





**korea Arts**  
**management**  
**service**

# **International Co-Production Manual**

*the journey which is full of surprises*

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Quotations used in the publication are taken from the full interview texts (the case studies are an edited version) and from other information sources in the research section.

The subtitle of the publication – “the journey which is full of surprises” – comes from the interview with Claire Sung of The Wuturi Players, Korea, with thanks.

Finally, the Research Team would like to thank each other for their respective persistence, hard work, collaborative attitudes, knowledge and skills which brought this publication to fruition within a very short space of time. It was a co-production between writers who had never met or worked together before and in spite of this, and an 11-hour time difference, it worked. In particular, Sophie is thanked for her willingness to do the night shift for Skype meetings and Judith and MJ for their readiness to take the early morning Skype slot.

Research Team: Judith Staines & Sophie Travers – M J Chung

March 2011

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international network for contemporary  
performing arts  
[www.ietm.org](http://www.ietm.org)

**korea Arts  
management  
service**

**KAMS**  
Korea Arts Management Service  
[www.gokams.or.kr](http://www.gokams.or.kr)

## Foreword – IETM

IETM is delighted to collaborate with our partners at the Korean Arts Management Service to bring this extremely useful co-publication into existence, and we heartily thank our researcher-writers MJ Chung, Judith Staines and Sophie Travers for their intelligent and efficient labour!

IETM (*international network for contemporary performing arts*) was founded in 1981 to facilitate cross-border cooperation and collaboration, mainly co-production, in the contemporary performing arts. The aim has not changed in over 30 years – in fact it is now shared by professional organisations and institutions around the world. The concrete manifestation of it now includes many types of shared projects (process-based initiatives; co-conception of long-term, evolving projects; producing consortia; co-programmed festivals or seasons; co-organised audition or training initiatives and so-on) and has become a standard way of working in Europe, assisted by favourable arts policies and funding programmes on the European and some national levels.

In the last ten years there has been an expansion of this model both on - and between - other continents or regions. It has become a critical skill for a young (or more experienced) artist or cultural manager to find their way capably around these practices. Even if the artist or organisation does not initiate a co-production, sooner or later they will probably find themselves somehow implicated or influenced by such a shared collaborative experience.

Since 2003, IETM has turned to Asia in order to both become informed about the many exciting artists and organisations working in that vast and diverse space, and to encourage productive, creative networking between professionals in Europe and in Asia. Curiosity and respect are the first qualities needed to achieve this, but experience and knowledge about how things work (and why) soon show themselves to be indispensable. Continuity is a key to gaining these hard-won qualities and thus IETM treasures the partnership it has been developing with KAMS since our first co-organised Satellite Meeting in Seoul in 2007.

At the time of writing, humans are facing multiple challenges, from the degradation of the environment and the natural - and social - upheaval this unleashes, to the effects of the most recent financial crisis. Omnipresent media brings the 'Arab Spring' uprisings, African political evolutions, both South and North American power struggles into our daily lives. As news unfolds we also feel the effects on local prices, policies and public opinions.

It is more than clear that people have to learn to work together, to reflect, to imagine, to understand different world views and approaches, to develop the human capacities necessary to create alternative, shared models capable of addressing global challenges.

Experience with art, whether as a creator or participant, provides a multiplicity of openings to stimulate new ways of perceiving our realities and thus alternative ways of engaging with them. And experience in artistic co-production is one of the best ways for professionals in our sector to not only facilitate the creation of exciting artistic products or processes and their diffusion to diverse audiences but also to learn the 'sharing' qualities that we all, as global citizens, must start to exercise.

Thanks also to all of the artists and organisations who generously gave us their stories.

Mary Ann Devlieg  
Secretary General IETM  
March 2011

## Foreword – KAMS

We often get a sense of “mania” or “compulsion” from the words “international” and “global.” They always seem to appear before the names of the international efforts undertaken the Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS), but they are also, in this sense, the subject of the most alarm and caution. Of course, unlike Europe, which has sustained a long and placid history of international collaboration both geographically and culturally, Korea has experienced a process of modernization at a fairly murderous rate, and it may be the case that these perceived concerns are relatively greater for Asians, who have been stepping on the accelerator of so-called “compressed growth.”

It was under these circumstances, with the whole world racing toward “internationalization,” that the Korea Arts Management Service and international network for contemporary Performing arts (IETM) undertook the timely publication of a joint research report titled International Co-Production Manual. However, we have no intention of fanning any globalization “mania” or “compulsion” with this report. On the contrary, our hope is that those performing artists who aspire to participate in international co-productions will enjoy something of a brief respite, at least during the time it takes to make the intellectual effort of reading it. For its compilation, many experienced artists, artistic groups, and organizations shared useful examples of their own experiences, their trials and errors, and took part in frank interviews. We believe that the valuable lesson contained in these cases lies in realizing that before rushing into the three-legged race that is “co-production,” there is a more crucial process of careful tuning through “mutual understanding”---between the artists working together, and between the cultures that are coming into contact.

It stands to reason that the contemporary performing artists of the “here” and “now” will focus their attention and curiosity on the artists and creative endeavors of the same here and now. The world outside the time and place in which a person lives may seem like a vast stage where diachronic time exists synchronically---like a street scene in India where horses and cows, humans and Mercedes- Benzes, all share the same space. A respect for the world's diversity and a search for cooperation within it may be the values that can be learned through the creative endeavor of an international co-production.

Another thing learned within the context of the relationship between IETM and KAMS has been the virtue of “getting better and better” within a steady process of mutual understanding. Since the ITEM Satellite Meeting in Seoul in 2007, we have participated in a process of mutual understanding through human exchanges and cooperative endeavors large and small. Over the passage of time, we have come to amass knowledge and information useful to performing arts professionals around the world through the format of joint research, and we have even begun working together on publications. The qualitative and quantitative sense of growth from these collaborations has afforded a truly great pleasure. The international efforts under way at KAMS are now transforming and expanding, moving from our early focus on introducing the Korean performing arts to the international community toward a “process-oriented” approach of jointly supporting the development of international collaborations with overseas partners from a mid- to long-term perspective. We know that this, too, originated in the experiences and lessons gleaned from our international collaborations over the past five years.

I wish to offer my thanks to IETM, which has invested so much effort toward the publication of this manual, along with Jisun Park, BJ Yoo, Subin Lim at KAMS. In particular, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the hard work done by our three researchers, MJ Chung, Judith Staines, and Sophie Travers.

Yeon Woo  
Director, International Development Department, Korea Arts Management Service



1

**Introduction**

*artistically it was a turning point ... uncalculated chemical reactions occurred when the two different cultures met ... the achievement was that a great artist created a great work ... relationships, when sincere and nurtured, will reap priceless rewards ... clear, simple communication is vital ... the project took us out of our comfort zone – which is a great thing! ... we learned that we really need to tighten financial control of site specific works ... reach between the artist and the audience ... it is based on building a trusting relationship ... there is always the risk of failure but you cannot plan like this ... be patient! ... everything was late ... we experienced different, but sincere human relationships ... call us if you want to share our experience ... local artists are definitely improved after this project ... once the work is good, the opportunity will come ... choose your collaborators wisely ... our bartender tripled his turnover ... maintain an honest and constant dialogue ... it takes an enormous time to finalise a contract ... cultural differences caused occasional conflicts ... this was a pioneering experience ... I wouldn't do such a large scale again – it is too crazy ... expect the unexpected ... every misunderstanding is an opportunity for development ... people don't always behave the way you think they will ... there are so many things to prepare and discuss ... I feel that I am facing a tall wall to climb over ... support each other ... make sure you can trust your partners before starting a co-production ... make it simple and try hard to understand people wisely ... it needs to start with the artist and end with the artist ...*

***Experiences are the most important thing, there is no advice.***

Dejan Pestotnik, KIBLA, Slovenia

As these backstage snippets of conversation, advice and cathartic confessions from interviews with experienced international co-producers in Europe and Asia demonstrate, it is high time for this publication.

The idea for the *International Co-Production Manual* first came from the Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS) who in the past five years have developed strategies to support Korean performing artists and companies to enter overseas markets. KAMS joined with IETM, whose 30 years experience as an international network for contemporary performing arts places them at the forefront as an observer of trends in the quality, development and contexts of contemporary performing arts in the global environment. Both partners wanted a study that would inform their members and constituents and honour diverse experiences of international co-production and collaboration.

***Cultures and arts influence each other: they are developed and made sophisticated by many encounters and exchanges. It cannot be like a seed in a flask raised to bloom without any contact with the outside world.***

Satoshi Miyagi, Kunauka Theatre, Japan

A co-production in the performing arts involves two or more producing partners entering into a contractual agreement to support the creation and distribution of a production or process-orientated project.

The aim of the publication was to explore and demystify the process of international co-production, to explain different models and mechanisms of co-production and to spell out the benefits and challenges. The idea was to get under the skin of the co-production process which, all too often, only focuses on the final product. The authors wanted to tell some of the stories of co-production, to check out what goes on behind the scene and see what could be learned from this. The manual was to speak to both seasoned co-producers and to less experienced performing arts professionals starting out on an international career. It was to provide encouragement and give a reality check. It would do this by talking to the people who initiate, finance, manage, dream and sweat over international co-productions.

It seemed at the outset that a co-production might be something like a jigsaw or a piece of flat pack IKEA furniture – get the pieces ready, find the right tools, follow the instructions and you could hope to assemble an object of beauty. The idea of a manual or guidebook which would tell the reader how to do it was very appealing.

But, of course, the reality was much more complex and nuanced. Happily – for both readers and authors.

In fact, interviews with several different co-producers on the same production often threw up quite contrasting experiences and perceptions of the one project. So perhaps a better analogy would be the story of the blind men and the elephant:

*Six blind men were asked to determine what an elephant looked like by feeling different parts of the elephant's body. The man who feels a leg says the elephant is like a pillar; the one who feels the tail says the elephant is like a rope; the one who feels the trunk says the elephant is like a tree branch; the one who feels the ear says the elephant is like a hand fan; the one who feels the belly says the elephant is like a wall; and the one who feels the tusk says the elephant is like a solid pipe.*

This well known tale, passed down through different cultures of Asia and Europe, is used to illustrate the principle of living in harmony with people with different belief systems, and that truth can be stated in different ways.

In order to uncover the truths of co-production, in depth interviews were carried out with 30 performing arts professionals – mainly artists, production producers and managers, festival directors, venue directors and managers. They were located in 21 different countries, covering much of Europe and Asia. The interviews focused on 15 selected recent international co-productions in the fields of theatre, dance, opera, music, new media and interdisciplinary forms.

A structured interview questionnaire guided the conversations and was adapted for the individual context and perspective.

***There is no key formula for co-producing. Every co-production is different, and everything depends on the needs of the artist.***

Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt, Germany

The authors found that what underpins most successful international co-productions are a high level of interpersonal and intercultural communication skills, a deep commitment to supporting the creative process of the artist and an iron-willed determination to deliver the production. The enormous array of skills, flexibility, dedication and organisational capacity demonstrated through the case studies is impressive. Interviewees spoke about the process of finding co-production partners, of establishing trust, and dealing with the inevitable risks and challenges of working internationally in a complex collaborative model. They were open and honest about where things had gone wrong and emphasised the need to learn from experience.

The case study interviews also generated a poetic subtitle for the publication. To balance the pragmatism of the manual concept – “the journey which is full of surprises” – gives a sense of the narrative process of an international co-production. This eloquent phrase is borrowed from Claire Sung of The Wuturi Players in Korea:

***Build artistic trust with a partner before starting a co-production and then you can find a positive solution when you face a difficulty in the journey which is full of surprises. Always be honest about a problem and face it and find a solution together, then you will find the true meaning of international co-production.***

Claire Sung, Wuturi, Korea

The interview contributions, combined with the knowledge and experience of the authors, fed into the writing of the Manual section – a concise and pertinent guide to international co-production. The Manual outlines the different types, partnership mechanisms, benefits, planning phases, roles and responsibilities and other essentials. Quotations from the interviews, tips and suggestions from experienced artists and producers consulted for the publication, complete the Manual.

Most of those who were interviewed stressed that in their experience the only way to learn about international co-production is by doing it. You have to take risks and be open to learning from your mistakes.

***If you want to find out what you are and what you are not good at, make an international co-production. Never leave a project without having tried everything – it is a waste of all the effort that goes into making it happen.***

David Pledger, Not Yet It's Difficult, Australia

This publication focuses on current practice in international co-production in the performing arts rather than on the history of international collaboration and touring. Research indicates that the process and mechanisms of international co-production remain at an informal, peer-approved, intra-professional level rather than being formalised through an external framework. Co-productions are generally subject to contractual agreements between partners and there has been some dedicated funding support in a few countries and regions for co-productions, notably in recent years in Europe through the EU Culture Programme.

However, there is no sign of the type of support given in the film industry where international co-productions can apply for benefits under bilateral inter-governmental treaties. International film co-production agreements seek to achieve economic, cultural and diplomatic goals. For filmmakers, the key attraction of a treaty-approved co-production is that it qualifies as a national production in each of the partner nations and can access benefits that are available to the local film and television industry in each country. India, for example, has film co-production agreements with four European countries. In Europe, international film co-productions have a long history, dating back to the spaghetti westerns of the 1950s. Although the financial model and distribution mechanisms of performing arts co-productions are significantly different from those in the film industry, perhaps a longer history and practice, combined with increased visibility and understanding of performing arts co-productions, will in time lead to a more structured framework of support.

The main evolving trends in performing arts co-production are discussed in the Manual chapter. There are also a few forthright comments in the case study interviews about the different levels of experience and resources from one country to another, and how this can affect a co-production through an imbalance in contributions.

The final section of the publication is dedicated to Research Resources where the authors present a short Glossary, to try and pin down some of the slippery and imprecise vocabulary in use in the field. A long list of additional examples of co-productions with partners in Europe and Asia is presented, the result of the exhaustive research undertaken for the publication in order to identify a representative group of case studies. Other research resources include information on the financial model in commercial musical theatre, a checklist for international touring contracts, relevant publications and information sources.

*Any opportunity for collaboration is reserved for those who are ready to take up challenges, and the challenges are never the same on each occasion.*

Wang Huiquin, calligraphy artist, China/Slovenia

## **Methodology**

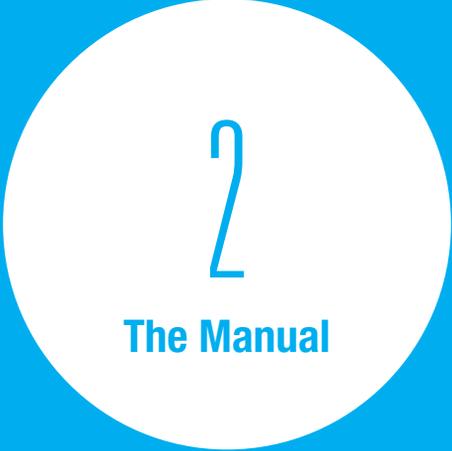
As well as being on the subject of international co-production, the research and writing of this publication was in itself an international co-creation and co-production. The Research Team comprised UK-based author and mobility expert Judith Staines, experienced arts manager and

consultant Sophie Travers of Gallus Arts Advisory in Australia and Korean performing arts producer and journalist M J Chung, based in London. They were appointed by the partners, IETM and KAMS in December 2010. Having never met or collaborated with each other, with no face-to-face meetings and an eleven hour time difference, they got to know each other and conducted the research and writing entirely via email, Skype and using the Basecamp online project collaboration tool.

A call for case studies was published in December 2010 (see Appendix A) and the Research Team also mined their professional contacts and carried out extensive desk research to identify a long list of case studies (Chapter 4 - section [2]). From these, a representative and diverse selection of case studies covering many countries of Europe and Asia was made for in depth interviews with two or more co-production partners (see Chapter 3).

All members of the Research Team contributed to and approved all parts of the publication. Judith Staines was the overall editor; she structured the publication, wrote the Introduction, Glossary, Research section and edited interviews into case studies. Sophie Travers wrote the Manual section, structured the content and cross-referenced with interviews; she also skilfully managed communications between the team and with the partners. M J Chung conducted the large majority of the interviews for the case studies, organised translations where required, transcribed the interviews, did research on musical theatre and international touring and picture research for the print version.

The publication was researched in December 2010/January 2011, written in February/March 2011 and launched at the IETM Spring Plenary Meeting in Stockholm in April 2011.



2

**The Manual**

## 1 Types of co-production

### Definition

A co-production in the performing arts involves two or more producing partners entering into a contractual agreement to support the creation and distribution of a production or process-orientated project.

### The Scope of the Manual

Many co-productions involve partners from the same country and can be described as national co-productions. However, this guide to international co-productions deals with co-producers located in more than one country. The specific geographical focus here is co-productions in the Asia-Pacific and European regions. It covers the performing arts and includes music, theatre, dance, circus and hybrid interdisciplinary forms. The manual deals mainly with the subsidised sector, rather than the commercial world of musical theatre or performing arts productions replicated in other countries through licensing agreements.

### Two Major Models of Co-Production

The term co-production is often used quite loosely to describe many different types of collaboration. However, for the purposes of this manual, the focus is on the two major models of co-production that exist internationally:

#### 1. The co-financing model

The most common co-production model involves an artist or company being supported by a number of organisations with finance or infrastructure - or a combination of both - to create a new production. These organisations (the co-producers) might be festivals, venues, foundations, agents, cultural institutes or a co-producing consortium. For the purposes of economy, this manual refers to all co-producing partners that are not artists or companies as presenters.

In most cases, the contractual agreement between the co-producers comes before the creation process, thus providing a kind of pre-financing for the project. This takes the form of an agreed co-production fee that is guaranteed by the partners as a contribution to the creation process. Sometimes it is paid in advance and sometimes at a later stage. Usually the co-producers are also the first to present the production and the co-production fee is often linked to, or replaces, the presentation fees the company can command. This type of co-production can be initiated or commissioned by the artists themselves or by the producing partner(s).

The co-financing model of co-production both finances the creation of new work and guarantees a presentation context. It is particularly suited to facilitate large scale productions where high production costs and performance fees can be shared among the partners. The co-producers guarantee a premiere season and this also helps the artists to structure and promote a wider tour

to other presenters.

## **2. The artistic or cultural collaboration**

The other common model involves two or more artists or companies contributing financial, creative and infrastructure resources to a shared project. Usually the artists or companies commit to an extensive fundraising process where they seek support for the co-production from national and international sources (e.g. EU Culture Programme, foundations and national cultural institutes such as the Saison Foundation, KAMS or Goethe-Institut).

This collaborative model commonly carries other intrinsic cultural and artistic benefits, in addition to the creation of new work. There might be a focus on interdisciplinary experimentation and this type of co-production can also involve intercultural dialogue between artists from different backgrounds, as well as skills development and exchange.

### **Other models**

There are other models in the performing arts which are based on the concept of investment and profit-sharing. A new profit-share model for the subsidised sector is explored in Section [8] on Contracts and Fees. Notes on the financial model used in commercial musical theatre production, involving large financial investments and the granting of territorial licensing and distribution rights are in Research Resources (Chapter 4 – Section [4]).

### **Components of Co-production**

In the two major models of co-production considered for this publication, the co-producers make financial contributions. In many cases, there are also infrastructure contributions, which are given a financial value (monetised as 'contributions in kind') against the space rental, technical facilities, staff and/or marketing support contributed.

A popular type of co-production contribution involves the artists making the new work in residency at a venue that can offer a fully equipped theatre space to finalise the work on stage. Often this type of co-production culminates in the host presenting the world premiere or national premiere of the work.

### **Degrees of Co-production**

According to research for this manual, the number of co-producers involved in a project can range from two up to twelve. In the majority of cases only one or two producers carry the major responsibilities of production, in particular the artistic aspects.

Where long lists of co-producers are found, these are most likely to be making a financial contribution rather than committing to logistical support, fundraising or other forms of direct involvement in the production process.

It is common for the credits for a co-production to list:

- **Production:** usually those involved in the creation – i.e. the artistic company and sometimes a venue or festival which commissions, hosts and/or premieres the work
- **Co-production:** mainly presenters – a long list of co-producing venues and festivals which make up the co-production tour

*I don't profess to know everything about co-productions as I am still learning myself. I am however acutely aware that there is no single model. It is all about the partnerships you build and the nature of that relationship. And they vary from creation to creation.*

Low Kee Hong, Singapore Arts Festival

## 2 Trends in international co-production

In recent years experienced performing arts professionals have observed an increase in the number of international co-productions. This is attributed to a number of factors including:

- Increased capacity of experienced co-producers based upon the artistic and commercial success of previous co-productions
- Presenters with a history of commissioning national artists interested in expanding into international collaboration
- Increased number and visibility of international performing arts festivals
- Increased number and importance of international performing arts markets
- Increased promotion of cultural cities and regions through projects such as the European Capital of Culture and UNESCO creative cities network
- Heightened visibility of artists from outside the local context due to increased international touring and international co-production presentations
- Increased mobility of artists leading to more opportunities to engage in international collaboration
- Improved communications tools (Skype, internet) encouraging global exchange
- Increased membership of European and other cultural networks that focus on international collaboration and exchange
- Shift in focus of some international cultural institutes and government agencies from export towards exchange and capacity building internationally
- Heightened awareness of our role in a global society as international citizens with shared concerns

In opposition, some new barriers are emerging to international co-production, including:

- The global financial crisis brings reductions in cultural budgets and audience spend in many countries

- Increased environmental awareness of the carbon footprint of international travel and touring performing arts
- Political changes in some countries have reduced funding for the arts

Nevertheless, international co-producing has now become an established practice for many presenters and artists and can be seen across the world. A large international arts festival, such as Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Belgium or the Singapore Arts Festival, will now commonly work with a consortium of co-producers to support at least one major co-production for each festival edition. In a similar fashion, the same co-producer names tend to appear in the lists of supporters for companies of a certain international status. For further examples, see Chapter 4 – Section [2].

*In terms of international co-production, I can see, as a practitioner, a certain change in practice. Co-productions were led mostly by festivals until the end of the 1990s and then accelerated by various art markets from the 2000s. It seems as if things are going through another change at the moment.*

Kyu Choi, AsiaNow, Korea

*We all turn more and more global; foreign languages are more spoken than before, travelling becomes more affordable, virtually we are in contact with people in other countries. We are more and more mixed in our personal backgrounds, through birth or experience. The notion of national borders, in opposition to international, will disappear sooner or later, as we live already in a global comprehension.*

Dirk Korell, MOOV'N AKTION, France

### **3** Benefits of co-production

Each type of co-production outlined in the typology delivers distinct benefits to the co-producing partners, with different rewards depending on their role in the process.

#### **For the Artist**

- The pre-financing of productions eases cash flow challenges
- The possibility of undertaking large scale or complex productions
- The guarantee of a world premiere season at the end of the creation process, as well as a series of national premieres on a tour of co-producing partners
- A more committed relationship with a presenter or presenters who may have previously only booked work on a one-off basis
- Access to technical and logistical support sometimes offered by co-producing venues; this may include studio space and a technical period in the theatre prior to the

- premiere, as well as marketing, audience development and PR support
- Funding for material that supports the international touring of the co-production, e.g. translations of programmes and press material, sur/sub-titles)
  - Access to new audiences in new markets
  - An extended life for a production beyond the premiere season
  - Prestige from the positioning/branding of the company as a contributor to world theatre
  - A new perspective on the local culture and its role in global cultural discourse
  - A new understanding and appreciation of personal or company skills and how these relate to other cultures
  - International media coverage and profiling through online promotion

***Hotel Pro Forma had for years been touring without co-producing. The performances tended to play two to three venues, or sometimes only one venue, and then their “life” would end. Working with international artists and organisations is an important part of Hotel Pro Forma’s brand on a national level, and is one of the main reasons we receive funding nationally.***

Bradley Allen, Hotel Pro Forma, Denmark

***Collaborating/co-producing with a partner allows both partners to maximise resources: finance, staffing, creative, contacts etc; allowing for a larger, more ambitious project to be produced.***

Claire Moran, Cryptic, Scotland

***The achievement is to have toured this show about 60 times in the last year and to get full houses and standing ovations at every theatre.***

Karen Feys/Bram Smeyers, Eastman, Belgium

## **In Co-Productions between Artists**

- The opportunity to work with international collaborators with a distinct cultural practice or aesthetic
- Refreshment of the company or artist’s aesthetic through provocation and stimulus
- An opportunity to experiment away from the eyes of a home audience
- The exchange of skills and ideas
- The acquisition of new skills and techniques for future productions
- A personal experience of intercultural and interdisciplinary exchange
- Association with peers of international repute
- Access to the partner company or artist’s touring circuits and co-producing relationships

***The main achievement of the project was the artistic integrity and quality of the public performances, the development of a strong international ensemble and a***

***dramaturgy that was at once intercultural and universal.***

David Pledger, Not Yet It's Difficult, Australia

***This project created its own dynamic in Hanoi and stimulated the participants. It might have contributed to more autonomy and self-confidence of a number of them, now very pro-active in the organisation of events and performances in Vietnam and internationally.***

Franz Xaver Augustin, Goethe-Institut, Indonesia

***Through the eyes and different points of views of non-Japanese artists, we learn more not only about our culture but also who we are. Working with artists who live in other cultures, languages and value systems makes us open-minded to other cultures and aware of other layers of our own culture.***

Chieko Hosaka, Setagaya Public Theatre, Japan

## **For the Presenter**

- A closer relationship with a high profile or innovative artist or company
- The opportunity to present new work to local audiences, frequently from regions where there is a strong cultural practice not commonly seen
- Presenting work from cultures where the presenter has a local audience community that connects with that particular culture or ethnic background
- A relationship with international peers in a co-producer network of exchange and dialogue
- The prestige that comes with certain co-producing networks of leading venues – “joining the club”
- Association with a project that has longevity and success: the partner credits of a co-production are featured wherever it tours and for the duration of the touring
- Association with new ways of working internationally and an experimental approach to producing
- The opportunity to add to the initial co-producing investment with other funds set aside by national funding bodies and supra-national organisations (e.g. EU funding) to support international co-operation and exchange and deliver projects of scale

***I have known Pichet Klunchun for a long time and have been following his work very closely. He is an artist we believe in investing in. Nijinsky Siam was an important phase for Pichet in his career and we wanted to be there for him.***

Low Kee Hong, Singapore Arts Festival, Singapore

***KVS is a house that actively engages with social, political and cultural issues. We try to function, not as a community building but as a space for dialogue where the community can become involved, because our city has diverse people from***

*different cultural and economic backgrounds. All these international artists we are working with have very strong engagement with the society where they live.*

Nicole Petit, KVS, Belgium

*To have a world premiere is good for the reputation of a festival.*

Christoph Haering, International Dance Festival – Migros Culture Percentage, Switzerland

*Our achievement as a festival is that we gave somebody an opportunity to create this challenging new work and co-produced and presented the work. We try to give more attention to artists from outside Europe, showing a more differentiated, less Euro-centric vision of contemporary creation.*

Thomas Walgrave, Alkantara, Portugal

### **For the Funding Body or Cultural Institution**

- A stronger dialogue between cultures
- The stimulation of a local or national culture through an encounter with new influences
- The creation of new forms of intercultural dialogue and exchange
- Upgrading artists' skills and creative capacity and encouraging their mobility
- Association with cutting edge work
- Visibility and prestige from association with high level, established international artists
- A progression from bilateral relations into multilateral cultural cooperation

*In this region dance training institutes are underdeveloped and dancers don't have many opportunities to work internationally. So it is important to provide them with this kind of international experience. Nhiều mặt (Faces) revealed Vietnam to be dynamic, opening and modern, but also traditional and culturally rich.*

Franz Xaver Augustin, Goethe-Institut, Indonesia

## **4 Starting points**

The starting point of a co-production relationship can be as unique as the final production, as the many and varied starting points in the case studies in Chapter 3 illustrate. However, there are certain notable similarities.

As discussed in Section [3] – Benefits of Co-Production, the motivations that drive each partner may be different, but almost all start with an exchange of ideas and expectations, ideally in person. As this manual goes on to show, a strong start, in the form of a meeting of minds and an agreed set of shared expectations lays the groundwork for a good co-producing partnership.

## **Mutual Respect**

In the majority of cases, regardless of whether the co-producing relationship is between two artists/companies or between an artist and a presenter, there should be an underlying mutual respect that motivates the interest in working together.

*All of our co-producing partners respect Mr. Lin's creative integrity. Chekhov International Theatre Festival took up the co-producing partnership based solely upon a few lines of his creative thoughts.*

Joanna Wang, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Taiwan

Sometimes this respect may be for an established artist, with a practice that the presenter or artist wishes to adapt to their local context. At other times, the partner is interested in an emerging talent with something fresh to offer, that will challenge either their practice or their audiences. Frequently, the presenter or collaborating artist may be interested in a particular cultural practice that is foreign and challenging.

Between artists, it is often a direct encounter with the collaborator's work in their country or on tour that stimulates the interest in collaboration. It may be that the artist has seen a previous collaboration and been impressed by the other artist's intercultural expertise.

## **Prior Contact**

The co-producing partners have usually met or even worked together before the co-production begins. Often this meeting has been facilitated by an intermediary such as a cultural institution or through a network meeting. In most cases there is an established dialogue that precedes the commitment to the co-production.

The presenter may have observed the artist's work in another context or presented their work in his or her festival before commencing a co-producing conversation.

*I saw earlier works of Kornél Mundruczó and this idea for a co-production with him came up when I went for a meeting of Next Step, which is a European [project] network of festivals.*

Thomas Walgrave, Alkantara, Portugal

It is rare for there to have been no personal contact. However this does happen, as the international reputation of certain artists or companies can encourage others to wish to collaborate or commission them. Similarly, a dynamic artist or group can contact an international peer "out of the blue" when visiting their country or hearing about their work.

*We had never worked together before. It was a question of almost blind faith.*

Leslie Tan, T'ang Quartet, Singapore

## Strategic Introductions

Occasionally an international co-production can be initiated by a presenter seeking to address thematic content for a festival or season. They may introduce artists to each other for the purpose of undertaking a commission.

Similarly, a cultural institution or foundation may initiate a project with specific goals and objectives, such as transversal, cross-cultural content or particular geographical priorities, and bring selected artists together to develop an international collaboration and to co-produce work.

## 5 How to build experience and capacity

While many presenters are now very experienced in co-producing through their involvement in international consortia and project partner networks, the growing number of international co-productions taking place each year brings in new players. It is important to consider your experience and capacity to undertake international co-productions before you launch yourself into a large, ambitious project.

Some artists and presenters find it useful to have experience of national co-productions first, although this is only possible if the performing arts sector is structured this way in your country. National or regional co-production projects can be helpful to understand the basics of collaboration, communication, shared planning and allocation of responsibilities before going onto the international level.

Though, as the case studies show, some professional companies have found themselves deep into a project which is much larger than they anticipated – or can manage – and are forced to sink or swim.

*To be honest, we pretty much completely underestimated the project. We're only three people in the company, so it was very challenging to find time to do everything and manage such a large-scale production with so many unexpected events.*

Eeva Bergroth, Smeds Ensemble, Finland

Ideally, you can avoid this by pacing yourself and starting out slowly with one manageable project, building over time to take on more and more ambitious co-productions.

### Plan Carefully

International co-productions are much more complex and challenging than regular productions. Therefore it is critical to assess your internal capacity and allocate time and money to sufficiently

cover your roles and responsibilities within a project.

If all parties are first-timers, things are naturally more challenging. It is important to be clear with your co-producing partners not only about your previous experience of international co-productions but also about your organisational capacity.

### **Network to Build Contacts**

Use your professional networks to build international contacts and establish relationships. Attend international network meetings and learn from others about their experiences of co-producing. Use social media and online communications for profiling and research.

Consider attending international performing arts markets appropriate for your sector such as PAMS, Fira Tàrrrega, CINARS, WOMEX, either as an exhibitor or participant. National showcases of theatre and dance, often organised in conjunction with international festivals, can also be a good way of meeting other presenters and potential co-production partners.

### **Acquire International Experience**

Everyone has to start somewhere, and the only way to gain experience in this field is through doing. It is useful for some if not all of those involved in the project to have had some experience of working internationally in other contexts, such as touring or relevant employment in other countries.

Sometimes companies get their first international experience through involvement in a project that brings artists and arts bodies together through a shared exchange programme. The KAMS Connection in 2010/11 links performing arts professionals between Finland-Korea, UK-Korea and USA-Korea and gives participating artists and producers time to research, visit and build relationships to nurture future international co-productions.

Don't forget that intercultural experience ideally should be related to the countries where you plan to work. If the partners have prior experience of working with each other's specific culture, this is a bonus. Many artists considering embarking on an international collaboration or co-production will visit the region of interest for a period of immersion, through a residency or workshops, in order to gain experience of the culture first hand.

### **International Touring**

International touring is a good starting point to build the networks and experience that are essential for international co-productions. Start with a couple of years of international tours to various venues and festivals and then look for partners among those who once presented your show.

If a national market is limited by geography, population or financial resources, or where the work is too artistically or politically challenging for a national context, performing arts companies have frequently found audiences through festivals abroad. It is common to gain experience

of international touring before developing a desire or need to work in a more structured and collaborative way through international co-production.

*For the first four years, I focused on increasing international recognition of Korean contemporary theatre works through intensive touring. This was also the fundamental initial phase to build networks and relationships with international producers and artists. After that, I started questioning what would be the next stage: what would bring the further artistic development for the theatre companies once they started working internationally? So I found the next stage for them to build further international recognition by looking for co-commissions and co-productions with those partners with whom the company already built a relationship.*

Kyu Choi, AsiaNow, Korea

For a young company, or for companies that are less well known internationally, it would not be easy to attract the attention of the mainstream festivals. In this case, participating in a fringe festival such as Edinburgh Fringe, Avignon Off or Adelaide Fringe could be a way to start international touring. These fringe festivals have open invitations for anybody who wants to apply, unlike most international performing arts festivals that are programmed by artistic directors. Other prominent fringe festivals with open calls include Dublin Fringe Festival, M1 Singapore Fringe Festival and Stockholm Fringe Fest.

So going for a fringe could be a solution when a company is not known internationally but is confident about the quality of their work based on a good track record in their own countries. These fringe festivals provide a great platform because there are plenty of media exposure opportunities as well as a chance of being seen by renowned international programmers. Many companies have made the great leap from the unknown to mainstream venues following a debut at a fringe festival.

However, there is a danger in fringe festivals. If the work is not competent enough to stand out among the hundreds of performances, the fringe experience could be a dispiriting waste of time and money. As fringe festivals have diverse international audiences, visually strong physical theatre pieces tend to get much wider appeal and appreciation. Of course, a thoroughly researched preparation at least a year in advance is essential.

## **Start Small**

Ideally, you will start your own co-production history with a smaller, more manageable project, with fewer rather than more partners and with partners closer to home or in a culture or art-form with which you are familiar.

*The co-producers have all followed and known either Hotel Pro Forma's work or*

*one of the other participating artists. Many of the venues had presented our work in the past two or three seasons, and it was a natural extension of our cooperation with these venues.*

Bradley Allen, Hotel Pro Forma, Denmark

If you have no prior relationship with your co-producing partners it is strongly recommended that you invest in meetings to build relationships as early as possible. Don't think of this as a luxury, but rather as essential for the project. Indeed, if you cannot allocate resources to travel to meet your partners at the start, you should seriously re-consider whether you are genuinely in a position to undertake an international co-production.

### **Find an Experienced Partner to Start Out With**

Ideally, your first experience of an international co-production will be with a more experienced partner, who can take responsibility and a leading role.

A good starting point for an artist or company can be to undertake a co-production with a local or national venue that can then be taken onto an international level with a new project involving international partners. In a co-production with several artists from different countries, they may bring relationships of trust with venue partners that can lay strong foundations for the international co-production.

*National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center, R.O.C. is Cloud Gate's long term partner and has always been either the co-producer or co-commissioner for Cloud Gate's new works.*

Joanna Wang, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Taiwan

### **Ask for Help along the Way**

As the project progresses, do not hesitate to address capacity issues and communicate these to your partners. It is good to know where to turn for help with problems that arise. You could usefully canvas your peers before starting a major international co-production, to find those with similar experience and advice that you can draw upon if you need support.

### **Manage Risk**

Creating a risk management plan is highly advised. Take into account factors outside your control as well as those inherent within the project. Make contingencies for the usual project risks such as key artist injury or unavailability, venue closure etc. Try to plan also for the unexpected, so that you have at least discussed with your partners how you might collectively respond to major changes in the outside world such as political or regime change, natural disasters etc. Many of those interviewed for this manual reported that unforeseen issues such as delays in visas or complications with travel were major challenges for their co-productions.

## 6 Phases of the co-production process

Each co-production will have a distinct schedule depending on a variety of factors. It is important to consider the arc of the project in its entirety before commencing. This will have an influence on the contract and will also help ensure a smooth set of relationships and communication between partners.

Naturally, there will be a number of unforeseen elements to any ambitious co-production process. Some specific challenges identified by experienced co-producers are elaborated in Section [10] – Risks and Challenges. These should be considered when planning the project so that the agreed schedule is as realistic as possible.

As a rule, co-productions take time and should be planned with contingencies that allow each stage to overcome any obstacles and reach its fullest potential.

Most co-productions are structured around the following phases. It is important to create a time plan for your co-production and to tailor this specifically to your project. Some of the activities listed below may happen simultaneously and they do not necessarily happen sequentially. The process usually lasts from six to eighteen months although a small number of the projects reviewed in the interviews for this manual lasted several years from start to completion.

1. Dialogue, exchange and research between the partners
2. A research visit or visits, to initiate dialogue between partners if there is a collaborative element
3. Further meetings to discuss the artistic and technical content of the co-production
4. A period locating additional co-producers if required
5. Contracting of all partners
6. A period finding additional funding if required
7. Meetings with design artists and other creative collaborators
8. A venue inspection for the artists
9. Tour booking if required
10. One or more creative development periods either in residence at the venue or elsewhere
11. A production period, usually in venue for the premiere
12. Marketing and publicity
13. A premiere season
14. Documentation
15. Ongoing touring
16. Evaluation, finalisation of grant procedures and review

Sometimes there will be additional discrete artistic contributions within a major production, such as the creation of an independent score or a film element, with their own production schedules that need to be integrated into the overall process. There may also be audience and professional development activities scheduled throughout a project, such as workshops and talks and associated skills development activities.

***Any successful co-production requires a long gestation period and several visits to develop the work and to gain a greater insight into the local culture at each opportunity.***

Claire Moran, Cryptic, Scotland

## **7 Roles and responsibilities**

Due to the complex nature of international co-productions, it is vital to establish clear roles and lines of responsibility for each partner from the outset. No matter how new or how old the relationships, it is important to meet and explore the current capacity of each partner and how their contribution can be expressed in the contract and throughout the process of co-production. It is important also to examine the requirements of the allocated roles, as aspects of jobs commonly assumed to be the same the world over, can be quite different in reality.

***Even though we have fluent English speakers in the company, we sometimes encounter unexpected issues. The main reason is that the function and/or role of each member such as stage manager and producer are sometimes totally different in each country. Through a ten year collaboration, we learned the difference between each role and function in London and Tokyo.***

Chieko Hosaka, Setagaya Public Theatre, Japan

### **A Lead Partner**

It is common for there to be one dominant partner in the co-production and for that presenter or artist or company to take a lead throughout the project. They may co-ordinate the other partners and act as sort of hub for communication, dealing with challenges and adjusting roles and responsibilities as the project progresses.

The producer who initiates the project often takes this lead position. This lead partner may co-ordinate the contracts for the co-production. They may also manage the overall budget, agreeing the amount contributed by each partner and distributing roles and responsibilities. This lead partner may also be responsible for tour booking, mining the contacts and networks of each co-producing partner and centrally controlling all communication around the tour.

The lead partner usually takes an overall responsibility for fundraising, seeking additional grants and other co-producers from their networks. In some cases, the lead producer may carry the financial risk for a co-production, covering costs not achieved through fundraising or, in extreme cases, making a loss.

If the lead producer is a venue, they may have access to a network of co-producers with whom they have trialled roles and responsibilities on a previous project. This can make for a very smooth process. However, if the presenter is making new partnerships, it is doubly important that they are clear about their role and establish clarity with all producing partnerships on their part in the co-production.

EU funding programmes require a lead applicant, with the other parties described as partners, co-organisers or associates. Such a relationship is likely to determine some of the roles and responsibilities within an EU-funded co-production project where the applicant takes responsibility for financial management and reporting and other roles are distributed among the co-organisers.

As in all partnerships it is important to pay close attention to the lines of communication. For more information on this please refer to Section [9] on Communication.

### **Artistic Roles**

In artistic collaborations, the role of each contributing artist needs to be clearly mapped and regularly reviewed to avoid conflict in the co-production process. Often the initiating artist becomes responsible for the overall direction of the co-production, assigning different aspects to collaborating artists. It is important to establish protocols for how to select design contributors and other artistic collaborators and to stick to these with clear communication throughout the process. Exhaustive dialogue about all creative decisions at the outset of an international co-production underwrites a smooth artistic collaboration.

### **Presenter Roles**

The role of the producer in following and supporting the artist's creative process also requires experience and sensitivity to determine the right level of engagement.

***Recommendations: give the artist full trust and let him determine what kind of support he/she needs. But follow the rehearsal process closely.***

Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt, Germany

***The artist is responsible and in control of making the work. We provide the supporting structures, from resources to dramaturgical discussions to clarify the piece.***

Low Kee Hong, Singapore Arts Festival

## Presentation and Logistics

Where artists are collaborating it is common for each group or individual to be responsible for the detail of the presentation in their country, liaising directly with the presenter and organising all media, outreach and other activities.

Logistically, it makes sense for artistic partners from different countries to take care of their own travel and visas. However, there is increasing complexity around visas and work permits which means that the co-production partner in the receiving country may need to be closely involved. For example, in the UK, visas for working visits require a Certificate of Sponsorship from a host organisation in the UK, the application for which takes considerable time to prepare and some expense.

In addition to these legal requirements, the host artist or presenter is most likely to be responsible for local issues such as accommodation, access to rehearsal space, outreach and complementary activities such as workshops or talks. Co-producing venues on a tour usually also take care of pre-production and presentation requirements, providing technical support and promotion for the show.

## Influencing Factors

There are several factors that influence the roles and level of responsibility that are taken in an international co-production. These include:

- The infrastructure in each partner country: where there is little opportunity for funding or little management or administrative expertise, a more experienced partner may be obliged to take the lead
- Funding opportunities: if one partner has access to travel funding and others have none, that partner may be obliged to do all the travelling for the creation period
- Access to rehearsal or pre-production spaces: if one partner has good studio access, they may locate the majority of the creation period there. If a partner has a theatre in which a production can be trialled pre-presentation, they may be more likely to achieve the premiere

***In regions such as Vietnam and Cambodia, you should not expect too much from your partners. Usually dancers are very talented but local institutes and organisations have very limited resources and limited support. What they usually provide is rehearsal space, sometimes accommodation or food. Most funds [for this project] were from the European side: 95% of the production cost.***

Franz Xaver Augustin, Goethe-Institut, Indonesia

## 8 Contracts and Fees

It is important to create a legally binding contract for every co-production, no matter how strong the informal relationship between the partners. A contractual agreement should include all co-producing partners, regardless of the stage of creation at which they enter into the co-producing relationship. This ensures that all communication is clear and legal and the expectations of all parties are managed.

Often larger venues and organisations have standard co-production contracts available for adaptation. Frequently, the artist involved in a co-production with several presenters will enter into a separate co-producing contract or contracts with each venue. In these cases, it is still important for each partner to check through the detail and not to accept any aspect of the contract that they cannot fully understand. Be prepared to negotiate in detail and do not neglect the time required to finalise your contract before starting the project.

It is common practice for a contract between several parties from different countries to use English as a shared language for the contract.

The contract should be clear about every aspect of the co-producing process and should allocate the roles and responsibilities of each partner throughout the creation, presentation and touring periods. It may be necessary to revisit a contract as a project changes over time.

Items to discuss with every partner include practical arrangements and other issues such as:

- Access to any spaces included in the creation process
- Production meetings and communications
- Technical requirements
- The opening (première)
- Fees
- Per diems
- Ticketing
- Press and marketing
- Touring
- Rights and royalties
- Tax issues including withholding tax & VAT
- Social security issues
- Visas and work permits
- Insurance

Depending upon the scale of the co-production project, there may be more than one contract. For example, a complex project could require separate contracts for:

- The development and rehearsal process
- The premiere season
- Future touring
- Workshops, masterclasses, talks and associated outreach and skills development activity

An *International Touring Contract Checklist* is in Chapter 4 – Section [3] and covers the practical and administrative elements to be considered for a touring contract.

***Don't be afraid to use lawyers as it is worth the investment. For an independent company or a one-off production you might think that it is too expensive, but it is worthwhile.***

Bradley Allen, Hotel Pro Forma, Denmark

## **Fees**

The number of co-producers and the amount of co-production fees vary for each project. The smallest number of co-producers will be two, but large projects can include up to twelve partners. Where there are many co-producers, negotiation of fees can be a complex operation.

It is important to disclose the overall production budget to all co-producers and to establish from the outset what their contribution entitles them to. For example, additional contributions may be required for supplementary activity such as workshops or talks.

The overall aim for the project is to cover the cost of production through co-production fees. The costs will be shared between the partners according to their resources. There are cases where a co-producer is able only to contribute in-kind support. In-kind resources include the provision of rehearsal and production spaces and staff, press and marketing support, ticketing and sales of collateral products such as DVDs, books or CDs.

The fee is often related to the number of performances required for each presenting partner. Sometimes the co-production fee is calculated separately from a performance fee if, for example, there are several non-presenting co-producers. In this case, it may be simpler for the few presenting partners to have a separate contract for this aspect of the partnership. Sometimes presenters insist on a standard contract for presentation and will ask for this to be attached to a separate co-producing contract for the creation process.

If in doubt as to how to allocate co-production fees, the lead producer should convene a meeting with all partners and consider the budget in detail. In some cases it will be necessary to re-visit fees and contributions as a project's budget changes. Open communication and close adherence to the contract are the only way to avoid confusion in such matters.

## Budgeting

When creating your budget for an international co-production, you need to plan well with all partners to ensure that every expense and contingency has been considered.

For example, you need to allocate sufficient costs for international travel. It is advisable to consider the additional expense of flexible fares to allow for changes in the itinerary. The touring party for the final production is a future cost that you need to agree at the outset of a project.

It is also important to allocate sufficient funds for the administration of visas and permits. You need to allow contingencies for additional fees involved with visa problems such as re-submission, or the use of a specialised visa agent.

Similarly, the budget for accommodation and per diems need to include contingencies for changes in the plan. Often jet lag is not adequately considered, so take care to build recovery days into your schedule and budget.

*The time difference between Thailand and the countries we were in affected the dancers. It was quite hard to adjust to jet lag and the new local time. The first two days were very tiring. I prefer to have the whole team flown in three days before a show date in order to recover from the time difference and have enough time to set up, rehearse and get ready for the show.*

Pichet Klunchen, choreographer, Thailand

## A Profit Share Model

Some large-scale international co-productions in the performing arts are able to profit-share between partners after a long period of international touring (a year or two). This is particularly the case if the touring production is promoted by professional tour booking agents.

Unlike the commercial sector, any profit share in the subsidised performing arts field is not for a commercial purpose and is reinvested in company development. It must respect the non-profit status of a company and comply with conditions attached to any public funding. The share is usually not a large amount. The aim is more to build stronger partnerships between the co-producing partners by providing them with some incentive and transparency in the project structure. It is also a way to generate confidence in the project.

For example, Hotel Pro Forma is planning a profit share model for the next international co-production which will tour for two years internationally after a premiere.

*This is not a way to attract co-producers, but an incentive to make them to commit to the project. Experienced partners wouldn't see this as a reason to join a co-production, though it might bring on some new partners, not because of the profit, but because of the demonstrated confidence in the project. What we aim for in*

*this profit share model is to show confidence in the number of tours, the level of exposure and an idea of budget. Also the transparency in the project structure will provide our partners with peace of mind as they can see where their money is going.*

Bradley Allen, Hotel Pro Forma, Denmark

The profit from the tour will go to partners who invested in the performance. The profit will be the amount of income that remains after deducting all the costs for the production and touring. It will be divided between the partners according to their contributions at the end of two years.

A lot of investment will be needed for the two year tour, so the amount of profit will be not large. It is to provide some incentive to the partners by giving back something for their contribution, as well as giving them motivation to sell the performance through their networks.

Research for this publication indicates that the profit-share model described is at an early stage and is not a feature of most international co-productions. However, in large-scale commercial musical theatre productions and in the film industry, the notion of pitching projects, seeking investors and developing incentive models to reward venture investment in cultural production is common.

The financial model used for commercial musical theatre production is described more fully in Research Resources – Chapter 4, Section [4]. But it has yet to find a place in the subsidised performing arts sector where creativity, risk-taking and ‘shorter life’ touring productions are intrinsic to the co-production process and the associated costs and benefits are factored into the financial model.

## **9** Communication

As described in Section [8] – Contracts and Fees, it is important to maintain open and clear communication throughout every stage of the co-production process.

### **Communicate Frequently**

It is easy to make assumptions regarding every aspect of a large and complex project and therefore an established methodology for checking progress, clarifying confusions and dealing with changes to the plan can guide you through most challenges.

*Write constantly, use clear and simple language. When in doubt, get in touch.*

David Pledger, Not Yet It's Difficult, Australia

## Check your Assumptions

Do not take for granted things that may be culturally or geographically specific. For example, you may have a completely different approach to rights and royalties in your country. Or you may be used to working for a concentrated six to eight week rehearsal period whereas you find that other collaborating artists work in a protracted, intermittent way.

***Watch and listen. Give and take. Don't judge other cultures or behaviours with your scales and values.***

Dirk Korell, MOOV'N AKTION, France

The success of your production hinges upon the integrity of your relationship with your co-producing partners, so take care to honour this with open and truthful communication at all times.

***Maintaining an honest and constant dialogue with everyone involved so that we are all on the same page.***

Low Kee Hong, Singapore Arts Festival

## Schedule Regular Meetings

It may be important to factor in face-to-face meetings throughout a project, especially if there are unexpected issues. Often taking a plane or train at the moment of crisis can avert further problems.

***Compared with the communications tools ten years ago, we surely live in more convenient world. However, as always, the most important and effective communications are simple: to meet, to talk face-to-face and to dine together.***

Chieko Hosaka, Setagaya Public Theatre, Japan

***Being able to Skype has helped a great deal to sort things out quickly when a face to face is not possible. I personally still prefer being in the same room. Planning trips together so that we can meet in person is always on my mind.***

Low Kee Hong, Singapore Arts Festival

## Address Language Issues

If language issues are likely to be an obstacle, it is important to directly deal with these and employ a translator where necessary. There are for example great differences in the way in which people speak to each other in their own language as opposed to the way they address people in a second language in which they are less confident.

***Sometimes we experienced problems with an email based approach, due to language barriers. However these difficulties were always overcome, if necessary by phone, using the VOIP technology.***

Dejan Pestotnik, KIBLA, Slovenia

## Consider Cultural Communication Differences

Cultural differences in communication need to be taken into account. The deference of one culture may be misread by another more direct and vocal culture or vice versa. There is a directness to communication in parts of Europe that is very foreign to some Asian cultures where a more courteous and measured form of communication is normal.

*We had many languages and cultures involved but even communicating with colleagues from Brussels was sometimes difficult and there were some misunderstandings. I guess our Finnish way was a bit too rough for them, and at the same time we sometimes felt weird receiving phone calls when there was nothing important to report – just different ways of handling the situation which we both had to get used to.*

Eeva Bergroth, Smeds Ensemble, Finland

## Be Sensitive to Conflict

Different cultural approaches to conflict may pose another challenge to communication. It is vital to air your concerns when you have them and to face up to any failures or difficulties you may have caused or contributed to.

## Think about Geographical Obstacles

Different time zones can complicate communicating with partners in other regions. For example, artists working between Australia and Europe have to cope with a twelve hour time difference that can make scheduling calls particularly complex.

In some parts of the world periods of inclement weather, such as a heavy summer monsoon or a deep winter freeze, can bring projects to a standstill.

National holidays can also come at unexpected times and can add unanticipated delays to an international co-production. For example, the long August holiday in parts of Europe can lead to projects and communications grinding to a halt. In parts of Asia, Chinese New Year can impose a similar hiatus, as can religious holidays around the world. In major Indian cities, there is a distinct cultural season, linked to the weather; at other times of the year arts venues are not active and audiences are out of town.

## 10 Risks and Challenges

The complex nature of the international co-production brings a raft of risks and challenges. It is important to discuss these with all of your co-producing partners prior to commencing a project and to agree on contingencies and contractual arrangements in advance. Major challenges in communications and capacity are dealt with separately, however it is worth considering the

additional areas below:

## **Artistic Risks**

There are risks for co-producers entering into an agreement with artists to deliver a performance outcome that is not guaranteed. Requirements for presentation on a certain date, technical limitations in the co-producer's venue and a range of challenges regarding content, quality, casting, language etc. are all unknown at the moment of signing the co-production contract.

*Presenting creations in the festival is of course a risky thing: you don't know what will come out. This implies another relation with the audience: you cannot guarantee a masterpiece. But what you can guarantee is that this is an important artist, who has a vision and a personal artistic language. It appeals to the sense of adventure and curiosity of the audience, a complicity with the artists. In short, the opposite of a consumer-attitude.*

Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt, Germany

*More than half the programme of our festival last year was productions we couldn't see when we decided to include them, as the premiere was either at our festival or long after the programming decision. Taking risks is a part of what we are doing.*

Thomas Walgrave, Alkantara, Portugal

The relationship with collaborating artists may not be smooth. The very personal chemistry of the rehearsal room may be disrupted by cultural or personality clashes.

There is also a risk inherent within some co-productions that are not initiated by artists or by producers with a genuine relationship to the artist or the work. This can lead to a "marriage of convenience" where the partners have been brought together for the wrong reasons, usually to service a funding body or theme imposed by a presenter.

*A lot of co-productions today are set up to be able to get European subsidies. Europe requires networking and international collaboration. In itself positive, but sometimes it might lead to artificial collaborations. Another trend would certainly be the international creations with artists from different countries and cultures, set up by curators and programmers. Most of the time, they are artificial, superficial and bad.*

Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt, Germany

## **Inter-Cultural Risks**

Collaborating artists may differ in their cultural approaches to collaboration. They may have distinct and complicated approaches to attributing rights, honouring traditions, seeking permissions etc.

Artists can also bring cultural practices that may disrupt the rehearsal and presentation process that is ‘the norm’ in the host country. For example, a necessity to observe religious rituals or holidays or a looser, more fluid approach to time. For Indian classical dancers and musicians, who honour the stage as a sacred space, it can be profoundly shocking to see Western technicians in shoes on stage. Rituals associated with religious holidays, such as the fasting required by Muslim artists during Ramadan, can also lead to complications in scheduling.

***I very much respected that the Muslim dancers needed to pray five times a day. But it was inevitable to face lots of interruptions during the rehearsal period.***

Gerard Mosterd, Kantor Pos Physical Theatre, Netherlands

## **Financial Risks**

It is easy to underestimate the overall cost of an international co-production. Some logistical aspects, such as the need for international planning meetings are often neglected in the initial budgeting.

***We had to go through the budget many times but still unexpected expense is inevitable. We didn't budget for preparing meetings but found out we needed at least two meetings with all the partners and many other smaller meetings with several international partners as it is quite easy to miss something or to get second hand information when working with busy partners.***

Eeva Bergroth, Smeds Ensemble, Finland

***Both companies lost money on the co-production and tour. This raises the question of how to make cross-continental co-productions between Asia and Europe financially viable.***

Alison M. Friedman, Ping Pong Productions, China & Jerry Remkes, anoukvandijk dc, Netherlands

In co-production processes that commence before all the finance is secure, certain grants or sponsorships may not be achieved, leading to shortfalls in the budgets and changes need to be made in the overall project. In extreme cases, a co-producing partner may pull out of the project leaving a significant shortfall in income.

***A co-producer stepped out at a very late moment. It is important that co-producers stick together with the artist at these moments, and try to find solutions together.***

Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt, Germany

It is very important to create a viable cash flow for the entire co-production process, as it can be difficult in some cases to secure all the funding for the creation process up front. In many cases the co-producers will impose their own payment schedule for co-production fees and you need to factor these into your budgets from the start.

*With co-producers the main problem is maintaining cash flow for the project. Most of our cost is before the production premieres. But some the co-producers only want to pay just before they have the performance at their venues.*

Karen Feys/Bram Smeyers, Eastman, Belgium

## Perceptions of Imbalance

As discussed in the section on Roles and Responsibilities, international co-productions are often “imbalanced” with certain partners contributing significantly more resources to a project. A lack of clarity around these arrangements at the outset can undermine trust between partners and threaten the outcome of the co-production.

*Sometimes problems arise since each collaborator might feel the imbalance in the use of project funding. However, they can all be solved by negotiation.*

Dejan Pestotnik, Kibla, Slovenia

*China does not yet have the system of foundations or individual contributions. [...] Thus the majority of funding came from the Dutch side. This imbalance was a potential source of tension for both funders and artists.*

Alison M. Friedman, Ping Pong Productions, China & Jerry Remkes, anoukvandijk dc, Netherlands

## 11 Advice and suggestions

The case studies contain detailed information on the experiences of the co-producers, with in depth interviews and tips and recommendations from artists, presenters and other co-production partners. While many stated there is no substitute for experience and that learning through doing remains the most effective way to master international co-production skills, there were several common threads amongst those who did give advice.

*It was a learning session in a way. In terms of production, we learned how to communicate with international partners, how to get along with people, how to schedule etc. You can't teach anyone these things. We should learn from our own experience.*

Eeva Bergroth, Smeds Ensemble, Finland

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### >> Use your judgement constantly

The complexity of international co-productions makes unusual demands upon all concerned and the constant checking of motivations, assumptions, and objectives is important throughout the process. It is vital to remain in close communication and to question anything that is not clear.

## ***Do not overestimate or underestimate a partner (use the right judgement.)***

Dejan Pestotnik, KIBLA, Slovenia

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### **>> Do your research**

The more information you have about your partners and your context in an international co-production, the more prepared you will be for any unexpected challenges. Knowing the detail of your project is important and it is better to be prepared before you start, so that you are proactive and able to deal with challenges dynamically.

***We only work with partners with whom we have built artistic trust. When a theatre company does a co-production with international partners, the methodologies of the company are destined to go through a sort of test. It can be said that these challenges in a new environment are what we are looking for by working internationally.***

Claire Sung, Wuturi, Korea

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### **>> Be meticulous**

Attention to detail is important in an international co-production, in order to ease the process, avoid conflict and to retain a record for future planning.

***Keep records of everything in writing, even emails and get things confirmed by everyone. In a busy environment, co-producers tend to forget things.***

Eeva Bergroth, Smeds Ensemble, Finland

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### **>> Build in contingencies**

Almost every aspect of an international co-production is subject to external factors beyond your control. Build contingencies into all aspects of your planning and you should be able to steer an even course.

***Be prepared for the worst crisis and overcome it wisely.***

Claire Sung, Wuturi, Korea

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### **>> Be clear about your role**

If any aspect of your involvement in an international co-production is unclear, you need to clarify this immediately, as complex creation schedules involving several partners are not easy to modify once things go awry.

***Don't try to invent everything yourself, don't set up 'clever' international co-productions. But listen to the artist, once you trust him/her. Let the artist decide on how, where, with whom to work. Stand by the artist, follow up closely, but respect his/her freedom. And certainly, don't think you're the artist and you know how***

***things should be done. And when things turn out not so well, stick together.***

Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt, Germany

***Artists should be creative and original in the process of making a theatre piece and producers should be patient and trust artists. Both should share the notion of questioning, challenging and defying the status-quo and giving the audience any hints to live more meaningfully.***

Chieko Hosaka, Setagaya Public Theatre, Japan

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### **>> Take your time**

Every aspect of an international co-production should contain a contingency of additional time required to overcome the challenges and risks outlined above. It is important to build time into the process so that no partner is stressed or underachieving in their roles and responsibilities. Your first collaboration or co-production experience may not be your most important one; consider returning to the partners again over time.

***International co-operation takes time to flourish. It needs a lot of discussions, personal connections and relevant contacts.***

Pirjetta Mulari, Dance Info Finland

***We've got to find out and understand what each partner wants. To do so, you really need to take time and make it clear each other what are your objectives and aims. You must have a long term plan to deepen understanding of each other and create a true artistic collaboration.***

Claire Sung, Wuturi, Korea

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### **>> Be collaborative**

The strong relationships that characterise successful international co-productions are built on mutually agreed goals and objectives and an ability to work together for the greater good of the project. An open-minded approach to conflict resolution is important.

***For festivals, try to collaborate with the artist, try to listen to the artist and find out what their needs are rather than deciding for them. Maintain an open dialogue. Try to follow the artist rather than merely present something and then throw it away, try to do something more. Support the artist in true sense. Reach between the artist and the audience.***

Thomas Walgrave, Alkantara, Portugal

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### **>> Cultivate personal relationships**

An ability to collaborate, to overcome difficulties and to consider differences with an open mind, is based upon mutual respect and understanding. It is vital to invest in the personal relationships

that carry a successful international co-production.

***Every artist has his or her unique way of working. You need to understand each other beyond the barrier of language and culture before starting a journey together.***

Jung-ung Yang, Yohangza Theatre Company, Korea

***The most important thing is to build “TRUST” among partners based on long-term relationship. If you cannot trust a partner, you should not start.***

Kyu Choi, AsiaNow, Korea

***You have to know and like the people involved and be working together for cultural reasons rather than just financial.***

Judith Dimant, Complicité, UK

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### **>> Go easy on yourself**

The pressure of delivering something extraordinary and unprecedented for an international co-production can undermine the ability of all parties to excel. It is important to be clear about what success will look and feel like. Try to avoid hype and pressure from external stakeholders.

***You don't have to stress yourself about finding something completely new, or something different from what you are used to doing for an international co-production.***

Claire Sung, Wuturi, Korea

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### **>> Enjoy cultural differences**

While there are many unknown challenges involved in any engagement with a foreign culture, these are for the most part a rich benefit of the experience. The chance to reflect on your own cultural habits and practices is unprecedented. The opportunity for genuine exchange with people from different backgrounds is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the international co-production.

***Enjoy the difference in the partners and in their work as well as their culture, including all the details of their daily life. Any experience is good. Try to understand the difference in attitudes, ways of seeing the world, philosophies and ways of living.***

Jung-ung Yang, Yohangza, Korea

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### **>> Do not make assumptions**

Along with an appreciation of cultural difference, it is vital to retain an open mind regarding different ways of doing things. Seek advice and support if things are not developing according to your expectations.

***We tend to have pre-conceptions about the attitude and culture of artists from other countries that should be overcome by being open-minded.***

Jung-ung Yang, Yohangza, Korea

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### **>> Be true to your vision**

Your motivation for working on a complex international co-production needs to be strong enough to guide you through any challenges to come. It is vital to be clear about your vision of success and to articulate to yourself and your partners what you seek to achieve in the project, and why.

***For an artist: try to think little bit further than just the next production. Be sincere and make what you want to make, don't try to make something that you think will please the community. Sincerity is a major quality for artistic work.***

Thomas Walgrave, Alkantara, Portugal

***From the very beginning, you should make sure you know 'Who I am' and 'What I want.' And make clear what is the 'meaning of success' and 'expectation' between partners before a co-production starts.***

Kyu Choi, AsiaNow, Korea

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### **>> Embrace challenges**

Although not every international co-production involves difficulties, it is almost inevitable that there will be challenges along the way. It is important to prepare for these and to have internal coping mechanisms and clear plans for conflict resolution and mitigating risk.

***Just go for it! Throw yourselves in the deep end. What have you got to lose?***

Leslie Tan, T'ang Quartet, Singapore

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### **>> Be flexible and ready to adapt your project**

Sometimes the way you plan your project will prove to be impossible due to unforeseen circumstances, such as changes in artistic personnel, cultural differences or shifts in time lines and budgets. You need to be prepared to change the parameters of your project in close partnership with your co-producers to ensure the project can be realised.

***In the end, we ended up with something very different, which was not either of the two different methods of the companies involved in the project.***

Kyu Choi, AsiaNow, Korea

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### **>> Learn from experience**

Every co-production experience, regardless of its success, will deliver transferable learning that can be adapted to future projects and relationships. It is important to retain organisational memory of each experience so that future managers or artists in your position can learn from your

experiences and add to the growing body of knowledge, skills and expertise in this field.

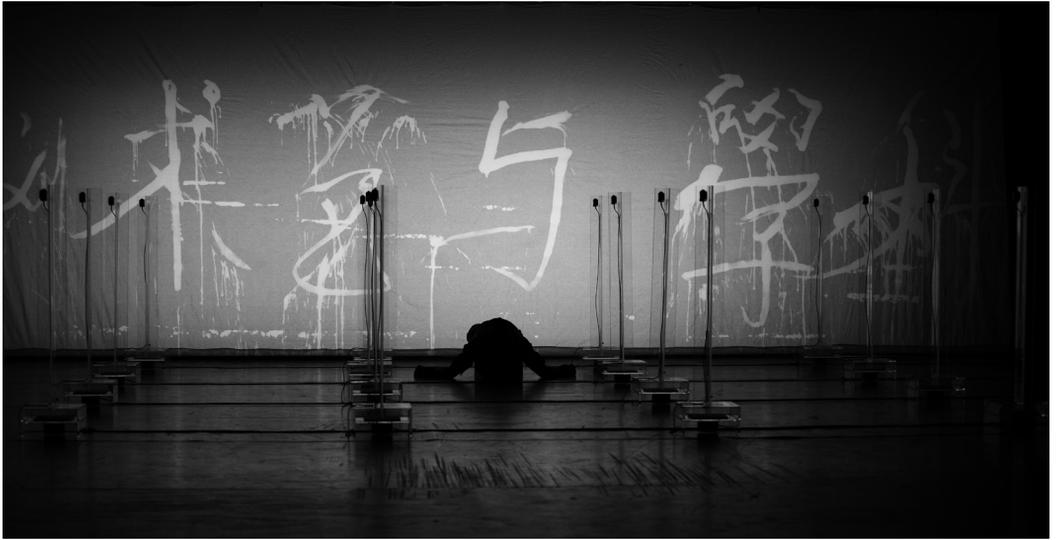
***There are always many bumps and humps that you didn't expect in the journey. Try to be open-minded and see the positive side.***

Jung-ung Yang, Yohangza, Korea



# 3

## Case Studies



▲ **Shun-kin** (2009)

photo by Tsukasa Aoki

▲ **Hallerstein** (2008-2009)

photo by ACE KIBLA

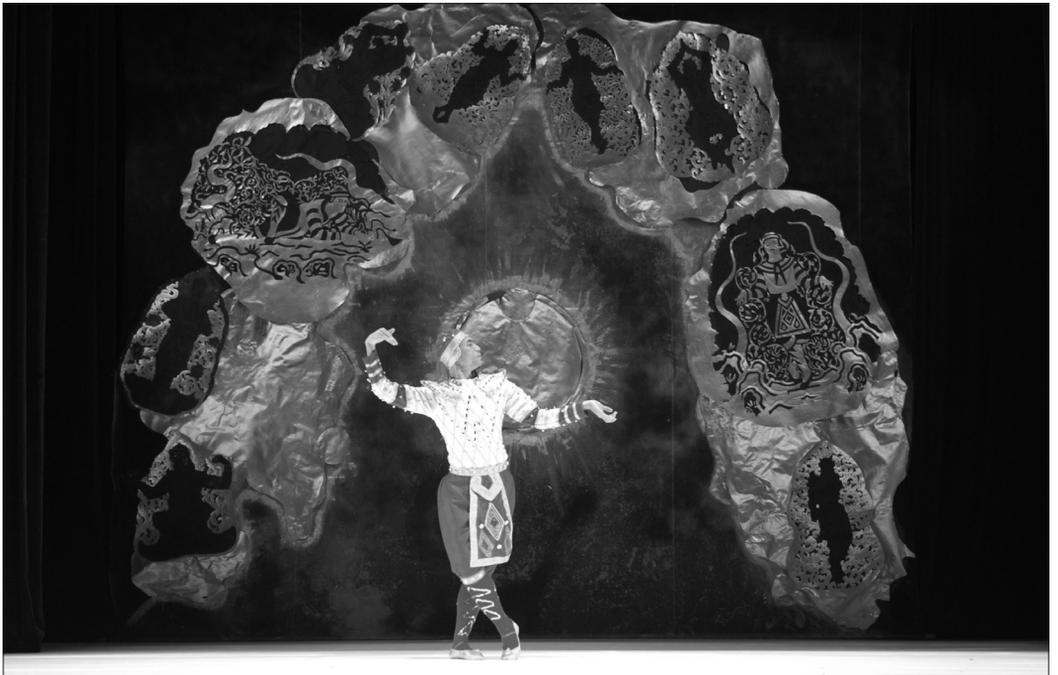
◀ **Babel** (2010)

photo by Koen Broos



◀ *Nhiều mặt / Faces* (2008)  
photo by Bodi C

▼ *Nijinsky Siam* (2010)  
photo by Sojirat Singholka





▲ ***Optical Identity*** (2007)

photo by Eamonn McGoldrick

▶ ***Paradise...a Woman?*** (2007)

photo by Cherie Goewie





▲ ***Hard to Be a God*** (2010)

photo by Márton Ágh

◀ ***Water Stains on the Wall*** (2010)

photo by LIU Chen-hsiang

▼ ***The Trojan Women*** (2005)

photo by Takehiko Hashimoto





◀ ***The Maids*** (2011)  
photo by Kyu Choi

▼ ***Tomorrow, in a Year*** (2009)  
photo by Claudi Thyrrstrup





▲ ***Mental Finland*** (2009)

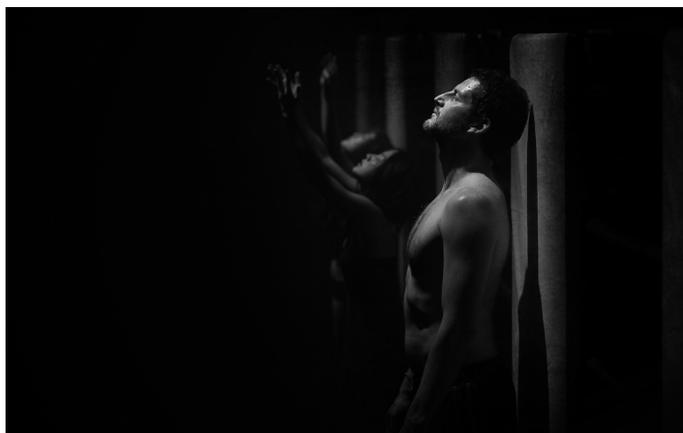
photo by Bart Grietens

◀ ***Strangeland/The Dispossessed*** (2009)

photo by Jave Lee

◀ ***Women of the World*** (2007)

photo by Jerry Remkes



## Selection methodology and criteria

The Research Team compiled an extensive range of international co-productions involving partners in Europe and Asia. Some contributions came from an online call for co-production examples. From the long list (see Chapter 4 [2] for additional examples), a representative group of case studies were selected for in depth interviews with artists, production producers and managers, festival directors, venue directors and managers.

The basic criteria for selected case studies were:

- **International co-productions** (both production- and process-oriented projects with partners in at least two different countries)
- **Performing arts:** theatre, dance, opera, musical theatre, puppets, street theatre & circus etc., both venue-based and site-specific
- **Europe/Asia:** collaboration between partners in Europe and Asia or Europe-Europe or Asia-Asia (to include the wider Asia-Pacific region)
- **Recent:** projects should have taken place in the last 5 years

The Research Team also aimed to reflect diversity through the case studies by considering:

- **Artistic content:** a range of performing arts styles, content, audience appeal
- **Scale:** large and smaller-scale projects, varying numbers of co-producing partners
- **Level of experience:** examples of experienced co-producers as well as first-timers
- **Type of partner** (to reflect different typologies of partner)
- **Main focus:** most to be production-oriented; some cases with a stronger focus on process (creative development, professional skills, intercultural dialogue etc.)
- **Region & country:** the majority of case studies involved partners in Asia-Europe, with a smaller proportion for both Asia-Asia and Europe-Europe, covering as many countries as possible
- **Range of cultural economies:** examples from both prosperous, active cultural markets and from less well resourced countries of Asia and Europe

Interviews were conducted by e-mail, by phone and Skype in January/February 2011 (see Appendix B for questionnaire). Interviews were edited for publication as case studies.

## 1 **Mental Finland (2009)**

### Theatre

#### **Finland – Belgium – Lithuania – Austria**

Co-production: Smeds Ensemble (Finland); KVS (Belgium); Finnish National Theatre (Finland); Linz 2009 (Austria); Vilnius 2009 (Lithuania)

*Set in a Europe of 2069, where the lingua franca is bureaucrat English and national customs and languages have been forgotten, Mental Finland is a comedy about the 'state of mind' of a small northern welfare state and the rest of Europe in times of globalisation. Armed with a good dose of surrealism and black humour, Finnish director Kristian Smeds, asks himself how real or imaginary this globalised reality is and what it shuts out and conceals.*

[www.mentalfinland.com/blog/](http://www.mentalfinland.com/blog/)

**Interviewees:** Eeva Bergroth, Head of Production, Smeds Ensemble (Finland); Nicole Petit, Producer/Tour Manager at KVS | Royal Flemish Theatre, Brussels (Belgium)

### #1 : **Eeva Bergroth, Smeds Ensemble (Finland)**

About ten years ago one of Kristian's plays was shown in Brussels at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts, and soon after that the KVS dramaturg, Ivo Kuyl, started to visit Finland regularly, seeing all of Kristian's works. Ivo Kuyl was very interested in getting Kristian to create something in Brussels, and suggested a collaboration with the KVS. But Kristian has never been very keen on working on commissions; he wants to develop his own ideas and have a true reason, a kind of "inner urge" to realise a certain idea in a certain place. He wasn't familiar with Brussels and at the beginning couldn't imagine what and why he would create in that city.

But the good contact with Ivo Kuyl and the KVS was then already established, and some years later Kristian came up with the idea of Asterix. He wanted to use the idea to portray modern Europe, the European Union being the Romans and the Finns representing the little Gaul village, the last bastion to oppose the powers of the huge Roman Empire. As Brussels is also known for contemporary dance, Kristian wanted to try working with dancers for the first time. We planned to work with 8 actors (the Gauls) and 10 dancers (the Romans), but as one of the planned actors was injured and the budget was going up in a crazy way, we had to downsize the production and ended up working with 7 actors and 7 dancers. The original name Asterix was dropped, mainly due to copyright difficulties, and Kristian came up with the new name *Mental Finland*.

When the rehearsals began, we didn't have a written script, just a couple of ideas to play with as a starting point. Improvising, playing and trying out all possible ideas is very typical for Kristian's working method. This is usually a very fruitful process, but needs a lot of time - he rehearses mostly 3-4 months prior to the premiere. For *Mental Finland* we planned 4 months rehearsal with

the actors (in Helsinki), and some 2.5 months for the dancers (in Brussels). Out of this time, the whole crew spent 6 weeks together in Brussels before the premiere.

Smeds Ensemble was a young and very small company with only a little experience in international co-producing and touring when we started the project. *Mental Finland* was in fact our first large-scale international production. Although Kristian Smeds was already a big name in Finland, and also known a bit abroad, and the rest of us had a wide range of working experience, *Mental Finland* was a huge challenge which we pretty much underestimated. The budget grew a bit out of hand, we were perhaps a bit too blue-eyed and trusting in the negotiations with potential co-producers, and let the contract signing wait too long. But nevertheless, *Mental Finland* was an incredible multicultural journey. A truly unique process, where every member was an equal part of the whole.

Most of the co-producers we already knew before starting the joint experience:

- The plan to work with the KVS had existed for years, mostly through the friendship that Kristian shared since years with the theatre's dramaturg Ivo Kuyl.
- Airan Berg from the Linz09 also knew Kristian's previous work and had expressed his wish to cooperate with him. He was contacted very early, when we started to plan the project in a more concrete way.
- Vilnius2009 joined as the third partner; Kristian had been working in Lithuania in 2006 and knew most of the local cultural operators there.
- We contacted the Finnish National Theatre where Kristian had just done a masterpiece called *The Unknown Soldier*. They immediately agreed to co-produce after such a success.
- Airan Berg brought in the Vienna Festwochen. Theatre Festival Baltic House (St. Petersburg) expressed their interest after hearing from the project. These festivals were both supposed to be involved, but stepped out when the rehearsal period had already started, due to internal issues and unexpected funding cuts. We had to downsize the production again after this in a very late stage of the production - a painful and unfortunate task.

### On working internationally

Kristian Smeds was already well known in Finland, and had also worked abroad - mainly in the Baltic countries - when we started the project. For him working internationally is not valued in itself but is of course artistically interesting after achieving nearly everything in his home country. At the same time, Kristian is very keen on opening the fairly isolated Finnish theatre world to a more international direction, mixing Finnish and international artists and simply experimenting artistically by bringing artists from very different backgrounds together.

Smeds Ensemble had just been established as a company when the process of *Mental Finland* got more concrete. Since we're a tiny three-member company without a space of our own, we're flexible and mobile. Working internationally, building new networks and creating production

processes that hadn't been there before (in Finland) were some of the most important aims to found the company in the first place. In terms of funding, an international co-production is also an interesting option, but at the same time it makes the production process a lot more complicated. And for sure it doesn't solve any funding problems for good!

### The main objectives

For us as Kristian's company one of the main objectives is always to make his artistic ideas possible and try to create them in the best possible way and best possible environment. In *Mental Finland* the target was to expand the territory and stir it up a bit in the very centre of Europe. Although Kristian doesn't see himself as any kind of official representative of Finland, it was also an interesting idea to gain new audiences and make Finnish theatre art visible on a wider European stage. Kristian emphasised that the process itself was as important as the result. We wanted everybody to feel truly part of the process, giving his/her contribution to the whole - and in my opinion succeeded quite well. 27 people from 11 countries became sort of Mental Finns for a while!

Touring was not the main target, but of course it had to be taken into account as we knew from the start that we would go on tour at least to the co-producing cities and venues. We also managed to arrange the tour, but being on the road with 27 people and several heavy trucks is definitely not the easiest starting point for touring. If a production is meant to tour a lot, I think this should be taken strongly into account already in the pre-production period - or at least be aware of the difficulties that a "heavy production" might carry.

### The main phases

- Developing the initial idea, mostly with the main partner KVS
- Budgeting and scheduling
- Pre-production, including casting and searching/negotiating with other partners
- 1st rehearsal period with actors in Helsinki Oct/Nov/Dec 2008 (3 months)
- During the 1st rehearsal period the loss of the potential co-producing partners and thus, downsizing of the project
- 1st rehearsal period with dancers in Brussels Nov/Dec (6 weeks)
- 2nd rehearsal period altogether in Brussels Jan/Feb 2009 (6 weeks)
- Premiere and 9 additional shows in Brussels in February 2009
- Tour in Sept/Oct 2009 included: Helsinki (10 shows), Vilnius (1 show), Strasbourg (2 shows) and Linz (2 shows)
- Legacy: *Mental Finland* was meant to tour more, but due to the large scale of the production and the difficulties in finding performance dates that would suit everybody (14 freelance artists on stage + 2 camera operators) the performance hasn't been shown since the 2009 tour.

### The financial input of the co-producing partners

- Smeds Ensemble 200 000€

- KVS 200 000€
- Linz09 50 000€
- Vilnius2009 28 000€
- The Finnish National Theatre 50 000€

The budget was much bigger than originally planned, even though we downsized it a lot. Each partner had a contract with the Smeds Ensemble, but we started working on contract details and signing them far too late. Sharing of tasks, outlining risks and a precise plan of who is in charge of what financially and practically should be done in an early stage of the project to avoid misunderstandings among the crew members.

More money would have been good in general, but for example. we had completely underestimated the money that is needed for pre-production meetings - it's still fairly expensive to fly and accommodate several people many times, even within Europe. And still, I think it's essential to meet face to face and be able to speak directly with all the people involved present.

### Difficulties & achievements

To be honest, we pretty much completely underestimated the project. We're only three people in the company, so it was very challenging to find time to do everything and manage such a large-scale production with many unexpected events, even though we got great support from the KVS and its experienced staff.

We were also too optimistic in terms of financing, giving the potential partners too much time before signing a contract - due to this we had suddenly a huge gap in the budget at a very late stage of the process and had serious trouble cutting down the costs. The unexpected costs were also much higher than planned - sticking to the original budget and saying no to some last-minute artistic ideas would probably have been the only way to prevent this.

Communication was also much more difficult and time-consuming than expected. We had many languages and cultures involved, but even communicating with the colleagues from Brussels was sometimes difficult and there were some misunderstandings. I guess our Finnish way was a bit too rough for them, and at the same time we sometimes felt weird receiving phone calls when there was nothing important to report - just different ways of handling the situations which we both had to get used to. I think it is always better to meet people personally - which again is much more expensive.

In the end, I'm very proud and happy we succeeded in staging *Mental Finland*. The artistic idea behind it grew even deeper within the rehearsal period and the crew became one big family. *Mental Finland* has resulted in long-lasting friendships and many excellent side projects, and remains a unique experience and a personal learning process. But, I'm not sure if I can recommend a project like this to anyone; the craziness required many sleepless nights and moments of desperation.

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### Things I learned from this project:

- Make the contract earlier!
- Have everything in writing, even email, and get it confirmed by everyone. In a busy environment, co-producers tend to forget things.

### Advice

- Make the contracts as early as possible. It's easier to concentrate on the work itself when everything is official and written down, the tasks and financial/artistic involvement clearly shared.
  - Be realistic about the budget. If the project is too big, reconsider if it's possible to realise it in a different way. Best thing would be to have found all the partners when starting the project. Finding new partners to cover the financial gaps while the project is running is very difficult and costs a lot of time and nerves.
  - Try to meet the partners at least a couple of times before starting the rehearsals/performing. It's much easier to talk things through face to face than on the phone or via email. It also makes sense to see the venue and meet the rest of the staff - that way you know who is in charge of what and what to expect.
  - Communicate, communicate, communicate! And be aware and prepare yourself for the cultural/personal differences in the ways of communicating.
  - Still: whatever comes along, take it easy. Performing arts are supposed to be fun, too!
- 

## #2 : Nicole Petit, KVS | Royal Flemish Theatre, Brussels (Belgium)

Our dramaturg, Ivo Kuyl, first saw a theatre piece directed by Kristian Smeds at a festival in Brussels. After that, Ivo and other KVS people saw his work at Helsinki Festival and at Kunstenfestivaldesarts. So the invitation from us was already there to Kristian to make a production with us if he had an idea, although Kristian was not very keen on Brussels at first.

When Finland joined the EU, there were unfortunate consequences for Finnish farmers that made Brussels quite a hated city from a Finnish point of view. That was why Kristian wanted to do something about Europe – 'the evil EU'. His idea was about Asterix, a village fighting the Romans. It was received by KVS quite enthusiastically. But we told Kristian we are happy to make remarks about the EU, but we don't want to be Europe-bashing. The EU is in fact necessary – you can criticise it but we didn't want to be one-dimensional. In the end, what Kristian made was about Europe and the situation of the Finns.

KVS is currently involved in important international projects with the Congo and Palestine. We are a venue for the Festival, 'Meeting Points' which presents various works by artists in Arabic. So our focus is outside Europe. In the case of Kristian Smeds, he was not very well known on the European stage when we worked with him. He is European but he is an outsider. I think that he

will want to stay outside as he is quite idiosyncratic.

In Belgium, especially Flanders, many venues and organisations are already presenting international works. KVS is one but we want to find how we can relate to international programmes without doing the same as others. The most important thing in our encounters with artists is to provide artistic recognition, respect and admiration, and to build a strong bond. Hopefully we share our enthusiasm with the audience, press and our colleagues. Particularly working with artists outside Europe is to make their works visible in Europe.

Also, KVS is a house that actively engages in social, political and cultural issues. We really try to function as a space for dialogues where the community can engage, because our city has very diverse people from different backgrounds both culturally and economically. All the international artists we work with have a strong engagement in the society where they live.

### The main objectives

Artistically we wanted people in Brussels and Belgium to see the work. Also it was important for a voice to be heard about how Europe was perceived by someone far from it. The collaboration between a Finnish director and Belgian dancers was also an artistic objective.

In audience development, one of our aims is to attract Eurocrats. Not only for Kristian's work, but it worked very well with this co-production. Brussels has many civil servants from about 27 countries at the European Commission. We want to present works that appeal to them. We provide translated subtitles in Dutch, French and English, even when we present Shakespeare. For *Mental Finland*, we invested a lot of time and effort to bring in Finnish audiences by working with the Finnish Institute and invited Finnish people in Brussels.

There were three main producers including the Finnish National Theatre who were confident to present 11 shows of *Mental Finland*. This made them the 3rd main producer after Smeds Ensemble and KVS. Other co-producers were Linz 2009 and Vilnius Cultural Capital 2009. All the co-producers shared the production costs, contributed to the artistic creation by having some of the artists from their own country in the production and presented the show.

At the beginning, Kristian wanted Finnish actors and dancers. KVS suggested including a Belgian choreographer and dancers as Brussels is a centre for contemporary dance. In the end, Kristian chose to work with Finnish choreographers, but the dancers were all based in Brussels. Also, our dramaturg Ivo Kuyil participated in the co-production as well as the KVS technical director for lighting design. Linz09 provided an Austrian composer/ soundscape designer and Vilnius 09 brought in a Lithuanian scenographer for set and costume design.

In terms of the co-production fee, KVS and Smeds contributed much more than other co-producers. Vilnius paid a much smaller amount but we considered their economic situation. The co-production fee was also related to the number of shows co-producers would present. Finnish

NT had 11 shows while KVS's run was 2.5 weeks, Linz had only 3 days.

### Difficulties and achievements

Everything was late. We fought a lot to get more co-producers and to find EU funding. Also, I think our financial director asked Smeds Ensemble to make a proposal but it took quite a long time until the figures were clear. I think the delay of the proposal was the main reason other things got delayed.

Also, KVS is a quite a big house and we are busy here, working on other things at the same time. It takes much more time to get things done here than in a small company like Smeds.

Planning a co-production takes a lot of time. For example, Linz suggested the amount of their investment for co-production and presentation right at the start. But the amount was dependent on the number of shows they presented, the number of people they brought in and the travel costs of those people. All these things influenced the overall cost and co-production fee. It took a long time to settle all the details and budget. So the delay was like a domino effect. One thing delayed and everything was delayed.

The most difficult thing was that the Finns had a different way of dealing with certain situations. They were like 'Finnish cowboys' sometimes. For example, Vienna Festwochen stepped out at an early stage. They never confirmed anything about the co-production. But Smeds Ensemble assumed Vienna's involvement and had already included their potential co-production fee in the budget. For a large organisation like us, we cannot assume such a financial matter. We are more cautious. Probably, this came from the different organisational culture: they are a small company with 3 staff whereas we are a large organisation with big responsibilities and 65 staff members. We cannot be too cautious.

The biggest worry that put a weight on the production from the very beginning was the budget. We applied for EU funding, but didn't get it. So, unfortunately, we had to oblige Kristian to cut down the number of actors and dancers. For a long time, he insisted on 10 dancers and 10 actors. It was a long process till we finally settled on 7 actors and 7 dancers.

At one point, Kristian wanted to raise the ticket price for KVS shows to cover the shortfall. But once we announce ticket prices, we must keep them as it is agreed by our board of directors according to our democratic ticket policy. You can't just raise prices to break even. So we said that we were not going to change the ticket prices and that was a frustration.

There was a difference in styles of working between the Finns and us (Flemish) which was not always easy. In our experience there are differences in mentality and ways of working between different people and cultures.

Overall, we achieved all our objectives for the project more than we expected. In terms of the audience, it was a full house every night. For our objective to attract more Eurocrats, particularly

Finnish people in Brussels, almost 200 Finnish audience members came to see the show every evening in our 500 seat theatre. Also we brought the dynamics and different kind of energy of the Finns into our venue. For example, they were drinking every night in the bar until four in the morning. Our bartender tripled his turnover!

If we do an international co-production again, we will do our best to avoid the budget shortfall. I am not sure it is possible but we will make sure that the budget is prepared before the project starts. If not, we won't do it because it is such a frustration for the artist. We would like to provide a more comfortable situation for the artist in terms of budget.

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### **Advice**

- It is very important to be as flexible as possible without denying your own culture and your way of working.
  - Be prepared and manage to deal with different cultures. You really need to adapt yourself sometimes.
  - Make sure you have the budget that you need when you start a project. Money is always never enough. But, if you are frustrated because of money, it is a pity.
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## 2 **Hard to Be a God (2010)**

### **Outdoor performance**

**Portugal – Belgium – Netherlands – France – Hungary – Germany – Estonia**

**Production:** Proton Cinema 2010 Budapest

**Co-production:** Alkantara Festival Lisbon (Portugal); Baltoscandal Rakvere (Estonia); Culturgest Lisbon (Portugal); Kunstenfestivaldesarts Brussels (Belgium); Rotterdamse Schouwburg (Netherlands); Théâtre National de Bordeaux (France); Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest (Hungary); Theater der Welt 2010 (Germany).

**Supported by:** Eky Light Budapest, Prop Club, Next Step (with the support of the Cultural Programme of the European Union)

*A site-specific theatre project by film director, Kornél Mundruczó (Hungary) has interlaced stories from a lost Soviet future with the reality at the eastern edges of Europe for a stirring reality show on the loading bay of the truck. It is described as a real-life road movie from the edge of Europe.*

<http://archive.kfda.be/2010/en/node/1086>

<http://www.nxtstp.eu>

**Interviewees:** Dora Büki, Production manager, Kornél Mundruczó Production (Hungary); Thomas Walgrave, Artistic Director at Alkantara Festival Lisbon (Portugal); György Szabó, Managing Director, Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest (Hungary).

### #1 : **Dora Büki, Kornél Mundruczó Production (Hungary)**

First, Christophe Slagmuylder at Kunstenfestivaldesarts contacted Kornél Mundruczó to suggest a possible co-production. Mr. Mundruczó then started to develop the artistic idea and we began to seek a Hungarian partner for the co-production, while Mr. Slagmuylder looked for international co-production partners.

Kornél Mundruczó had worked with some of the co-producers before: Kunstenfestivaldesarts and Rotterdamse Schouwburg in 2009 and several collaborations with Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest since 2004.

### **Working internationally**

It was the first time we participated in an international co-production and we thought it would be a great opportunity. Our main objective was to realise Mr. Mundruczó's idea. If you work as an independent artist in Hungary it is unfortunately not possible, mainly for financial reasons and because of the lack of possible partners, to undertake such large projects. This production would never have been realised without international partners and their support.

## The main phases in developing the co-production

- Developing the idea
- Making a draft budget for the production
- Keeping in touch with Mr. Slagmuylder, the spokesman of Next Step, the EU-funded festival network, which was searching for international co-producing partners
- Finding the Hungarian partner
- Producing the performance in Hungary
- A short rehearsal period and the premiere in Brussels at KDA
- Co-production tour

Kornel Mundruczó was solely in charge of the creation and the other co-producers (festivals and venues) shared the production costs and presented the production in their own festivals.

The contract was drawn up by the co-producer and Proton Cinema Ltd. producing the production in Hungary. Communications worked out very well.

The most difficult part of producing the project was that we knew that the exact tour conditions and technical needs of the production were not available before the tour, as it was a site specific show. Because of that there were a lot of problems to solve in the last moments, but we were actually prepared for that.

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### Main achievements

- It was very important for Mr. Mundruczó that he could develop such a big project here in Hungary where he could work with those actors and colleagues who are his creative partners and with whom he can build a team and devise a production together.
- We learned a lot from this project, particularly how to run an international project.

### Advice for others

- I would say go ahead as I think that international co-productions will be probably the only possibility for independent artists seeking to develop large scale productions in the future.

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## #2 : Thomas Walgrave, Alkantara Festival Lisbon (Portugal)

I saw earlier works of Kornél Mundruczó and this idea for a co-production came up at a meeting of Next Step (an EU-funded project network of festivals). Kornel is a Hungarian cinema director who is quite famous on the festival circuit and a major name in European independent cinema. What he really wants to make artistically is quite difficult to raise money for. It was important for us to sit together and set a co-production structure for him. Festival directors including Baltoscandal Rakvere, Rotterdamse Schouwburg and Théâtre National de Bordeaux met and decided to co-produce his next work. We selected a spokesman, Kunstenfestivaldesarts Director, who contacted Kornel with the idea of a co-production.

### **The co-producers**

It was the first time we worked with Trafó in Budapest but the rest of the co-producers are members of the same network. We have co-produced countless works. Usually 99% of our festival's co-productions are made through the European networks that we are a part of. Next Step started in 2007 as a co-producing network between festivals.

Alkantara festival has run international projects such as Pointe to Point – Asia-Europe dance project and Encounters 2005-2006 project, a year long project where artists and scholars from different cultural contexts worked together addressing themes of cultural difference.

### **Main objectives**

Festivals should support artists and follow artists rather than just presenting them. We have a number of artists whose work we follow over the years and see the way they develop and grow. A festival like ours is not focused on mainstream artists. Rather, we try to provide opportunities to less visible artists, whose artistic value we believe in – artists who make sincere and very high quality artistic work. They often work outside the main structures so they need more support to make their work. So for me, it is important to support these artists we believe in and to show their work more.

More than half our festival programme last year was works we couldn't see when we chose them – the premiere was either at our festival or long after the programming decision. Taking risks is part of what we do. Also Alkantara tries to give more attention to artists from outside Europe, showing a more differentiated, less Euro-centric vision of contemporary creation.

Our main objectives with this project were to support the artist and to present something which people would be hungry for: something very local and specific but also universal. It was a new way of using theatrical language; a cinema director made a theatre piece set in an unusual place. Also it was about how violence is represented in cinema and theatre.

### **The benefits of international co-production**

First, an artist or company gets money which is important. An international co-production is a way of extending their financial scope. Also they get a different visibility: a wider geographical range of where their show is seen, even including outside Europe.

Artistically, they can have more space to experiment in co-productions which are based on trust, generated through a body of work they have already created. A network such as Next Step aims to provide artists with more free space outside the market mechanism. Most programmers are inclined to programme what they know. It is really important for artists to have space to experiment because performing arts is strange like that. Painters can create something and hide it away in the back of a studio. But for performing arts, this kind of discarding doesn't exist. Everything you do is immediately very visible and it makes it hard to take risks. But we should encourage possibilities of taking risks and trying out things that can bring new directions for

artists for the rest of their career.

### **The main phases in developing the co-production project**

- The first meeting with co-producers. We select one spokesman among partners for each co-production. It is always a different festival each time.
- Discussion between the artist and Kunstenfestivaldesarts (spokesman): overall plan including schedule
- Budget and finding money
- Creation of the show
- Touring: still ongoing

The whole process took about a year and half.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Seven co-producers contributed financially. The actual share for each partner varied depending on their financial capacity. It is a puzzle to put together and it was a very informal process to decide the actual amount of the co-production fee for each partner.

The creation of the production was solely the artist's responsibility. It is part of the process to give maximum freedom to the artist. In this case, Kornel's work started to change into a very different thing. The production developed into something different from the original idea of theatre in a cinema – we had considered performing it in an abandoned cinema. In the end, he changed it completely and it was performed in two trucks as a site specific performance.

### **Contract**

Each co-producer had a standard co-production contract with the artist; also a separate presentation contract between each presenter and the artist. Sometimes we make a draft and send it to an artist; sometimes an artist has their own format and sends it to us.

### **Communications**

You don't need to communicate actually. Most communication runs through the company who are central to the project. Between Next Step partners, lots of informal communications were going on. But in terms of the actual production, only a week before the premiere in Brussels, we started communicating a lot on practical things, particularly between technical teams as it was a site-specific work, there were lots of things to prepare.

### **Difficulties**

Open air, site specific performances can be difficult. In some countries with unstable climates, they had to do it in indoors. Also for a site-specific work, there are always extra costs you can't predict. We managed to bring the costs down to an acceptable level. It went a little bit over our budget but it was OK in the end. It is a basic rule that a site specific show is always more expensive than you planned.

For *Hard to be a God*, there was a big question of translation. Kornel insisted on using simultaneous translation as the dialogue was in Hungarian. But after the premiere in Brussels, he discovered it would be better with subtitles. So we had a very short time (3 or 4 days) to prepare subtitles. We had to hire extra equipment at unexpected additional cost.

Also the location of the show was in question for a long time and changed a lot until it was agreed to perform it in two trucks as a site specific performance.

### **Achievements**

Our achievement as a festival is that we gave someone an opportunity to create this challenging new work and co-produced and presented the work.

It is important for our festival to be linked into this co-producers' network. It is interesting to share the work with colleagues across Europe and beyond in both formal and informal ways.

Many professionals visit our festival. So for our festival, as well as for the artist, it was good to present the new work at Alkantara, where it was seen by potential promoters. It is a way to maintain our position as a professionally well recognised international festival.

### **Increases in international co-productions in the festival circuit**

Yes, absolutely. It is hard to say how much it has increased. But in terms of co-production fees, I think that it is easily three or four times more than 10 years ago, mainly because of the European networks which bring many producers for a single co-production and also bring in the funding from the EU which encourages such co-productions. For example, for Kornel, it would be impossible to collect this size of money without EU support.

For us, the number and percentage of co-productions hasn't changed much as we did it from the start. But it is true that we were initially more focused on local works. There is a sort of a tendency to be more international each time in terms of co-productions to support artists.

Another reason would be the changed artistic landscape. More interesting artists work outside this. For example, France has a very well organised artistic landscape structure where funding is distributed. But you see a lot of interesting artists outside it. To make new works, they are dependent on a co-production network like ours.

You can say it is a healthy evolution to see a shift in government funding decisions towards funding festivals and large theatre venues to support artists. It means the EU has passed the artistic decisions to the field rather than directly funding artists.

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### **Learning**

- You learn from every co-production and every show you present. But in this specific case, we learned that we really need tighter financial control of site specific works. On

the other hand, we understand that artists need to work in a challenging way from our experience of previous site specific works. It was the way to bring the work to the city and it takes away the theatre as gateway. However, we need to maintain a balance between financial control and artistic freedom. For this project, the balance was absolutely positive.

### Advice

- **For an artist:**

Try to think little bit further than just the next production.

Be sincere and make what you want to make, don't try to make something that you think will please the community. Sincerity is a major quality for artistic work.

- **For festivals:**

Try to collaborate with the artist; try to listen to the artists and find out what their needs are rather than deciding it for them.

Maintain an open dialogue: try to follow the artist rather than merely present something and then throw it away, try to do something more.

Support the artist in true sense. Reach between the artist and the audience.

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## #3 : György Szabó, Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts (Hungary)

In my case, I was invited to be a partner. We have known most of the co-producers in the project for a long time. We have increased the number of co-productions since we became more networked and need to exchange co-productions.

By working internationally, we hoped to gain:

- Money
- New skills
- Professionalism
- Easier distribution for work co-produced
- Higher quality of production

The main objective for Trafó for this project was to have a better programme. We provided technical equipment and technicians' lodging but were not involved artistically.

We made all the paperwork including contracts. It was easy to negotiate with the partners. But co-productions have no model of financing or execution and we do not have so much co-production experience. We had only one unexpected problem. The production did not have a realistic presentation fee. We got into significant financial trouble because the final cost of presentation was so high.

The main achievements of the project were to pull in more money by co-producing. It would not have been possible for us to present such a big project alone.

### 3 **Babel (2010)**

#### **Dance**

**Belgium – France – UK – Netherlands – Austria – Luxembourg – Switzerland – Italy – Germany**

**Production:** Eastman (Belgium) and La Monnaie/De Munt (Belgium)

**Co-production:** Fondation d'entreprise Hermès (France); La Grande Halle -La Villette (France); Sadler's Wells London (UK); Boulevard Festival (Netherlands); Festival Theatre Saint Pölten (Austria); Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg (Luxembourg); Migros Culture Percentage – STEPS International Dance Festival (Switzerland); Fondazione Musica per Roma (Italy); Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele (Germany).

*This dance performance, choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Damien Jalet with design by Anthony Gormley, explores language and its relationship with nationhood, identity and religion. Babel featured fifteen dancers and five musicians from 13 countries across five continents. It was a project almost as ambitious, imaginative, resolute and brimming with talent as the construction of the Tower of Babel itself.*

[www.sadlerswells.com/show/Sidi-Larbi-Babel](http://www.sadlerswells.com/show/Sidi-Larbi-Babel)

**Interviewees:** Karen Feys, Executive Director & Bram Smeyers, Production Manager at Eastman (Belgium); Christoph Haering, Chief of Project, STEPS International Dance Festival of Migros Culture Percentage (Switzerland)

#### #1 : **Karen Feys & Bram Smeyers, Eastman (Belgium)**

The artistic starting point was the wish to make a production, the final part of the trilogy with *FOI* and *Myth*. Eastman is the company of Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. *Babel* would also be the third collaboration between the choreographer, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and the visual artist, Antony Gormley, and was a choreographic collaboration between Mr Cherkaoui and Damien Jalet . On the production side, Cherkaoui has been working internationally for quite a while and he has toured the world with many of his shows. His work is thus very well known and some theatres and festivals were interested to present it as their country's premiere in exchange for a co-production fee.

We have already worked with some of the co-producers:

- Fondazione Musica per Roma (Rome) was an interesting co-producer because we have a long history and plans for a long future with them
- La Grande Halle - La Villette (Paris) was a new partner but it was the one we want to continue collaborating with. They give us the possibility to expand to new audiences.
- Sadler's Wells ( London), co-producer which has produced other works of Cherkaoui and will also co-produce another new work

By working internationally, we hoped to gain financial support to make the performance on this scale that we wanted to realise. We do receive state funding, but one of the basic rules to get the funding is to look for co-producers. In Belgium, there are not many players who can co-produce performances of this scale.

The main objectives of this project are purely artistic. The need for co-producers is to make this artistic project in a way we want to make it. Ideally we would work with a smaller number of co-producers because each co-producer requires other research. So in a way, the fewer co-producers there are – the better.

**Main phases:** Normally the idea for a show grows about two years before the actual creation time. The actual co-production, with the organisation of which dancers will perform etc., started around October 2010.

- Looking for co-producers: To find out co-producers, we sent out info and talked to potential co-producers to see if they were interested
- Pre-production: auditions for 10 days; rehearsals for 3 months
- Premier: 27 April 2010, Cirque Royal, Brussels, Belgium
- The co-producers tour and the rest of the tour happen together: started at the beginning of May 2010 and goes on at least till the end of 2012

The production responsibilities were all in Eastman's hands. The co-producers support financially the creation and they get a right for their country's premiere and also contributed to organising tours to any other theatres or presenters.

### Communications & contracts

All the co-producers were copied in all the communication about the show which was mostly by email. There were some meetings with each co-producer individually, but no meeting with all co-producers at the same time.

No difficulties or misunderstandings with contracts, since the contracts are very clear. The co-production fee was set and discussed at the beginning of the project. So we didn't have problems on this at a later stage.

Sometimes co-producers want to be sure that Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui will be present when the show is presented in their venue but, considering his very hectic schedule, that is not always possible. But they do understand this when it is explained.

However, the main problem was maintaining cash flow for the project. Most of our cost was before the production premieres. But some co-producers only want to pay just before they have the performance at their venues.

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### **Achievements & advice**

- The achievement is to have toured this show for about 60 times in the last year and to get full houses and standing ovations at every theatre. High artistic quality.
- Overall, we had very strong co-producing partners with whom we want to work again. And we managed to have a long list of co-producers because we have been working with these venues or presenters for the last 10 years.
- The international co-production is based on building a trusting relationship and providing quality so that you can convince them to join the project.

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## **#2 : Christoph Haering, STEPS International Dance Festival – Migros Culture Percentage (Switzerland)**

International co-productions bring new contacts, new possibilities and new partners to collaborate: we organised a symposium during our Festival with the choreographers of the show and other artists to discuss further.

We co-produced *Babel* for artistic reasons. Objective was to have a new production or a first release or a world (European) premiere which is good for the reputation of a festival.

The main phases were Contact – Discussions – Negotiations – Previews. We had a contract. It is never easy to negotiate, but no revision was needed later.

As long as the contact-persons are reliable, communication is easy to work out. When the premiere is shortly before the presentation in the festival, it is important that technical details and all the materials for press and marketing (programme, photos, etc.) come to the organisers of the festival as soon as possible.

If you invite a performance to a festival before you have seen it like this co-production's case, there is always the risk of failure, but you cannot plan on this.

In case of *Babel*, it was good to have them in our festival. Particularly, it was great that the choreographers were present and could discuss with other artists.

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### **Three things I learned from this project**

- It is good to trust artists.
- Have all the contacts well established.
- Make a contract in which everything is clear.

### **Advice**

- Keep looking for different shows that are in your country.
  - Go to festivals and try to contact artists.
  - Try to find finances to invite companies from abroad.
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## 4 **Tomorrow, In a Year (2009)**

### **Electro-opera**

#### **Denmark – Germany – Switzerland – Sweden**

Production: Hotel Pro Forma (Denmark)

Co-production: La Bâtie – Festival de Genève (Switzerland); Hellerau - European Center for the Arts Dresden (Germany); The Concert Hall Aarhus (Denmark); Dansens Hus, Stockholm (Sweden), in cooperation with the Royal Danish Theatre.

*The world seen through the eyes of Charles Darwin forms the basis for the performance Tomorrow, In a Year. Theatre production company Hotel Pro Forma's striking visuals blend with pop-duo The Knife's ground-breaking music to create a new species of electro-opera.*  
<http://hotelproforma.dk/side.asp?side=2&id=549>

### # **Bradley Allen, Manager, Hotel Pro Forma (Denmark)**

Hotel Pro Forma had for years been touring without co-producing. It had meant that performances tended to play 2 or 3 venues, sometimes only one, and then their “life” would end: a very disappointing result both for the artistic and production crews. Artistically, we wanted to try a large music and dramatic piece. This project was a larger format and more expensive production than our typical performances, with the participation of several internationally recognised artists and therefore would require a different financing and organisational structure than our typical productions. Co-producing was therefore essential.

We wanted a cross genre production incorporating international artistic collaborators. It started with a very loose idea of Darwin as the main performance concept. Our Director, Kirsten Dehlholm, had this idea that Darwin would be the framework for the performance and within that anything would be possible. At the very beginning we met various international artists. But, later, we decided not to work together as it seemed that it would be better for them to work on their own. So we moved on and we found other artists to collaborate with.

### **Partners**

The co-producers have all followed and know either Hotel Pro Forma's work or one of the other participating artists. Many of the venues had presented our work in previous seasons, and it was a natural extension of our cooperation. With Royal Danish Theatre, we had a good long-standing partnership and performed there several times. But we never co-produced before – probably because nobody ever asked. It was quite easy to ask them to do a co-production but, when it comes to negotiating terms, in fact it became more complicated.

La Bâtie – Festival de Geneve came in because of the choreographer Hiroaki Umeda. Aarhus, Dansens Hus, Stockholm decided to do the co-production for The Knife (music) which is

very well known in Sweden.

### On working internationally

- For artistic inspiration: our artistic director is extremely interested in looking beyond Denmark's borders for new and interesting artistic collaborations that go beyond what you may typically find in another Nordic group and it's a key factor to her success as an artist. So an international co-production is a result of this artistic direction.
- Working with international artists and organisations is an important part of Hotel Pro Forma's brand, and is one of the main reasons we receive national funding.
- Hotel Pro Forma needs to carry on establishing collaborations with international, acknowledged artists within fields that go beyond traditional performance.
- Co-productions are important in order to distribute and establish an audience.

### Objectives

- To re-establish Hotel Pro Forma at European level as one of the leading artists in its field of visual music performance. Co-producing is the only way for the performance to reach a wide enough geographic and demographic audience to attain this goal.
- For us co-production is primarily a means of "distribution" outside Scandinavia, and not necessarily a means of financing.

### Year 1

Idea development (Darwin plus the individual artistic elements that make up the piece)

Artistic partner development (finding other artistic collaborators appropriate to goals)

Budgeting

### Year 2

Fundraising (national, international and private funds)

Production development (workshops, workshops, workshops)

Finding organisational partners (co-producers, agents): it took about a year to get all the co-producers on board: Royal Danish Theatre signed the contract one and half years before the premiere and Hellerau Arts Dresden, La Bâtie – Festival de Genève joined. The last one, Dansens Hus, Stockholm signed six months before the premiere.

### Year 3

Production and rehearsals

Premiere

Co-production Tour

### Year 4

Tour

Co-production agreements should be set up with The Royal Danish Theatre and at least one venue

with a central Western European location for Hotel Pro Forma's next international production. This is for artistic, financial and marketing reasons. They were by far the largest contributing partner to the project, and they contributed everything from an artistic network to rehearsal space, funds, stage time etc. Furthermore, playing there in Denmark is very important for our local "image" and typically means that we can attract international and national venues to Denmark to see the performance.

Workshops focusing on technology are an important tool to develop Hotel Pro Forma's performances artistically and technically, and moreover they add innovation.

In terms of creating the show and establishing the co-production, Hotel Pro Forma did all of this work and took most of the financial risk and shared the cost. There was one co-producer who didn't contribute financially. Co-producers shared the cost, not the profit.

We will try a profit sharing with some of the partners for our next co-production project which will tour for two years internationally after premiere. The profit from the tour will go to partners who invested in the performance as their contribution. The profit will be the amount of income after deducting all the cost for the production and touring, divided among the partners according to their contributions at the end of 2 years. A lot of investment will be needed for the two year tour, so the amount of profit will be not a large amount of money. It is to provide some incentive to the partners by giving back something for their contribution, as well as giving them motivation to sell the performance through their network.

We need to make sure the tour is profitable, though it is not easy and we rarely make money from touring. In planning the co-production, we estimated the tour income for two years and gave an idea to the partners that this amount would be the profit share after 2 years. Certainly, it is not a way to attract co-producers, but an incentive to make them to commit to the project. Experienced partners wouldn't see this as a reason to join a co-production, though it might bring some new partners, not because of the profit, but because of confidence in the project. What we aim for with this profit share model is to show confidence in the number of tours, level of exposure and budget. Also, transparency in the project structure will provide our partners with peace of mind as they can see where their money is going.

### **Difficulties & achievements**

There was an artistic crisis because the choreography was not well received before the premiere. So we had to work on this. Two weeks before the premiere the choreographer just left. It was too late to do anything about it. That was the biggest problem we had and it is still a problem. We didn't address it properly. The piece was re-choreographed at a very basic level and the show is still touring. It is a dilemma as we tour a piece that we are not entirely happy with the choreographic side. But everything else is working very well.

It was our largest scale production at an international level and reached the largest audience

numbers as well as a much wider range: primarily because of the music by The Knife. We were very happy to have very young audiences. It's pretty much sold out wherever we went.

We've learned that we should do music and dramatic pieces rather than including dance. We are expert in music not dance. At an international level, the dance market is extremely competitive and to reach that high quality level in contemporary dance is too difficult for us.

From the problem with the dance part of the show, we learned we have to have to check on artistic progress before it is too late.

We've also learned that the co-production for us is more about distribution than financing. The fees for us as Danish artists are already very high: it is not a main objective for us to get financial support from co-producers though it was quite helpful.

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### **Advice**

- Be patient!
  - If you are a group recognised artistically, start a co-production with re-staging part of an already existing show and tour to venues where you haven't been. Then, make sure to follow up with another tour for the next three years to build a strong network.
  - Allow enough time to build a relationship, a network and trust with all the venues as potential co-producers so they are confident in co-producing a new show with you.
  - There is a certain format for international co-productions to think about. For us it was important to have a large scale piece but probably it wouldn't be so for other groups.
  - Don't be afraid to use lawyers as it is well worth the investment at the end. We hired a lawyer for the contract with international artists, particularly for the music rights and it was essential to have the whole agreement it turned out. For an independent company or a one-off production you might think that it is too expensive. But it is worthwhile.
  - Co-production is quite time-consuming. You need to know why you want a co-production.
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## 5 *Hallerstein* (2008-2009)

### Intermedia performance

Slovenia – Czech Republic – Portugal – China

**Co-production:** KID KIBLA (Slovenia); Slovene National Theatre, Maribor (Slovenia); CIANT, Prague (Czech Republic); Instituto Politecnico de Tomar (Portugal).

**Project co-organisers:** Beijing Language and Culture University - Institute of Sinology studies (China); University of Minho - Confucius Institute (Portugal); Slovenian cultural association Korotan (Austria)

*The production was inspired by the story of Hallerstein, a Slovenia-born scientist who travelled to China in the 18th century. Conceived by a Chinese visual artist living in Ljubljana, the hometown of Hallerstein, the international co-production was developed through a series of research processes such as workshops, conferences and publications with various international partners from the countries where the scientist was born, travelled and died. The final performance incorporated visual art, dance and music embodying the universal contrast between diverse languages, cultural and historical barriers, the relation between the traditional and the modern, between science and art, between the East and the West.*

<http://www.hallerstein.net/?p=39&lang=en>

**Interviewees:** Dejan Pestotnik, Vice-President & Aleksandra Kostič, President, KIBLA (Slovenia); Wang Huiqin, artist for Hallerstein (China/Slovenia)

### #1 :Dejan Pestotnik & Aleksandra Kostič, KIBLA (Slovenia)

Chinese artist Huiqin Wang started a new international project in 2007 with Maribor gallery Kibela, collaborating with a Japanese traditional dancer, Slovenian director and multimedia artist. The interactive exhibition *Live Calligraphy* united various elements of expressions by different people into one art work. The wish that harmony should rule the world was fulfilled by the artists themselves with their art work and was also a starting point for *Hallerstein*.

Avguštin Ferdinand von Hallerstein was a scientist and a man of an extremely strong personality who lived in the Chinese imperial court as a court astronomer for 35 years and studied the universe and even attempted to count the Chinese population. He is a great inspiration to Huiqin Wang (a Chinese artist based in Ljubljana). Wang's concept was to search for different materials (letters, sketches, suits, coat of arms, pictures) and create a visual image of Hallerstein, a kind of calligraphy image.

## Co-production partners

KIBLA is an organisation that has always worked internationally. The European project *Hallerstein* was created to connect European with Chinese culture. Through the conceptualisation of the two-year project *Hallerstein*, we combined cultural heritage, performing arts and new media technologies.

We applied for EU Culture Programme funding, under a special 2007 programme for EU collaborations with China (target country changes each year). As partners, we needed universities and scientific circles to contribute studies and research on Hallerstein. Our adviser from the University of Ljubljana and Huiqin Wang recommended as a Chinese partner Beijing Language and Culture University – Institute of Sinology Studies, the Portuguese University of Minho - Confucius Institute and Viennese SKC Korotan.

CIANT in Prague has been KIBLA'S project partner for many years, as has the Portuguese Instituto Politecnico de Tomar. These partners made one other important contribution: Avguštin Ferdinand von Hallerstein either travelled through the country or lived there for his research purposes. With the partners we have worked with, we know exactly what we can expect from them, considering know-how, interests, skills and knowledge.

CIANT was responsible for developing a Chinese shadow theatre puppet into virtual 3D space, interactive with a dancer on a special sensorial podium. In *Hallerstein*, we wanted to integrate traditional media with new media and use it for narrative artistic media.

University of Minho - Confucius Institute, Korotan and Slovenian Cultural Association were integrated into the project as new partners from Europe without previous experiences in collaboration in EU projects. Confucius Institute collaboration was the most distinguished in music and Korotan, in fine arts. The Chinese partner, Beijing Language and Culture University, Institute for Sinological Studies was for the symposium.

As an overall evaluation of our partners, we would say that was very balanced, efficient, inspiring and challenging. Somehow we all wanted to continue, because a long term solid partnership has been developed through years. Two years is quite a short period and we all felt somehow stopped in the middle of an action when the project was finished.

## Achievements

Overall, a total of 36 activities were held for the project from the first meeting to the final performance, exhibitions and publication of DVD and a book on Hallerstein. It was planned to set up an event in every partner country, i.e. Slovenia, Portugal, Austria, Czech Republic and China, according to the historical path of Avguštin Ferdinand von Hallerstein. The final performance of *Hallerstein* in October 2009 at Slovenian National Theatre in Maribor celebrated the 253rd anniversary of his death and the international year of astronomy.

The *Hallerstein* project resulted in good connectivity of intermedia artists proposed by all partners.

A good balance of artists is accompanied by a good balance of performances and event locations, introducing the personality of Hallerstein and Jesuit culture, science and geography to audiences in different places, reaching some 20,000 people over two years.

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### **What we learned from the project**

- strictly follow a clear plan
- do not overestimate or underestimate a partner (right judgement)
- diplomacy

### **Advice:**

Experiences are the most important thing, there is no advice.

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## #2 : Wang Huiqin, calligraphy artist for *Hallerstein* (China/Slovenia)

My first collaboration with KIBLA was in Maribor in spring 2007. I worked with a Japanese Butoh dancer for a multimedia performance with the theme Living Calligraphy. This collaboration with KIBLA impressed me greatly. When I introduced the importance of Hallerstein to Madam Aleksandra Kostič (president of ACE KIBLA, curator of KiBela gallery) in 2007, she immediately agreed to support us with funding and staff for the production of our first *Hallerstein* DVD, with letters, sketches, and paintings I had collected.

The first time I heard of Hallerstein (Chinese name Liu Songling) was the celebration of his 300th birthday in 2003. Apart from his former residence, the elaborate equatorial armillary sphere he invented and some records in Chinese, Latin, English, Russian, Slovenian and Portuguese, so far no portrait of him has been found. Hallerstein, a forgotten historical character, haunts me and I want more people to know about him. I am greatly interested in his life and career. Both China and Europe have forgotten this great cultural character of the 18th century. Probably because I live in a foreign land, my understanding of Hallerstein is deeper than others and that equips me with a stronger desire to present him.

Originally I studied oil painting at China Academy of Art, and I learned about printmaking and painting in the West. However, I still feel this is limited. I already started creating oil painting, printmaking and photography with different artists from Slovenia in 1997. I also collaborated with the puppet theatre in Ljubljana. In fact, there are many examples of different artists creating together in ancient China, e.g. one does the bamboo, another the peony, a third the bird, and finally the poet writes on the painting. The artwork is created by the collaboration of artists, a kind of cross-border collaboration. The *Hallerstein* project results from artists who share the same interest in Hallerstein and come together and work together.

In the globalised 21st century, most resources are shared. However, the field of multimedia and new media are still not yet fully developed and made available to all. Without question, I am most proud of the realisation of the *Hallerstein* project, but I think this is far from the end. I still want to create a series of pictures of him, an animation, and a documentary. I also intend to initiate an

advocacy for UNESCO to organise a world culture day for Hallerstein.

### **On working internationally**

Although I have left China and lived in Europe for more than 20 years, I have never isolated myself from Chinese culture. On the contrary, I always work and communicate with Chinese artists. I continually invite Chinese artists to have their exhibitions here in Europe and often go back to China for exhibitions and lectures in art schools. After 20 years of learning about European contemporary culture from zero, my exploration and experience have become my hidden spiritual wealth.

### **The main objectives of *Hallerstein***

More than 99% of Slovenians and Europeans have no idea who Hallerstein was. 99% of Chinese don't know who Liu Songling was. Few people know that Hallerstein and Liu Songling are the same person. I want to make more people know about him, make him closer to people by using a contemporary visual language. Multimedia art breaks the language barrier and the obstacles of time and geography. It brings people closer to history, to truth. It opens up the dialogue between East and West, tradition and modernity, science and art.

Now the *Hallerstein* project has produced the first English publication about Liu Songling, which is being translated from English to Chinese. A performance was held during Expo 2010 in Shanghai. We also attended the first ASEM Culture and Art Festival in Beijing in 2009. A performance took place in the Slovenia Pavilion during the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008.

### **Difficulties**

Sometimes problems arise since each collaborator might feel the imbalance in the use of project funding. However, they can all be solved by negotiation. I do not recall any difficulty that cannot be solved.

### **The main achievements**

We all know that shadow play is the oldest multimedia form. We used high technology to combine western ballet with a Chinese creative element – the shadow play, and this produces greater volume than in traditional repertoire. Travelling across the time and space, the ancient character Hallerstein was vividly performed in a contemporary multimedia form.

Through the project, many who did not know Hallerstein have now known Liu Songling. I feel pleasure from the collaboration, especially when expanding the channel for collaboration, which draws the best artists and their skills. This process is also one in which I learn and progress. But without KIBLA, without Madam Sandra Kostic, without the EU funding, the *Hallerstein* project would have been only a seed that would never sprout and blossom. It would not be like what we have now, blossoming everywhere around the world.

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**Advice**

Any opportunity for collaboration is reserved for those who are ready to take up challenges, and challenges are never the same on each occasion.

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*\* Original Interview was done by emails in Chinese and translated into English by Minchih Sun*

## 6 *Nijinsky Siam* (2010)

### Dance

#### Thailand-Singapore-Germany

**Co-production:** Singapore Arts Festival (Singapore); Theater der Welt 2010 (Germany); supported by Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Switzerland) and Noorderzon/Grand Theatre Groningen (Netherlands).

*In this autobiographical Shadow Dance Theatre, Pichet Klunchun, the choreographer and maestro of Thai khon dance, evokes another maestro, Vaslav Nijinsky, the extraordinary and legendary choreographer. Nijinsky danced with the Ballets Russes at the Paris Opera, where he made his debut as a choreographer with Afternoon of a Faun. That controversial production made its mark across Europe and is considered the moment when modern ballet was born. Pichet Klunchun came across pictures of the production: its poses and costumes reminded him strongly of traditional khon dance. In fact, Nijinsky had seen a performance in Saint Petersburg given by a visiting Siamese dance group. Pichet Klunchun does not want to know why, but rather how his dead colleague had copied this language of gesture.*

<http://www.pklifework.com/WorkPages/Nijinsky%20Siam.html>

<http://www.pklifework.com/>

**Interviewees:** Pichet Klunchun, Pichet Klunchun Dance Company (Thailand); Frie Leysen, Head of Programme, Theater der Welt 2010 (Germany); Low Kee Hong, General Manager, Singapore Arts Festival (Singapore)

### #1 : Pichet Klunchun, Pichet Klunchun Dance Company (Thailand)

I met Frie Leysen at Theater der Welt in 2008/2009 and shared my idea of creating *Nijinsky Siam* with her. She got interested. In 2009, my producer, Tang Fu Kuen proposed this project to Low Kee Hong in Singapore and he also was interested. During that time, Tang Fu Kuen was also trying to find more parties for co-producing the production.

All the co-producing partners have been good friends for many years. I met Frie Leysen in Bangkok back in 2006. At that time she was director of Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels and invited me to perform there. We kept in touch. Low Kee Hong is also a good friend that I have known since 2003. They both have seen my work and I believe that they had trust in my work; that was why, when I proposed to them the plan of *Nijinsky Siam*, they decided to co-produce the production without hesitation. Furthermore, both of them have been working with Asian and European artists for a long time, so they had a good perspective about work in both cultures. The concept of *Nijinsky Siam* is a cross-culture (Asian and European) work. As a result, it was suitable for both continents.

## On working internationally

My only objective is I want to share my country's art form with others in order to create understanding among different cultures. I found that working internationally was more effective than in my own country.

The main objective of this particular project was for me to learn about how he created what he did in La danse siamoise. The more I worked with Nijinsky's choreography from the photographs of him in La danse siamoise, I acknowledged and learned surprising facts and got more interested in him. Nijinsky saw the beauty of Thai Classical Dance and developed that beauty to become his own perfect beauty. I believe that looking at Thai Classical Dance from the outsider's point of view allowed him to see a side that was impossible for an insider to see. Moreover, I wanted to do the research about the touring of Thai Classical Dance Troupe, the Bud Mahinot Dance Company that went to Europe back in the 1900s.

## The main phases

We discussed the details of the concept, the production and budget. After that we discussed the technical rider and the development of the production. Frie Leysen also came to Bangkok to observe the rehearsal and gave feedback.

The co-producers shared the production fees that allowed me to create the piece. The production fees are equally split three-ways between Singapore Arts Festival, Theater der Welt and Zürcher Theater Spektakel together with Noorderzon/Grand Theatre Groningen. When we performed at their festivals, they paid for the performance fees, travel costs, per diems and accommodation. They also theatre and technical crew and promotion.

The contract is always complicated and has to be read carefully. However, I never had to revise it at the last stage. I would do the negotiation before starting the contract.

In terms of communications, using email is very convenient. During the period before the show is presented, communication is usually very busy and time consuming.

## Difficulties

- Different stages affect the technical set-up and performance. The theatre size must be right for the show – not too small, not too big. This show has a particular setting that is quite complicated. If I found the theatre was not quite perfect for the show, I let my lighting designer talk to the technical crew to see what we could do to solve the problem.
- Logistic of travelling. When we go on tour in many countries, we must plan the flight clearly to fit the travel schedule. We had 5 people in the team and everything had to be planned ahead and checked carefully before the tickets were issued. One more thing is about the visa, we had to apply for a business visa and it is not so easy or convenient. During this process, I had to be in contact with the organisers very much in advance to

prepare the support document for the visa. After that we had to plan the time to apply and get the visa in time for the departures.

- Time difference between Thailand and the countries we were in affects dancers. It was quite hard to adjust to jet lag. The first 2 days were very tiring. I normally had to have the whole team flown in 3 days before a show date in order to recover from the time difference and have enough time to set up, rehearse and get ready for the show.

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### **Achievements**

First, I learned about Nijinsky and the techniques that he used in La danse siamoise. Another important thing is that I have developed “shadow puppet” to be used for a new purpose rather than only presenting the “Ramayana story”. I bring Nijinsky back in the form of a shadow puppet while other dancers brought him back by dancing. I think this is a new approach to bring him back that really makes me feel good.

- I learned what Nijinsky saw in Thai Classical Dance.
- I saw Thai Classical Dance much deeper through Nijinsky’s works.
- I saw myself and some feeling of Nijinsky; I felt the connection between him and myself during the time I performed on stage.

### **Advice**

In this globalised world, it is not difficult to be known or interesting [internationally]. The most important thing that I want to suggest to artists is to focus on the work that they are doing and make it perfect and good quality. Once the work is good, the opportunity will come.

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## **#2 : Frie Leysen, Theater der Welt 2010 (Germany)**

The starting point for this co-production was, as it is always, the artist himself and the project he wanted to realise. I know Pichet and his work for some years now, and presented him several times in Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels, that I directed till 2006. The subject he wanted to develop in this production – the influence of traditional Thai dance on Nijinsky’s Siam ballet – was more than interesting.

In terms of partners, I had indeed worked with Pichet before. But with the Singapore Festival, it was the first time. I invited a production I had seen in the festival, but this was a re-creation, separate from the festival.

In Theater der Welt 2010, we co-produced 16 productions. I’m convinced that festivals have an important role to play in the creation of new work, as well as presenting existing work. Co-production means a financial support, often necessary to create new work, but more than that. It means also looking for other partners, and thus other presenters and other audiences. It can mean support for the organisation, feedback during the creation process, if needed and/or wanted by the artist.

Presenting creations in the festival is, of course, a risky thing: you don't know what will come out. This implies another relation with the audience: you cannot guarantee a masterpiece. But what you can guarantee is that this is an important artist, who has a vision and a personal artistic language. It appeals to the sense of adventure and curiosity of the audience, a complicity with the artists. In short, it's the opposite of a consumer-attitude. By the way, I don't like commissions and co-commissions: it is the artist who decides what he/she wants to talk about, not the programmers and festival directors.

A lot of co-productions today are set up to be able to get European subsidies. Europe requires networking and international collaboration. In itself positive, but sometimes it might lead to artificial collaborations.

There is also some criticism of 'festival-circuit co-productions'. If a festival presents only this type of work, it is clearly a proof of lack of vision and inspiration. But it illustrates also the economic need to collaborate in producing new work. Most festivals don't have the means any more to produce on their own. And, what is positive, these collaborations guarantee the artists a number of presentation platforms, before the work is finished. Another trend would certainly be the international creations with artists from different countries and cultures, set up by curators and programmers. Most of the time, they are artificial, superficial and bad.

### Objectives of the project

1. First of all, to present Pichet in Theater der Welt: he is one of the most interesting choreographers in Asia at the moment.
2. Secondly: to support his new creation.
3. And thirdly, the look of an Asian choreographer at a great Western artist, who was himself influenced by Asian traditional dance.

Theater der Welt wanted to be a real opener to the world, and present contemporary works from all over the world.

### The main phases

- discussing the content
- discussing budget
- planning and organisation
- search for other co-producers
- follow up of the creation by mail
- attending rehearsal
- follow up of all this

Honestly, I did not have so much contact with the Singapore Festival. Pichet has his own structure and manager and a rehearsal space in Bangkok, where everything was coordinated. Tang Fu Kuen also supported him during the rehearsals and assisted him a lot during the research period, when Pichet was studying Nijinsky.

Everything was centralised in Bangkok. The contract was between us and Pichet, not between all the co-producers. Since we know each other well, and trust each other, everything went smoothly.

### Communications

Since Bangkok is not really round the corner, communication happened a lot via email and phone. But at a certain moment, when Pichet thought he had a first rough base, I went especially to Bangkok to see rehearsals and discuss with him.

A co-producer stepped out at a very late moment. It is important that co-producers stick together with the artist at these moments, and try to find solutions together.

The achievement was that a great artist created a great work.

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### Learning & advice

- There is no key formula for co-producing. Every co-production is different, and all depends on the needs of the artist.
- Give the artist full trust and let him determine what kind of support he/she needs. But follow rehearsal process closely.
- Don't try to invent everything yourself, don't set up 'clever' international co-productions. But listen to the artist, once you trust him/her. Let the artist decide on how, where, with whom to work. Stand by the artist, follow up closely, but respect his/her freedom. And certainly, don't think you're the artist and you know how things should be done.
- And when things turn out not so well, stick together.

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## #3 : Low Kee Hong, Singapore Arts Festival (Singapore)

This project was brought to us by Tang Fu Kuen (dramaturg and producer working with Pichet) and Pichet Klunchen in autumn 2009. It was a project that worked for us conceptually for the 2010 edition of the Singapore Arts Festival. I have also known Pichet for a long time and have been following his work very closely. He is an artist we believe in investing in and so we're always open to be kept up to date on his new projects.

When the project was brought to us, we were informed that they were also in discussion with Theater der Welt to co-commission the piece. So strictly, this is not a co-production relationship with Theater der Welt. Frie and I did not have much discussion on the work together with Pichet and Fu Kuen, rather I believe we had separate discussions.

### On international co-productions

These days resources are always limited and of course one of the most immediate advantages of co-commissioning is to share creation costs with partners i.e. festivals, art centres or other presenting institutions. The space of co-production takes on a very different mode usually involving the conception of the idea with artists and partners. That said, our job as curators and artistic directors of festivals is to serve the ideas of the artists. Together, we try to create an

environment conducive for artists to explore the work. In the process, we may also try to find more opportunities for the work to be seen by audiences in different markets. It all comes down to identifying and believing in the artists you want to support.

Co-investing in artistic projects with partners is to stretch our programming dollars. It gets more expensive to make a new show now and coming together allows artistic projects and artists the space to focus on making the work. It is also a result of dialogue with your colleagues about artists we have similar interests in so that we can pull together resources to support their work because we believe in them.

### **The main objectives of the project**

*Nijinsky Siam* was an important phase for Pichet in his career and we wanted to be there for him. I am more interested in his continued development than any particular project per se.

It needs to start with the artist and end with the artist. The idea must emerge from an artistic impulse and for me this comes from a conversation with the artist. Our role is to ask questions to clarify these artistic ideas and when something is seeded and relevant to our festivals we move to encourage the creation process usually with resources either through residencies, creation seed monies, workshops, etc. After this first phase, when the ideas are more developed and clearer drafts signal the possibility of getting the work up, we move into funding the actual production of the piece. Throughout the process, all parties are engaged in a dialogue in order to clarify the work and idea.

Once the project proposal is clear, we may start to interest other partners keen to co-invest or present the work. Each time a piece is presented is an additional opportunity to fine-tune the work. Of course, it also ensures that more audiences get to encounter the work.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The artist is responsible and in control of making the work. We provide the supporting structures from resources to dramaturgical discussions to clarify the piece.

We have two contracts for this situation. One with our partner and one we sign collectively with the artist. The first contract details each party's commitment to the project and other ancillary terms and conditions mutually agreed upon. The second details the role of the artist, the work, and terms and conditions related to the first and subsequent presentations.

When we all operate in different countries and time zones, communications are not always easy. The thousands of emails attest to a constant to and fro to maintain the communication channels. Being able to Skype has helped a great deal to sort things out quickly when a face to face is not possible. I personally still prefer being in the same room and planning trips together so that we can meet personally is always on my mind.

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### **Learning and achievements**

- As with any project when we work with artists and partners, it is about deepening the relationship and trust so that we are on the same page as we work together to raise the discourse and push the boundaries of how art engages in ways of seeing.
- As with any creation project there are a couple of things I am always conscious of:
  - Sufficient time for the artist to develop the work
  - In-built platforms for the artist to share the work with audiences to fine-tune the piece
- Maintaining an honest and constant dialogue with everyone involved so that we are all on the same page

### **Advice**

I don't profess to know everything about co-productions as I am still learning myself. Hence, I am not sure if I am qualified to give any advice. I am however acutely aware that there is no single model. It is all about the partnerships you build and the nature of that relationship. And they vary from creation to creation. I suppose it is about sharing of information so that we can learn from each other possible processes that could be relevant and applicable.

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## 7 *Nhiều mặt / Faces* (2008)

### Hip Hop dance theatre

Vietnam – France – Germany

**Project leaders:** Goethe Institute Hanoi (Germany-Vietnam), French cultural centre L'Espace-CCF, Hanoi (France-Vietnam)

**Production coordination:** MOOV'N AKTION (France)

*A Hip Hop dance theatre piece by European choreographers, Sébastien Ramirez (Perpignan) and Raphael Hillebrand (Berlin), they worked with eleven Hanoi artists including two musicians and nine dancers from different crews. Modern Hip Hop language encountered traditional Vietnamese culture. This performance followed several workshops and tours with European and Vietnamese artists.*

<http://www.moovnaktion.org/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqI6sMisDas>

**Interviewees:** Dirk Korell, Director of Production & International Relations, MOOV'N AKTION (France); Franz Xaver Augustin, Regional Director South East Asia, Goethe-Institut

### #1 : Dirk Korell, MOOV'N AKTION (France)

In 2008, MOOV'N AKTION conceived and realised a cultural cooperation project in Vietnam. Our company had been working internationally on similar collaborations since 1999. After several tours, workshops and a first choreographic collaboration in 2006/2007 in Vietnam, we created this new project, financed and organised by the Goethe-Institut and the French cultural centre L'Espace-CCF, with funding from the German-French cooperation fund, Fond Elysée.

The performance has been presented twice in Hanoi and also in Ho Chi Minh City. On the invitation of Goethe-Institut Indonesia, it was presented in Jakarta. In 2011, financed by Goethe Institut Vietnam, we realised a revival, with new presentations in Hanoi and Ho-Chi-Minh City. In March 2011, it was shown in Europe, in France and Berlin.

*Nhiều mặt* is not a 'conventional' co-production in the sense that no theatres have been involved in this project. It was completely funded by Goethe-Institut Vietnam, L'Espace-CCF Hanoi and the Fonds Elysée, with the support of the Performing Arts Centre Vietnam.

We already knew both CCF and Goethe-Institut after several previous cooperation projects. This ambitious cooperation was then built up together. The national partner in Vietnam was involved thanks to Goethe-Institut and CCF who, of course, know the situation in Vietnam well.

What we, MOOV'N AKTION, can realise is ongoing presentation of the work in France and

Germany. This is our focus in terms of our role and objectives in the co-production. We work with our networks and dynamics in order to continue the 'life' of the performance. I think that this kind of co-operation between national institutes (Goethe/CCF) and an independent production company is particularly interesting and complementary.

### **On working internationally**

Since the very beginning, our company works internationally. Our festival, Danse HipHop Tanz, started as a French-German event which since became international. Every year, we receive companies from other countries, mainly in Europe. We also cooperate with associated companies/collectives/choreographers based in France, Germany, Brazil and Belgium which also opens touring opportunities.

We support cross-border cultural co-operation. Often, we work with the logic of artists from France and Germany in a third country (so far, Ivory Coast, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia). Plus other projects with either a French or a German partner (Brazil, Cambodia, Cuba and Singapore). Our main focus is dance, a (mostly) non-verbal universal language. Our second focus is Hip Hop, an international culture with no borders. Our company itself is a very small-scale organisation run by people from mixed backgrounds. So being international, or rather, being 'non-national' is our life itself.

But of course, there are extra values when it comes to cross-national (or cross-cultural) work: communication between peoples, peace-making/keeping, mobility of artists, opening up of personal and artistic horizons, questioning yourself (and the artists) about ways of working in collaboration and creations with others.

Right now, I hear more and more that companies should go international for touring, as the so-called crisis makes it more difficult to tour in France. But I think the economic aspect should not be the first motivation. We all turn more and more global; foreign languages are more spoken than before, travelling becomes more affordable, we are in contact virtually with people in other countries. The notion of national borders, in opposition to inter-national, shall disappear sooner or later, as we live already in a global comprehension.

### **Objectives of the project**

- Artistic development that also involves professional skills in choreography, production & administration
- Mobility of artists and works
- Human development
- To build connections with co-production partners

### **Main phases & responsibilities**

- Conception
- Preparation travel/casting (1 week)

- Creation and presentation (4 to 5 weeks)

*MOOV'N AKTION*: conception of the project in cooperation with Goethe-Institut and CCF; coordination beforehand and in Vietnam; contracts of European participants; production & tour management.

CCF: the partner for Fond Elysée; administration & finance; local coordination such as coordination with local partners; rehearsal space, light technician and communication.

Goethe-Institut: the partner for Fond Elysée; administration & finances; local coordination with local partners, local artists' contracts, venues and communication.

We had a contract with Goethe-Institute. It was easy and uncomplicated: no revision later. Communication was made by CCF and Goethe-Institut. Communication in Vietnam is always a challenge for us, as we don't (or barely) speak Vietnamese, and the general English level is not the best. Also here, we found a solution thanks to a great interpreter/coordinator.

Overall, there were no major problems, but were unable to cast traditional dancers due to their time-table. Other than that, we organised the casting quite well, so it was not complicated to choose other artists in their place, even though we were back in Europe.

## Achievements

- An artistic work of high level.
- Deep link between participating artists: the Vietnamese artists did not know each other well and it was the same between the European and Vietnamese artists.
- The presentation in Jakarta and the participation of two Vietnamese dancers at workshops in Indonesia: it was an interesting cross-border project in South-East Asia.
- This project also created its own dynamics in Hanoi and stimulated the participants. It might have contributed to more autonomy and self-confidence of some, now proactive in the organisation of events and performances both in Vietnam and internationally.
- The critics wrote very positive reviews emphasising how this project was trans-generational with the enthusiastic audiences of all ages. The link between traditional music and Hip Hop has also been received very well by the critics.

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## Learning

- Be humble.
- Take people for what they are and try to push them further in their expression, give them self-confidence and let them open themselves on stage.
- Vietnam is a beautiful and culturally rich country. We experienced different, but sincere, human relationships.

## Advice

- Watch and listen. Give and take.

- Don't judge other cultures or behaviours with your scales and values.
  - And call us if you want us to share our experience.
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## #2 : Franz Xaver Augustin, Regional Director South East Asia, Goethe-Institut Jakarta (as the representative of the Vietnamese partner for the project)

The project *Nhiều mặt* was developed when I was in Vietnam from 2001-07, premiered in Vietnam in 2008 and then toured further in 2009. A revival is being made for a tour to Berlin and Paris in March 2011.

The company, Moov'n Aktion brought choreographer, Sébastien Ramirez and a few other dancers from Europe and presented their work in Vietnam in 2004. Then collaborations with local dancers were undertaken annually from 2005-07. It was a long series of collaborations that developed slowly and gradually. The final work was *Nhiều mặt* which was premiered after I left Vietnam. In 2009 it also toured to Indonesia where I am now and Malaysia.

Moov'n Aktion worked with us since 2004 and we have a long-standing partnership with the French cultural centre. Dirk Korell is a German living in France; one of the choreographers is from Germany and one from France. So we could get funding from the German-French cooperation fund, Fond Elysée which was established in 1963 for the international project with German and French artists in dance, music, puppetry and film; particularly for collaborations between local artists and German and French artists.

### On working internationally

It is simple: they (the artists) like it and they learn a lot!

Every culture has its own movements and its own body languages. For example, Thailand and Indonesia have wonderful traditional dance forms. Many contemporary dancers in this region go through traditional training. Meeting people from different backgrounds is always interesting and greatly helpful for artistic development.

We choose to work with dance in this South East Asian region for two reasons. Firstly, dance is not dependent on language, unlike theatre or literature where everything needs to be translated. Secondly, the region has experienced a long Indian influence over the centuries. Thailand, Laos, Indonesia and Malaysia have developed Indian dance traditions and are now developing new ways and new forms out of the tradition.

*Nhiều mặt's* objective was the same as all other international collaborations we have done: to bring young dancers from the region to collaborate with artists from Europe and let them learn from each other. After four or five projects in Hip Hop for young dancers in Vietnam, this co-production was the first to use traditional elements such as traditional music and masks. This experiment turned out to be very successful. As a regional coordinator, I can say that such a level of co-

production in Hip Hop has not been realised in Jakarta yet. There are some interests in working with European artists among Indonesian Hip Hop dancers and we are trying to start collaboration, but things are still in initial stages.

### The main phases

- Several events prior to a co- production
- Two workshops before they decided on a joint production
- A workshop for co-production
- Rehearsal for actual production for 4-6 weeks
- Premiere in Vietnam and tour

In regions such as Vietnam and Cambodia, you should not expect too much from your local partners. Usually dancers are very talented but local institutes and local organisations have very limited resources and limited support. What they usually provide is rehearsal space, sometimes accommodation or food. Most funds were from the European side: 95% of the production cost. Apart from European funding, sometimes we achieve limited sponsorship or support in kind for international co-productions, but their contribution is very small.

We made a contract between Moov'n Aktion and one of the European institutes: Elysee funding is from Germany for one year and from France for the next year. So it depends from which nation the fund originates. The Goethe-Institut or the CCF has a contract with local dancers – we decide who will be the representative for the project and only one of us makes contracts for a project. This is a routine now as Franco-German national institutes have built a good partnership through working together over time.

In terms of communications, we used translators and also some of local dancers spoke quite good English. So we had good interpreters during the rehearsal process. The dancers managed their communication well through the rehearsals. The European choreographer talked through some dancers who could speak English.

### Difficulties & achievements

The most difficult thing was the lack of discipline of local dancers, mostly freelancers. Sometimes they didn't turn up for rehearsals, though very committed to the project.

Another thing is that the Europeans had to cover all the cost. I force local partners to find more contributions but their input is still limited. It doesn't make a balanced co-operation, but in many parts of the South East Asian region, the government's focus is not on arts subsidy. So this is a little bit of a problem in managing co-productions in the region.

However, we made a good production which was acclaimed not only in Vietnam but also internationally. A group of local and foreign dancers, musicians and choreographers merged the two arts to create a show to remember.

Local dancers incorporated elements of their traditional performing arts such as masks and musical instruments. This show successfully merged traditional and contemporary music and dance. *Nhiều mặt* revealed Vietnam to be dynamic, opening and modern, but also traditional and culturally rich. It's hard to imagine a crowd of 650 people, 90% under 20, sitting rapt before a performance of traditional Vietnamese musical instruments. That was the scene at *Nhiều mặt / Faces*.

Local artists are definitely improved after this project. Both the Vietnamese and European artists learned a lot from the co-production.

I've learned that you need certain continuity for international co-productions. You cannot expect to achieve immediate success from the first attempt. You need to do it step by step.

Also you cannot change the group of people you work with every time. You need to work with the same people for some time. This is the same in music and performing arts.

It is about capacity building and you need time for that. *Nhiều mặt* was the fourth collaboration project in the course of development. We had to go through three other projects to make a final international co-production like this and it took years.

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### Advice

- You should not hurry: you should not force anything as development needs time.
- It is very important to take the first step to get to know who they are going to work with. You cannot say whether it will work or not from the beginning. The first encounter should still be open to whether these collaborators are right for each other, whether it is worthwhile investing in the project further or not. To bring artists together and force them to do something immediately doesn't work.
- For example, Arco Renz (German dancer based in Belgium) has a big project with Cambodian dancers in Singapore Arts Festival in May 2011. He has made two visits to work with local dancers and did try outs prior to the premiere. In case of *Nhiều mặt*, there was much more input from the local artists in terms of the forms and creative suggestions and it worked because we invested in a long period of time to build trust and to create the environment in which this could happen.
- Like those Vietnamese artists, in many regions in transforming (developing) countries, local artists still need to develop their standards: mostly they are good dancers but they need to learn international standards. In this region, dance training institutes are underdeveloped and dancers don't have many opportunities to work internationally. So it is important to provide them with international experience.
- There are certain national institutes which are more or less focused on public diplomacy in the field of culture. In such cases, culture is often used as a means to develop co-operation relationships. But, our focus at Goethe-Institut is on the capacity building in the arts. It is not to use the arts or culture as means of development. Some funders encourage choreographers to work with local disabled children, for example. I'm not

against the social functions of the arts at all. But then it becomes a social commitment or social humanitarian development, it is not a way to artistic capacity building. I believe that to realise the improvement of the artistic level in still developing countries, it is better not to use culture as medium of messages.

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## 8 *Shun-kin* (2009)

### Theatre

UK – Japan

**Co-production:** Complicite (United Kingdom); Setagaya Public Theatre (Japan)

*A theatre piece based on the writings of the Japanese writer, Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, directed by Simon McBurney/Complicite, performed by Japanese actors. Inspired by two texts by Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, A Portrait of Shun-kin and In Praise of Shadows, Shun-kin is the story of a blind Shamisen player and the servant so devoted he will do anything to share her world.*

*Shun-kin is performed in Japanese by its all-Japanese cast.*

<http://www.complicite.org/flash/>

[http://setagaya-pt.jp/en/theater\\_info/2008/11/shunkin.html](http://setagaya-pt.jp/en/theater_info/2008/11/shunkin.html)

**Interviewees:** Judith Dimant, Producer, Complicite (UK); Chieko Hosaka, Chief Producer, Setagaya Public Theatre (Japan)

### #1 : Judith Dimant, Complicite (UK)

We have worked with the Setagaya since 1995. We have taken two shows to Setagaya previously and in 2003 created *The Elephant Vanishes* from Murakami's stories as a co-production with Japanese actors and it was presented both at Setagaya and the Barbican.

We always wanted to do a show with the Setagaya, working with Japanese actors. Our interest was with Japanese writing and we wanted make the show in Tokyo. We embarked on writings by Tanizaki – but at that time Simon couldn't find a 'way in'. Someone outside the company suggested reading the Murakami short stories which we all loved immediately. Simon felt it was an accurate portrayal of modern urban living that would be familiar to many – also the stories were funny and sometimes magical. The Setagaya were very open to this idea and tracked down Murakami himself to meet and Simon met him to request the stage rights. Also, the ideas in the essay of Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, were of great interest to Simon as was the extraordinary story of *Shun-kin* and most Japanese knew this tale.

Our collaborations are determined by the work we make and the stories we want to tell. We want to show work relevant to those particular countries. We have made several international co-productions and tours recently.

### The main objectives

It was mainly artistic development. Of course we also need to make money to fund shows– but the artistic drive is the motivation.

We have worked on this story based on the writings of Jun'ichiro Tanizaki since 1995. *Shun-kin*

was cast in 2007 by Simon and his associate Catherine Alexander visiting Tokyo and meeting actors that Setagaya recommended.

### Phases of co-production

- We decided in 2005 that we would make another show in Tokyo. It took about 2-3 years to develop and devise the show from the concept to the stage.
- Pre-production: casting in Tokyo in 2007
- Rehearsal in London and final rehearsal in Tokyo: 2007/2008
- About 12 -15 weeks to first produce the show and then 3 weeks rehearsal for revivals
- Premiere: Feb 2008 – Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo
- 1st Revival:       Jan 2009, Barbican Theatre, London  
                      Mar 2009, Setagaya Public Theatre
- 2nd Revival:     Nov 2010, Barbican Theatre  
                      Nov 2010, Theatre de la Ville, Paris  
                      Dec 2010, Setagaya Public Theatre  
                      Dec 2010, National Chiang Kai-shek Cultural Centre, Taipei

### Roles and responsibilities

Actors and some crew including one of the designers were Japanese; creative team and some crew were from the UK. In the first instance, we rehearsed and developed the work in London for several weeks before moving to Tokyo where the show opened.

The co-production received some funding from The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, Arts Council England and Japan Foundation. Costs were shared equally, income shared equally. Setagaya raised far more funds than us – because they have a theatre. The money we raised from the Japan Foundation in 2010 was towards costs in Paris and London only.

We drew up a contract as we were going through the process! A lot was left to trust and knowing each other well.

### Communications

Of course it is difficult working in a different culture and we all recognised this and did our best. Language is the most difficult aspect. In terms of the communication with the actors, Simon worked well with them. He had excellent translators he had known for many years.

The Japanese production structure was very well organised. Incredible work ethic – they work harder than anywhere else I know, but they are not always direct about what they think!

Lost in translation? Probably! Lots of cultural differences and they would probably say that we are very rude and a bit too direct!

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### Achievements & learning

- We made a true co-production and a show of exceptionally high artistic and creative standard.
- We learned how differently we all work, but also how to work at a high standard.
- Particular skill needed? Patience mainly – and also a great deal of plain speaking – but generally a very happy, creative experience and one I would do again.

### Advice

It's tricky! You have to know and like the people involved and be working together for cultural reasons rather than just financial.

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## #2 : Chieko Hosaka, Setagaya Public Theatre (Japan)

The relationship between Complicite and Setagaya Public Theatre (SePT) started before SePT opened in 1997. In 1995, I worked with the Tokyo Globe Theatre as international liaison officer/administrator and was in charge of presenting *The Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol* by Complicite there. It was the first encounter for a Japanese audience with Complicite and their work. Also it was the company's first visit to Tokyo. During this visit, Simon McBurney did workshops with Hideki Noda with Japanese actors. They were named "Memory Workshops". At that time, Simon conducted such workshops in many countries and later it turned into a theatre piece. This was the first time Simon worked with Japanese actors.

In 1996, many staff members of Tokyo Globe Theatre, including myself, were transferred to Setagaya Public Theatre (SePT), in order to prepare for its opening in 1997. SePT, a self-producing public theatre aims to produce and/or to present top-notch and/or cutting edge productions. In 1998, we presented Complicite's *The Street of Crocodile*. On his second visit to Tokyo, Simon was given a Tanizaki essay, *The Praise of Shadow* and he was very much attached to the Japanese culture depicted in the book. Simon asked me to organise workshops on Tanizaki's piece with Japanese actors while he was in Tokyo. This was the very starting point of *Shun-kin*. We chose two texts for the workshops, one is *The Praise of Shadows* and the other is one of his best novels, *The Tale of Shunkin*, both written in 1933.

Tanizaki is one of the best writers in Japan in the 20th century and is regarded as an icon of the Japanese literature/culture. At this moment nobody was sure if a British director, who neither read nor spoke Japanese, could make a theatre piece on Tanizaki with Japanese actors but I believed in my sixth sense. My instincts told me "Go Ahead!" Simon fell in love with Japanese culture and food and we fell in love with Simon's directing of theatre works. Since then we organised Tanizaki workshops every now and then. In 2001, Simon brought his collaborators to Tokyo, conducting workshops with the Japanese actors. At the end, we were sure the workshops would be developed into a full staged version in future. Through several Tanizaki workshops for five years, Simon, Japanese actors and SePT members felt that it would take enormous time to transform Tanizaki texts into a theatrical form. The more we tackled Tanizaki texts, the more

we learned how it is not a piece of cake to make a theatre piece with a British director and contemporary Japanese actors.

The text was written in 1933 and the participating Japanese actors felt the distance in time. In 2002, we brought four Japanese actors to London and did workshops with UK designer/actors. In the workshops, all of sudden, Simon declared that he would like to use the text of Haruki Murakami's *Underground* and seventeen short novels, entitled *The Elephant Vanishes*, instead of Tanizaki texts. It worked perfectly! So we made up our mind to make a theatre piece based on Murakami's short novels in 2002. It turned into *The Elephant Vanishes*, premiered in Tokyo 2003, followed by shows in Osaka and London.

Through *The Elephant Vanishes*, Simon, Japanese actors/technical staff members and British crew established good communications and trustworthy relationships. All of us now knew we were ready for a journey to the world of Tanizaki. In 2006 & 2007, SePT organised auditions and workshops in Tokyo and started rehearsing in November/December 2007 in London and January/February in Tokyo. The world premiere of *Shun-kin* was in February 2008. Since the first workshops in 1998, it took nearly ten years to make a theatre piece on Tanizaki. It really was a long and winding road.

### On working internationally

Uncalculated chemical reactions occur when two different cultures meet. I am sure most cultures cannot exist without being influenced by others. In Japanese culture, so many 'foreign' cultural elements are infused. Through the eyes and different points of views of non-Japanese artists, we learn more not only about our culture but also who we are. Although we enjoy working with Japanese artists, we need 'other point of view' to create a 'new' theatre piece. Working with artists with different cultures, languages and value systems makes us open-minded to other cultures and aware of another layer of our own culture.

### The main objectives of the project

In working on this international co-production, our main objectives of the project were:

- To make a co-production with a top level artist, Simon McBurney
- To extend touring range internationally
- To develop artistic skills
- To contribute to audience development

Artistically speaking, we wanted to create a brand new theatre piece on Japanese culture with a person who has a different point of view towards Japanese culture.

### Roles and responsibilities

Financially speaking, Setagaya was responsible for the Japanese actors, composer, set designer and technical crew, translator for the director and production management. Complicite was responsible for the creators such as director, lighting/sound/projection, costume designers and UK technical crew.

We shared the costs according to the income. We had funding from the Agency of Cultural Affairs in Japan, the Japan Foundation and Daiwa Anglo – Japanese Foundation.

It takes an enormous time to finalise a contract for many reasons.

Compared with communications tools ten years ago, we surely live in a more convenient world. However, as always, the most important and effective communications are simple: to meet, to talk face-to-face and to dine together. Since we have a 15-year relationship with Complicite, daily communication is by email when we are in our home cities. But I often drop by Complicite's office or see Simon's other theatre pieces in Europe and USA.

In *Shun-kin* we had several English-speaking Japanese company members. Even with fluent English speakers in the company, we sometimes encounter unexpected issues. The main reason is that the function/role of each member such as stage manager and producer is sometimes totally different in each country. Through the 10-year collaboration, we learned the difference between each role and function in London and Tokyo. Every time we encountered unexpected issues, we have thought why and have sorted it out one by one.

### Achievements

Many Japanese think that most Japanese novels/texts are difficult to understand for a non-Japanese reader/audience. However, the huge success of *The Elephant Vanishes* (based on Haruki Murakami) and *Shun-kin* (based on Jun'ichiro Tanizaki) in a world tour proved that it has a universal value. In the process of creating a theatre piece, we were able to communicate with company members with different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, presenting such a show in Japanese enables us to communicate with an audience in many countries. The audience and the company can share the same feelings and/or compassion to see our performance even though we live in a different culture.

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### Learning

Be patient, patient and patient! As the proverb says – where there's a will, there's a way.

The three things I learned from this project are as follows:

- Simon has the courage of not deciding until the last minute and so I made up my mind to have the courage of waiting until his last minute decision was made.
- Artists should be creative and original in the process of making a theatre piece and producers should be patient and trust artists. Both should share the notion of questioning, challenging and defying the status quo and giving the audience any hints to live more meaningfully.
- Appreciating cultural difference which is enjoyable.

### Advice

Believe in your sixth sense and trust other partners.

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## 9 **Paradise... a Woman? (2007)**

### **Physical theatre**

#### **Netherlands – Indonesia**

**Co-production:** Kantor Pos (Netherlands); Gumarang Sakti (Indonesia).

*A collaboration between Dutch-Indonesian theatre maker, Gerard Mosterd and world renowned Sumatran choreographer, Boi G Sakti. An international group, consisting of four Indonesians, a Japanese and two Netherlands-based dancers, perform the patterns of Sakti and Mosterd which results in a dynamic dance spectacle. Sakti takes an old Minangkabau myth [Bundo Kanduang] as his starting point, focusing on the role of women in today's world. [www.kantorpos.nl](http://www.kantorpos.nl)*

**Interviewees:** Gerard Mosterd, Director, Kantor Pos (Netherlands); Yessy Apriati, formerly in management of Gumarang Sakti (Indonesia)

## #1 : **Gerard Mosterd, Kantor Pos (Netherlands)**

I have been working in the Dutch and Indonesian performing arts scene for 13 years.

As a theatre maker I work in Indonesia every year and my work tours in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula. In 2003, I saw a performance of Gumarang Sakti, a theatre group with explosive modernistic dance based on the traditions of the Malay people of the Minangkabau (West Sumatra). I was surprised by the refreshing dynamic of the movements, and the strong and original ensemble dancing. I felt that their martial art, Pentjak Silat lent itself fantastically as a movement vocabulary in combination with contemporary theatre. Never had I seen anything like this. The selection of Indonesian stage craft offered worldwide, and in Indonesia, has for the last 30 years been devoted to promoting the Javanese and Balinese traditions.

### **On working internationally**

As a theatre maker of contemporary, physical, multi-disciplinary productions, I always retain a link with my Indo-European background. I travel often and extensively to South East Asia and have performed there as well as brought performances from there to Europe.

Recently, I started working with a newly established artistic collective, Kantor Pos, a production centre focused on cultural exchange between the Netherlands and, in particular, Indonesia. One of our aims is the integration of the Asian and European worlds. Kantor Pos is a Bahasa Indonesian name derived from the Dutch word, 'Postkantoor', meaning Post Office. The name was chosen as our main concept of 'sending' and 'receiving' information to and from all over the world. Various challenging projects and activities will be tried within the coming years by Kantor Pos where international cooperation and exchange are central.

My objective in the project was to make a collaboration work with the Sumatran choreographer, Boi G Sakti. He develops very particular modern dance-theatre from themes deeply rooted in the matriarchal Minangkabau community (a region of West Sumatra). I wanted to explore this community. As a Dutch-Indonesian, it was part of my continuous search for a way of collaboration with talented artists in the region.

A wide range of touring was one of the objectives but it wasn't about making a profitable production. It was more to be presented to a wider range of audiences in different territories to share the experience. Most promoters booked the show because they understood that it was a very unusual work of high quality.

### The main phases

- Finding a partner and suggestion of collaboration 2005
- Negotiation and fundraising for a year 2006: unfortunately, I did most of the work in this period. It would have been nice if the Indonesian partner had been more active in fundraising, but they didn't contribute much due to lack of resources in the region.
- Booking tours: 1 year prior to the premiere 2006
- Pre-production 2007
- Rehearsal: Invited dancers to south of Jakarta : 6 weeks 2007
- Additional tour booking for Indonesia by the Indonesian partner 2 weeks before premiere
- Few try-out performances
- Premiere season 2007 (Sep/Oct): Indonesian Premiere: Gedung Kesenian Jakarta  
Dutch Premiere: Theatre De Lieve Vrouw, Amersfoort
- Tour in Asia & Europe: 2007-2008

With more than 50 shows and workshops worldwide in notable theatres, it was performed in venues in Indonesia, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, the Netherlands and Germany.

We took care of 95% of the fundraising as well as the production. Very few Indonesian performing arts companies have knowledge and experience for production management. Even famous ones such as Gumarang Sakti didn't have a proper production structure - this is very underdeveloped in Indonesia. I used my own network in Indonesia as well as my knowledge on producing and tours. Gumarang Sakti organised the rehearsals in the Jakarta area. We arranged the accommodation and 95% of the tour bookings and organisation.

So, in terms of finding supporters, mostly I contacted them. In Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, my works had already been presented and well received. So many of those venues were happy to book the co-production one year before the premiere mainly because they could see the concept of the project was very interesting and promising.

Drawing up a contract with the company, Gumarang Sakti was not easy. It had to be revised

during the tour period. Working with the choreographer, Boi Sakti wasn't easy either. We started this project out of artistic idealism. Unfortunately once we arrived for the rehearsals in Jakarta, it became clear that money was an issue. We managed to raise a reasonable amount of funding but our Indonesian partner expected more than I could offer. It's not a happy collaboration when the rehearsal process starts with an argument over money. Sadly, there was a tendency of distrust, particularly towards foreign people. What we wanted was not to make money, but purely to realise a challenging artistic collaboration. The project resulted in a big tour because the work had an interesting concept. Financing was not my aim in the project and it was difficult to make the Indonesian partner understand this.

I am half Indonesian and was raised with Indonesian values, food and history. I speak the language and know how to deal with Indonesian customs which frequently conflict with Western manners and opinions. Speaking the language is a great asset. More important thing is to understand how to behave and how to communicate in Indonesia, respecting their values and developing trust. It truly takes a lot of patience. Understanding this complex culture should be taken seriously and can only be the result of careful observation, lots of experience, along with a sense of diplomacy and psychological insight.

### **Difficulties and achievements**

- Cultural differences caused occasional conflicts, in particular over money issues. Performing artists in Indonesia are not used to tours of more than 10 shows. Also they don't know the European rates for performers and theatre fees. Some think that Europe is a financial paradise where you can charge whatever you want.
- The collaboration contract was far too delayed and changed even during touring.
- Ego conflict in the artistic collaboration.
- The heat during the rehearsal up to 34 degrees
- I very much respected the religious need of the Muslim dancers to pray five times a day. But it was inevitable to face lots of interruptions during the rehearsal period.
- The production was far too delayed and we ended up cancelling a tour for Sumatra.
- This was a pioneering experience. We showed the region that an Indonesian collaboration project could tour extensively worldwide. This kind of tour was unusual as the matrilineal Minang culture was exposed.
- Quite remarkable media exposure in Indonesia which included national newspaper coverage - it was much more exposure than in Holland

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### **Learning and advice**

Life is a continuous learning, but with this, I learned more about dealing with Indonesian people in many ways, particularly understanding the Indonesian performing arts scene.

Also I learned how to organise a tour inside Indonesia. Even local artists and managers didn't know how to organise such a large scale tour and they simply didn't believe it would be possible. So by realising such a tour all over Java and Bali, we showed what is possible in terms of touring and how important it is to have your work to be seen and exposed.

- Do careful research in advance.
- The co-production process is quite complicated. It is not easy to work together in a culture where things are very different from what you are used to. It is not a matter of language, but a matter of tradition and culture.
- Very important you should do a co-production not only for artistic drive but also building relationships and deepening understanding.
- In terms of the production side, it is important to do some research on the production infrastructure in the region where you are going to work But also, it is very important to do some anthropological research so you can have a good understanding on the culture and customs of the country before you set off on the journey.

## #2 : Yessy Apriati, Gumarang Sakti (Indonesia)

As a choreographer and artistic director, Boi G Sakti has done lots of collaborations before in several fields with various artists in Asia, Europe and Australia. He decided to work with Gerard Mosterd when he had a proposal for collaboration for a new creation.

Different artists have different ways of working. Artistically, a new challenge was opened when Gerard asked to work together because they both have very different expressions and different kinds of movements. We had an extraordinary result as the two artists created an amazing work performed by Western and Eastern dancers based on their own characters and different movements. Many audiences in Europe and Asia already know the works of Gumarang Sakti/ Boi Sakti. The most important thing was creating the work.

Gumarang Sakti/ Boi G Sakti has worked on other international co-productions, including King Lear in 1997 with TheatreWorks Singapore and the Japan Foundation and a work for the opening of the Esplanade - Theatre on the Bay, Singapore, 2002. International co-productions are mainly for a quality work for us.

One of our objectives of the project was to bring more funding and sponsorship as it's so difficult to find funding in our country especially in performing arts. Also, we hoped to extend touring range in terms of distribution. It's very important for our reputation, at the same time, vital to provide such experiences to the dancers. However, most of all, our aim was to learn and to give each other rich experience and creativity.

### The main phases

- Rehearsal
- Workshops: prior to the performance, we did workshops on 'Minang silek'. Minangkabau Silek (Minangkabau's martial art) is full of philosophies, even though the movement has been recreated by Gumarang Sakti to make it more interesting to show, but the basic idea of Silek/Martial Art is about how to be aware in life, how to be wiser and how to be strong in life. That's why we wanted people to learn Silek through a short

workshop. How the people move did not matter, but it's more about what they learn and at the same time, to be familiar with us before they see the show.

- Premiere in Jakarta
- Tour in Indonesia, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, the Netherlands and Germany.

Most of the funding was from foundations in the Netherlands as from the beginning we realised there are no foundations in Indonesia who could offer support or sponsorship. There are some supporting organisations here but the amount is too small for an international co-production. Gerard did good work and found funding and sponsors in his country. We also did it in Jakarta and found some support. Once again we could do it because of our reputation and that people have known our work from years of struggling.

Making the contract was not easy at the beginning but then, by the time our understanding was improved, we tried to do our best. Then, we could get a good contract which was revised only for a new schedule during the touring. Communications were done by phone and email at the beginning and then by visiting in the 3 months before the production.

My tips for people who work with Indonesian partners are: to make a good communication, make sure the partner really understand what to do. You have to be clear about your intentions and dialogues by sharing them with your partner.

The difficulty was in people's different personalities: two people (artist/choreographers) had different thoughts, actions and expressions. That's why you need a mediator or a manager in a co-production/collaboration to make it flow or to control the process and slow down the tension. The main and the most important achievement was learning and understanding other people who had their own ways, so different from each other.

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### **Advice**

- My advice is, to develop international performing arts co-productions, make it simple and try hard to understand other people wisely and try to find the best solution for both partners for each problem over the whole process.
  - Don't be selfish because it is a big enemy for everybody.
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## 10 *Optical Identity* (2007)

**Contemporary music – performance – design**

**UK – Singapore**

**Co-production:** Cryptic; T'ang Quartet; commissioned by Singapore Arts Festival 2007.

*With sculptural sets by internationally acclaimed furniture designer Jason Ong, costumes by Singapore fashion designer BAYLENE, visuals created by Swiss digital artist Jasch, and live performance by the T'ang Quartet, Optical Identity immerses its audience in a sensory world of escape, directed by Cathie Boyd. Prior to the creation, creative residencies took place in both Glasgow and Singapore and used local resources and creative talent. The work performed at the Singapore Arts Festival, Edinburgh International Festival and an extensive rural Scottish tour in 2007. Following the initial performances Optical Identity performed at the Alicante International Music Festival in 2008 and a film used in the live performances was screened at the BigPond Adelaide Film Festival 2009.*

<http://www.cryptic.org.uk/optical-identity/>

**Interviewees:** Claire Moran, Producer, Cryptic (Scotland); Leslie Tan (Cello), Member of T'ang Quartet (Singapore)

### #1 : **Claire Moran, Cryptic (Scotland)**

Cathie Boyd, the founder and Artistic Director of Cryptic, made a research visit to Singapore in 2005 as part of a NESTA scholarship. During the visit she presented her 'seeing music' research to various universities, institutions and musicians interested in presenting their work visually. She also met with Singapore Arts Festival and the T'ang Quartet. It quickly became evident that the T'ang Quartet were an ideal ensemble to create a co-production with as they shared similar visions and passions about staging music visually. The main barrier was how to fund such a project across continents.

The first meeting between Cryptic and the T'ang Quartet was a great opportunity for creative ideas to be shared face to face, which is vital in the development of any co-production. It was also clear that the T'ang Quartet were open to new ways of working and wanted to 'try something different' while also increasing their international profile outside Singapore.

Singapore Arts Festival (SAF) under Goh Ching Lee was aware of Cryptic's work prior to this co-production and previously the T'ang Quartet had worked with SAF on several projects previously, so a relationship had already been established. However, both Cryptic and T'ang were aware that, for the project to be successful, both organisations had to be able to invest financially. Cryptic was experienced in co-producing and staging work on this scale but this was something new for the T'ang Quartet. The T'ang's main source of funding for *Optical Identity* was through the Singapore

Arts Festival (SAF). Involvement in SAF would also mean that Singapore received the premiere of the work which was an important aspect for the T'ang Quartet.

As the T'ang already had strong connections with SAF, they made the initial approach with a project proposal drawn up by Cryptic. Following this, Leslie Tan (T'ang Quartet); Goh Ching Lee (CEO, SAF); Cathie Boyd (AD Cryptic) and Claire Moran (Producer, Cryptic) met in London to discuss initial ideas of the commission. At the same time the national Arts Council-Scottish Arts Council and SAF-Edinburgh International Festival were discussing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Singapore and Scotland. The MOU was signed in 2007 coinciding with the premiere of *Optical Identity* at the Singapore Arts Festival.

### On working internationally

Cryptic has always looked both inside and outside the UK for creative stimulus. Internationalism plays an important role within all areas of the company and is a core value. In addition to the international focus, Cryptic has forged partnerships with many UK and Scottish artists and organisations. The company remains passionate to learn about new cultures' approach to the arts and how best we can learn from each other in the creation of a new work.

Collaborating/co-producing work with a partner, whether UK based or not, allows both partners to maximise resources: finance, staffing, creative, contacts etc. allowing for a 'larger' more ambitious project to be produced, Cryptic enjoys the experience of collaborating internationally as it is an opportunity to learn new cultures and traditions, and challenges the organisation. In addition, Cryptic feels that the European arts have become very similar and are interested in looking further afield to work within other cultures.

### The main objectives of the project

- Creative stimulation from another culture
- Access to non UK artists
- Introducing artists to UK culture
- Introducing international artists to UK audiences
- Introducing Cryptic's work to new audiences
- International kudos
- Access to international & national funding for international exchanges, touring etc.
- Increasing Cryptic's international profile with the view to future international co-productions and touring opportunities in new markets
- Finding new artistic forms of expression

### The main phases in development

Any successful co-production requires a long gestation period and several visits to develop the work and to gain a greater insight into the local culture at each opportunity.

1. Preparation visits: *Optical Identity* had a total of six visits to create the work:

2005	Cathie visits Singapore on a research visit and meets T'ang.
Jun 2006	Cathie, Claire and T'ang meet in Cork, Ireland to discuss the project in more detail, to agree repertoire and composers to approach for commissioning.
Aug 2006	Cathie visits Singapore to meet SAF, T'ang, Jason Ong (Visual Artist/Set Designer), possible costume designers & film companies. Cryptic's Production Manager researches venues and meets SAF technical team.
Dec 2006	Cathie visits Singapore for creative development and creation with T'ang, Jason Ong and Li Baylene (Costume Designer).
Feb 2007	Jason Ong resident in Glasgow, Scotland: 1 week developing set designs.
Mar 2007	4-week residence in Singapore with creative and technical team present.
May 2007	Cathie visits Singapore to shoot and edit the film that will accompany one section of the performance with Singaporean film company Reel Loco.

## 2. Final Creation and performance periods:

May/Jun 2007	4-week residence in Singapore with full technical rehearsals and three performances as part of SAF
Aug 2007	Two performances at the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF)
Oct 2007	3-week tour of Scotland and England, 8 performances, including a live broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland
Sep 2007	Performance at the Alicante International Music Festival

## Roles and responsibilities

Cryptic took a lead role in the management and execution of the commission and co-production as Cryptic had more resources and experience in this area and liaised directly with SAF in the logistics, and with T'ang Quartet for any creative discussions.

- Singapore Performances and Logistics: mainly organised and managed by SAF including accommodation, venue hire etc. The main involvement of the T'ang was to provide the Quartet and also make introductions to local artists.
- UK Performances and Logistics: Cryptic led in this area organising, financing and managing all Scottish performances and tour responsibilities.
- Marketing: host partner was responsible to market the production in their own country.
- Creative team: it is important for Cryptic to work with as many local artists and technicians as possible when working in co-production. The split of this is usually governed by what is available locally and its suitability for the project.
- Finance: the creation and premiere performances of *Optical Identity* were split between Cryptic and SAF, with SAF taking on the higher proportion of costs.

Various contracts were agreed throughout the project:

- Commissioning and performance contract between SAF and Cryptic. The T'ang were represented as performers in this contract.
- Co-production contract between Cryptic and T'ang
- EIF performance contract drawn up between Cryptic and Tang
- Touring performance contract drawn up between Cryptic and Tang

The agreements were quite detailed so took time for all parties. The most complicated was the commissioning contract from SAF, especially the financial agreement and split.

The majority of communication was done through email due to the time difference however telephone conversations did take place. It is essential to have face to face meetings on Skype with management teams and the lead producers. Research visits and residencies were invested in as it is vital to meet artists face to face to discuss aesthetics. Also every opportunity to meet either T'ang or SAF in the UK or Ireland was maximised by Cryptic.

Emails can be misunderstood especially with language barriers. Often phoning through Skype where you can see the person can help solve misunderstandings quickly rather than play email tennis. Constant and clear communication is imperative for a successful co-production. An understanding of how business is conducted locally is also useful so that you can be aware of any cultural differences and nuances when working across cultures. British Council advised in these areas in Singapore as well as supporting the production.

### Learning and achievements

Agreeing the final elements of the commission contract with SAF could have been made easier with an early visit to Singapore by Claire Moran (Cryptic's Producer). This was unforeseen, however, it is a lesson learnt and it is an expense that is now incorporated into every project and such meetings now take place earlier in the co-production.

We also quickly learnt how there were different cultural approaches and sometimes saying no to the other party was difficult, which is something we are more used to in the UK.

We achieved:

- A high quality music theatre work which performed at international festivals in Singapore, Spain and Scotland raising the profiles of both the T'ang Quartet and Cryptic.
- The relationship with the T'ang Quartet and their introduction to both new repertoire and new approaches to staging music. For *Optical Identity* the T'ang quartet memorised 50 minutes of a 70 minute music programme. The works are still performed by the Quartet in a concert hall setting off score which is fantastic, leaving an artistic legacy.
- An increased international profile for Cryptic which gave the company new contacts.
- Introducing Cryptic and the T'ang Quartet to new audiences in Scotland and Singapore.

We learned:

- Clear simple communication is vital on every level.
- Sufficient planning is essential; it needs to be over several visits not just one long period.
- Face to face meetings for artists are essential and regular skype calls between producers are important.

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### Advice

- Time, time, time .... Never underestimate the time that international co-productions take and the planning required to make them successful. A minimum of 2 years is ideal to develop the relationship and project. In addition to the lead-in time, the amount of day to day office time that needs to be invested is high.
- Face to face meetings allow for projects to develop quicker - use skype.
- Ensure you leave enough time between performances for set etc to be transported.
- Having a local festival commission and premiere for a new work is a really important start as it gives the local artists a chance to showcase their work in a fresh manner to international promoters. Thus hoping the project has a longer shelf life.
- Make sure that the partners you have chosen are the right ones for you and your project not just because it is an international co-production. There has to be a synergy between the organisations and a genuine want/need to work in co-production with each other.

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## #2 : Leslie Tan, T'ang Quartet (Singapore)

Cathie Boyd, the artistic director of Cryptic was in Singapore in 2005 for an unrelated project. She asked the National Arts Council to meet up with local artists. We met and the rest, as we say, is history. We had never worked together before. It was a question of almost blind faith. Of course, we had each others' materials and collaterals.

By 2006 we heard that Cryptic was commissioned by the Singapore Arts Festival to work in co-production with the T'ang Quartet. This resulted in a Singapore/UK/Swiss creative team being formed to create and produce *Optical Identity*.

We have been based in Singapore for some ten years - we started our careers here 20 years ago. So the National Arts Council had always had us in their sights and they were generous in their funding. We had participated in 2 other projects for SAF.

Through various artistic commissions and collaborations, the Quartet has been able to extend the reach of classical music to wider audiences globally and locally. Recent tours have been in Malaysia, Australia, Belgium, Indonesia, France and Ireland. International collaborations are always interesting as we get to share ideas from across nations and cultures. This was also for the main objective from our side for *Optical Identity*.

## During the co-production

We drew up a contract but it's not about the money. Communications were made via email and phone. We met Cathie when we were in Europe and she came to meet us on our tour.

It was very easy to work with Cryptic: Cathie the director is an artist and super honest. It was a pleasure. Scheduling is based on the dates of concerts – once that is settled, the rest always fall in place very quickly.

The project took us out of our comfort zone - which is a great thing! But otherwise we were extremely happy with the production and collaboration.

We achieved international coverage including Edinburgh Festival and Alicante Festival: this made us push our boundaries and made the audience push theirs.

In the end the whole thing from incubation to the last concert took about 2 years and we are hoping for more life from the production. The idea was extremely interesting, the production, very gratifying. Cost was always going to be in the way of more international tours.

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### We learned from this project

- We need to extend our artistic selves.
- It is always good to try new things.
- Scotland is a lovely country.

### Advice

Just go for it! Throw yourselves in the deep end. What have you got to lose?

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## 11 *Strangeland / The Dispossessed* (2009)

### Physical Performance

Australia – Korea

**Collaboration:** Not Yet It's Difficult (Australia); The Wuturi Players (Korea)

*A unique cross-cultural collaboration, it featured an international ensemble of some of Australia's and Korea's finest contemporary performers and an award-winning production team. Part performance, part installation, part prophesy, the project was a dynamic physical performance inspired by the literary works of Samuel Beckett, Cormac McCarthy and Michel Houellebecq – which created a compelling and mesmerising landscape of the future we are hurtling towards. Not Yet It's Difficult (NYID) is an ideas-based group of artists who collaborate on the production of interdisciplinary projects. The Wuturi Players is a contemporary theatre group incorporating Korean traditional performing arts elements.*

[www.notyet.com.au/project/strangeland](http://www.notyet.com.au/project/strangeland)

[www.wuturi.com/otherproductions.htm](http://www.wuturi.com/otherproductions.htm)

**Interviewees:** David Pledger, Artistic Director, Not Yet It's Difficult (Australia); Claire Sung, Producer, The Wuturi Players (Korea)

### #1 : David Pledger, Not Yet It's Difficult (Australia)

*The Strangeland/The Dispossessed* project began with a desire to take the ideas of a preceding NYID project, *apoliticaldance*, and develop them in the context of an international collaboration with a group of Korean actors trained (by David Pledger) in the physical system on which the original work was based. So we wanted to make use of the shared vocabulary. By engaging with Wuturi, we felt that the potential of the ideas would have the best chance of being realised.

The partnership arose out of a longstanding working relationship that began in the early 1990s when David Pledger was Visiting Lecturer at the Korean National University of the Arts. One of his colleagues was Professor Kim Kwang Lim who would later form Wuturi.

The project arose out of a natural extension of the company's intercultural dramaturgy which had characterised its formative years. Philosophically the company is drawn to international collaborations as it feels the secrets of artistic development are found in situations where the artists are in less familiar territory both culturally and professionally. Also NYID have had a strong commitment to engaging with Asian performing practices, specifically those of Japan, Korea and China.

The main objective was to make a significant performance work with artistic collaborators we

enjoyed working with. In proposing the project to Wuturi, Pledger felt that they would provide the project with actors he had trained and a rehearsal and presentation environment that would enable the work to develop to its full potential.

In essence the project was always viewed as a two-stage project, the first to make a new offering on the ideas outlined in *apoliticaldance* and the second to refine that performance – *The Dispossessed* – by filtering further to arrive at the essence of the work. So with *The Dispossessed*, whilst it was presented at the Seoul Arts Centre as an opening production of the Seoul Performing Arts Festival, there was still in the performance the essence of experiment and indeed improvisation, also retained in *Strangeland*. So *The Dispossessed* was still an idea taking shape whilst *Strangeland* was much more a finished work.

### Development phases

The projects were made for two very different spaces: Jayu Theatre in Seoul Arts Centre (*The Dispossessed*) is a dedicated theatre space while The Fridge at Arts House (*Strangeland*) was a new space – originally a meat market – opened by the project. This determined development phases for each project:

#### *The Dispossessed*

5-day Workshop in Seoul organised by Wuturi from which 5 actor/dancers were selected  
2-week Rehearsal in Seoul with full company 5 from Wuturi and 2 from NYID  
Bump-in and Presentation/3 Performances at Jayu Theatre

#### *Strangeland*

3-week rehearsal in the performing space followed by 3 performances with 3 actor/dancers from Wuturi and 4 from NYID

### Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities were divided according to where the project was being presented. In Seoul, Wuturi took care of all arrangements re- accommodation, per diems, production and venue liaison including establishing rehearsal venue, marketing etc. In Melbourne this was undertaken by NYID. Both companies were responsible for paying the wages/fees of their company members.

We wrote an agreement of responsibilities in the form of reciprocal invitations. Although we did not revise the agreement, it was constantly referred to in the early stages of planning.

### Difficulties

*The Dispossessed*: The Jayu Theatre had been a favourite space of director David Pledger since he had performed there in 1993 as an actor in a visiting production of *King Lear* from Australia. So he was very keen to mount the project there and show off its unique features which were compatible with the production's aesthetics. However, as the production developed, it was clear that there were concerns from Arts Centre management that it might be pushing the venue's

'capacity' and personnel too far. It is unlikely these concerns could have been planned for. We had good communication at production level and support and – in the end – the problems were favourably resolved.

For *Strangeland* we had issues with visas for Korean actors.

The main achievements of the project were the artistic integrity and quality of the public performances, the development of a strong international ensemble and a dramaturgy that was at once intercultural and universal.

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### Learning and advice

- Write constantly, use clear and simple language. When in doubt, get in touch.
- Expect the unexpected.
- People don't always behave the way you think they will.
- Making art is a process that can hypnotise artists and audiences alike.
- If you want to find out what you are and what you are not good at, make an international co-production.
- Choose your collaborators wisely.
- 'Translation' is a key word in all aspects of an international project.
- Never leave a project without having tried everything - it is a waste of all the effort in making it happen.
- Every misunderstanding is an opportunity for development.

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## #2: Claire Sung, The Wuturi Players (Korea)

The Wuturi Players is a theatre group that aims to contemporise the Korean traditional performing arts method for theatre making. We have tried various international co-productions since the company was founded in 2005. Wuturi have done a few co-productions with partners that we had built a strong partnership with for a long time. For example, our partnership with David Pledger at NYID had developed since the late 1990s. The co-production, *Strangeland* was developed from *apoliticaldance* which was originally created by David and presented as a work in progress in Australia. Later, the show was recreated by Korean and Australian actors/dancers based on David's methodology.

We only work with partners with whom we have built artistic trust. Mostly our co-production is initiated by one of the collaborators on the suggestion of a specific idea to develop together. This is the case with NYID. This would be partly because Wuturi tends to prioritise a national project over an international project, as do most Korean theatre groups.

David Pledger was once exchange professor at the Korean National Drama School where Wuturi's director, Kim Kwang Lim taught. During David's stay, many students incorporated his theatrical method and later many joined Wuturi as performers. In 2005, those Korean performers and

creative team as well as some Australian performers made a collaboration piece, *K*, presented at the Seoul Performing Arts Festival; I was the production manager.

When a theatre company does a co-production with international partners, the company method is destined to go through a sort of test. For actors, it provides great stimuli to work in a new environment. In terms of production management, the usual practice is challenged as sometimes things that worked well in Korea would not necessarily work in abroad. These challenges in a new environment are what we are looking for by working internationally.

### Objectives

- To have an opportunity to stimulate further artistic development with a partner based on a long term partnership
- To create opportunities to be exposed more to new promoters and presenters as well as to meet new audiences.

### The main phases

1. David Pledger's visit to share and develop his project idea
2. Project scheduling & audition
3. Pre-production to set up production details for 2-3 months
4. Casting, getting creative team, find a venue, set design, technical preparation
5. Creation of the show: a rehearsal period with a strong focus on artistic development
6. Tour booking for Australia
7. Tour

The overall artistic decision-making was done by David and all the preparation to realise his decisions was mainly done by the Korean partner. For the Australian tour, the Korean partner was responsible for visa and the international travel only, while NYID arranged most of preparations for the tour production in Australia.

Generally, actors were managed by each theatre company and each partner took most of the responsibility for the show in their own country. If there was any confusion, we discussed openly and came up with a solution.

We wrote a sort of invitation letter rather than an agreement, which set out each party's major responsibilities. For smaller matters, we discussed and shared the responsibility. In the initial period, we negotiated a little bit by email, and we didn't need a revision later.

The main co-production structure was decided in the first meeting. Further details were discussed between production managers by email. Any problem, we called or emailed David direct. When you don't understand each other's context, there can be misunderstanding or delay, so it was important to discuss with an open mind and mutual trust.

## Difficulties and achievements

Half way through the rehearsal, one of the performers had problems with the director so we discussed firing the performer. We were afraid there was no alternative actor to replace this physically well trained performer. But we tried to respect the director's feeling and decision.

During the tour in Australia, the visa for one of the Korean actors was rejected because he recently had tuberculosis. So we had to replace him with somebody else at the last moment.

Both of these crises were hard to predict.

Wuturi had a good opportunity to be stimulated and challenged by working in a new environment and structure both artistically and production-wise.

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### Learning

- The importance of long-term partnership for international co-production
- A co-production project is full of surprises right up to the last moment
- The partnership between the producer and the artist based on an antagonism which in the end brings homeostasis

### Advice

- You don't have to stress yourself to bring in something completely new, or something different from what you usually do for an international co-production.
- Build artistic trust with a partner before starting a co-production and then you can make a positive turn when you face a difficulty in the journey which is full of surprises.
- Always be honest about a problem and face it and find a solution together then you will find the true meaning of international co-production.

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\* *The original interview was done by email in Korean, summarised and translated by M.J. Chung*

## 12 *The Trojan Women* (2005)

### Theatre

Japan – Korea

**Co-production/collaboration:** Yohangza Theatre Company (Korea); Kunauka Theatre (Japan)

*A modern adaptation of the Greek tragedy, The Trojan Women was an artist-led collaboration/co-production between two theatre companies both of which are well-known for their international collaborations, particularly incorporating elements of East-Asian traditional performing arts in order to create a new contemporary theatrical language. The co-directors, Satoshi Miyagi (Act I) and Jung-ung Yang (Act II) worked with both Japanese and Korean actors from two different companies. The show incorporated the modern history of two nations referencing the Japanese occupation of Korea by portraying the Trojans as Koreans and introducing Greek gods in the images of the World War II's political leaders. It was performed in 2005, the year of Korea-Japan Friendship celebrating the 40th anniversary of normalisation of diplomatic ties between Japan and Korea.*

<http://www.kunauka.or.jp/en/index05.htm>

**Interviewees:** Jung-ung Yang, Director at Yohangza Theatre Company (Korea); Satoshi Miyagi, artistic director, Kunauka Theatre (Japan)

### #1 : Jung-ung Yang, Yohangza Theatre Company (Korea)

In 2004, I wanted to make some collaboration works with international companies in both Europe and Asia. I was looking for a Japanese theatre company. Kunauka, particularly the renowned director, Satoshi Miyagi was very interesting to me because they seemed to have lots of similarities with my works at Yohangza theatre company, such as an acting method incorporating traditional elements, strong physicality and poetic interpretation in staging. So in 2004, I visited Japan to see a show and met the director.

I don't think Satoshi Miyagi knew about me or my company although we had performed in Japan a couple of times by then. He must have done some research on me and my works after our first meeting. He was pleased by my enthusiastic response to his show and seemed happy that I suggested a possibility of working together. We discussed further when I got back to Korea by email. It wasn't difficult at all to get the final confirmation from him. I suggested we work on *The Trojan Women* and he agreed quite immediately.

We found it out it was Korea-Japan Friendship Year. It might have brought more opportunities for government funding, though it didn't work out in the end.

I suggested that *The Trojan Women* could be portrayed as Korean women considering the history

of Japanese colonisation over Korea. Satoshi Miyagi accepted it and we, as co-directors, developed the idea further in collaboration with the Korean costume designer. Those ideas shaped the show not because it was the year of Korea-Japan Friendship. No matter when the show was created, we would have done the same thing.

### **On working internationally**

After travelling and working with international theatre groups in Spain, Japan and India, I began to think about my cultural identity. That's why I wanted to return and work in my mother country to create cross-cultural works. I established a company named 'Yohangza' which literally means 'a traveller'. From the start, Yohangza's goal was to find the Korean identity and future direction through collaboration with artists from other countries.

I am very passionate about communication across different languages and cultures. When I brought my show to Spain, the local audience understood the Korean show beyond the language and cultural barriers. I believe in the universal language of theatre, the beautiful interaction and exchange available between artists from different cultures. Language is often considered as a barrier to overcome, but I see much more possibility beyond the barrier.

### **Main objectives of the co-production**

We did many international tours but there were not many opportunities for international collaborations or co-productions. So I wanted to find a way to realise them. I focused on the process such as workshops rather than the outcome. So it was to build experience more or less. I could clearly see the similarity in the acting method and way of creating theatre in Kunauka Theatre Company who had already had lots of international collaborations. I wanted to see how the collaboration would work.

### **Main phases in developing the project**

1. Initiation: in 2004, I visited Tokyo to suggest the collaboration. Soon after, we agreed on *The Trojan Women* and by email developed ideas of casting, the method and structure. We applied for several grants but I got only a small one from the Arts Council Korea.
2. Revising objectives: in early 2005, I revisited Tokyo and suggested we postpone our project. But Satoshi Miyagi insisted that we go on with the original schedule. He said he would get some funding in Japan and invitations from Japanese festivals and venues. So we reduced the project size, particularly the role of the Korean side. I had to cancel the workshop and performance in Korea and we had one month rehearsal in Tokyo in April.
3. Performance tour:  
2005 *Japan*: in May, we performed in Spring Arts Festival Shizuoka (SPAC) – where now Satoshi Miyagi is the artistic director – followed by performances in Nagoya East City Cultural Theatre (Nagoya, Japan). When we returned to

Korea, we got an invitation from a festival between Korea, China and Japan.  
2005 *China*: in November we performed at the 12th BESETO (BEijing, SEoul, TOKyo) Festival (Ningbo, China).

### Roles and responsibilities

In terms of creation of the show, we shared the role. It was performed by Korean actors of Yohangza and Japanese actors from Kunauka, using their own languages. Satoshi Miyagi directed Act I and I directed Act II. The costume design was by a Korean artist and we used Korean musical instruments. The rest of the creative team were Japanese.

Kunauka managed to find most of funding from Japan and the small Arts Council Korea grant paid for international travel and fees of the Korean actors and creative team. The Japanese partner covered the most of the production cost with Japanese funding and the performance fees from the Japanese and BESETO festivals.

I made two preparation visits. Most of communication was done by email in English. During the rehearsal in Japan, we hired a Korean co-ordinator living in Tokyo as an interpreter.

### Challenges

The major difficulty was that the funding from the Korean side was much less than expected. We had to downsize and cancel a workshop and performance in Korea. The Korean actors and costume designer were generous enough to accept a lower fee to make it happen.

For the BESETO Theatre festival in China, one of the Korean actors was unavailable for the tour. I chose another actress in my company, trained her in Seoul and sent her to Tokyo for a week rehearsal. But replacing a performer often happens in international tour production.

### Achievements and learning

- The experience itself was an achievement. I could see lots of similarities and differences between two companies in ways of creating theatre and communication.
- I realised that a good co-production requires quite a long time and abundant resources. I was hungry for such an experience but I wasn't satisfied with the downsized co-production at the end, particularly the lack of time working together face to face.
- I learned many things from Satoshi Miyagi as he was much more experienced than me as an artist as well as a human. He was much more organised and disciplined than me and had quite a different style of working in terms of theatre making.
- The workshop between two groups of actors was quite fruitful. We exchanged our actor's training methods. It was a very exciting exchange.
- We don't have plans for collaboration with Miyagi's company but I hope I can do an upgraded co-production with workshops. Next time, I hope to have enough time and a good level of Korean funding to realise further exchange in depth. Now Satoshi Miyagi is the artistic director at SPAC, we might be able to discuss a possible co-production.

- It is too much for an independent company to be responsible for all the process of finding partners and creating a work and distributing it internationally. At the moment, I feel that I am facing a tall wall to climb over. I wish venues and festivals can initiate and commission more artists and companies for international co-productions. Also I wish the project funding criteria could be more flexible to support long term projects.

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### Advice

- There are so many things to prepare and discuss for an international co-production.
- Every artist has his or her unique way of working. You need to understand each other beyond the barrier of language and culture before setting off on a journey together. Particularly for Koreans, when they work with artists in neighbouring countries, we tend to have a preconception about attitude and culture that should be overcome to be open-minded. Most East Asians are so polite and mannered that sometimes it is not easy to read their thoughts. We've got to find out and understand what the partner wants. To do so, you really need to take time and make it clear each other what are your objectives and aims.
- International collaboration takes time. It must be a long term plan to deepen understanding of each other and create a true artistic collaboration. Start light and develop as a well-planned long term project.
- There are already many bumps and humps that you didn't expect in the journey. Try to be open-minded and see the positive side.
- Enjoy the difference in the partners and in their work as well as their culture including all the details of their daily life. Any experience is good. Enjoy it.
- Every human relationship has a crisis even between people from the same country. Try to understand the difference in attitudes, ways of seeing the world, philosophies and ways of living. Be prepared for the worst crisis and overcome it wisely.

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*\* Interview in Korean by telephone. The text was transcribed and translated by M.J. Chung*

## #2 : Satoshi Miyagi, Kunauka Theatre (Japan)

The Korean director, Jung-ung Yang at Yohangza Theatre Company came to see my show, *Antigone* in 2004. He wanted to talk to me after the show and when we met, he suggested a co-production with his company. I had never met him nor seen any of his or his company's works. So I watched the DVDs that he gave me after the meeting and made some enquiries about Yohangza Theatre Company through theatre colleagues who knew more about Korean theatre. All of them praised the company's works as well as Yang's personality. So, on the recommendation of my friends, I decided to collaborate with Jung-ung Yang.

I heard from Yang that we might be able to get some funding from Korea as 2005 was Korea-Japan Friendship Year. However I didn't create the piece for that occasion. I am Japanese and have always been aware of the history of Japan in East Asia, and particularly the relationship with Korea. I believe that awareness has influenced my work as a director.

## Working internationally

I choose to work in theatre but I find that theatre has very strong language barriers compared to other art forms. In theatre, I find that people tend to see works in their own language and, in fact, there were very few theatre pieces performed in other languages in Japan. I couldn't bear the fact that my works could not be seen by an audience in other countries because of the language barrier.

Unlike artists in other forms of the arts, actors seemed unable to compare their work to their international peers. It was like a 'protective trade': Japanese actors were 'protected' by 'the wall of Japanese language' and it made them unable to compete with actors in other countries. This limitation causes a certain lack of tension, underachievement and non-competition in a theatre artist's life in Japan.

That was why I started thinking of ways to overcome the language barrier with my theatrical works and why I started to undertake international collaborations. In terms of method, I came up with one character acted by two actors (the one 'speaker', and the other as a 'mover') so that any actor – no matter what their mother tongue - could work together on stage.

While I was working with international actors, I started questioning what a Japanese body is. Some gestures that Europeans and Americans think of as 'Japanese' can be seen in other Asian people. Many aspects of culture that are considered 'Japanese' are actually imported from other countries. So I travelled in search of the roots of Japanese culture and worked with theatre people in other countries. But I found out that it is meaningless to search for the roots of a culture. Cultures and arts influence each other: they are developed and made sophisticated by many encounters and exchanges. It cannot be like a seed in a flask raised to bloom without any contact with the outside world.

I realised that it was meaningless to try to find the 'originality' or 'uniqueness' of great cultures, countries or regions. In other words, there was nothing that only Japanese people could do. This was a conclusion that I reached after my exploration. However, when I saw Japanese actors performing together with other countries' actors, I could see the mysterious charm of foreign actors as well as the unique feature of Japanese actors, which is not on the level of individual talent but something related to being Japanese. This discovery made me think about what is the specific talent you could have just because you were born and lived in a certain region, apart from your own talent or learned and trained skills.

If there is such a thing, it must be 'the body'. A body is defined by the soil, the language, the religion, the food and the climate. You cannot get it from somewhere else. For example, a body grown up in Japan is organised to speak the Japanese language well. It is also accustomed to the region's conventions and beliefs (or religions) such as what is considered important and what is to be avoided.

The body differentiates actors from different countries and the 'unfamiliarity' in the actor's body is perceived as attractive to the audience in other countries. I didn't realise this when I was working in a rehearsal room full of Japanese actors. I realised this in the process of trying to find out what is the mysterious attraction in the foreign actors' body and gesture. Once I learn how to watch the actors' body, I could see that Japanese actors also have such idiosyncratic features in their gestures. When a director or colleague actor starts to see this charm, the actor himself can perceive that too. This makes the actor able to recognise the fundamental aim of an actor, which is to present the charms of his body.

I am currently Artistic Director of Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC). As the only public theatre in Shizuoka Prefecture, SPAC should be a window to the world for those who live here, especially for young people. This mission leads to more international exchange programmes. In 2010 we presented work from Colombia, Korea, France and Cameroon and have held an annual international theatre festival since 2000. From 2011 it is re-launched as 'WorldTheatreFestival under Mt. Fuji'.

*\* The interview was done by email in Japanese with translation organised by KAMS and M.J Chung.*

## 13 *Water Stains on the Wall* (2010)

### Contemporary dance

#### Taiwan – Singapore

**Co-production:** Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (Taiwan); National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center, R.O.C. (Taiwan); Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay (Singapore)

*A new work by the Taiwanese choreographer, Lin Hwai-min: the title of the dance refers to a popular metaphor that represents the highest state in the aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy. Lin Hwai-min and dancers take off from this metaphor and create an abstract work of beauty and magic that stands sublimely on its own. To the Zen-like music by Toshio Hosokawa, performers give the illusion of summer clouds and of water stains on the wall. The total effect reminds one of Chinese classical landscape painting.*

<http://www.cloudgate.org.tw/waterstains/english-1.htm>

**Interviewees:** Joanna Wang, International Representative, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (Taiwan); Jobina Tan, Deputy Director Programming, The Esplanade Co Ltd (Singapore)

### #1 : Joanna Wang, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (Taiwan)

Esplanade is a long term collaborator of Cloud Gate and we have collaborated with them since 2003. However, this is the first time Esplanade has co-produced with Cloud Gate.

Unlike most other co-production projects we have experienced, the starting point of this collaboration came quite late because, the choreographer, Mr. Lin took a longer time to finalise this creative idea. Esplanade was approached in May 2010 when Cloud Gate performed at the Esplanade co-presented by the Singapore Arts Festival. This was approximately five months before the world premiere of *Water Stains on the Wall* in November 2010.

In terms of artistic content, the choreographer chose Chinese calligraphy and Chinese traditional movement trainings, such as tai chi and martial arts, as these share pretty much the same aesthetics. The aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy is Mr. Lin's long-time obsession and serves as a springboard for *Water Stains on the Wall*. It is not about calligraphy, but is a pure contemporary dance piece.

For *Water Stains on the Wall*, Mr. Lin uses minimal technology. He devised a gigantic ramp that takes only 3.5 hours to set up. Overhead lights are replaced by overhead projections. Such technical requirements facilitate a one-day setup on tour.

## Partnerships

National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center, R.O.C.(C.K.S/ the national Theatre)is Cloud Gate's long term partner and has always been either the co-producer or co-commissioner for Cloud Gate's new works. C.K.S. provides dates for Cloud Gate two years ahead of time. C.K.S also provides free venue and facility usage, technical support, marketing promotion and other support. Only with the support of the C.K.S. Cultural Centre would Cloud Gate be able to premiere its new creations at the National Theatre. Creative works are solely the responsibility of Cloud Gate. The National Theatre normally does not interfere with artistic direction of the creation.

Working with international co-producers doesn't influence Mr Lin's work. All our co-producing partners respect Mr. Lin's creative integrity. Take Chekhov International Theatre Festival for example, they took up a co-producing partnership based solely upon a few lines of his creative thoughts.

## The main phases in the co-production

1. Solicitation for interest: the earlier the better, (depending on how much time you have from the date the choreographer has developed his/her creation concept).
2. Written proposal with budget and schedule: a basic schedule outline was included when the creation proposal was made to the National Theatre, two years before the premiere. A more detailed schedule shaped up and was presented to the Theatre along the way according to company's touring schedule. The budget was submitted 18 months before the premiere. With the Esplanade, as the co-production partnership was proposed closer to the premiere, a more detailed schedule and budget were submitted.
3. Production premiere: world premiere season in Taiwan in November 2010
4. Touring organisation: planning is still on-going.

For the current tour, the planning of the US tour began in spring 2009. The Singapore tour was planned when the Esplanade became a co-producing partner in June 2010. The discussion of touring to Tel Aviv Performing Arts Centre began in late 2010 and confirmed a month later. After the world premiere season finished in Dec 2010, requests for touring began in Jan 2011 and are still coming in. More engagements are being negotiated.

5. Scheduled tour:
  - Autumn 2011 USA, inc. Next Wave Festival, New York
  - 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2012 Singapore, Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts
  - June 2012 Israel, Tel Aviv Performing Arts Centre(Opera House)

## Contracts

The contract is normally drawn up by our partners. Each partner has their own standard contract, which we will review and discuss the terms with the partners and come to an agreement. Once the contract/agreement is signed, revisions are hardly ever made. The contract must be signed in English. Each partner has their own separate contract with us.

The National Theatre requested 10 performances when the proposal was made. The co-production fee and terms were finalised a year before the premiere. With the Esplanade, it took some 3 weeks from the first approach to confirmation of the co-producing collaboration.

An international co-production certainly helps extend the range of our touring. Cloud Gate has to cover any deficit in the production costs that are not covered by the co-producers.

We have had no problem communicating with all of our international co-producing partners; they have all been very supportive and helpful. We mainly emailed in English with the Singapore partner. There were no particular difficulties in the course of the project.

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### **Achievements**

- A new development / different collaboration between Cloud Gate and the Esplanade.
- The co-production helped to pay off part of the production costs and serves as a recommendation for further bookings.

### **Learning and advice**

- I think we should start earlier and therefore secure more co-production partners.
- Have a clear idea with written blurb of how the production will be created, plus some visual materials such as arresting photos and/or video would be helpful to convey the choreographer's new creation to potential presenters.
- Support each other.

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## **#2 : Jobina Tan, The Esplanade Co Ltd (Singapore)**

Esplanade has had a long relationship with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan. Shortly after Esplanade's opening in October 2002, we presented Cloud Gate's *Moon Water* in 2003 and *Cursive* in 2006, and we have been regularly in touch with them. We also know National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center well as they are one of the AAPPAC (Association of Asian Performing Arts Centres) members whom we meet with regularly.

We invited Cloud Gate to the inaugural ConversAsians in May 2010. ConversAsians was conceived as a platform to inspire producers, presenters and artists interested in the Asian performing arts scene to learn, to exchange and engage with Asian artists who will share their work and artistic journeys. During this platform, Cloud Gate invited us to be a co-producer for their new work and we accepted. We believe in their work and artistic vision, and wanted to support their new work.

Esplanade's focus, when producing and commissioning new work, is on Asian works as we feel more can be done to develop and produce such content for the international stage. We also participate in co-productions and build relationships with artists whose work and artistic vision we believe in, and whose works we know will be warmly received by our audiences.

### **New trends in co-productions in the international festival circuit**

There are more international co-productions and co-commissions now as compared to ten years ago. Both festival organisers and arts centres realise that given the high cost of presenting new work, it makes sense both from their points of view and from the artists who create this work, that co-producing is the way to go. Not only does it reduce the cost of the commissioning party, it also ensures a touring life for the work.

### **Contract & communications**

It was a very straightforward agreement – the contract was just between Esplanade and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan. It was good working with Cloud Gate as they always kept us updated. No difficulties, everything went smoothly as planned. I think it's great that we have developed a closer relationship with Cloud Gate, one of the top dance companies in the world, and that we played a part in the creation of this highly acclaimed work.

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### **Learning and advice**

- Just one learning point: relationships – when sincere and nurtured – will reap priceless rewards.
  - The primary reason to co-produce work must stem from a belief in the artist and the work they create.
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## 14 *The Maids* (2011)

### Physical Theatre

**Korea – Macau – Austria - USA**

**Co-production:** Sadari Movement Laboratory, commissioned by Macau Cultural Centre (China) & Chuncheon International Mime Festival (Korea) and produced by AsiaNow.

*The original project was a collaborative co-production between Sadari Movement Laboratory and Macau Cultural Centre and resulted in a work-in-process performance in 2009, with Korean actors from Sadari Movement Laboratory and two local performers from Macau. In 2010, Sadari Movement Laboratory (Korea), Matthias Erian (Austria), Robin Bargar and Insook Choi from New York City College of Technology (USA) participated in creation of the adaptation version of Jean Genet's play. This physical theatre using interactive technology explores the delicate relationships among two maids and the woman they serve through kinetic images and objects.*

[http://asianow.kr/menu03/m03\\_sub01\\_1.html](http://asianow.kr/menu03/m03_sub01_1.html)



### Interviewee: Kyu Choi, Executive Producer, AsiaNow (Korea)

*\* For this case study, only one interview was done due to research constraints.*

When I founded AsiaNow, the producing company representing several Korean physical theatre companies, my starting point as a producer was to establish strategies for international exchange for those Korean artists considering the reality that most artists outside Korea didn't know much about the Korean theatre.

For the first four years, I focused on increasing international recognition of Korean contemporary theatre works through intensive touring. This was also the fundamental phase to build networks and relationships with international producers and artists. After that, I started questioning what would be the next stage: what would bring further artistic development for the theatre companies once they started working internationally? Particularly, I thought what would be the best way to share the method of Korean artists with other international artists. Sadari Movement Lab. has a very visual and physical theatrical language, so I was interested in introducing something else for them while maintaining their unique method and style, as well as finding new approaches in creating contemporary theatre. Also I looked at how to develop Asian contemporary theatre by sharing something with other Asian artists. Sadari Movement Lab.'s *Woyzeck* had toured in Singapore, Macau and Australia. So I found the next stage for them to build further international recognition by looking for co-commissions and co-productions with those Asian partners with whom the company already built a relationship.

For the development of the company's theatrical method, I came up with an idea for a

development project on body and technology. It was an area I initially researched while I worked for the arts & technology field, questioning the meaning of the actor in performance using technology in which the latter often overshadows or marginalises the former.

So I planned an international collaborative workshop on physical theatre with Macau where Korean companies had already been presented. This was the starting point of *The Maids*. I went to Macau for an initial meeting to set up a co-production between Sadari Movement Lab. and Macau Cultural Centre. My plan was to start with a presentation of Sadari Movement Lab.'s existing work and a workshop with local performers in Macau, followed by an audition for local artists and co-devising stage aiming a full production as a collaboration work.

### Phases in co-production of *The Maids*

**Phase 1:** Tour of previous show, *Woyzeck* and a workshop with local performers

**Phase 2:** Audition for local performers for the co-production and 2 week workshop. Here, we faced a problem. The main aim for the co-production was to collaborate with local artists who would participate in the devising process and create the work together. But we couldn't find local performers with the necessary skills and experience. Macau Cultural Centre was celebrating its 10th anniversary with many other events in the same period. As Macau didn't have a wide range of physical theatre performers, we couldn't find anyone good enough and available for the collaboration with Sadari which demanded certain skills and experience.

So we went into a long discussion to solve the problem. We agreed to adapt the mission statement of the project a bit which was originally to introduce a new way of physical theatre to Macau by presenting a full production as a collaborative work. We gave up the full production idea, instead, we agreed to present a thirty-minute work-in-progress showcase in Macau a few months after a workshop in residency in Korea.

I learned an important thing from this. If a co-production starts with a meeting between artists, this sort of problem probably wouldn't have happened. But in our case, it was initiated by an independent producer and a venue to provide new opportunities for Macau artists. We didn't have enough information about practitioners in the local area. So, we concluded that the fundamental mission of the project had not failed, as we could still provide opportunities for local artists. But we had to compromise our way of doing it according to reality.

So we had to change our strategies. We found two local performers from Macau who were not able to collaborate on the same level as the more experienced Korean artists in the devising process. We tried to maximise learning and training opportunities for them so that they could learn as much as possible from the 3-week rehearsal period in Chuncheon, Korea. Also I tried to show them many theatre shows during the Chuncheon International Mime Festival so that they could open their eyes to new works and new ways of making physical theatre.

**Phase 3:** 30min showcase as a work-in-progress. Performed at Chuncheon International Mime Festival (May 2009) and at Macau Cultural Centre (Sep 2009) as part of Theatre Black Box series with post-show talk and debrief of project.

**Phase 4:** Working towards a full production. Here, we had another long discussion with the Macau partner whether we would keep those two local performers for a full production or drop them. We concluded to give up the idea of including local performers unless we could find alternative, more skilled performers, which seemed very unlikely. So, instead, Macau Cultural Centre decided to contribute artistically by finding a local stage designer and interactive media technicians while Sadari was responsible for providing actors and director. However, this didn't work either as we did not find any local artists from Macau.

**Phase 5:** Second change in strategy: when Sadari Movement Lab. went to New York for a tour, we met some media technicians at New York City College of Technology. So finally we settled as follows in terms of roles and responsibilities:

- Sadari Movement Lab. – responsible for creating the show with its director and actors
- Artists from New York/New York City College of Technology – technology workshops, residency space, real-time sound, video and digital technology
- Macau Cultural Centre and Chuncheon International Mime Festival – presentation of a leg of the Korean and international tour from 2011
- DOOSAN Arts Centre (a new Korean partner) – co-producing arts centre providing venue and marketing (3 week production presentation Aug 2011)
- AsiaNow – supervision of the whole project both artistically and management-wise and fundraising the production cost

In terms of budget, the production is supported by Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (creation), New York City College of Technology (technology development), DOOSAN Arts Centre (space & technical equipment for 3 weeks). But, in the end, the artist groups, Sadari Movement Lab. and AsiaNow had to make small contributions for the total cost due to lack of funding for co-production fee.

### Difficulties in co-production in Korea

The idea of commissioning or co-production is still not very well known in Korea. Many partners usually pay the presentation fee in advance as a sort of deposit rather than share the production cost. In Korea, many co-commissioners don't have experience in international co-productions or enough resources. They often get the credit as co-producers but their actual roles and contributions are closer to that of supporters or presenters. Macau and Singapore have a deeper understanding of co-productions and actively support development of new works. So, in Korea, producers need to work hard to change this underdeveloped practice as most venues and festivals do not understand the need to pay for research and development (R&D). Usually commissioners expect creation of a new show in two months.

However, I can see things are improving with recent examples by foundations such as the Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation and the fund from Gwangju: a Cultural Hub City of Asia, which started supporting international workshops in residency for R & D.

In terms of artistic development, producers tend to be more exposed and responsive to the new trends that can be seen in various international works, because producers travel more than artists. So, the producer often introduces a new trend or a new international work to the Korean artist as means to provide stimuli. However, I have experienced that some artists just try to use superficially some elements of the new trend or the new work that I introduced, rather than incorporating their learning to enrich and develop their own works.

In that sense, there is a challenge in my role as dramaturg/producer. First, I need to understand what the artist's need is and to find a right balance and limit in my match-making job for international collaborations and co-productions. Second, as I see more new works than the artist can see, I tend to make two steps forward at a time in terms of incorporating changes and new trends for a new work that I develop with the artist. Sometimes, it makes it difficult for the artist, so I have to be careful about my pace. Third, I have to be considerate when introducing new international collaborators to the local artist because often he or she just uses some of the themes or elements of those collaborators without making a sincere effort to understand the whole context.

The fundamental aim for a creative producer who is involved in artistic development must be to be a true collaborator with the artist: the producer should respect the artist, lead him to new ideas so that he can realise meaningful artistic development, at the same time do all the conventional producer's job for financing and management.

In Korea, this creative producer's job is very important as most producers in major venues and festivals are artists themselves, mostly theatre directors, who still tend to focus on creating and presenting their own works rather than developing infrastructure to nurture younger artists. Of course, this is improving too with recently established governmental agencies such as KAMS and Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture who have contributed to building the infrastructure to support the local artists for international works.

In terms of international co-production, as a practitioner, I can see a certain change in practice. Co-productions were led mostly by festivals until the end of 1990s and then accelerated by various art markets from 2000s. It seems to go through another change now.

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### **Advice**

- Depending on starting point and mission statement of your co-production, there are many ways to collaborate with each other. Most important one is that the artist drives the project. An international co-production is not always good for everybody. Some artists simply do not want to collaborate with other international partners when

their focus is on exploring their own way of theatre making for local audiences. It is for someone who wants to go to the next step with clear objectives. It surely brings increased recognition and visibility. But, it is very tiring; there is a lot of work involved in all those communications, translations and cultural differences.

- International co-production always takes time, so it should be a long term development. Normally, I think there should be three stages. First, research and development where you should build “trust” among partners and understand your partner’s vision and way of working. Then, through a residency programme, you can share ideas and create something new. You have to be ready to break your rules in the work process – otherwise you cannot create something new. Finally, as a third stage, you can create co-production with full time rehearsal. It is time-consuming work.
- The quality of work is important but trust in the person who you are working with is even more important. Otherwise, all you get is hurt. So make sure if you can trust your partners before starting a co-production. If you cannot trust a partner, you should not start.
- From the very beginning, you should make sure ‘who I am’ and ‘what I want’ through a long process of getting to know each other, which will help to avoid serious problems later that are caused often by misunderstanding and distrust.
- And make it clear what is the ‘meaning of success’ and ‘expectation’ between artists and partners before you start. I have seen some partners talk about totally different things when they write an evaluation paper at the end of a project.

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\* *The interview was done in Korean in person and the text was transcribed and translated by M.J. Chung*

## 15 *Women of the World* (2007)

### Dance

#### Netherlands – China

**Co-production:** Beijing Modern Dance Company (China); anoukvandijk dc (Netherlands)

*A co-production between two pioneering dance companies, one from China and one from The Netherlands: many dance companies from Europe come to perform in China, and many companies from China have performed throughout Europe. But these performances often can be the cultural equivalent of a 'one night stand' – a short term engagement with little influence or contribution to local context. Women of the World involved long-term, in-depth collaboration which affected not only the artists involved but also larger audiences through the tours in Holland and China. The artists involved shared their traditions and skills with each other and their audiences. Through performances, post-performance discussions, open master classes and other activities, as well as the long-term collaboration between the Dutch and Chinese artists, the aim with this project was to contribute to the deepening of cross-cultural understanding between the people of China and the people of The Netherlands.*

<http://www.anoukvandijk.nl/en/about-us/the-company/anoukvandijk-dc>

<http://www.bmdc.com.cn/>

<http://www.pingpongarts.org/>



### Interview: Alison M. Friedman, Director, Ping Pong Productions (China) & Jerry Remkes, anoukvandijk dc (The Netherlands)

Due to research constraints, this interview with one partner was provided by email.

**Timeframe:** Planning, creation, rehearsal period spanned 2005-07; premiere at Holland Dance Festival in 2007 and Dutch tour; China premiere in 2008 at National Ballet of China's Tianqiao Theater in Beijing

**Funding Partners:** China-Netherlands Art Foundation, Fund Performing Arts, Holland Dance Festival, The Royal Netherlands Embassy in China, Hivos-NCDO Culturefund

**Touring Partners:** 6-week, 17-city Dutch tour booked by Van Baasbank & Baggerman

*Women of the World* was a co-production between the Beijing Modern Dance Company (BMDC) from China and anoukvandijk dc from The Netherlands. Ms. Gao Yanjinzi from BMDC and Ms. Anouk van Dijk from anoukvandijk dc each choreographed a work for the dancers of the Beijing Modern Dance Company. The full-length programme, *Women of the World*, premiered during the Holland Dance Festival in 2007, then toured The Netherlands and returned to Beijing in 2008 for the Asia premiere.

Although both the creative process and the final forms of the two choreographers' work are very different, Gao and Van Dijk do use a remarkable number of the same principles. The two women recognised in each other's work a shared view of the world and of humanity. For the starting point of their creative process, they were both inspired more by strong visual images and atmospheres than by thematic or formally inspired approaches. Both choreographers were dancers themselves, having a great liking for, and knowledge of, technical and compositional details in the development of their choreographic works. The mutual recognition of these similarities was the deciding factor for a collaborative venture.

BMDC was drawn to working with Anouk van Dijk because they realised that for a rehearsal process to result in performances with such a distinct character and such a personal signature, it must originate in a very different creative process to the one the company was used to. Even for such an original choreographer as Gao Yanjinzi, it is very difficult to find new ways to re-invent the rehearsal process. The dancers have been trained to work in a traditional master-pupil system from an early age. The introduction to Anouk van Dijk – with her almost alien approach to the creative process, by Chinese standards – was therefore a motive for the BMDC directors to question many of their assumptions in the company's way of working, and thus ultimately to enable the company to go in new directions.

### Challenges

Basic challenges to be expected involved language barriers (Chinese / English) and cultural issues including how choreographers develop work and the role of a choreographer in relation to dancers in China – which is hierarchical – and The Netherlands – which is more collaborative / egalitarian. Other less obvious or less expected challenges included:

#### *Timing*

- Finding the weeks to rehearse together despite living on separate continents
- Working across time zones on basic communication exchange and also in developing the work dramaturgically / conceptually
- Different customs when it comes to rehearsal schedules, production schedules, etc

#### *Funding*

- China does not yet have the system of foundations or individual contributions. BMDC is an independent company that receives no government funding. BMDC made efforts to acquire funding to cover airfare for the Dutch tour from Beijing Municipal government, but this was not successful. Thus the majority of the funding came from the Dutch side. This imbalance was a potential source of tension for both funders and artists.
- Both companies lost money on the co-production and tour. This raises the issue of how to make cross-continental co-productions between Asia and Europe financially viable?

#### *Follow-up*

- For both companies, there was such effort to realise the creation of the double bill

and then the tour that the final aspect of the entire co-production – bringing *Women of the World* back to Beijing for China audiences – was barely realised, as funding and energies were almost dried up by that point.

- Due to changes in staffing in both companies, long-term follow up to continue the relationship between BMDC and avd dc or future development / touring of the co-production has not been a priority.

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### **Lessons Learned / Questions Raised**

- If both companies lost (invested) money on the co-production, how to make cross-continental co-productions between Asia and Europe financially viable? Or is the 'cross-cultural' significance enough to make the investment (loss) worthwhile?
  - How to handle situations with the reality of an imbalance of available financial resources
  - Need for clear division of duties from the start – who oversees budgets and timelines? What is the schedule for checking in on all of these on a regular basis? How to make this kind of communication possible across time zones? All of this further complicated when it's not just a two-way co-production but the third partner of the tour booking agent is involved. Three-way communication becomes complicated when it is not clear which party in the co-production takes the lead on which aspect.
  - Clear outline of expectations for outcome of project, why do it, who is accountable for what and when.
  - How to ensure partnerships are sustainable beyond one-off projects - unless the project is enough and both parties are happy to move on after the project is completed.
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4

**Research  
Resources**

## 1 Glossary

The language used to describe roles and activities in international co-production is rather slippery and apt to change from one country and region to another. Even where partners are speaking English, there are differences in language use between the countries of Europe, Asia and in Australia & New Zealand. The authors present a short glossary of terms as used in this publication. They are not set in stone and are liable to change with time.

Several definitions are adapted from the 2010 Mad Bastards study by Jo Porter for the Independent Producers Association in Australia.

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**Co-production:** a production in the performing arts that involves two or more producing partners entering into a contractual agreement to support the creation and distribution of a production or process-orientated project

**Co-producer:** a partner in a co-production – usually a venue or festival that presents the production but it may also be an artistic company, booking agent, project network consortium or other cultural institution.

**Co-production tour:** the tour of the co-production to the co-producing partner venues and festivals. This normally precedes international touring to other non-partner venues.

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**Agent:** (or booking agent) an individual or business that promotes artistic companies and their productions, and books and organises their tours. Acts as a middle man to negotiate contracts, fees, organises the logistics of touring and takes a fee/commission for services. The role and position of agents varies between countries and across art forms. Some agents are also involved in programming and production and may, in some cases, be co-production partners. Some agents act as a gateway into a country, or region, for foreign performing arts companies, and are engaged as the interface with festivals and venues.

**Artist management:** a term commonly used in the music field, particularly with classical musicians and ensembles as well as in the pop and rock industry. Artists managers are also known as concert agents. They act on behalf of artists and promote them to presenters (venues and festivals), book concerts, negotiate programmes, contracts and fees and organise touring logistics.

**Associated outreach activity:** e.g. workshops, master classes, talks offered by an artist or company to accompany a production. They are designed for creativity and skills development, and to raise interest in the production from potential audience members. They may be promoted as part of a venue or festival's audience development programme.

**Commission:** a work in the performing arts (or other art forms) made by an artist or artistic company at the request of a presenter, another artist or company, a creative producer or programmer (i.e. the 'commissioner') for a specific context. The content of a commission may be partly pre-defined to fit a thematic project, season or festival; or it may be open – a new work whose parameters are determined through discussion and negotiation between the artist and the commissioner. A fee and timetable are agreed at the outset. A commission may be initiated by more than one party (a 'co-commission'). It may also be a co-production with several partners contributing to production and distribution, although normally just one producer/presenter would take the lead in guiding the creative production process.

**Creative Producer:** a person whose role is focused particularly on the creation of the work. This creative support and development role can be equivalent to that of a dramaturg and involve 'accompanying the artist' or initiating and guiding a commission. But it may also include other 'normal' producer responsibilities such as business aspects (see Producer).

**Intercultural dialogue:** a series of specific encounters, anchored in real space and time between individuals and/or groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, with the aim of exploring, testing and increasing understanding, awareness, empathy, and respect. The ultimate purpose of Intercultural Dialogue is to create a co-operative and willing environment for overcoming political and social tensions (definition: The Rainbow Paper – Platform for Intercultural Europe). A priority in many EU funding programmes and for some European national cultural institutes, research by the Platform indicates that the concept of intercultural dialogue is often misunderstood.

**Premiere season:** the first season when a production tours. Following the 'world premiere', it may be marketed as a national premiere in the various countries it tours to.

**Presenter:** a venue, festival, booking agent or other entity that is responsible for presenting a developed performing arts production to an audience. Role involves negotiating fees, marketing, dealing with technical requirements, ticketing, press etc. In this publication, 'presenter' is also used to cover all types of co-production partners who are not involved in the actual creation of the production.

**Producer:** a person or entity responsible for the business aspects of an artistic production – e.g. administration, finance, law, insurance, copyright etc. However, in recent years, the titles Producer, Executive Producer and Creative Producer have been used and tend to create a more confused definition of the work of a producer.

**Programmer:** the person at a venue or festival who selects the work to be presented. Sometimes this involves choosing pre-developed productions that fit the theme, audiences, budget and general presentation context. Sometimes it involves a more active creative role (e.g. the artistic director of a festival) – curating a programme, initiating commissions etc.

**Process-oriented:** a project, production or co-production can be described as ‘process-oriented’ when the focus is more on the creative development, learning, skills sharing and other processes, than on delivering a production (‘product-oriented’). Some residencies are process-oriented and do not require a final presentation of work.

**Project network:** (or project consortium) a grouping of organisations which come together for a project. A common structure for EU funded projects where there is a lead applicant and partners or co-organisers and projects may last for 3 years or more. When a project sets out to commission or co-produce work the project network (or ‘network’) may be a co-production partner. Not to be confused with an international cultural network – a permanent membership organisation that delivers wide-ranging, longer-term benefits to members.

**Promoter:** a term which is sometimes used quite loosely (‘presenters and promoters’, ‘promoters and programmers’) to describe various roles which bridge the interface between a production created by a performing artist or company, a presentation context (venue or festival) and an audience.

## 2 International co-productions: selected examples

The case studies in Chapter 3 were chosen from a long list of potential cases, drawn up by the Research Team. Examples from the long list are presented here for further research by readers. Some were contributed by users following the online call but most were identified through independent study by the authors. Given the short research period for this publication, this impressive and diverse range of recent co-productions lists many partners, countries and types of production.

Many of the main players in international co-production in Europe and Asia can be found here. Readers looking for further examples should check large international performing arts festivals; major performing arts venues, particularly opera and dance; performing arts companies who tour internationally (much of such work is co-produced); and the performing arts programmes of European Capitals of Culture. Some examples are also given of more process-driven collaborative projects.

### Asia – Europe

#### *Bittersweet Recipes*

Japan – Austria – Germany

Intermedia performance by Japanese dancer/choreographer Yui Kawaguchi & German artists using film, dance, physicality in performance. Performed in Austria & Germany 2009.

*Co-production partners:* KLIMAELEMENTE, Künstlerhaus Mousonturm & German Stage Service, Marburg. Funding from Japan Foundation PAJ Europe programme.

[http://www.klimaelemente.de/suessbittere\\_rezepturen/index.html](http://www.klimaelemente.de/suessbittere_rezepturen/index.html)

***Call Cutta in a Box***      **India – Germany – Finland – Denmark – Belgium – Switzerland – France**

This performance by Rimini Protokoll used live links to a call centre in Calcutta.

*Co-production partners:* Rimini Apparat, Baltic Circle Helsinki & Helsinki Festival, Camp X Copenhagen, HAU Berlin, Kunstenfestivaldesarts Brussels, Nationaltheater Mannheim, Schauspielhaus Zürich, 104 Centquatre Paris. In collaboration with: Callcenter Descon Ltd, Calcutta.

[http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project\\_2766.html](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_2766.html)

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***Food Chain***

**Australia – Germany**

Dance theatre work by Gavin Webber and Grayson Millwood, presented at Sydney Festival and venues in Germany & Austria in 2011.

*Co-production partners:* Performing Lines, pvc Tanz Freiberg Heidelberg.

<http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/2011/Dance/Food-Chain-Inner-West/>

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***Hui Liu Ensemble***

**China – Germany – Belgium**

Musicians from Het Collectief (BE) play on modern western instruments & Dragon Ensemble (DE/CN) on traditional Chinese instruments. Work was presented as part of Europalia China in Belgium, 2010.

*Co-production partners:* Hui Liu Ensemble, Het Collectief, Dragon Ensemble, deSingel Antwerp.

[http://www.desingel.be/en/productionDetailView.orb?pr\\_id=8840](http://www.desingel.be/en/productionDetailView.orb?pr_id=8840)

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***Large Screens and the Transnational Public Sphere***

**Korea – Australia**

Telematic performance in public space, organised as a collaborative installation in 2009.

*Partners:* University of Melbourne, Sydney College of the Arts, Australia Council, Fed Square Victoria, Art Centre Nabi (Korea).

<http://spatialaesthetics.unimelb.edu.au/>

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***Madame Seiho Okudaira***

**Japan – France**

Dance production with Emmanuelle Huynh, reflection on aspects of Japanese culture. Presented in Angers, Paris & Japan in 2009.

*Co-production partners:* Centre National de Danse Contemporaine – Angers, Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Institut franco-japonais de Tokyo, Festival d'Automne à Paris.

<http://www.festival-automne.com/emmanuelle-huynh-show271.html>

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***Memory***

**China – France**

2008 production by dancer Wen Hui & video artist Wu Wenguang on the history of the Cultural Revolution. Original production is 7 hours long. Performed at Theater der Welt 2010.

*Co-production partners:* Living Dance Studio (China), Biennale de la Danse Lyon, Centre National de la Danse.

[http://www.performingarts.jp/E/pre\\_interview/0803/1.html](http://www.performingarts.jp/E/pre_interview/0803/1.html)

## *Monsoon Project*

**Belgium – Germany – Netherlands – UK/France – Indonesia – Cambodia – Singapore – Philippines – Taiwan**

2010 contemporary dance, multimedia art, music & performance project which took place in Belgium, supported by Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). Artists developed new work through collaboration.

<http://www.stuk.be/en/dance/detail/58099>

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## *Nal Boa [look at me]*

**Korea – France**

Dance/street theatre collaboration, performed at Festival d'Aurillac and Hanmadang Festival of Gwacheon 2010.

*Co-production partners:* Ex Nihilo (France), Project Wae (Korea) with other supporting partners.

<http://www.exnihilodanse.com/spip.php?rubrique102>

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## *Pichet Klunchun and Myself*

**Thailand – France**

Legendary collaboration between Jérôme Bel and Pichet Klunchun: a dance conversation initiated in 2005, and since performed worldwide.

*Co-production partners:* Bangkok Fringe Festival, SACD Le Vif du Sujet, Festival Montpellier Danse 2005, R. B. Jérôme Bel. Commissioned by Tang Fu Kuen.

<http://www.pklifework.com/WorkPages/Made%20In%20Thailand.html>

<http://www.jeromebel.fr/eng/jeromebel.asp?m=3&s=10&sms=5>

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## *Rhinoceros*

**Korea – France**

Co-production initiated by SPAF to create a French play with Korean actors as part of programme at Avignon Festival Off 2010, subsequently performed at two venues in Korea.

*Co-production partners:* Seoul Performing Arts Festival, Théâtre des Halles (Avignon), Ansan Arts Center, Korean Cultural Centre, France.

<http://www.theatredeshalles.com/LES-SPECTACLES/ete/100-Rhinoceros>

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## *Sacred City*

**Japan – Finland**

A 5 hour performance created through collaboration between artists in Finland & Japan. Performed in Helsinki & Yokohama, 2010/11.

*Co-production partners:* Reality Research Center (Finland), Keizo Maeda (Japan).

<http://www.todellisuus.fi/sacred-city-english>

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## *Semele*

**China – Belgium – UK**

Ambitious interdisciplinary opera production; Chinese artist Zhang Huan designed first full length baroque opera performed in China. Presented in Brussels, Beijing, Shanghai, 2009/10.

*Co-production partners:* KT Wong Foundation, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie | de Munt.

<http://www.ktwong.org/#/performance>

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## *Shibahama*

**Japan – Hungary**

Interactive multimedia performance, a collaboration between Japanese performing arts company

Fai Fai & Hungarian new media lab Kitchen Budapest. Performed in Tokyo 2010.

*Partners:* Fai Fai, Kitchen Budapest.

<http://faifai.kibu.hu/>

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### *Sortie de cuisine*

**Korea – France**

2006 street theatre production by companies in Korea and France, co-produced by street theatre festivals in the two countries, where it was performed.

*Co-production partners:* ilotopie (France), Homo Ludens (Korea), Hanmadang Festival of Gwacheon, Chalon dans la rue.

[http://www.ilotopie.com/fr/livre\\_images/06.htm](http://www.ilotopie.com/fr/livre_images/06.htm)

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### *Sutra*

**China – Belgium – UK – Greece – Spain – Luxembourg – France – Italy**

Dance co-production which has toured extensively worldwide 2008-2010. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Anthony Gormley, Shaolin Temple monks & Szymon Brzoska.

*Co-production partners:* Sadler's Wells London, Athens Festival, Festival de Barcelona Grec, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, La Monnaie Brussels, Festival d'Avignon, Fondazione Musica per Roma & Shaolin Cultural Communications Company.

<http://www.sadlerswells.com/show/Cherkaoui-Gormley>

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### *Synchronising Berlin Hong Kong*

**China – Germany**

Streaming of live collaboration between German and Hong Kong music ensembles with artists and performers and presenting partners in each place. Performances in 2011.

*Production:* by Ensemble Adapter and Dreher&Schmidt in cooperation with Hong Kong New Music Ensemble and Goethe Institut Hong Kong.

<http://www.ensemble-adapter.de>

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### *This is how you will disappear*

**Japan – France – Austria – Germany – Norway**

Multimedia dance work by Gisele Vienne and Shiro Takatani. Performed in France, Japan, Austria, Germany, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden in 2010/11.

*Co-production partners:* Festival d'Avignon, Le Quartz Scène nationale de Brest, Festival/Tokyo, Steep Slope Studio-Yokohama, Kyoto Experiment Festival, Comédie de Caen Centre dramatique national de Normandie, Centre dramatique national Orléans/Loiret/Centre, Steirischer Herbst (Graz), BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen), Kampnagel (Hambourg), Centre chorégraphique national de Franche-Comté- Belfort et Centre chorégraphique national de Grenoble (& other funding partners).

<http://contemporaryperformance.com/2010/07/16/in-performance-gisele-vienne-this-is-how-you-will-disappear/>

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### **Other sources of examples:**

- **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** has supported various process-oriented arts residencies and collaborations, e.g. Pointe to Point Asia-Europe Dance Forum (2009-10) was a 2 week residency in Lisbon with 20 dance artists from Asia and Europe. This was followed by a production phase which supported selected collaborations between

artists.

[http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com\\_programme&task=view&id=35](http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_programme&task=view&id=35)

ASEF project info: [www.culture360.org](http://www.culture360.org)

- **EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee** gives grants for cultural activities involving Japanese partnerships with a European Capital of Culture programme, and some other European projects. Co-productions and other cultural exchange programmes have been supported.  
<http://eu-japanfest.org/n-english/index.html>
- **Finland-Japan dance collaborations** were initiated through the Finland-Japan residency exchange project 2007-2009, linking Dance Info Finland, the Finnish Institute in Japan and Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse Number 1.  
<http://www.danceinfo.fi/projects-and-publications/projects/finland-japan-residence-exchange-programme-2007-2009/>
- **Korea-Finland Connection:** a cooperation between KAMS & Dance Info Finland linking dance professionals with in depth research visits and collaboration support, 2010-2011.  
<http://www.danceinfo.fi/projects-and-publications/projects/korea-finland-connection-developing-the-co-operation-between-korean-and-finnish-performing-art-fields/>
- **Korea-UK Connection:** a cooperation between KAMS and Visiting Arts linking performing arts producers through visits and a supportive environment for collaboration 2010.  
<http://www.visitingarts.org.uk/content/korea-uk-connection-2010-producers%E2%80%99-research-visit>
- **Performing Arts Japan Programme for Europe (PAJ Europe)** is an annual programme of the Japan Foundation, supporting collaborations between performing arts companies in Japan and Europe, including some co-productions.  
2011/12 guidelines: [http://www.jki.de/pool/files/programmheft/PAJ\\_Europe\\_2011-2012\\_Guideline.pdf](http://www.jki.de/pool/files/programmheft/PAJ_Europe_2011-2012_Guideline.pdf)  
List of supported projects since 2007: <http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/culture/perform/oversea/index.html>
- **Saison Foundation** makes an annual call for EU-Japan performing arts projects in collaboration with EU-Japan Fest funding programme, as well as international project support for performing arts organisations in Japan.  
2010 grants: <http://www.saison.or.jp/english/awardees/projects2010.pdf>  
2009 grants: [http://www.saison.or.jp/awardees/report/report2009/38\\_48.pdf](http://www.saison.or.jp/awardees/report/report2009/38_48.pdf)

## Asia – Asia

### *People Puppet Project*

**Australia – Korea**

Collaborative puppets/street theatre project between artistic companies Snuff Puppets and Tuida, who are developing a collaborative production through workshops and residency in 2010/11.

*Partners:* Snuff Puppets (Australia), Tuida (Korea) with Hi Seoul Festival, Ansan Street Arts Festival, Gwacheon Hanmadang Festival; other funding partners; produced by AsiaNow.

[http://asianow.kr/menu03/m03\\_sub01\\_2.html](http://asianow.kr/menu03/m03_sub01_2.html)

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### *Playing Landscape*

**Taiwan – Macau**

Multimedia theatre production with artists from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan & Macau, touring in 2010.

*Co-production partners:* Out To Theatre Company (Taiwan) & Point View Art Association (Macau).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZbnitSFsKU>

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### *Swift Sweets*

**Korea – Japan**

Pappa Tarahumara collaborative project with Korean performers.

*Co-production partners:* Pappa Tarahumara, LIG Art Foundation, Seoul International Dance Festival.

<http://www.pappa-tara.com>

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### *The Buddha My Body*

**Australia – Korea**

A 2008 mime/dance collaboration between Tony Yap Company (Australia) and Theatre Nettle (Korea), with a creative development phase in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, involving Yoga artist Agung Gunawan. Performances in Yogyakarta, Seoul & Melbourne, 2008-09.

<http://www.multiculturalarts.com.au/events2009/palimpsest.shtml>

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### *Tri\_K*

**China – Japan**

Dance/multimedia project: artistic collaboration between Dick Wong, Takao Kawaguchi & Koichi Imaizumi. Presented in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Kobe, Lisbon, 2010.

*Co-production partners:* Hong Kong Arts Festival, Takao Kawaguchi Project.

[http://www.kawaguchitakao.com/release/091126/tri\\_k\\_pressrelease\\_en.pdf](http://www.kawaguchitakao.com/release/091126/tri_k_pressrelease_en.pdf)

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### *Yakiniku Dragon*

**Japan – Korea**

The 2nd in a series of joint Japan-Korea productions of new works that began in 2002. Yakiniku Dragon is the name of a Korean barbecue restaurant in Japan and offers a look at Japanese-Korean relations past, present, and future in a play that also incorporates music.

*Co-production partners:* New National Theatre (Tokyo), Seoul Arts Center.

<http://www.nntt.jac.go.jp/english/season/s357e/s357e.html>

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### *Yellow Monkey*

**Korea – Singapore**

The performance developed through a 6-week residency in Singapore for 5 male dancers from the all male Korean company and 3 Singapore female dancers. It premiered in Singapore in 2008

and was invited to Seoul for SiDance Festival 2009.

*Co-production partners:* Post Ego Dance Company (Korea) & COLLECTIVE mayhem (Singapore).

[http://www.esplanade.com/downloads/press\\_releases/Aug%2008/EsplanadePresents\\_Aug08\\_Programmes.pdf](http://www.esplanade.com/downloads/press_releases/Aug%2008/EsplanadePresents_Aug08_Programmes.pdf)

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Other sources of examples:

- **Arts Network Asia (ANA)** makes an annual call for projects that encourage challenging, provocative exchanges and collaborations between different cultures within Asia, in all artforms. These collaborations and exchanges can be with diverse cultures of the same country or even the same city.

<http://www.artsnetworkasia.org/main.html>

- **Little Asia Dance Exchange Network 2005:** performances at SiDance Festival in Seoul with artists and producers from Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore.

[http://www.sidance.org/2005/eng/seedance\\_view.php?code=D13082005404017](http://www.sidance.org/2005/eng/seedance_view.php?code=D13082005404017)

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## Europe – Europe

### + 4'33" *Tribute to John Cage*

**France – Portugal – Belgium**

2010/11 international co-production of John Cage's legendary performance of silence. Supported by EU funded Reseau Varese – European Network for the Creation and Promotion of New Music

*Co-production partners:* Casa da Musica, Ircam/Les Spectacles Vivants-Centre Pompidou, Festival Musica, Ars Musica.

<http://www.reseau-varese.com/4-33-Tribute-to-John-Cage>

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### (A)pollonia

**Poland – France – Belgium – Switzerland – Austria**

Krzysztof Warlikowski's project based on classical Greek and contemporary texts. 2009 production which tours in 2011 to Taiwan, Moscow & Athens.

*Co-production partners:* Nowy Teatr Warszawa, Narodowy Stary Teatr (Cracow), Festival d'Avignon, Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, Théâtre de la Place in Liege, Comédie de Geneve-Centre Dramatique in Geneva, Wiener Festwochen.

[www.nowyteatr.org/](http://www.nowyteatr.org/)

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### *Black/North SEAS* **Sweden – Bulgaria – Croatia – Denmark – Norway – Denmark – Netherlands**

EU Culture Programme funded project, a major European platform for intersecting arts with other sectors of society. During the first phase of Black/North SEAS (2006-2008), 20 interdisciplinary and trans-national co-productions were created, many inspired by an experience ("a date") between two artists or groups of artists, from two different European regions, while exploring a harbour city on a European coast.

*Project co-organisers:* Intercult (Sweden) is the initiator with 7 co-organisers -Theatre Sfumato (Bulgaria), Badco (Croatia), Hotel Pro Forma (Denmark), Tromsø Kommun (Norway), Copenhagen International Theatre (Denmark), Treaty of Utrecht Cultural Programme (Netherlands).

*Production information:* <http://www.seas.se/productions/index.php>  
<http://www.seas.se>

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### *Conte D'Amour*

**Finland – Sweden**

Theatrical investigation of the ideology of romantic love: a 2010 co-production following successful collaboration between same partners in 2007. The work premiered in Berlin in 2010, followed by shows at Finnish-German festival in Cologne, followed by performances in Malmö and Helsinki.

*Co-production partners:* Institutet & Nya Rampen.  
[www.nyarampen.fi/English/index.html](http://www.nyarampen.fi/English/index.html)

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### *Glossopoeia*

**France – Spain**

Production with 3 dancers, 4 musicians, video and live electronics, supported by EU funded Réseau Varèse – European Network for the Creation and Promotion of New Music.

*Co-production partners:* Ircam/Les Spectacles vivants–Centre Pompidou, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Ensemble intercontemporain, Operadhoy-Madrid, Réseau Varèse.  
[www.reseau-varese.com/Glossopoeia](http://www.reseau-varese.com/Glossopoeia)

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### *House without a Maid*

**Switzerland – Belgium – Portugal – Germany – Netherlands**

A joint theatre production by film director Jorge León and choreographer Simone Aughtlerony for 2010 Kunstenfestivaldesarts, staged in a 19th century bourgeois house in Brussels.

*Co-production partners:* Verein für allgemeines Wohl (Zürich), Niels asbl (Brussels), Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Alkantara Festival (Lisbon), Dampfzentrale/Biennale (Bern), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Productiehuis Rotterdam (Rotterdamse Schouwburg), Theaterhaus Gessnerallee (Zürich).  
<http://archive.kfda.be/2010/en/node/1018>

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### *K, a Society*

**Belgium – Netherlands – Germany**

Kris Verdonck, - a walkabout through a Kafkaesque world, set in a post-industrial site.

*Co-production partners:* Stilllab, Kaaitheater, Le Manège Mons, Kunstencentrum Vooruit, Productiehuis Rotterdamse Schouwburg, Schauspiel Essen, Theater der Welt 2010.  
<http://www.kaaitheater.be/productie.jsp?productie=828>

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### *Koniec /The End*

**Poland – France – Belgium – Germany**

Directed by Krzysztof Warlikowski in 2010, the production tours in 2011 in Europe.

*Co-production partners:* Nowy Teatr (Warsaw), Théâtre de l'Odéon (Paris), Théâtre de la Place (Liège), La Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand - Scene Nationale, Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin).  
<http://www.nowyteatr.org/>

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### *Life Streaming*

**Netherlands – Germany – UK**

Experiential performance production in 2010 by Dries Verhoeven with performers in Sri Lanka through skype to internet cafes, it is cited as example of how to minimise international touring carbon impacts.

*Co-production partners:* Dries Verhoeven, LIFT Festival London, Huis a/d Werf & Schauspielhaus Bochum.

<http://www.driesverhoeven.com/>

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### *LKN Confidential*

**Belgium – Italy**

A 2010 ZimmerFrei production for the Kunstenfestivaldesarts, with intervention in public space in Brussels. The Italian ZimmerFrei collective has been making audiovisual city portraits for years.

*Co-production partners:* Mokum (Brussels), ZimmerFrei (Bologna), Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Bruxelles nous appartient/Brussel behoort ons toe.

<http://archive.kfda.be/2010/en/node/1107>

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### *Matsukaze*

**Germany – Belgium – Poland – Luxembourg**

Sasha Waltz & Guests new opera production, based on a popular classic of Japanese Noh theatre, choreographed by Sasha Waltz with music by Japanese composer Toshio Horosokawa. World Premiere at La Monnaie, Brussels 2011, followed by premieres in Warsaw, Luxembourg and Berlin.

*Co-production partners:* Sasha Waltz & Guests, La Monnaie, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa (Warsaw).

<http://www.lamonnaie.be/en/opera/56/>

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### *Next Step*

**Portugal – Belgium – Estonia – Sweden – Netherlands – Austria – France**

An EU Culture Programme project network of seven European festivals set up to stimulate the co-production and the transnational circulation of new works by the great European artists of tomorrow.

*Co-organisers:* Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Alkantara Festival, Baltoscandal Festival, Göteborgs Dans & Teater Festival, De Internationale Keuze van de Rotterdamse Schouwburg, steirischer herbst festival, Théâtre National de Bordeaux.

<http://www.chekhorfest.ru/en/rus-italy/spec/1006/>

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### *On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God, Vol I*

**Italy – Netherlands – France – Norway – UK – Russia – Slovenia – Poland – Italy – Germany**

Romeo Castellucci is considered a seminal European theatre-maker and has been invited to festivals from Tokyo to Buenos Aires.

*Co-production partners:* Societas Raffaello Sanzio, deSingel, Théâtre Nationale de Bretagne, National Theatre Oslo, Barbican London, Chekhov International Theatre Festival, Holland Festival, GREC 2011, Festival d'Avignon, Maribor 2012, DIALOG Wroclaw, spielzeit'europa I Berliner Festspiele, Théâtre de la Ville Paris, Romaeuropa Festival, Le-Maillon, Theater der Welt 2010.

[http://www.chekhovfest.ru/en/rus\\_italy/spec/1006/](http://www.chekhovfest.ru/en/rus_italy/spec/1006/)

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### *Prospero [EU-funded project]*

**France – Belgium – Germany – Finland – Portugal – Italy**

EU Culture Programme funded project 2008-2012 which links theatre partners in 6 European countries, developing several co-produced works, with support and training for young directors

and actors, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and other elements.

<http://www.prospere-online.eu>

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### *Radio Muezzin*

**Germany – Greece – France – Austria – Switzerland**

Successful Rimini Protokoll production which has toured extensively to festivals in Europe since 2009, and travels in 2011 to Singapore Arts Festival & Denmark.

Co-production partners: HAU Berlin, Goethe-Institut Egypt, Athens Festival, Bonlieu Scène nationale Annecy, Festival d'Avignon, steirischer herbst festival (Graz), Zürcher Theater Spektakel.

[http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project\\_3767.html](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_3767.html)

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### *The Man without Qualities I*

**Belgium – France – Spain**

Robert Musil's tableau of the world in decomposition, a mythic text equal to *Remembrance of Things Past*, worked by director Guy Cassiers.

Co-production partners: Toneelhuis Antwerpen, De Tijd, Centre Dramatique Nationale d'Orléans/Loiret/ Centre, Maison de la Culture d'Amiens, Centro Dramático Nacional (Gobierno de España).

<http://www.festival-avignon.com/en/Spectacle/12>

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### *Three Sisters*

**UK – France – Russia**

The 2007 production by Cheek by Jowl is performed by Russian actors following previous productions by the artistic director Declan Donnellan in Russia. It has been performed every year since 2005 in venues in UK, France, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Finland, USA and Colombia.

Co-production partners: Chekhov International Theatre Festival (Russia): Les Gémeaux, Sceaux, Scène Nationale, La Filature, Scène Nationale de Mulhouse, in association with Cheek by Jowl.

[http://www.cheekbyjowl.com/three\\_sisters.php](http://www.cheekbyjowl.com/three_sisters.php)

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### *Two Places – One Piece*

**Germany – Romania**

A joint programme by the Theater Oberhausen and the Radu Stanca National Theatre in Sibiu (Romania) - supported by the Wanderlust Fund. Premiered in both countries in 2011.

Co-production partners: Theater Oberhausen, Radu Stanca National Theatre.

[http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/programme/internationale\\_theaterpartnerschaften/two\\_places\\_\\_one\\_piece\\_4032\\_3.html](http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/programme/internationale_theaterpartnerschaften/two_places__one_piece_4032_3.html)

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### *Vamos sentir falta de tudo aquilo de que não precisamos [we are going to miss everything we don't need]*

**Portugal – Belgium – France – Spain – Germany**

Vera Mantero dance production at Kunstenfestivaldesarts 2010.

Co-production partners: O Rumo do Fumo (Lisbon), Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Alcantara Festival (Lisbon), Culturgest (Lisbon), Festival Montpellier Danse 2009, Teatro de la Laboral – Ciudad de la Cultura (Gijón), Centre national de danse contemporaine (Angers), O Espaço do Tempo (Montemor-o-Novo), PACT Zollverein (Essen).

<http://archive.kfda.be/2010/en/node/1126>

Theatre production directed by Jan Klata.

Co-production: Teatr Polski Wrocław, Festiwal Czterech Kultur (Łódź), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin).

<http://www.teatrpolski.wroc.pl/przedstawienia/ziemia-obiecana>

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Other sources of examples:

- **EU Culture Programme 2007-2013** The programme offers grants for cultural projects (annual ‘cooperation measures’ and multi-annual co-operation projects) involving partners in at least three eligible European countries: e.g. Prospero & NXTSTP listed above. Other areas of this programme which may offer direct or indirect financial support to co-production projects include the annual programme linking EU with third countries (e.g. EU-China in 2007) and programme support to European cultural festivals. The EU Culture Programme is under review for 2014 onwards. [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.php)
- **European Capitals of Culture (ECoC)** programme has run since 1985 and each year designates two cities in different European countries. It is common to find international co-productions in the performing arts programme of the ECoC: e.g. Linz09 featured *Mental Finland* by Kristian Smeds (Finland), *Bollywood Bandwagon* by Anurupa Roy (India) and *Empire* by Superamas (France/Austria). <http://www.linz09.at/en/kunstprogramm.html>  
European Capital of Culture: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm)
- **European Festivals Association:** links to festivals in Europe and beyond. [www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu)
- **Kulturstiftung des Bundes** Wanderlust Fund is an application-based fund of the Federal Cultural Foundation in Germany, open to municipal and state theatres in Germany which want to establish a partnership with a foreign theatre. It has funded many international co-productions, mostly in Europe but also with theatres in China and India.  
[http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/programme/internationale\\_theaterpartnerschaften/wanderlust\\_fund\\_for\\_international\\_theatre\\_partnerships\\_3407\\_44.html](http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/cms/en/programme/internationale_theaterpartnerschaften/wanderlust_fund_for_international_theatre_partnerships_3407_44.html)
- **NPN Support for Dance Co-productions** scheme in Germany ran 2005-2010 and has supported trans-regional and international co-productions. Applicants had to be based in Germany and develop the main part of the production there but there could be foreign partners. A popular scheme and a petition against its closure raised 1,000 signatures.  
<http://www.jointadventures.net/web/en/npn/npntanz/npnsupportfordancecoproductions/index.html>
- **Nordic Culture Point** funding for cultural production projects in the Nordic region.  
<http://www.kknord.org/lang-en/nordic-culture-point>

### **3 International Touring Contract Checklist**

This checklist of items for a contract for touring international performing arts was written by Eva Neklyaeva, Director of the BALTIC CIRCLE International Theatre Festival in Helsinki. [www.q-teatteri.fi/baltic\\_circle/eng/index.html](http://www.q-teatteri.fi/baltic_circle/eng/index.html) It has been slightly modified for this publication.

It was commissioned as part of the International Mobility Fact Pack, published in English and Russian for the Seeds of Imagination project 2008-2010 ([www.seeds.fi](http://www.seeds.fi)), an EU funded project building bridges between the Russian and Finnish theatre fields.

English: <http://www.rtlb.ru/file/mobilityFactsheets.en.pdf>

Russian: <http://www.rtlb.ru/file/mobilityFactsheets.ru.pdf>

#### **1. Contract parties, legal addresses, contact persons**

#### **2. Subject of the contract: touring performance and hosting venue. Dates and place of the tour**

#### **3. Touring company's commitments:**

- Providing necessary marketing material (photos, press clips, etc.), together with the right to use them for advertising the tour
- Providing necessary technical information
- Ensuring rights to tour the performance internationally
- Taking care of all necessary insurances for staff, stage set etc.
- Participation in possible extra activities, such as audience discussions, interviews, etc.
- Providing a right to take photos/videos/audio recording (the maximum length might be specified in the contract) during the performance or/and rehearsal in the hosting venue

#### **4. Host venue's commitments:**

- All administrative expenses, marketing, translations
- Payment of royalties (specify the percentages and means of payment)
- Technical equipment hire and technical staff, according to the technical rider (technical rider should be discussed in detail, signed separately by both parties and enclosed into the contract. Never sign the contract without the technical rider!)
- Interpretation of the play (can be also organised by the company)
- Number of free tickets to be reserved for the touring company's guests

#### **5. Financial responsibilities of the parties – specify who pays for what:**

- Travel and visa expenses: route, how many tickets, what class, maximum cost per ticket
- Local transfer: number of people and trips
- Who is responsible for booking the tickets and local transfer
- Freight expenses: air or land, maximum cost of the freight. Who is responsible for

dealing with the transportation company. Customs' costs. Who is responsible for dealing with the Customs

- Accommodation: number of rooms (double or single), nights, lowest acceptable hotel class. Breakfast included or excluded. Who is covering accommodation for the truck drivers (on land routes). Who is covering minibar and other hotel extras. It's good to include a rooming list in the contract
- Per-diems: number of persons and days. Specify the sum of per diems in the contract – there are different standards between countries. When and how per-diems will be paid
- Catering at the venue, food and drinks in the dressing rooms. Also specified in detail in tech rider
- Fee and the means of payment. Who is responsible for paying the taxes and possible social security charges. Specify if a registration certificate or other documents are needed for the local tax office

## **6. Plan of action in case of cancellation**

## **7. Force majeure**

## **8. Enclosures**

## **9. Date, place, signatures**

This checklist is intended to be a long list to be adapted for each touring situation. Therefore, you also need to:

### **Think if you have any other special requests for the tour – for example:**

- safety regulations
- permissions for outdoor events
- permissions for use of copyrighted material
- assistance requests for disabled members of the company
- need for an interpreter during the building of the set

It is good to include in the contract any special requests, to avoid possible problems later on.

## **4 The financial model in commercial musical theatre**

In the commercial musical theatre field, usually the creators (the artists) write the book (the script/libretto) and music first (not necessarily completed) and then look for producers through showcases/readings. This would usually include a presentation of a synopsis and few songs or summary version of a completed work. This has been a traditional practice for decades in the West End of London and on Broadway.

In the past, usually one leading producer produced the entire production using funds raised from a number of investors. The producer shared the profits from the production with the group of investors, according to the size of their contribution, once the production started to generate profit. This was after it reached the point where all the production costs had been recouped from surplus box office revenue over running costs.

Once this first production had proved to be a success and generated quite a large amount of profit share for the investors, the leading producer would look for distributors to secure distribution of replica productions in other territories. Also, to maximise the profits of the premiere season in West End (or other launch city), the original leading producer would not normally give rights for distribution to producers in other territories until after a year or two.

But recently, there is a trend to look for more international co-producers and for further international distributors in the process of capitalisation (finding investment). That is why producers' lists are seen to become longer these days. There are more cases where a lead producer is teamed up with a group of writers. They look for international co-producers as international investors and distributors through readings or showcases.

Recent examples include *The Lord of the Rings* (premiere 2006 in Canada by a UK producer), *Gone with the Wind* (premiere 2008 in UK by an US producer), *Dreamgirls* (premiere 2009 in Korea by US/Korea co-producers), *Ghost* (premiere 2011 in UK by a US producer), *Doctor Zhivago* (2011 in Australia). Here, the lead producers looked for international co-producers who can pay up front around € 350,000 to € 700,000 as an initial investment and then plan an international replica production in other countries. The deal for investors is to provide advance investment finance and to be given the right to be the first to be invited to make an international replica production (a priority is to get the licence for the show in other territories).

Clearly there are more co-productions in commercial musical theatre now due to:

- The rise in production costs – over € 4 million for a musical production
- The growth of the international market and international distribution – not only West End / Broadway now, but also there are large audiences in Germany, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Korea and China
- The huge financial successes of blockbuster musicals which attract major star performers and have been replicated around the world

\* An abridged version of notes by MJ Chung

## **5** Bibliography, desk research & other information resources

### **Publications**

*Bridging Asia and Europe Contemporary Performing Arts*, Katelijn Verstraete, article

for Culture360, <http://culture360.org/magazine/bridging-asia-and-europe-contemporary-performing-arts/>

***Complicite Theatre's Long Road to India***, Judith Dimant, 2009, article for Culture360, <http://culture360.org/magazine/complicite-theatres-long-road-to-india/>

***Co-production and touring***, Guy Cools, On-the-Move, 2004, <http://on-the-move.org/library/article/13862/co-production-and-touring/?category=57>

This study contains a basic co-production contract template.

***Co-Productions: an introduction***, Independent Theatre Council (ITC) in consultation with Bates, Wells & Braithwaite, Solicitors, an ITC information sheet, [www.itc-arts.org/](http://www.itc-arts.org/)

***Greening the Arts: thinkpieces for a zero carbon future and a survey of sustainable arts practices***, Tipping Point Australia, 2010, [http://tippingpointaustralia.com/static/files/assets/dd35ab7a/Greening\\_the-Arts.pdf](http://tippingpointaustralia.com/static/files/assets/dd35ab7a/Greening_the-Arts.pdf)

***International Mobility and Networking***, Judith Staines for Seeds of Imagination project, 2009 (updated 2010), [www.seeds.fi](http://www.seeds.fi)

***International Touring Contract Checklist***, Eva Neklyeva for Seeds of Imagination project, 2009, Factsheet 10

[www.rtlb.ru/file/mobilityFactsheets.en.pdf](http://www.rtlb.ru/file/mobilityFactsheets.en.pdf) (download in English),

[www.rtlb.ru/file/mobilityFactsheets.ru.pdf](http://www.rtlb.ru/file/mobilityFactsheets.ru.pdf) (download in Russian)

***International Visa and Taxation: a guide for performing arts organisations in Australia and New Zealand***, Sophie Travers & Linda Sastradiprajda, Australia Council & Creative New Zealand, 2010, [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004179672/international\\_visa\\_and\\_taxation\\_resource\\_vfinal.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0004179672/international_visa_and_taxation_resource_vfinal.pdf)

***Korea-Finland Connection: an East-West dance project incubator***, Judith Staines, 2011, article for theApro & Culture360, <http://culture360.org/magazine/korea-finland-connection-east-west-dance-incubator> <http://eng.theapro.kr/main.asp?subnum=9&pageNo=1&state=view&idx=191&ord=1&ordt=1>

***Mad Bastards: issues facing career independent producers***, Jo Porter, 2010, for the Independent Producers Association, Australia

***Moving Arts: managing the carbon impacts of our touring – Theatre***, Julie's Bicycle, 2010, [www.juliesbicycle.com/about-jb/publications/moving-arts-theatre](http://www.juliesbicycle.com/about-jb/publications/moving-arts-theatre)

***Mobility of Imagination: a companion guide to international cultural cooperation***,

Dragan Klaic, 2007, [www.budobs.org/pdf/klaic-flyer.pdf](http://www.budobs.org/pdf/klaic-flyer.pdf)

***The Producers: Alchemists of the Impossible***, Kate Tyndall, Arts Council England & The Jerwood Charitable Foundation, 2007, [www.the-producers.org](http://www.the-producers.org)

***Tax and Social Security***, Judith Staines, On-the-Move, 2004-2007, <http://on-the-move.org/library/article/13863/tax-and-social-security/?category=57>

A basic guide for performing artists in Europe to international taxation.

## Events/other resources

***Models of international co-productions and touring***, Baltic Circle seminar, 2010  
<http://balticcircle.fi/type/seminars/models-of-international-co-productions-and-touring/>

***Julie's Bicycle - Industry Green Tools***, [www.juliesbicycle.com/ig-tools](http://www.juliesbicycle.com/ig-tools)

Tools for measuring environmental impacts of arts activities, including international touring and performing arts productions.

## Desk Research

The Research Team examined a wide range of sources for examples of international co-productions in and between Europe and Asia. The results – and the Team's experience – demonstrate that an in depth search of the websites and production archives of most of the major international festivals, larger venues, opera houses and certain artistic companies would reveal numerous other examples. While the schedule for this publication did not allow for such extensive work, carefully targeted research was undertaken, including:

## Festivals & Venues

Atlas Festival, Belgium [www.extremeconvention.be](http://www.extremeconvention.be)

Aurillac International Festival of Street Theatre, France [www.aurillac.net](http://www.aurillac.net)

ConversAsians, Singapore [www.conversasians.com.sg](http://www.conversasians.com.sg)

Europalia China, Belgium <http://china.europalia-dev.be/europalia/home/?lang=en>

Huayi Festival, Singapore [www.huayifestival.com](http://www.huayifestival.com)

Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels <http://archive.kfda.be/2010/en/home>

La Monnaie | De Munt, Brussels [www.lamonnaie.be](http://www.lamonnaie.be)

Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture, Austria [www.linz09.at](http://www.linz09.at)

New Vision Arts Festival, Hong Kong [www.newvisionfestival.gov.hk](http://www.newvisionfestival.gov.hk)

Theater der Welt, Germany [www.theaterderwelt.de/en/index.php](http://www.theaterderwelt.de/en/index.php)

Sadlers Wells, London [www.sadlerswells.com](http://www.sadlerswells.com)

Seoul International Dance Festival – SiDance, Korea (2005-2010) <http://sidance.org/>

Sydney Festival, Australia [www.sydneyfestival.org.au](http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au)

Taiwan International Festival of Arts <http://tifa.ntch.edu.tw>

Transmediale, Berlin [www.transmediale.de](http://www.transmediale.de)

## **Artistic Companies**

Amrita Performing Arts [www.amritaperformingarts.org](http://www.amritaperformingarts.org)

Cheek by Jowl [www.cheekbyjowl.com](http://www.cheekbyjowl.com)

Dries Verhoeven [www.driesverhoeven.com](http://www.driesverhoeven.com)

Fai Fai <http://faifai.tv/en/about.html>

Kitchen Budapest [www.kitchenbudapest.hu](http://www.kitchenbudapest.hu)

Rimini Protokoll [www.rimini-protokoll.de](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de)

Sasha Waltz & Guests [www.sashawaltz.de](http://www.sashawaltz.de)

ZimmerFrei [www.zimmerfrei.co.it](http://www.zimmerfrei.co.it)

## **Other**

Arts Network Asia [www.artsnetworkasia.org](http://www.artsnetworkasia.org)

Asia Europe Foundation [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

Culture360.org [www.culture360.org](http://www.culture360.org)

EU Culture Programme [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm)

Japan Foundation: PAJ Europe [www.jpf.go.jp/e/culture/perform/oversea/paj\\_europe.html](http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/culture/perform/oversea/paj_europe.html)

Kulturkontakt Nord [www.kknord.org](http://www.kknord.org)

Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Wanderlust Programme) [www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de)

NPN Dance Co-production scheme

[www.jointadventures.net/web/en/npn/npntanz/npnsupportfordancecoproductions/index.html](http://www.jointadventures.net/web/en/npn/npntanz/npnsupportfordancecoproductions/index.html)

Performing Arts Network Japan <http://performingarts.jp/>

Réseau Varèse: European Network for the Creation and Promotion of New Music

[www.reseau-varese.com](http://www.reseau-varese.com)

Saison Foundation, Japan [www.saison.or.jp](http://www.saison.or.jp)

## Appendix A

### Call for case studies & respondents

The call for case studies was published in December 2010 and distributed through partners, networks, web portals, producers and festivals.

<http://www.ietm.org/index.lasso?p=information&q=newsdetail&id=508>

[http://gokams.or.kr/kams\\_eng/main.asp?sub\\_num=25&pageNo=1&state=view&idx=264](http://gokams.or.kr/kams_eng/main.asp?sub_num=25&pageNo=1&state=view&idx=264)

### Publication

The call was published on the following websites:

IETM: [www.ietm.org](http://www.ietm.org)

KAMS: [www.gokams.or.kr](http://www.gokams.or.kr)

theApro: [www.theapro.kr](http://www.theapro.kr)

Culture360.org: [www.culture360.org](http://www.culture360.org)

On-the-Move: [www.on-the-move.org](http://www.on-the-move.org)

LabforCulture: [www.labforculture.org](http://www.labforculture.org)

Circostrada: [www.circostrada.org](http://www.circostrada.org)

European Festivals Association: [www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu)

Federation for Asian Cultural Promotion: [www.thefacp.org/](http://www.thefacp.org/)

### Respondents

Responses to the call were received from the following individuals and organisations:

Tay Tong, TheatreWorks, Singapore

Neo Kim Seng, Singapore

Katelijn Verstraete, Asia-Europe Foundation, Singapore

Atsuko Hisano, Saison Foundation, Japan

Annaliese Monaro, Australia Council for the Arts

Pirjetta Mulari, Dance Info Finland

Kathrin Deventer, European Festivals Association, Brussels

Martin Lopez, Federation for Asian Cultural Promotion, Philippines

Krista Koskinen, Finnish Theatre Information Centre

Dirk Korell, Moov'n Aktion, France

Junko Takekawa, The Japan Foundation (London office)

Shinah KIM, SiDance, Seoul

Fenn Gordon, Australia Council

Bradley Allen, Hotel Pro Forma, Denmark

Daria Baiocchi, Italy

Pelin Basaran, Turkey

Claire Moran, Cryptic Theatre, Scotland, UK

Amelia Douglas, University of Melbourne, Australia

Gerard Mosterd, Kantor Pos, Netherlands

Sejung Lee, Seoul Performing Arts Festival, Korea  
Anyoung Jeong, Project Wae, Korea  
Hanmadang Festival of Gwacheon, Korea  
Sung Im Her, Korean dancer in Belgium  
Lei Wu, theatre researcher, Brussels/China  
Bradley Allen & Anders Hangoj, Hotel Pro Forma, Denmark  
Malgorzata Cwikla, Poland  
Michael Karl Schmidt, Germany  
Alison M. Friedman, Ping Pong Productions, China  
Michelle J. Lee, International Performing Arts Project, Korea  
Vanessa Ware, Intercult, Sweden  
Marie Ange Jannuccillo, Léda Atomica Musique, France  
Maria Darmansingh, Indonesian Dance Festival, Indonesia  
Katia Engel, Germany  
Lidia Teychenne, not yet it's difficult, Australia

### **Case study interviewees**

Interviews were carried out with the following international co-production partners:

Bradley Allen, Manager, Hotel Pro Forma (Denmark)  
Yessy Apprianti, Producer, formerly of Gumarang Sakti (Indonesia)  
Franz Xaver Augustin, Regional Director South East Asia, Goethe-Institut (Vietnam/Indonesia)  
Eeva Bergroth, Head of Production, Smeds Ensemble (Finland)  
Dora Büki, Producer for Kornel Mundruczó, Cinema/Theatre Director (Hungary)  
Kyu Choi, Executive Producer, AsiaNow (Korea)  
Judith Dimant, Producer, Complicite (UK)  
Karen Feys, Executive Director/ Bram Smeyers, Production Manager, Eastman (Belgium)  
Alison M. Friedman, Ping Pong Productions (China) – email interview  
Christoph Haering, Chief of Project, International Dance Festival Migros Culture Percentage (Switzerland)  
Low Kee Hong, General Manager, Singapore Arts Festival (Singapore)  
Chieko Hosaka, Chief Producer, Setagaya Public Theatre (Japan)  
Pichet Klunchun, Pichet Klunchun Dance Company (Thailand)  
Dirk Korell, Production Director & International Relations, MOOV'N AKTION (France)  
Aleksandra Kostič, President, KIBLA (Slovenia)  
Frie Leysen, Head of Programme, Theater der Welt 2010 (Germany)  
Satoshi Miyagi, Artistic Director, Kunauka Company & Shizuoka Performing Arts Center/SPAC (Japan)  
Claire Moran, Producer, Cryptic (Scotland)  
Gerard Mosterd, Director, Kantor Pos Physical Theatre (Netherlands)  
Dejan Pestotnik, Vice-president, KIBLA (Slovenia)  
Nicole Petit, Producer & Tour Manager, KVS (Belgium)

David Pledger, Artistic Director, Not Yet It's Difficult (Australia)  
Jerry Remkes, anoukvandijk dc (The Netherlands)  
Clare Sung, Producer, The Wuturi Players (Korea)  
György Szabó, Managing Director, Trafó - House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest (Hungary)  
Jobina Tan, Deputy Director Programming, The Esplanade Co Ltd (Singapore)  
Leslie Tan, Cellist, T'ang Quartet (Singapore)  
Thomas Walgrave, Artistic Director, Alcantara Festival, Lisbon (Portugal)  
Huiqin Wang, Artist for Hallerstein (China)  
Joanna Wang, Company Manager, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (Taiwan)  
Jung Ung Yang, Director, Yohangza (Korea)

## Appendix B

### Interview questions template

Sample questionnaire for case study interviews – this was adapted according to the project.

1. What was the starting point for this co-production project?
2. How did you find the partners? Had you worked together before?
3. Did your organisation already have experience of working internationally? (e.g. touring, co-productions or other collaborative projects)
4. What did you hope to gain by working internationally that you could not find through working alone or by collaborating with partners in your own country?
5. What were the main objectives of the project? (e.g. to make a co-production, extend touring range, artistic development, gain professional skills, find new markets, audience development, build profile with national funders and/or programmers)
6. What were the main phases in developing the co-production project?
7. How was the project divided up between the partners in terms of roles and responsibilities?
8. Did you draw up a contract? How easy was it to negotiate the agreement? Did you need to revise it at a later stage?
9. How did you manage communications throughout the project? Do you have any tips or recommendations?
10. Were there any particular difficulties in the course of the project? How did you deal with these? Were they unexpected or do you think you could have planned for them?
11. What do you feel are the main achievements of the project?
12. What are the three main things you learned from this project?
13. Do you have any advice for others who want to develop international performing arts co-productions?



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*the journey which is full of surprises*

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