you can watch the news but because of distance we cannot do anything. We know about Syria; we know our computers and phones are made by people who do not have good working conditions. We know so much, but what do we do with this information, how can we turn this into useful action which has some potential? We are in this state of helplessness constantly. On the content of *Wasteland*, you see people who have stopped defending life. They take life as it comes and act like animals; they kill each other, but no one is taking responsibility; [it is] showing life without value. It questions if we should accept death and violence in our lives, while highlighting that if we don't defend life it becomes without value. How do we accept death as part of life but still fight for life? It's a difficult paradoxical situation we are all in.

**We have already talked a little about Brexit and how *Idiom* (the festival theme of Malta Festival 2016) speaks quite heavily about the issues behind what has recently happened in the UK. I wonder if you could talk a little further about your thoughts on this and how things can move forward?**

I think it is really important that we stand opposite each other and we really share in direct dialogue that we do not agree. I do think it is important to acknowledge there are extreme sides, but to also think about the other questions about how we want to engage with one another in society, and if we want to be part of other societies. I think it is important to create a field where these two extreme voices can live together.

For example, if England plays against the Netherlands, you can want England to win but you have to realise that the game only happens when there are two sides. It's not either or; both extremes are there and we have to acknowledge them and create a game — which is what democracy should be — where both of these voices are part of the dialogue.

It's not about choosing one side which makes the Referendum bullshit; it should be about how we engage with Europe, as if you are out of Europe, you still have to have a relationship. What do the people want that to be?

## CREDITS

**concept, development, realisation** Lotte van den Berg & Daan 't Sas | **collaboration** Peter Aers, Andreas Bachmair, Ewout Bomert, Bart Capelle, Antwan Cornelissen, Katja Dreyer, Adelijn van Huis, Floor van Leeuwen, Dennis Molendijk, Jonathan Offereins, Bart van Rosmalen a.o. | **production** Third Space | **co-production** Muncher Kammerspiele | **support** Fonds Podiumkunsten, SNS Reaalfonds, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunsten, Fonds 21 | **received a Creation aid from** IN\_SITU network in the frame of the META project funded with support from the European Commission (DGEAC – Culture programme) with coproducers København Internationale Teater and Ctyri dny, Prague, Stichting Terschellings Oerol Festival.



Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

Kaaitheater is supported by

