

EINAT TUCHMAN & DOHA JAADI

Other Enter

6/03 19:00 | ESPACETOUS

PERFORMANCE | 60 MIN. | IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

EXTRA Join us for a post-performance talk with the artists, moderated by Esther Severi.

KAMI THEATER



NL Einat Tuchman werkt sinds enkele jaren in Molenbeek. Na lang aandringen slaagt ze erin om een kelderruimte in een buurthuis te mogen gebruiken: het wordt de 'Espacetous'. Iedereen is er welkom om te praten, te werken of gewoon te zijn. Het buurmeisje Doha is er regelmatig te gast. Samen maakten ze *Other Enter*, dat vertelt over de moeilijkheden die je tegenkomt bij het opzetten van buurtprojecten en hoe ze er toch in slagen om voor gewone mensen een plek te creëren waar ieder zichzelf kan zijn.

FR Einat Tuchman travaille depuis quelques années à Molenbeek. Après avoir longtemps insisté, elle parvient à pouvoir utiliser une cave d'une maison de quartier : cela devient l'Espacetous. Tout le monde y est le bienvenu pour parler, travailler ou simplement être là. La voisine Doha s'y rend régulièrement. Ensemble, elles créent *Other Enter*, qui raconte les difficultés qu'on rencontre pour mettre sur pied un projet de quartier et de quelle manière elles ont néanmoins réussi à créer un lieu pour tout un chacun et où chacun peut être qui il ou elle est.

EN Einat Tuchman has worked in Molenbeek for the past several years. After long insistence, she was eventually given permission to use a cellar space in a community centre: she named it 'Espacetous'. Everyone is welcome to talk, to work or just to be. Doha, a local girl, is a regular guest. Together, they made *Other Enter*, which talks about the difficulties that you encounter when launching neighbourhood projects and how they nevertheless manage to create a place for ordinary people where everyone can be themselves.

ON ESPACETOUS

notes by Einat Tuchman

Our quartier – Quartier Libérateurs in Molenbeek – is constructed by gaps and polite distance between differences. The inhabitants are mainly coming from Moroccan origins but there are many other cultural groups living in the area. There is no exchange between people. The main square is almost abundant, ruled by a small gang of youngsters. There are many cafes but only for men. There are more and more people buying houses in the area so it is slowly gentrifying. Many people just pass by before they end up in a better place. There is a generational gap, a cultural gap, an educational gap, and an economical gap. At the same time it is a place full of potential for rethinking social norms, because things are not established yet, they are in the making.

How to engage citizens from different cultures, alienated individuals, coming from families with busy life, with precarious conditions, with endless economical demands, in a neighbourhood art project? How to break 'the wall of the threshold' and convince them to leave for some hours their shopping, cooking, and other mundane activities in order to come together? How to invite inhabitants into a reflective imaginative space that does not propose fast entertainment or immediate life solutions and make them stay? How to slowly introduce the 'art value' within unfamiliar territories? And how can an art performance relate to the daily struggles and hopes of people?

During the last three years I initiated a number of small and big activities and events in my neighbourhood. I called this project 'Espacetous'. It is a profound research into the complexity of the multi-diverse urban reality of Brussels. I believe the artist can create new social ceremonies between multicultural differences and provoke other discourse about democracy and social cohesion. But not without difficulties, moments of doubts and questioning constantly the means and the purpose.

CREDITS

DIRECTION Einat Tuchman | **PERFORMANCE** Doha Jaadi, Einat Tuchman | **DRAMATURGY** Tom Viaene | **SET DESIGN** Khaled Barghouthi | **DRAWING** An Wittevrongel | **COSTUME** Maryam Ouasine | **CO-PRODUCTION** workspacebrussels, Nadine, KVS | **SUPPORTED BY** VGC



I feel I have to engage within the social imbalances of my city. I believe I can fight neoliberal tendencies of alienation and class division with her artistic tools. I want to get out of the mainstream artistic hubs and try to work with another public. I focus on the neighbourhood where I live. I'm alone and look for other artists to collaborate with. While creating Espacetous I reflected often about the roll of art in society. How can an artistic reflective place exist in a neighbourhood with so many social problems? Can art be political and transformative? Is this really an art project? Where are the other artists?

I looked for the closest local social organization to collaborate with when I was looking for a space as a hub for an Espacetous. I found the Maison de Quartier Libérateurs. Slowly I built up trust with the team working there. They are youth and kids educators coming from Moroccan origins. We discuss ideas together and how to realize them. But at times, they are overwhelmed by the challenges I provoke. Most of them are traditional Moroccan men, and I am a secular woman, from Israel. My activities demand another way of working. They don't understand why the other neighbours are not as active as me. 'Where is your group?', they often ask. 'You are an artist? So are you a painter, actor, dancer, sculpture? Where do you work normally?' It is very important for me to involve them in Espacetous. It is very hard sometimes but I believe it is part of the work. My drive to create an inclusive dynamic for all ages and cultures freaks them out. The overload of work, breaking house rules, many strangers going in and out and this whole utopian invasion create many tensions. Despite this fact, they continue to find ways to collaborate.

I tried to engage local politicians. First I met local figures such as the mayor and the alderwoman. Then I got a proposition to join the green party because I am a woman and an artist, and they need that on their list. 'If they are interested in art, they might want to help my project', I thought, so I joined them. I sat in their meeting and tried to understand what it was all about. I asked myself what the relation is between party politics and artistic engagement. Is it only about financial support? Can those relations re-invent new politics? When do politicians find an art project interesting? Or shall art stay in a certain critical position to politics? My political engagement helped to advance some processes in creating Espacetous. Yet, many needs are still unsolved.

The kids were the first to join my activities. They are very curious of anything new and different. I learned that the kids play a big roll in the family life. They are mediators for their parents because they know the language and the rules of their city better. Beside this big responsibility, they are often confused about the different education codes between home and school. Their parents loose their parental function because they are less involved in the civil reality of their kids. Some kids think that the street is the best place for them to hang out. But the public space in our neighbourhood is a very confronting and seducing place. It is very easy to get lost in translation.

It's not easy to meet a lot of women in our area, because they don't go out of their zone often. I looked for ways to involve them in the activities, I tried to lure them in by creating activities in the public square where they go on sunny days. I realized, time after time, that many women don't feel

like participating in the activities I propose. They don't feel included. I realize I have a very different perception of the behaviour in the public space than they do. Slowly, by repeating and learning, I manage to find some ways to open up a space for them to come and interact with me.

I assembled a group of inhabitants, as a kind of Espacetous committee. We discuss how to proceed with the activities: how to create cohabitation, familiarity and an exchange on how to improve the public space? In the beginning there was a lot of engagement, but slowly people dropped back to their usual life patterns. Every time I have to think of a different creative technique to reinforce their engagement without forcing participation. Many times I get confronted with all kinds of reasons why people are not interested in investing in collective neighbourhood actions: they have no time, don't want to mix, are afraid, value other things. But I still find ways to lure them in.

One of my tactics is to use existing collective traditions, like a "Fête de Quartier", a New Year party, Easter holidays and other dates to gather people and celebrate together. At every event, the neighbours themselves present creative practices for the participation of other inhabitants. These practices present a certain capacity, knowledge or value a neighbour has. Together we develop a small creative workshop derived from that talent and look for a link with the neighbourhood. For example: a neighbour who writes as a hobby, gave a course called 'the survival dictionary of Quartier Libérateurs'. During the event, people were asked what kind of information they need to survive in our neighbourhood. Then the sentences were translated so everybody could understand them. Another woman, who is an architect, drew the map of the area on a big tissue. Neighbours drew a certain value they have at home on it (on the spot where they live). Each one also made a small personal map, drawing the different trajectories they do in the neighbourhood and mark what they encounter on their way. Another person, who does many creative games with his daughter at home, developed a puppet theatre about the different frictions between kids and parents. The kids played the rolls of their parents and the parents those of their kids. Before each event I work individually with the people to develop their practice. At the end of each event we all eat a big dinner together.

Espacetous is open every Saturday afternoon.