

The role of community art projects within and without the school curriculum

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Abstract

In this paper I will describe four separate Community Art projects. The projects were run in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The book *Kunst in de Wereld* (Art in the World) is a collection of essays describing various projects all over the world. The four projects under discussion were chosen because of their universal appeal and applicability. In addition, these projects offer a good starting point for modules in the curricula for the courses in Community Art.

I have made use of reports, websites and publications of the various organisations involved, which I hereby gratefully acknowledge. Biographies of the leaders of the projects have been added as footnotes. A number of relevant website links and you-tube video's together with a list of references concludes the article.

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In this, my contribution to part IV of *Multiculturalism and Managing Diversity in Europe* (a handbook for intercultural education and communication), I should like to discuss four examples of good practice.

Community Art Projects are bridges; a bridge between learning opportunities within and without school; a bridge between school-culture and family-culture; a bridge between home and the world outside.

The Community Art Projects all have the same goal: to bring art, its passion and intensity, into the community and the daily lives of people who hitherto have had no experience, no exposure to art at all.

This is a very broad statement, based on the often quoted, most basic definition of Community Art: *Community Art is art created with, for and by the community in co-operation with one or more artists.*

All Community Artists have in common that their art is created, born and developed within a community where people are created, born and growing up in conditions of stress because of intercultural differences, poor grassroots communication and increasing intolerance (Europe). Community Artists and their art promote social cohesion – which is why these artists are so exceptional.

There are places in the world, like Iraq, Afghanistan and the Palestinian communities in the Middle East, where political decisions and religious differences – which may or may not have their roots in history – have so polarised the population that there are serious security issues, large groups living in abject poverty and many people who have no opportunity to live independent and fulfilling lives. In these areas, Community Art should not be just a stimulus for social cohesion, but should also initiate and create opportunities, such as jobs in the cultural sector with possible spin-offs to other areas.

In the developing countries in Africa we find extreme poverty, poor public health, often the threat of war or war-like violence and large groups of displaced persons and refugees. We see evidence that Community Art Projects help these people to get a grip on their lives again. The same applies to the favelas in Latin America where the children live in permanent danger due to the prevalence of poverty and crime. A characteristic of Community Art Projects is that they are all tailor-made to accommodate the culture and circumstance of each individual location.

I have chosen these particular projects because each of these can be used as a blueprint for projects outside The Netherlands, because the participating Community Artists occupy a special and particular position within the Community Art organisation in this country and also because all four projects were developed in close co-operation with educators.

“Hand in Hand” and “Kunst in de Wereld” (Art in the World) were both the result of projects by the Community Arts divisions of the Codarts Conservatoire of the Rotterdam University for the Arts, and the ArtEz University of the Arts in Arnhem, Enschede and Zwolle.

“Jij en je Wijk” (You and your quarter) was developed by IJsterk – a community welfare project of the city of Amsterdam together with the Education Faculty of the Amsterdam branch of University InHolland.

“Jalan Jalan” resulted in extensive publications. The project was carried out by ACCU, a community arts foundation together with Kunstenaars en Co. (artists & co) in co-operation with the Department of Citizenship and Cultural Dynamics at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (University of Applied Sciences).

An other similarity between de projects is that each was integrated into an academic

research project – in the case of *Jalan Jalan* and *Hand in Hand* the research was into community art, city development and integration, for *Jij en je Wijk* the research was into citizenship and for the book *Kunst in de Wereld* there was participatory research in the form of essays and reports of experiences by various Community Artists linked to internet searches of people, organisations and websites.

However, the most important similarity is that all participating Community Artists work within their dream, their passion. This is what makes them great, happy and free. Their freedom is the result of their talent, creativity, entrepreneurship and workmanship. They know that each and every person has some degree of talent, creativity and entrepreneurship. The Community Artist knows how to find and stimulate these sometimes hidden talents and from them create something unexpected and worthwhile.

Finally, I should like to mention one more example of “good practice” – “Heartbeat Senegal”.

In May 2006, three students studying to be Instructors of Music at the University InHolland started to work on their dream: organising music lessons at a village school in Senegal. In May 2007 they, together with four other student of their year, travelled to Senegal to establish their first “culture class”. They returned to the country every subsequent year, each time taking other students. After their graduation they continued their project. In 2010 they will establish their fifth “culture class”. They are hoping to get participation from students of other Schools of Music. Their dream has come true.

By the end of 2009, the foundation Music in Me hopes to have collected sufficient funds to start five new projects in Syria during 2010. Music will become part of the standard curriculum at five primary schools in various camps for Palestinian refugees. Linked to these schools, community centres will be established where music will be of great importance. Because the projects discussed were all community based, the expertise gleaned from them will be of great help in developing similar projects in the future.

The projects in the context of community based projects.

In this country there are some one hundred disadvantaged neighbourhoods where people find it difficult to improve their situation. The Ministry of VROM (housing, planning and the environment) has instituted various projects where, together with the community, an effort is made to improve liveability in these areas. Forty of these neighbourhoods have been identified as being in the most urgent need. Priorities are improving housing, job opportunities, education, integration and security. Many of the Community Art projects in these neighbourhoods receive support from the Oranje

Fonds (Orange Fund), established in 2002 on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Orange and Princess Máxima. The fund was established to support social cohesion and participation and is the largest of its kind in this country.

One of the areas in Amsterdam to be identified as one of the target areas is the Indische Buurt (East-India quarter). This fairly small and densely populated area is the oldest part of the borough Zeeburg. The population of the quarter is ethnically mixed with a high proportion of immigrants. It is estimated that 100 different languages are spoken in the quarter. The rate of unemployment is high, around 20 percent and family income below average.

“**Jalan Jalan**” is the Community Arts project which was developed through close co-operation between Stichting ACCU, Kunstenaars & Co and Studio-K, the local community and local artists, all supported by extra subsidies from a number of other sources.



Every year another theme is chosen. The first, in 2008, was “meet your neighbour with art and culture”

The independent research organisation TNO has done a study into the effectiveness of the 2008 Jalan Jalan. The question to be answered was: Have the community art activities resulted in more frequent inter-ethnic contact between people in the neighbourhood, who previously had no or little interaction with neighbours of different ethnicity. The result of the research was positive. It was shown that there is a need for longer term activities and an appropriate program has been developed.

The 2009 theme for Jalan Jalan was “Zeeburgers”, literally “burghers of the sea” but also “inhabitants of Zeeburg”. All sorts of “sea-things”, from sharks to mermaids, submarines to octopuses, were depicted with fantasy and imagination. Through this theme, the power and beauty was shown of all those different people from all those different cultures who live and work in the same quarter.

The Indonesian word Jalan Jalan means: walking through the streets.

On September 12th, 2009, an Iftar was organised in the East-India quarter. The Iftar is the meal eaten by observing Muslims after sundown during the month of Ramadan. The fast is broken according to tradition and then the meal follows. How the Iftar is organised and what is eaten depends very much on the particular Muslim culture. In Indonesia the Iftar is announced by the sound of the beduk drum, in Pakistan there are special Iftar bells. The meal is eaten with family and friends and generally lasts a long time as it is unwise to eat too quickly on an empty stomach.



Therefore, the procession Jalan Jalan is the sign to break the ramadan fast, then follows the community Iftar. The Iftar, which is free, is prepared by people in the community belonging to a variety of Muslim cultures. There is an open air stage where a program is presented by local amateur and professional artists and by community groups of all ages, colours and activities. Of prime importance is the year-long program to prepare for the Jalan Jalan festival through activities in schools, community centres, cultural centres and clubs. An example is the Pearl d'Amour, an playground opera for primary school pupils.



The co-ordination for Jalan Jalan is done by the ACCU Foundation, its artistic manager Jos Zandvliet and business manager Septimia Kuhlmann¹.

The other Amsterdam project is “**Jij en je Wijk**” (you and your quarter).

This project enables teachers, school and community workers to engage pupils directly with the environment in which they live. The project is designed for 11 – 14 year olds and aims to stimulate, challenge and involve. It encourages children to consider their world seriously and responsibly, to talk about it and to encourage a dialogue at a time in their lives when they learn to be more independent.



The pervasive theme of the project You and your Quarter is citizenship. Learning about citizenship provides the basic knowledge, aptitude and attitude necessary to play an active role in society. The mission of the project is to give practical form and content to the rather abstract notion of citizenship. The young participants get offered the means

and the opportunities to research, express and communicate what citizenship means to them and to their neighbourhood.

Having chosen a subject, the group takes part in a workshop Journalism, Writing and Photography. With their Press card they then each go out into their quarter and write their article. After that they post these, together with the photographs they took, on the project website. An interesting requirement is that the articles must be linked to Google Maps.

Also, there are links with free door-to-door newspapers. This means that the community does not just read about itself but also learns something about the views of the youngsters. A dialogue ensues and strengthens the social cohesion in the quarter. The mission of You and your Quarter is as follows:



- Get to know other people and your quarter; visit places where teenagers would normally never go.
- Acquire journalistic skills; learn to work on a website and with Google Maps.
- Bring the community into the school and vice versa: improve social cohesion in the community
- Acquire citizenship skills in the areas of democracy, participation and identity.
- Teach co-operation by allowing teenagers to participate in the community; improve the teenage self-confidence and sense of pride.



The project You and your Quarter was developed by the unit “Community and School” of the social services division IJsterk, the municipality of Amsterdam in conjunction with Jeroen Bottema ² of the School of Education of InHolland University and with Waag Society, a foundation for research into creative technology for social innovation.

“Hand in Hand”, the third neighbourhood Community Art project is located in the south of Rotterdam in the target areas Oud Zuid en Vreewijk. These areas overlap two adjoining Rotterdam boroughs, Charlois and Feijenoord. The target area Vreewijk is entirely part of Feijenoord, while Oud Zuid comprises seven quarters of which three are part of Charlois (**Tarwewijk, Oud Charlois and Carnisse**) and four are part of Feijenoord (**Afrikaanderwijk, Bloemhof, Hillesluis and Katendrecht**).



Traditionally, the area was inhabited by dockworkers. Most of the homes are small, cheap, badly insulated pre-war rental houses. Bloemhof, Tarwewijk and Hillesluis together have 35,700 inhabitants. In the first two quarters the often multi-storey homes are packed closely together and there is little greenery.

Out of all the inhabitants of Feijenoord, the people of Bloemhof are least content with their quarter and complain most about insecurity. The current inhabitants of these target areas are generally young, unemployed, not highly educated and with low earning potential. Many live on benefit. There are, in general, no decent houses to be found in these areas that could be bought by people with a higher income. These therefore usually move away, also because of the poor shopping and other facilities in the areas. This has put further pressure on small businesses with the resulting boarding up of shops and vandalism.

The south of Rotterdam is easily accessible both by car and public transport. It also has a good supply of business premises at relatively low rents. There are some important attractions, such as Ahoy (conferences and events), Zuidplein (shopping mall), the Feyenoord football stadium, Now & Wow (party centre), Kop van Zuid (urban renewal project) and, since late 2007, the ss Rotterdam. All of these attract many visitors and publicity, generate cash flow and improve the image and attractiveness of the south of the city.

Vreewijk has 7000 homes of which 80% belong to housing corporations. Most homes are old single family dwellings and three quarters was built before WWII. More than 14,000 people live in the area. About 70% are of Dutch descent. This is far above the Rotterdam average of 54%.

People from Surinam (formerly Dutch Guyana) form a relatively large proportion of the immigrant population. As to age distribution, the group 23 – 39 year olds is heavily under represented. There is, however, an exceptionally large proportion of seniors. In the age group 65 and over, 90% of the population is of Dutch descent.

In 2008 the quarter of Feyenoord – and its footballclub – celebrated its first centennial.



To celebrate this centennial, Peter van den Hurk³, leader of the Rotterdam Wijktheater devised a plan to create a show about the ups and downs of this legendary, world-famous football club and its faithful supporters. To produce the show he got together with the conservatoire and dance academy of Codarts University for the Arts, the International Community Arts Festival and Theatre Zuidplein.

The football club plays an important part in the lives of many families. Each match is eagerly awaited. Emotions run high: exuberant joy when the club wins and black sorrow when it loses. But, whatever happens, the Legion, as the supporters are called, always stand behind their club. In good times and bad. Their bedrock is the supporters' song "Hand in hand, kameraden" (join hands, mates). The context is formed by life in the quarter.



The shows are produced in close co-operation with the actors, who are all local. Helped by professional writers and stage directors, the local people show their own experiences in the performances. The result was the soaring Community Art production “Hand in Hand”. A show full of music, dance and theatre. There were ten performances of the show in the Zuidplein Theatre, the home of the Rotterdam Wijktheater company (RWT)

The Rotterdams Wijktheater (Rotterdam Community-based Theatre) is a theatre company that, supported by Rotterdam City Council, produces theatre for and by people from the community. The main aim of this community arts organisation is to develop new writing, accessible, appealing and relevant to people who do not normally go to the theatre. In order to invite new and culturally excluded audiences they present theatre performances that are based on the stories of their own community, and therefore dealing with issues that are relevant to those groups. By the sheer amount of new work they develop, the more than 60, usually packed, shows that are performed in the various community centres and the string of new projects in the pipeline, The Rotterdam Wijktheater is living proof that theatre by and for local people can be relevant, interesting, moving and entertaining.

Some characteristics: RWT does not present the community with an existing play, but develops plays based on stories and events told them by the local people.

All actors are drawn from the community - the people of RWT only facilitate, coach, direct, and provide technical back-up and assistance.

RWT works primarily in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with people who have little or no experience of theatre, either as performers or audience.

The plays tend not to focus on big issues like ‘teenage pregnancy’ or ‘child abuse’ but rather reflect life in the neighbourhood, with all the laughter and sorrow that that entails. Depending on the ages within and the cultural diversity of the group they work with, other disciplines such as dance, music or video may be incorporated.

The Rotterdams Wijktheater is working on establishing an international network of people or theatre groups with a similar approach. They are specifically looking for initiatives that not necessarily have theatre as their primary medium but have a similar methodology i.e. not the “distribution of the high arts” to the communities nor the socio-drama methods popular in the 1960’s and 70’s.

The Rotterdams Wijktheater is funded by a small group of professional writers and directors. They register experiences from improvisations by local people and transform these stories into a stage-play to be performed by people from the community. The ‘actors’ come up with universal themes like fear, loneliness, drugs, the increase of

violence, newcomers in the community, parent and child, upbringing and education, discrimination and racism, tolerance and togetherness which, through improvisation, produces material for the script.

The RWT has no regular company of actors. For each performance the cast is formed by non-professional actors from the neighbourhood where the play is based, written and rehearsed. The local people joining the production usually have no connection with theatre whatsoever and usually have never been on stage before. This means that a lot of work and effort is required for a long and very intense production process, which consists of two important phases. The pre-production phase consists of improvisation and discussion, which is such an important source of material reflecting life in the community. It is this material that forms the body of the script. The production phase consists of the rehearsals and the technical production of the play. In both phases the actors from the community are the engine driving the process. They are an irreplaceable source of inspiration.

RWT does most of its work within the communities they address. Rehearsals and performances are held outside the main stream Rotterdam theatre world. Instead these take place in community arts centres, community centers, youth clubs and schools. In their small van RWT goes all over Rotterdam, more often than not having to move pool tables and pinball machines to rig up a working theatre with lights, follow-spots and slide projectors, perhaps a dance floor, black-out curtains, and improvised dressing rooms. The Rotterdams Wijktheater has worked in the different boroughs of Rotterdam since 1992.

The last project in conjunction with a university is the book **Kunst in de Wereld** (Art in the World) by Merlijn Twaalfhoven.⁴



In his book, this composer and theatre maker proposes that art should be shown

outside the theatre and without a pedestal. He maintains that art could have a much larger impact when taken outside the usual boundaries: into the countryside, into towns, amongst people. Art, in other words, that anybody can encounter anywhere: Community Art.

The first chapter deals with how to look at things, how to consider art in its space, art in its context and the sensory impact that art can give. All of this is richly illustrated with many colour photographs. The content of this chapter would fit very nicely into a textbook on 'how to look at art'.

The other essays in the book give many practical tips to young artists, theatre makers and musicians. Where to create something? How to present your ideas? Co-operation with other participants, rehearsals, etcetera. There is also an appendix with a list of useful websites. It is a very practical book with tips generated by all sorts of community arts projects but principally reflecting his own experiences. It does not want to give a method or instructions, it is a prop (or a prod) for all people who make art and who like to think and reflect. It is therefore aimed at all people who, like Merlijn, feel that art is more than entertainment for the serious and the solemn, and at the growing group of artists convinced that a concert hall, theatre or gallery is not always the place best suited to create an extraordinary experience.



Merlijn himself literally creates Art in the World – apart from his projects in the Netherlands, he worked in Central Europe, Cyprus and, especially lately, in the Middle East.

One of his projects, “Symphony for All” (2008), was an orchestra with musicians aged

between ten and fifty who came from Jordan, Palestine, The Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Egypt and Germany and performed in the King Hussein Cultural Centre in the Jordanian capital city of Amman. The music was composed by Merlijn Twaalfhoven, and included existing Arab songs but also melodies resulting from intensive collaboration between the composer and Arab musicians and singers during the compositional process. Refugee children, who had never played in a concert before, were given preparatory workshops and so played a substantial part in the actual performance. The audience was extremely moved and reacted very enthusiastically. After the show, Merlijn received many positive reactions from the musicians, children and audience alike. This experience is being incorporated into new initiatives and future projects, intended to continue creating music projects that bring contrasting cultures together.



Merlijn Twaalfhoven's latest project in the Al Quds Underground Festival Jerusalem. It is a festival that takes place in the evening in sitting rooms and secret locations in East-Jerusalem. In 2009 the UN organisation UNESCO has declared Jerusalem as cultural capital of the Arab world. However, in East-Jerusalem this is barely noticeable. The Israeli police have forbidden or cancelled all cultural activities. There is more information on the website.

And then finally **Heartbeat Senegal**, the "dream" project of three students at the conservatoire, Ryanne van Sabben, Fleur Kamphuijs en Chris Mul⁵. Although this is not really a community arts project the students did, in preparation, contribute to a project of Merlijn Twaalfhoven and took part in workshops given by Jos Zandvliet. The emphasis of their study project was on cultural entrepreneurship in the context of their future profession as music teacher within and without the education system. The course was

geared towards the pupils of the school and not towards involving the community.



How did it happen?

At the end of their first year, the students were asked to write down their dream. By total co-incidence, it turned out that three students had the same dream. They teamed up, integrated their dreams and started to explore possibilities. At that time they could not fathom that, two years hence, they would have established a Foundation and would be off to Senegal for the second time to teach music at their very own “school of culture”. But that is what happened. They raised funds to build their school. What they wanted to do was to make musicians out of street children and “on the side” also teach them some reading and writing. One year later the school had been built and thirty children had registered. The first week the students were there they opened the school, taught the children and trained teachers who would keep the school going. After their return to Holland they stayed in touch regularly.



The next school year they did more fundraising and established a second school. Money was also collected to pay for instruments and furniture. Our students were now in their third year and they took second year students with them to Senegal to let them share in their dream. While in Holland, the students prepare courses in music, dance and drama. Most of the time, African instruments are used, but the 4 – 18 year old Senegalese pupils are also introduced to western instruments.

In 2009 the third and fourth culture school was established. Number five will follow in 2010.



Finally.

As explained in the introduction, the experiences of all projects described should prove extremely useful in the development of curricula for Community Arts courses; curricula that will not only focus on artistic development and entrepreneurship, but

place major emphasis on developing social, political, economic and communications skills. A curriculum “Community Arts” will have to be developed from the performance productions and follow a set of generally applicable criteria, the most important always being that each project should be “with, for and by the members of the local community, in their own environment”.

Websites and links

Het oranjefonds: (<http://www.oranjefonds.nl>)

Lektoraten Community Art: Community Art at Codarts, Rotterdam (<http://www.codarts.nl>)

PopKunst, ArteZ, Institute of the Arts, Arnhem, Enschede en Zwolle (<http://www.artez.nl>)

Community Art Projects:

Jalan Jalan: <http://www.jalan-jalan.nl>

Jalan Jalan - Stichting ACCU: <http://www.stichtingaccu.nl>

Jalan Jalan: <http://www.youtube.com/bekijkACCU#p/a>

Jalan Jalan – Parel d’Amour, a playground opera for primary schools: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GS4mvP6xWhY>

Jalan Jalan - Jos Zandvliet: <http://www.joszandvliet.nl/tekst onder.html>

Jos Zandvliet: <http://vredevanutrecht.com/community-art/2007/02/07/teatro-pasmi/>

Jalan Jalan – Kunstenaars & Co: <http://www.kunstenaarsenco.nl>

Jij en je Wijk: <http://www.googledearth-blog.nl/category/maatschappijleer/>

Jij en je Wijk: <http://www.jijenjewijk.nl>

Jij en je Wijk – IJsterk: <http://www.ajp.ijsterk.nl/film.php?item=106>

Jij en je Wijk – InHolland: <http://www.inholland.nl>

Jij en je Wijk – Waag Society: <http://www.waag.org/project/jijenjewijk>

Hand in Hand – Rotterdams wijktheater: http://www.rotterdamswijktheater.nl/voorstelling/hand_in_hand/18

Hand in Hand – the start: <http://www.rotterdamswijktheater.nl/pagina/video/6>

Hand in Hand – dancer aged 80: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U-njdfNys8&feature=channel>

Hand in Hand – on the news: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZGUu5siwc4&feature=channel>

- Spint – 110 jaar Feyenoord: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDRD_gVUtDE
- Kunst in de Wereld – Merlijn Twaalfhoven: <http://www.musicforgaza.net/Music-for-Gaza/nl-NL/summary+in+english.aspx>
- Kunst in de Wereld – Merlijn Twaalfhoven: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6sGLwcjL2o>
- Kunst in de wereld – PopArt: http://Awww.popkunst.nl/pages_EN/home.php
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven – A strange composer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rANsKLSGPNM&feature=related>
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven - Megafonie by Merlijn Twaalfhoven- composition for 200 participants
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmcryY8g5xE&NR=1>
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven - Carried by the Wind (Palestinian West Bank music doco)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=008p-_LePrg
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven – Symphonie for all in Amman -
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WN4hnEuzsc>
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven – Symphony Arabica - <http://www.arabica.nu/>
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven – Al Quds Underground-festival in Jeruzalem - <http://www.alqudsunderground.net/2009/10/welcome-to-al-quds-underground.html>
- Merlijn Twaalfhoven - Composing the audience - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sso66ykk-4&videos=z2wxG4T69wM&playnext_from=TL&playnext=1
- Stichting Heartbeat - <http://www.stichting-heartbeat.nl>
- Stichting Heartbeat - <http://www.stichting-heartbeat.nl/foto%27Stichting-Heartbeat.htm>
- Stichting Heartbeat – benefit concert 2007: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msv8WexHf-g&feature=player_embedded#

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Notes

1 Jos Zandvliet – Always the driving force, uniquely creative, artistic jack-of-all-trades, inexhaustible and always enthusiastic. He worked with the Dogtroep theatre company for 30 years as an actor, visual artist, musician, composer, scriptwriter, artistic director and inspirer. Jos is one of the founders of ACCU.

Septimia Kuhlmann – effortlessly combines artistic, organisational and commercial skills, reaches for the sky but firmly grounded. She worked with Dogtroep for 15 years as an actor, originator of concepts for performances and acts, as a visual artist and musician and location manager for countless productions. Septimia is one of the founders of ACCU.

2 Jeroen Bottema is a teacher trainer and researcher at the Centre of eLearning of InHolland University of Applied Science, Amsterdam. He is also the founder of Bodie Educatief Ontwerp, a consultancy in ICT & innovation for education where he promoted ICT integration in education. He is the author of : Geld verdienen op Marktplaats en eBay (2005) (making money on Marktplaats and eBay), a publication in the series Computer Idea.

3 Peter van den Hurk (1945) graduated in 1970 from the Theatre School Maastricht. He then worked as a director for, amongst others, La Mama Theatre in New York and the Groot Limburg Toneel in Maastricht. In 1972 he as one of the founders of GL2, a theatre company that wanted to reach a new public. From 1980 to 1992 he taught at the Arnhem Academy of Art. From here he initiated my community based projects. In 1992 he was one of the founders of the Rotterdams Wijktheater (RWT), a group that has become internationally known for its innovating theatre projects in working class areas in Rotterdam. From 2001 he also organizes bi-annual international community theatre festivals. These are the basis for various books on community theatre that he edited. In 2005 he was appointed to the chair for Community Art at Codarts University for the Arts in Rotterdam. He also still works as the artistic director of RWT. His credo is that a good community artist is someone who cannot just produce at an artistically high level, but who can also make this work accessible to people who do not, as a matter of course, have an interest in the arts. One of the goals of Van den Hurk's professorship is to establish courses in community arts and eventually a curriculum for a course leading to a MA in Community Arts. Van den Hurk co-authored a handbook of improvisation theatre: "Dramatiseren - van idee tot voorstelling" (creating drama – from idea to performance).

4 Merlijn Twaalfhoven (Wapserveen, 14th February 1976) is a Dutch composer who is

also active in the organisation of multi-disciplinary music events. His compositions have been performed internationally by the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, the Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest, the Royal Symphony Orchestra of Flanders, the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana and many others. He is also involved with musicforgaza.net.

From 2005 – 2008 Merlijn taught at the ArtEZ Institute for the Arts. His research project PopKunst (PopArt) investigated how to bring the broader public into contact with contemporary art without making any concessions to artistic quality and integrity. Merlijn studied at the Conservatoire of Amsterdam, both the Viola as well as Composition with a particular interest in ethno-musicology and contemporary music with southern Indian techniques. His graduation project was an inter-active essay on Japanese esthetics entitled “De Veelte” (muchness).

5 Ryanne van Sabben, Fleur Kamphuijs and Chris Mul were students at the conservatoire of InHolland university from September 2005 to July 2009, when they graduated as music teachers. Ryanne now works at a secondary school and also teaches the flute. Fleur works at the Centre for Art and Culture „Cool“. The centre contains a theatre and also gives courses in music and musicals, drama and the visual arts. It also develops multi-disciplinary projects that are performed at schools. Chris works in education and also has her own company „De Zingende Serveersters“ (the singing waitresses). Five professional singers waitresses at receptions, business parties or festivals and perform their art in between the courses of the menu. For all of them, **Heartbeat** remains their passion.