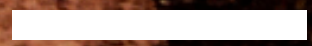
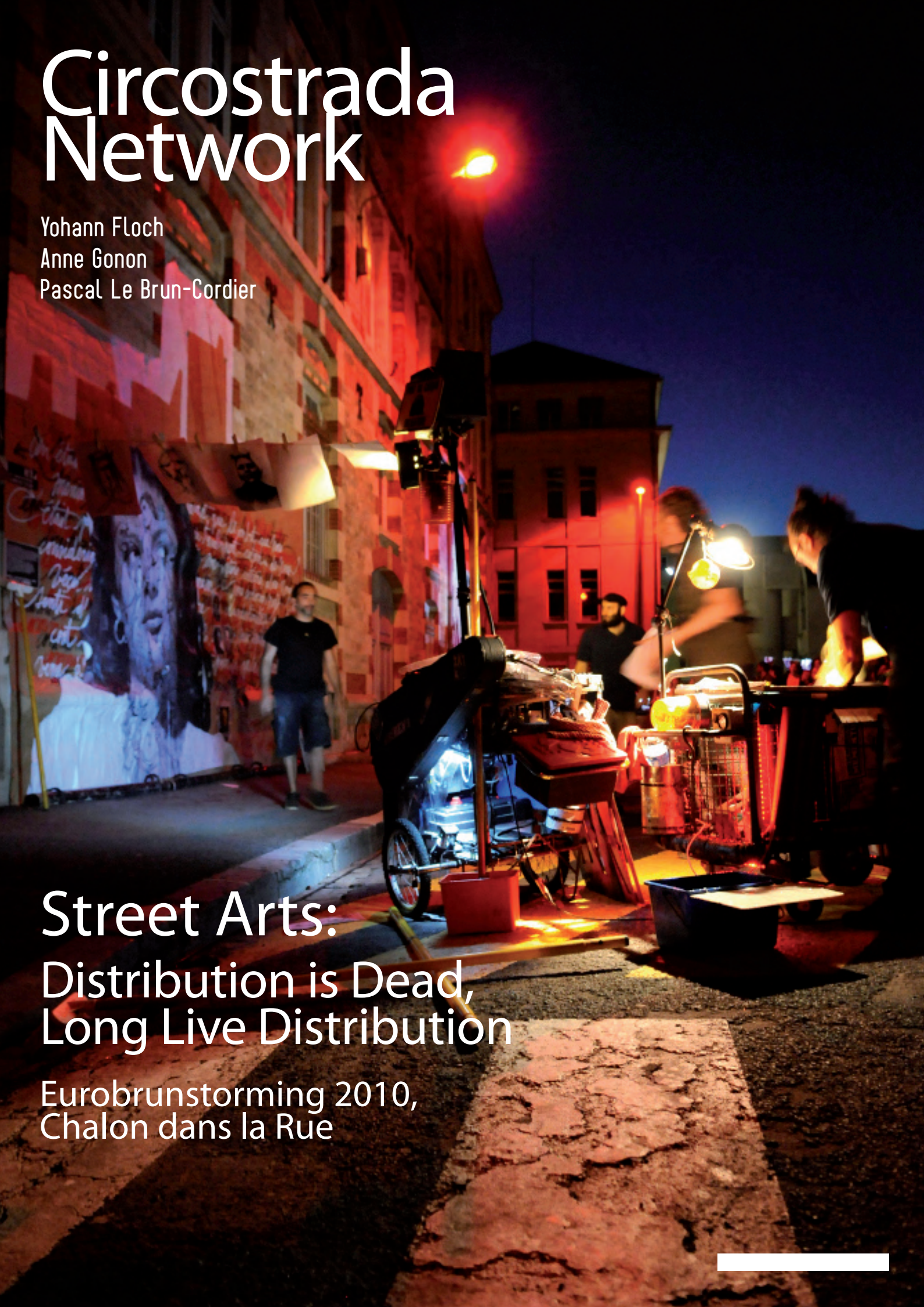


Circostrada Network

Yohann Floch
Anne Gonon
Pascal Le Brun-Cordier

Street Arts:
Distribution is Dead,
Long Live Distribution

Eurobrunstorming 2010,
Chalon dans la Rue



Street Arts: Distribution is Dead, Long Live Distribution

Eurobrunstorming 2010, Chalon dans la Rue

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Introduction

The distribution landscape of the street arts in Europe is evolving. Other spaces of contact with the public are being developed alongside festivals, thus diversifying the time and conditions of distribution. With new programmers, the crossing-over of networks, year-long distribution or presence in rural settings, the spirit of the street is emerging everywhere and is showing great innovation. Certain companies are even turning away from distributing shows so as to more solidly establish themselves within territories and “infuse” their creation work as closely as possible with the populations at hand.

To better understand the shifts taking place in this distribution landscape, HorsLesMurs launched, in 2010, a study and discussion construction site that has taken on many different forms: data collection on distribution, professional gatherings, published reports and the creation of a space for storing information... This crosscutting construction site has been enriched through the recording of a radio show and the publication of a special dossier in number 18 of the magazine *Stradda*, entitled “The Street Invents New Stages.”

The Eurobrunchstorming, gatherings organised for 23 – 24 July 2010 during Chalon dans la rue in Chalon sur Saône (France), by Circostrada Network and HorsLesMurs in partnership with the festival, set the foundation for this thematic construction site and raised the major discussion topics. Presented under the provocative title, “Distribution is Dead, Long Live Distribution!”, they questioned the pertinence of the current distribution models in Europe and emphasized new approaches of intervention and creation within these territories. This document presents a synthesis of exchanges and discussions in the form of three articles by Anne Gonon and Pascal Le Brun-Cordier, who were moderators for these gatherings, and Yohann Floch, coordinator of Circostrada Network.

We hope you enjoy the reading and invite you to discover the other online publications or resources (www.horslesmurs.fr) produced by HorsLesMurs as part of this construction site on street arts distribution.

Stéphane Simonin
Director of HorsLesMurs

What kind of distribution for the street arts in France and in Europe?

Anne **Gonon**

HorsLesMurs, studies and research manager

The supremacy of festivals (the database of HorsLesMurs counts 199 of them in France in 2010), little integration among outside networks (theatre, cross-disciplinary contemporary creation festivals, performance seasons, etc.), an imbalance between supply and demand, contexts with a festive ambiance, or one of simple entertainment... Distribution has long been a subject of debate for the street arts in France, as if it posed a problem that was intrinsic to the sector. The creation of networks of festivals that have, since the 90's, held a monopoly on the presentation of shows, plays a crucial role in the current French situation. While the street arts sector was constructing its own means of distribution, it also seems to have shut itself off in a cage... and hardly a gilded one at that. On the European scale, distribution has also been densely organised around festivals. Far from being a simple detail, the question of distribution is a central one in that it brings together three major issues: companies' budgets, creation forms and ways of coming into contact with the public.

This gloomy overview calls for some nuance. Some long-term changes have shifted the lines over the past ten years. First of all, it seems that the supremacy of festivals has been reduced in favour of other distribution contexts and, most notably, in favour of performance seasons. A study carried out in spring of 2010 by HorsLesMurs, and including the participation of 58 French street arts companies, has shown this (see box). While the results must be handled with care given the small number of respondents, it seems that 26% of performances carried out by the companies involved took place in the context of a performance season. Festivals and special events are still far in front, making up 54% of performances. But this substantial presence of distribution contexts outside of special events should be taken into consideration. We then notice that companies that declared that they had a "good level of distribution" in 2009 tour through different networks, going beyond the street arts circle. These two remarks are related, since performance season distribution is often the sign of a certain level of integration into cross-disciplinary contexts. Performance seasons dedicated exclusively to the street arts are small in number today, although they are developing more and more. While other circuits of the performing arts, and especially the so-called "generalist" circuit (national stages, municipal theatres, etc.), are slow to branch out, they do seem to be taking the first steps toward doing so, especially with the on-going work in local networks. Furthermore, the development of cultural projects that are called "local", putting the contextual dimension and the relationship with an audience at the heart of the process, is in part beneficial to street artists who share these on-the-ground concerns. For companies that tour abroad, however, festivals remain the prime mode of distribution. 91% of performances outside of France by companies participating in the study took place in the context of a festival or special event.

Lastly, another shift in this landscape of French distribution: the street arts field has opened up to artists and forms that hail from

other sectors of contemporary creation and take place outdoors. This movement not only includes dance (from Julie Desprairies to Nathalie Pernette and Willi Dorner), but also theatrical or visual proposals from environmental theatre or performance art (Dries Verhoeven, Roger Bernat, Antoine Defoort, the Compagnie Marius, to name just a few of these artists). This final evolution is partly linked to the great influence that European networks (PECA, now ZEPA, In Situ, Meridians, etc.) have had on the street arts sector for over ten years now in some cases. While from the French perspective one may at times tend to emphasise the benefits of these networks for foreign partners, who also benefit from the experience and skills of French participants (France remains the European country where the street arts are the most structured and supported), we must not neglect the influence these European exchanges have had in encouraging open-mindedness among French programmers. The distribution of these foreign performers, which has taken root over the past ten years even if there is still progress to be made, doubtlessly contributes to the renewal of aesthetics and to the breaking down of barriers between different practices from within the Hexagon. It also helps to partially level the playing field, which tends to favour the exportation of French productions to our European neighbours.

These long-term changes are significant and they contribute to placing the street arts sector in a sudden turn-around that is not to be missed. However, this turn-around is not an easy one to manoeuvre since, in the current context of the economic crisis, the noise is more alarmist than ever: bitter fee negotiations, a drop in the number of contracts, overly pressured production and distribution managers, artists in a state of flux... When asked about their take on the current situation, companies responding to HorsLesMurs' questionnaire say that they are under great stress: programmers with cold feet, late decisions, last-minute cancellations, the unstable climate... The economic contingencies that programmers must face have a dire effect on companies at the end of their rope... It is the reign of incertitude. The situation was already difficult in most European countries where funding was less available than in France, but it promises to get more strained in the months to come.

What are we to think today about the festival model of distribution in the street arts? Is it still relevant? Are festivals truly to blame? Are they being blamed already? What new paths can still be explored? What circuits can we develop to create a higher level of circulation of works in France and in Europe? The gathering "What kind of distribution for the street arts in France and in Europe?" was an opportunity to ask these questions and, perhaps, to envision the beginnings of an answer. The floor was given to Katrien Verwilt, co-director of Metropolis, in Copenhagen, as well as to Claude Guinard, director of Tombées de la Nuit, in Rennes, two programmers who refuse to organise "street art festivals." The floor was also given to Marik Wagner, who favours the title of "project aid" instead of "head of distribution" (see box for information on parti-

A study on the distribution of French street shows

HorsLesMurs has released a study on distribution, intended for street arts companies established in France. The study was in the form of a questionnaire to be completed online from March to June 2010. 58 companies responded to this questionnaire, which focused on the year 2009. As there were only a small number of responses, the results must be considered with prudence. They do, however, provide interesting pieces of information regarding the status of street art companies.

- The average number of shows available per company is 5. 62% of the companies state that they have at least 3 shows available and 26% have over 6.
- The average number of performances is 52 per company (with or without royalty contracts, in France or abroad), but this average hides significant disparities. The minimum is 2 performances, while the maximum is 301. There is a correlation between the number of performances and the number of shows available. Among the 7 companies that had over 100 performances in 2009, 3 had between 2 and 5 shows available, 2 between 10 and 12 and 2 between 25 and 30 – all small-form, mostly musical.
- 88% of performances (with or without royalty contracts) by the 58 companies took place in France, 10% in the European Economic Area (EEA) and 2% abroad, outside of the EEA. 31 companies (53%) had at least one performance in the EEA and 8 companies (14%) abroad, outside of the EEA.
- When asked about distribution contexts in France, companies say that they have had 54% of their performances as part of festivals or special events, 26% in a performance season, 9% in a socio-cultural context, 5% in a commercial context and 6% in some other kind of context. Again, we find considerable disparities since certain companies gave nearly all of their performances as part of a festival or special event, while others performed mostly within performance seasons. The preponderance of distribution in festivals is attested to by this study, but we also find a shift in favour of performance seasons.
- A large payroll rarely corresponds to a large number of performances, but rather to the presence of permanent employees in a company and/or in companies touring in "large forms", thus implying a large number of performers (as the two are often linked). Certain companies with a large number of performances do not necessarily have a large payroll. They mostly distribute forms that include a small number of performers and do not have permanent employees.

cipants). They were invited as on-the-ground decision makers who promote cross-disciplinarity and the breaking down of barriers. They are "outside of the field" and yet they are closely linked with many street artists.

Connecting artistic and economic mindsets

The common point of these three guests: the focus on the artistic, the need to put in place human and financial resources and to limit economic constraints in favour of the artistic. Thus, for Marik Wagner, her job consists of striking a balance, in collaboration with the organiser, between "three essential elements: the programmer's project, which hosts the audience and the non-audience, meaning people who we will come across on the ground, and the artistic process." Claude Guinard, who claims to be a "mediator more than a programmer," also places his focus on the artistic. "Artistic creations are the backbone of Tombées de la Nuit. The initial question is always, 'what artists do we want to work with?' Our role is to look at the map of the city and to ask ourselves, 'what is the best place for this proposal?' We thereby address the questions of territory and relationship with the audience. At no time do I say to myself, 'I need a show for the town hall square, or a show for the square at the Parlement de Bretagne...' And I don't have a quota saying that I must have so many street artists, so many installations and so many musicians. Everything is open-ended and it's the artistic side that kicks it all off."

Katrien Verwilt, at Metropolis, takes the same stance. The profound inscription of artists in the city being essential to the project, the artistic dimension is closely linked to consideration of the context. This way of thinking carries on as far as the commission and production of specific projects. "We create, together with the artists, productions for certain neighbourhoods or spaces that are not necessarily easy places, like the square in front of town hall. On the contrary, instead we pick difficult places. What can we do in this kind of neighbourhood? With this public? How can we encourage residents who never go to this particular neighbourhood to do so and to see it in a new way? Sometimes, we just buy pre-existing shows, but we also take into consideration the show's implementation in the city."

This virtuous outlook must not make us forget certain ominous constraints. Festival programming brings about a formatting of creative works, as if the artists, whether consciously or not, met a certain number of expectations that they assume to be held by programmers, thus imposing constraints onto their work (duration, audience capacity, number of performers, technical demands, etc.) in the hopes of selling their show... This turns out to be coherent thinking from an economic standpoint since touring with a show is certainly the goal of producing it. How can we alleviate the pressure exerted by this virtuous (or vicious) circle that pushes companies to create artistic formats that appease economic ones? This same squaring of the circle leads programmers to look at shows with a certain economic checklist in mind (cost of royalties, transportation and lodging fees, cost of audience reception, etc.). While this economic line of thinking cannot be neglected, how might we prevent it from resulting in a standardisation of proposals?

On this point, Marik Wagner evokes "the essential notion of taking risks." "Is creation an irrepressible need? What am I trying to say? To whom am I speaking? Not to which programmer, but to which audience?" These are, according to her, the first questions that an artist must be able to answer. Next, he or she must "find the language in which one might be able to interact with our different partners." The "partners," therefore, also have a responsibility. It is a responsi-

lity that Claude Guinard assumes entirely. "If, in the current context, we do not take any risks, then we are failing in our responsibility, especially in the Rennes region, where there is an immense field of possibilities. This notion of taking risks is an essential one for us." In Copenhagen, Katrien Verwilt's responsibility appears even greater, since Metropolis remains to this day the only rallying platform for Danish artists working in the public space. "When we began, a lot of artists came to us. They are looking for opportunities to create. They also need to work with European artists with more experience, so they can be inspired by their approaches and learn through contact with them." Metropolis is thus contributing to the development of an artistic field in Denmark. Artistic demands and risk-taking are not empty words, but participants recognise that it is not always easy to hold oneself to them. Marik Wagner considers that "it would be pretentious to say that we escape all kinds of formatting since, in spite of our efforts, certain things show through." Claude Guinard adds that he could provide counter arguments regarding risk-taking at Tombées de la Nuit: "If we look at the 2010 season, we can wonder if hosting the new creations of 26000 couverts and of OpUS can still be considered risk-taking."

Let's talk "money"

"I am not from the sector, but I already had difficulty finding my bearings between those who sell and those who buy... Now, they tell us that programmers are no longer "programmers" but "transporters" and that "distribution heads" are "project aids"... I'm slightly worried. Is it because there is no more money that we don't even bring it up anymore? This semantic shift is interesting to me. Of course your function is to serve as an aid, but it's also to sell or to buy..." This comment from an audience member leads us right to a

discussion of the current financial situation. Claude Guinard points out that "this economic issue is present in all domains of the performing arts. Small music production companies are facing the same problems" as street art companies. "Of course there is a commercial relationship. I'm not calling that into question," he adds. "The context is very tight financially and naturally that comes into play in our exchanges and our discussions with companies. However, it is important not to get into bargaining." It is up to the programmer to adjust their vision so as to strike the best possible balance. The 2010 version of Tombées de la Nuit was shortened by two days compared to 2009. This was not due to a reduction in the artistic budget, but rather to the costs of converting the public space (especially in matters of security), which are far from negligible. Nor does Marik Wagner deny that the commercial aspect of the sale of a show is important, but she refuses to make the financial relationship the central one. As far as the difficult climate that she has noticed for over 18 months now and considers particularly harsh since January 2010, she remarks that it led her to "change her way of thinking" and her position regarding programmers. While she used to envision a "face to face" relationship, she now sees it as "side by side." "I am not facing them, in a question-answer relationship. We all need to get on the same side, to look together where we want to go so that we can arrive together." For Katrien Verwilt, this cooperative mindset among several partners is essential and is part of the Metropolis project. It is one of the project's challenges to include the collaboration of artists, organisers and architects, since each possesses unique resources and codes. Concretely speaking, these discussions between companies and programmers can lead to scheduling changes that might allow for more logical travel itineraries, adaptations of installation sites so as to reduce surveillance costs, the creation of specific research and funding projects, etc.

Series and tours: a few good collaborative network practices

When talking economics, notions of series and tours quickly enter into the discussion. The festival season primarily takes place from April to September. Companies paradoxically find themselves having to turn down performance dates because offers are, for the most part, scheduled during summer weekends. Companies are also often called upon for just one or two performances, which generates longer and greater transportation time and costs that are scarcely made up for. Tombées de la Nuit tries to book a minimum of four performances. Metropolis tries to collaborate with other organisers to share the costs. Festivals almost systematically book French street or circus companies, which can at times generate exorbitant transportation costs. So Katrien Verwilt tries to work with companies to organise tours that include the other Northern European countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland...) or Belgium or the Netherlands, which are on the way to Denmark. This idea of creating tours "still needs to be explored in France," according to one company administrator. "The benefits are numerous. The streamlining of resources allows organisers to save money and, artistically speaking, it's a wonderful experience for companies." Indeed, Marik Wagner emphasises the need to work in tours as much as possible, "for economic reasons, as well as for ecological concerns and to avoid overtiring the team." She remarks that it is sometimes necessary to "be patient" before going to perform for a programmer at the other end of France. But she adds that these tours have today become difficult to organise due to the overall atmosphere of uncertainty. On the question of streamlining resources, Katrien Verwilt calls attention to the purpose of Euro-

Marik Wagner

Project aid
(Atelier Lefeuve et André, 2 rien merci, Opéra Pagai)

It was in Annonay, with the first edition of the Festival de la Manche, that Marik Wagner discovered the street arts in 1988 and was overtaken by their "way of calling out to a public." As early as the following year, she joined the voluntary programming committee and became the administrator for the Albédo company at its very beginnings, in 1994. Starting in 1999, she worked intermittently with different teams. She participated in the first preparatory workshop of FAI AR (Advanced Itinerant Street Arts Learning Programme) in 2002, which provided an opportunity for her to formulate, as the result of insight gathered over the course of several years, her own stance within the profession, while also clarifying her outlook on the profession along with its on-going changes. She then adopted the title of "cultural project aid" and chose not to align herself with just one company. She has collaborated with the Atelier Lefeuve et André and 2 rien merci, as well as with Opéra Pagai on intermittent projects alongside the permanent team. She is a member of the pedagogical committee of Illusion et Macadam and has also been involved with the Clowns Without Borders association for the past 11 years.

Claude Guinard, director

Les Tombées de la Nuit (Rennes)

In 2003, after twenty years of existence under the aegis of the Office of Tourism, Les Tombées de la Nuit became an independent association under the law of 1901. It was at this date that Claude Guinard took over the association's management, with Philippe Kauffman of Brussels serving as an artistic consultant. Les Tombées de la Nuit organised Sons Publics in July and Réveillons-nous! in the winter. While music is particularly present in Sons Publics, the festival is characterised by a multi-disciplinary programme, exploring the "covered" and the "discovered." Les Tombées de la Nuit does not have a space of its own and thus occupies any space it can in Rennes (from the Parc du Thabor to the Place du Parlement de Bretagne, or the conference room of a Crédit Agricole bank branch or of the Opera House), collaborating whenever possible with other cultural structures of the city. The association also includes an on-going artistic accompaniment as well as many cultural activities intended for all walks of life in Rennes. As the Breton capital is rich with structures and artistic and cultural initiatives, Les Tombées de la Nuit has taken on the mission of "exploring the niches" that are not yet so fortunate, by giving priority to the space of performance and to the relationship with the audience.

www.lestombeedelanuit.com

pean networks, which allow for the communal use of production and distribution resources. This way of working in a network can also function on the regional level, given the development of street arts distribution networks over the past few years. "Networks of festivals are interesting," according to Paco Bialek, the distribution head of several companies, "because they allow companies to organise tours in certain regions. But since festivals are pinned down to certain dates, this is less of a possibility. When network partners work in performance seasons and are therefore more flexible in their distribution period, the number of solutions for touring in a logical way increases. This is the example of 'En rue libre', which brings together nine structures in the Midi-Pyrénées region and enables the commissioning of companies from very far away for a series of sometimes about ten performances. These are examples to follow. They allow us to take a new look at the current modalities of distribution..."

This kind of collaboration also provides an opportunity to introduce other cultural decision makers to art in the public space. For example, Tombées de la Nuit collaborated with Champs Libre (organisation bringing together the Musée de Bretagne, the Espace des Sciences and the Bibliothèque centrale in Rennes) in 2008 to commission the choreographer Julie Desprairies, who created a proposal for four performers and 155 dancers, visual artists and musicians from the Rennes region. Companies may also take the lead in the breaking down of barriers and the promotion of transversality. Marik Wagner thus accompanied the Opéra Pagai in Avignon in 2009 for the show 80% de réussite. "We wanted to meet stage directors and directors of national performance spaces to show them another kind of theatrical work, to get their feedback, to dialogue with them about what could be done in their own space and given their audience

attendance... This crossover, this transversality, is tireless, long-term work, and requires some convincing. You need time to be on the ground and to get into discussions. I think that we must continue to create new openings and fresh interest; to incite people's curiosity." To ensure the streamlining of resources, which is the only thing that will allow us to continue accompanying artists in their process, to create innovative new ways of producing and distributing works, and to encourage a greater level of commitment to the most audacious artistic approaches - inter-network cooperation in France and throughout Europe seems more appropriate than ever.

Katrien Verwilt, co-director

Københavns Internationale Teater,
Metropolis Biennale (Copenhagen)

The particularity of KIT, created 30 years ago, is that it does not have a space of its own. Its mission is to present performances in Copenhagen or in its surrounding areas. KIT mainly develops summer projects through festivals. In 2007, the KIT team, inspired by the concept of "creative cities", and by the influence of cities on the contemporary Western world, chose to focus on the urban reality and on the role that artists must play in the development of cities. This marked the creation of Metropolis Biennale 2007-2017. On even-numbered years, Metropolis Lab brings together artists, architects, urban planners and scholars for discussion seminars, while workshops and residencies provide the opportunity to prepare artistic projects commissioned for the festival, which is scheduled on odd-numbered years. Metropolis's programme is decidedly contextual, cross-disciplinary and international. KIT produces or co-produces certain shows and sometimes commissions projects created specifically for a neighbourhood, with some of them being interactive. While in Denmark creation in public space remains underdeveloped and under-supported, Metropolis constitutes a crucial platform for Danish artists. On even-numbered years KIT also organises an international contemporary circus festival in August.

<http://cph-metropolis.dk/en>
www.kit.dk

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What kind of infusion for the street arts in France and Europe?

Pascal **Le Brun-Cordier**

Associate Professor, director of the Masters Degree programme in Cultural Projects in the Public Space
Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne

What do artists do when they are not touring a show? Some adopt an "infusion" mindset and install themselves, on a long-term basis, in one territory, creating custom-made projects. Others imagine on-going creations that are composed episode by episode. How are these projects developed? How are they accompanied? What is their economy? What do they provoke? In what way are they an alternative to the traditional distribution of performing arts in the public space?

We have decided to approach these questions metaphorically: the artistic and cultural practices being referred to here seem to be best captured by the notion of "infusion." A few artists and cultural actors have already made this term a part of their lexicon. We have also mentioned it to others who consider it to be relevant and useful for relating their work.

Before offering a few illustrations of what is included in this artistic infusion, let us consider the conditions that make it possible. What criteria allow us to distinguish a process of infusion from a more conventional residency? How can we avoid a "diluting" of the notion of infusion, since an overly eager and superficial use of the term would lead to confusion, as has happened these past few years with the notion of residency (cf. Anne Quentin, "Résidences, le flou artistique", *La Scène*, n°48, June 2008)?

Beyond their diversity (of context, result and means...) the so-called infusion projects have a few characteristics in common, which are widely emphasized by those who conceive them or accompany them:

A unique operating mode

Whereas, in the traditional artistic pattern, we can observe three distinct and successive sequences – 1. creation > 2. production > 3. distribution – , infusion approaches mix these three dimensions into one single sequence. Where distribution appears to be a system pointed toward the production of a final and finished product existing independently of its context, infusion can be defined as a situation created to facilitate the creation or the transformation of a place by an artistic object (device or process), which is itself liable to be modified by this context.

The need to "take the time"

There can be no infusion without a long period of time. Most of the presented projects involve a lead-up period, installation, presence on-site and at least a 2-week first encounter period. In certain cases, the projects take place over several months or even years. But it is not simply a question of having "more" time: the very nature of this time seems to be different.

An important human presence

These projects suppose a large commitment on the part of the "aides," entirely unlike what is asked of them for the simple distribution of a show. An artistic infusion requires regular presence right next to the artists, an ability to negotiate with the involved partners, as well as an ability to explain the approach and to focus attention on the artistic process and its many and often diffuse effects, more so than on a single, isolated result. This level of support and this great investment of time come with a cost and infusion projects require budgets that are often quite substantial.

Go with the way of the world

The infusing artist seems to us to be close to the Chinese strategies analysed by the philosopher and sinologist François Julien. "In the West, efficiency has been seen since Ancient Greece as being the implementation of necessary means to arrive at an end. Things are entirely different in Chinese thought, where one is supposed to go along with the movement of things, to make oneself one with the circumstances. (...) Going with the way of things and of the world and opening oneself to their potential: the effect is contained in the given situations or inscribed in events." (François Julien, *Traité de l'Efficacité*, Le Livre de Poche, 2002)

Wildworks Company (Cornwall)

Bill Mitchell, artistic director of Wildworks (www.wildworks.biz), was one of the meeting's three guests. The publication dedicated to his work by the publisher L'Entretiens (*Landscape Theatre / Théâtre de paysage, Le Voyage d'Orphée en Europe*, a publication coordinated by Savine Raynaud, from the Carnets de Rue collection, L'Entretiens, 2008) allows us to understand how this "site specific" landscape theatre was developed. The commission given to Wild Works by the Fabriques in Progress network (PECA – today extended by the ZEP network) enabled the company to create *Souterrain* in several locations, in France and in England. By their unique specificities, each of the seven sites influenced the performance of the famous *Underworld*: the park of Bois-Petit and the psychiatric hospital in Sotteville-lès-Rouen, a small village near Brighton, a primary school in Hastings, a former department store in Colchester, the historic citadel in Amiens, a Chartreuse from the sixteenth century along an old miner's residence in Gosnay, an abandoned nickel mine in Cornwall.

Each time, "the script blends into the landscape and is enriched by the specificities of partners, by the space itself, by the people who live there, by their imagination and daily lives... The process, led by Bill Mitchell, generated a new variation on the myth of Orpheus that is both unique and universal. The more specific one is, the more one is universal."

Definition

Let's open the dictionary, pull out the definition and specify the meaning that we would like to give to the term "infusion" in the artistic field.

Infuse

/in-'fyüz/ transitive verb. From latin *infundere*: to soak, to be soaked.

1. (Cooking): to steep in liquid (as water) without boiling so as to extract the soluble constituents.
2. Administer or inject by infusion – "According to fable, Medea infused new blood into the body of Aeson."
3. To cause to be permeated with something (as a principle or quality) that alters usually for the better "infuse the team with confidence."
4. Formerly a synonym for transfuse – "He received a blood infusion."
5. (Art) A creative strategy in which artists install themselves within a territory over a certain period of time (several weeks, months or years) so as to "create with" the landscape, residents, history, current events... Infusion is often a reciprocal process: artists infuse the environment as much as they are "infused" by it. Artistic infusion takes time, patience, available partners, substantial funding and a sense of porosity with the milieu. Infusion opens up dynamic artistic and cultural perspectives thanks to often subtle and profound ties that it makes possible between artistic objects and processes and an environment – See: *Art Contextuel* (cf. the manifesto of the Polish artist Jan Swidzinski in 1976*, then Paul Ardenne's 2004 essay*); residency, landscape theatre; in situ art; site-specific art...

Other than these accepted meanings, some other words and verbs can be found in the lexicon of artistic infusion: collect, custom-made, immerse (oneself), infiltrate (oneself), make do with, make together, seep (oneself), stride, time, meet, partnership, porosity, walk.

* Jan Swidzinski, *Art contextuel et les choses vont comme elles vont R*, Editions intervention, coll. Inter Editeur, Québec, 1997

** Paul Ardenne, *Un art contextuel : création artistique en milieu urbain, en situation, d'intervention, de participation*, Flammarion, coll. Champs, Paris, 2002

KMK Company (Nangis)

Véronique Pény, the artistic head of the KMK company (www.cie-kmk.org), was the other artist invited to the gathering. In 2010, she began a three-year implantation residency in Nangis, in the Seine-et-Marne region. "We decided to develop a cartography of the city. The idea will be to analyze everyday movement, ritual walks, the way the city is lived in, walked along, physically occupied. This approach will lead to different projects of creation and distribution and increase awareness, shifting the practice of the city into a poetic and imaginary dimension."

This long-term project will be accomplished through an installation within the heart of the city, in a former restaurant, called *Bienvenue chez nous*. "This boutique and its front window will make up an open location of encounters, exchange and exposure, which will echo the work of the company. It is here that a real cartography of the city will be constructed throughout the seasons to commemorate the trace of these footsteps. We are also going to offer installation-shows and *parcour*-shows in public spaces within the city. These surprise interventions will not be advertised to the public beforehand. They will be accomplished with the cooperation of municipal services and will disturb daily life and jostle the city's routine. We will also be developing a large series of cultural activities."

What does this infusion approach bring to the company and to the audience? "First, there is the possibility of a true encounter with a territory, the creation of a relation of exchange, of overlapping perspectives, of experiences and of practices coming out of close collaboration with local structures and strong participation on the part of residents taking possession of the project." This residency is supported by the City of Nangis, DRAC Ile-de-France, the Conseil Général of Seine-et-Marne and of the Ile-de-France region.

In the same spirit, the KMK company developed *Roman Fleuve* a few years ago, which is a growing installation put into place along a river and conceived from objects, texts, sounds and elements from the local collective memory, recycled, distorted, exposed, offering village residents "a pictorial and poetic reading of their familiar landscape." This project was notably presented as part of *Pronomade(s)*, an official performance space for the public arts and Haute-Garonne (cf. our article, "Promenades aux Pronomade(s)", *Cassandra*, number 62, Summer 2005), where Véronique Pény then began, in 2008, a residency project with the photographer François Serveau, extended into 2009 as part of the *Duo de paysage* project.

Les Veillées, HVDZ company (Loos-en-Gohelle)

Les Veillées, developed since 2004 by Guy Alloucherie, director from the HVDZ company (www.hvdz.org), bring the company to install itself in a neighbourhood for 15 to 20 days. During this time "the goal is to use all means possible – circus, dance, theatre, video – to go out and meet people so as to collect testimonies and invent art forms where people feel involved in what is said and what takes place. *Les Veillées* are based on this kind of encounter, including walks along the street and artistic interventions that involve residents in working class neighbourhoods with company employees during our residencies." At the end of this residency period, which takes place mostly in the public space or in places that are not intended for cultural activities, a show is presented to the public.

When interviewed for this article, Guy Alloucherie emphasized the reciprocity within the process. "Infusion, yes. But who is the water and who is the tea? We are the water first. We seep and then we reconstruct." What does this process provoke and what does it allow? "Our presence for two or three weeks in the city with all of the encounters

that we embark on and all the moments that we invent with people, it all has an effect on the make-up of the audience that comes to see the show: it's very diverse."

In the summer of 2010, 28 *Veillées* were created, with partners as diverse as national, regional and municipal performance spaces of medium to small size. The royalties fee is about €20,000, including two or three performances, and to this must be added the transportation and lodging costs for 7 to 8 people for 15 to 20 days of residency. Two separate contracts are drawn up: one royalty contract and one residency contract.

Le Bulb, Pixel 13 (Marseille)

Pixel 13 (www.pixel13.org) is an association of architects who question matters of the environment "in its broadest sense, at many different scales of time, space and action." "For us, the environment is a permanent backdrop for exploring at the crossroads of architecture, image arts, technologies for digital exchange and the performing arts." The object imagined by Pixel 13 to develop this project is *Le Bulb*, an inflatable structure designed for eight simultaneous projections and an atypical performance experience. But, for the HVDZ company, the show offered by this *Bulb* is only the visible part of a residency process that enabled the collective, for a period of ten days, to collect visual and sound materials and to encounter a population and territory.

Presented on the territory of Causses du Quercy, in Chalon-sur-Saône and in Lyon, this project takes place within a process of infusion. *Le Bulb* appears as a sponge, which first absorbs the coded data of a territory and then reconstructs them after they have been analyzed, filtered, recomposed by the collective of architects and artists.

Les Pheuillus, le Phun company (Tournepieu)

Created by Le Phun (www.lephun.net), *Les Pheuillus* are characters full of fallen leaves and installed into a landscape that can be urban (Niort, Toulouse, Champigny-sur-Marne) or rural (in Camargue, Lourde, a small village of the Haute-Garonne) and which they traverse and inhabit for several weeks or even months or years. This "vast statue-like choreography, a troubling reflection of the human condition", is a growing installation that develops with the territory through a process of infusion, or even fusion. *Les Pheuillus* may appear to come out of an embankment, or to graft themselves onto a wall and then, further along, to become one with a tree or candelabra. They are discreet chameleons that melt into the background while they also subtly interrogate it.

At certain moments, actors adjust the perspective of passers-by, telling a story through these poetic presences. During installation or maintenance, the Le Phun team talks with the residents, getting their reactions, collecting or soliciting stories. Developed with the Citron Jaune, the National Street Arts Centre, Marseille 2013 and la Tour du Valat, the Teciverdi festival (city of Niort), Pronomades(s), National Street Arts Centre of Haute-Garonne, *Chemin(s) d'eau* (city of Toulouse), this project decidedly works within the approach of a poetic infusion within a territory.

Other projects... to continue the exploration

Le Bruit du Frigo, Gabi Farage (Bordeaux)

www.bruitdufrigo.com

Collectif EXYZT (notably in Saint-Jean-en-Royans)

www.exyzt.net

Le Parti Poétique, Olivier Darné
(notably in Seine-Saint-Denis)

www.parti-poetique.org

La Mercerie, Michel Jeannès
(notably in Lyon in the La Duchère neighbourhood)

www.lamercerie.eu

Opener, a project conceived and piloted, the Art Et Espace public mission, Art Et Meditation department, the direction of museums of Dunkerque and notably the work of the artist Marie-Noëlle Boutin (see *Man's Land*, a publication by Michel Poivert, Aude Cordonnier and Pascal Le Brun-Cordier, Éditions Filigrane, Paris, 2010)

www.filigranes.com/main.php?act=livres&s=fiche&id=390

Agrafmobile, Malte Martin, in particular the project
Les Ciel de Villetaneuse

www.agrafmobile.net

See the text "Léger tremblement du cadre de ville," which was published in the edition released by Agrafmobile and the city of Villetaneuse at the end of this project.

Thomas Hirschhorn
(in particular in 2004 in Aubervilliers,
as part of the Musée Précaire Albinet)

Le Théâtre Permanent de Gwénaél Morin

archives.leslaboratoires.org/content/view/full/359/lang,fr/

See the gathering-discussion organized by the Masters programme in cultural activities in the public space at Paris 1 in December 2009 at the Sorbonne: <http://masterpcep.over-blog.com/article-rencontre-avec-l-equipe-du-theatre-permanent-de-gwenael-morin--39190025.html>

Women are Heroes, by JR

jr-art.net

See the gathering organized in January 2010 at the Sorbonne: art-espace-public.c.la

Jean Bojko and of the TêAtr'êPROUVêTe in Corbigny, Nièvre

www.theatreprouvette.fr

Guy Bénisty in Pantin

Julie Desprairies, especially at the Centre Pompidou-Metz
and at the Champs Libres in Rennes

www.compagniedesprairies.com

Distribution of street arts: rethinking our models...

Yohann **Floch**

HorsLesMurs, internationales relations manager
Circostrada Network, Coordinator

"French programmers do not travel abroad. They're not curios", "it's very difficult for a foreign company to enter the French market", "festivals host a lot of foreign companies. This isn't the case in France"... Here are a few thoughts often expressed by European companies regarding the French street arts sector. Without analysing whether or not they are justified, we can say that these recurring comments fed into the first discussions when imagining the Eurobrunchstormings at the Chalon dans la Rue festival.

The issue of the distribution of works in the public space is, of course, a central one. This concern is shared by all operators, no matter the country in which they are working and it includes the wellbeing of an economic system that, while often unstable, remains essential for many cultural workers. The international aspect shades this issue with some additional concerns. Indeed, street arts companies expect a great deal from international distribution: beyond the consolidation of their cash flow, it is more often a matter of gaining exposure and recognition that will prove profitable upon return to the country of origin. It is also a matter of testing one's artistic message with different audiences and to take inspiration from this very difference, to learn about other ways of working, other aesthetics and cultures... and to embark on an experience that can be fulfilling on the individual or collective level.

International distribution encourages operators (whether they are festivals that host foreign artists or companies wishing to export their work) to answer a series of at times unsettling questions regarding their deeper motivations. And so it became interesting for us to ask two questions: how can we improve the street arts distribution model as it exists today and why not think of abandoning it altogether?

Do old pipes really give the sweetest smoke?

The production-distribution model most in use within the street arts is a copy of the model put in place by indoor theatre and dance, with its lot of residencies, co-producers and co-distributors, sales documentation, creations, subsidies and marketing tools... In Europe, the support structures are also rarely dedicated to contemporary creation in the public space but are rather conceived for performing arts in the broadest sense. Therefore, projects in the public space have always had difficulty entering into the 'labels' of bureaucracies in charge of cultural affairs. The operators know this all too well. They are the ones who must endlessly explain their distribution process (free entry, spaces not intended for the use of performance, notifying or not notifying the audience, etc.).

This theatre-dance model can sometimes prove to be impractical and, after years of experience and dialogue with local

UK Street Arts and Mainland Europe (Opportunities and barriers to exploiting work from England in the rest of Europe)

Anne Tucker led an instructive study for the Arts Council England that was published in 2005 and that identifies the reasons why English street arts companies were having difficulty distributing their work on the continent. Starting with the observation that there are over 300 festivals dedicated to these forms and that a large part of them regularly invite foreign performers, the study aimed to shed light on the difficulties involved so that Arts Council England might be able to provide strategic solutions for the development of the sector.

Questionnaires were sent out to collect a wide range of information: working budgets, the scale of foreign shows hosted, the role of text and of language, kinds of programming, reimbursement of travel costs, support from governmental agencies providing funds for the purpose of exporting, etc.

Without trying to summarize the results of the study, let's at least mention a few points: 59 festivals out of the 62 surveyed say they have hosted foreign artists, but there is no clear correlation between the funding level and the proportion of international performers included. Also, "the proportion of international companies in festival programmes varies widely, from 10-100%. In general, festivals in France use the lowest proportion of international artists and Belgian and Italian festivals the highest." "Most festival directors travel widely to other festivals to see work (those that do not, are aware that they should, but do not have the resources). The big European festivals are frequently mentioned, and, in the UK, Brighton, Manchester and Stockton are known and visited. However, less than 50% of respondents have been to a UK festival." European programmers share their reasons for not programming English shows, mainly by stating: "I don't like the visual aesthetic (design, set, props)" and "Much of it is poor quality."

partners, operators of this sector wish to adapt it to their needs. Have they gone far enough to do so? What can be done so that this model can fully integrate an international dimension while proving suitable to both distributors and companies?

And where is globalisation?

Are street arts companies equipped to distribute their works abroad? To listen to artists and programmers, there seems to still be a great deal of inequality regarding appropriation of the current model. English is not always spoken perfectly and communication material does not exist, or is not available, in several languages (websites, quality videos, revues). The same goes for technical spec sheets... Companies are not always able to call on professionals able to help them in their approaches toward international distribution. For example, there are still reservations in certain countries about going through an agent, and these are shared by both artists and programmers.

Are street arts distributors equipped to host performances from abroad? The answer to this question could seem to be the same: do venues have communication material available in several languages? Are their teams ready to welcome foreign artists? Aside from being curious and open-minded (as well having good common sense and a sense of humour), the question is whether they have the specific skills and knowledge to be able to support these artists in the best of conditions. Few grants exist allowing street arts programmers to explore the artistic landscape outside of their own borders: there are less and less grants for "incoming mobility" (support to fund productions, foreign and others); there is an increased solidarity/preference in favour of national companies due to drastic budgetary cuts within the financial sector ("why invest in the costly distribution of foreign companies when my local artists need work?").

And what about Europe?

Of course a few European cooperative projects supported by the European Commission's Culture programme, by very visible elements within the sector (the former In Situ, the former Eunetstar, Meridians, ZEPA, etc.), have had a marked effect on overall structuring and allowed both distributors and companies to fully integrate this international dimension. Each structure involved certainly benefited greatly from these experiences and, because of them, are now better "equipped" than the others, or in any case much more aware of the issues linked with the dominant production-distribution model for the street arts in the public space.

The European Commission has imagined a strand to "support European cultural festivals with a view to: encouraging exchanges of experience through the mobility of European professionals in the cultural field; promoting the circulation of cultural works by giving access to non-national European cultural works to the largest possible audience; promoting intercultural dialogue." This new annual grant of up to 100,000 euros is open to all festivals that have had at least five editions.

It has been said that the number of candidates must have been very high and we look forward to finding out the list of candidates next spring. How many street arts festivals will there

Summary of conclusions from the Study on the Contribution of Culture to Local and Regional Development – Evidence from the Structural Funds

- "Cultural activity is at the heart of the creative economy: not only do cultural activities have direct economic impacts through the income generated and the number of people employed in the arts and at heritage sites, they provide multiple inputs into a wider range of creative industries, in the form of content, inspiration, skills and disciplines, intellectual capital and trained staff. Increasingly, cultural activities also provide a point of focus for creative networking and cluster development.
- The economic significance of the cultural and creative sectors: these sectors are significant and are growing more rapidly than the economy as a whole. Some of the more dynamic cities and regions in Europe have creative sectors that account for around 10% of their local economies. There is a danger that certain areas are being left behind.
- Generally, and with some important exceptions, consciousness of the significance of the creative sector is much more evident in cities and regions than at a national or European level.
- An approach for all regions: although much creative sector activity is concentrated in urban areas, culture-based interventions are not restricted to urban centres and can have wide applications across Europe's regions.
- Although the Guidelines suggest that culture-based contributions were mainly anticipated in relation to the first objective of the Structural Funds ('making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work'), in fact, the study shows important contributions to the other two objectives as well ('knowledge and innovation for growth' and 'more and better jobs'). Culture-based projects are capable of not only improving the structural conditions of lagging regions, but also of contributing directly to competitiveness and employment creation.
- Culture-based development strategies: Valuable lessons are being learned from the diverse experience of culture-based projects, especially through the promotion of best practice exchange in the URBACT and the INTERREG programmes.
- The study proposes a focused, flexible and integrated culture-based development strategy, with the potential for widespread application.
- Sufficient Support: DG Regio figures suggest that 1.7% of the Structural Funds will be devoted to culture in the current programming period. Even after taking account of projects that use a culture-based approach to achieve other objectives, this is still a relatively small proportion. Current investment in culture-based development under the Structural Funds is not really commensurate either with the current importance of the creative sector in the European economy or with its potential.
- The danger of a missed opportunity: some tentative explanations are offered of the lack of appreciation of the significance of the sector. The main problem appears to be one of basic communication and uneven capacity."

Summary of recommendations for the EU (Study on the Contribution of Culture to Local and Regional Development – Evidence from the Structural Funds)

"In view of the danger that the opportunity will be missed to exploit the major competitive advantage for Europe that the creative sector represents, it is important that the economic and social contribution of the cultural and creative sector have a higher profile in strategy development at national and European levels.

1. Specifically, the potential contribution of the creative sector to the main elements in the emerging strategy for Europe 2020 needs to be better articulated and its impacts across the full range of Structural Fund objectives acknowledged and promoted further.
2. Resources available for culture-based interventions under the Structural Funds should be more commensurate with the size and growth potential of the creative sector.
3. There should continue to be encouragement of a longer-term and more strategic approach to culture-based development at a local and regional level.
4. To be successful, it is necessary for culture-based development to be mainstreamed into integrated development strategies, at a local or regional level, built on partnerships between public authorities, cultural organisations, the relevant business interests and representatives of civil society.
5. This should be supported by further analysis of the rich and dynamic contribution that culture-based interventions are making to the knowledge economy and innovation and employment creation and social cohesion.
6. Similarly, the potential role of culture in promoting creativity, motivating entrepreneurship and improving communication on major issues faced by European society needs to be explored further.
7. In particular the identification and exchange of best practice at a European level needs to be strengthened and include innovative actions.
8. A special effort is needed to improve communication between the culture community and those involved in economic development, especially at local and regional levels. The experience of those who have successfully operated on both sides should be exploited and disseminated.
9. The capacity of the cultural sector to engage effectively in local and regional development needs to be strengthened and a greater professionalism in this area encouraged.
10. Practical considerations should be addressed, such as the user-friendliness of proposal and reporting procedures and the particular difficulties of cultural organisations over the timing and arrangements for funding.
11. Attention needs to be paid to the development of better evaluation techniques and methodologies and their more extensive application, again making use of existing good practice."

be?... Another condition for participating was: "The performance programme of the previous year and the provisional programme for the year for which the grant is requested must have performances from at least seven countries participating in the Programme." So, how many (French) street arts festivals will there be?

To be (mobile) or not to be (mobile)?

Besides the matter of financial support for international distribution, the idea is also to fulfil a basic need, identified long ago by leaders of artistic projects and institutions: greater access to information on mobility in and out of Europe. Numerous local or European studies, both within the sector and across sectors, have demonstrated this. Information about mobility is out there, but it is lost in a tide of endless information and is rarely translated in the project leader's language. It is either too general or too technical, or it doesn't take into account the specific needs of the cultural sector...

Of course, having access to quality, customized information helps operators in their work. But that will not clear authorities, no matter how competent, of having to take certain initiatives (for example, simplifying administrative procedures involved in international distribution), and of putting in place cooperative strategies for importation and exportation... as well as adequate funding.

We can easily see that there is still much to be done to improve this theatre-dance model.

The member states of the European Union are aware of these shortcomings and imbalances, they who work together within the OMC (Open Method of Coordination) and who, in June 2010, were recommending the improvement of information services regarding mobility in the cultural domain, the elaboration of programmes and actions looking to support mobility, the quantification of this mobility, the examination of the matter of visas, statistics, etc. Let's hope they will have the political will to implement their own recommendations...

From perfusion to infusion

The classic production-distribution model can be greatly improved upon – but in what way should the street arts be invested in this adaptation? Today, this model is showing signs of losing steam, surely as a result of institutional fatigue and the internationalisation of practices. This model, which was not at all valid for the street arts, is perhaps not of its time. For example, at the moment when environmental worries are winning over cultural professions and, broadly speaking, citizens, the mobility of artistic teams and audiences is insistently called into question.

Stepping cautiously into the search for an alternative mode, artistic teams, programmers and local authorities address support for the arts as part of a territory's (social and economic) global development strategy. Culture would then no longer be an isolated field, with the street arts brought back to their festive, entertaining or touristy elements, but rather integrated into cross-sector issues. Therefore, and despite the numerous effects of the global financial crisis, let's imagine an artistic presence on our territories that is far from the dominating production-distribution pattern.

Is it really reasonable to host a street arts company for six months in a neighbourhood or community instead of calling

on an audience for three performances? Judging by the impact brought about by such a presence, the answer is yes. Of course, a strong political will and a role within a larger global strategy seem necessary, combined with the appropriate material support.

The street arts in infusion: a local and regional development factor by culture?

In September 2010, a study carried out by the CSES in partnership with ERICarts was submitted to the European Commission (Study on the Contribution of Culture to Local and Regional Development – Evidence from the Structural Funds). The study's goal was to present an overview of the impact of culture in the process of regional development. It therefore observes the way in which cultural programmes and projects supported by the structural funds of the European Union have contributed to the economic and social development at a local level.

The structural funds represent the European Union's most important tool for funding economic and social growth. After the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), it is the largest individual budget of the European Union. For the period of 2007-2013, the amounts dedicated to structural funds have reached up to 347 billion euros. Within the same period, expenses planned for culture as part of the cohesion policy have reached more than 6 billion euros (or 1.7%, which does not include the contribution to culture in projects categorised under other objectives).

This idea of infusion of the (street) arts could certainly germinate within structural funds, a programme that is also about to be altered for the period of 2014-2020, and thus participate more in the sustainable development of our societies...

