Workbook
ArtInAD

Tools for artistic integration of audio description in contemporary dance and music theatre

Max Greyson

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Introduction

In Flanders the number of performances with traditional audio description (AD) is growing every year. Traditional guidelines prescribe an objective, factual verbal description of the visual information, without interpretation or stylistic experiment, which is transmitted live to the audience via headphones. The target audience consists of blind and visually impaired people, hearing impaired people, non-native newcomers, people with concentration problems, etc., who, thanks to a verbal description, can gain more access to the artistic content.

In practice, both audio describers and AD users sometimes experience this traditional method as too restrictive to do justice to the artistic creation, and alternatives are increasingly being sought. The project ArtInAD has taken this traditional form as a starting point to investigate the integration of AD in the artistic creation process as an alternative. In this way, the project tries to realize both artistic and social added value.

The artistic added value arises from the dialogue between artist and audio writer. The describer can inquire about the creative necessity of the creators and players, the artistic core can ask questions about accessibility or the artists themselves can create a creative description. In addition, (integrated) AD can also bring about social inclusion, a social theme that has become increasingly important in recent years.

The ArtInAD project tries to go beyond accessibility as a tool, by recognizing and implementing the potential of inclusiveness principles. AD of performing arts for the blind and visually impaired can be more than an actual visual description of the set, the players and the actions on stage. The goal is to integrate AD into the artistic creation process in order to increase the visual accessibility of a performance and to deepen and intensify the cultural experience. The research assumes that this goal can be realized if the audio describer approaches the creation in open dialogue with the creators or if the audio describer is a creator himself. He or she writes the AD from an artistic perspective and influences the creation. The AD is not a translation of the artistic product, but a part of it.

The research in ArtInAD consisted of:
   - AD text with a lot of visual quality so that the AD connects to the tonality of the dramaturgy.
   - Integrating the describer in the creation process.
   - Alternative AD voices: AD written/spoken by performers themselves.
   - Multi-sensorial experience: providing auditory and sensitive information in addition to verbal input.
   - Alternatives to headphones as a medium for verbal information.

The ArtInAD research project

ArtInAD is a two-year artistic research project that I conducted between January 2019 and December 2020 at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp, in collaboration with the research group CREATIE, the Un-Label ensemble, VeBeS, and with the highly valued support of promoter Katharina Smets and co-supervisors Ine Vanoeveren and Nina Reviers.

As a sighted writer and theater maker, description lies at the basis of my artistic practice. The idea and my personal necessity for this research project came during the creative phase of the dance theater production L of the Un-Label ensemble. Employees of the University of Cologne produced a traditional AD for this performance. Although it was qualitative, as a theater maker I could not reconcile myself with the idea that the audience of AD users would hear a neutral voice and description, parallel to the performance itself. The AD gave a visual aid, but was not embedded in the theatrical whole. Moreover, it was conveyed by means of headphones, which in my perception are a visible element of exclusion. Thanks to the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp and the project ImPArt of the Un-Label ensemble, I was able to spend two years studying methods to integrate AD artistically, partly in theory, but especially in practice, on the theater floor.

In interviews with people from the Flemish Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VeBeS) I was able to record a great gratitude for the traditional form of AD. In this form, a theater company contracts an external audio describer to attend a rehearsal, write an AD based on a video recording and interpret live during the performance.

In this form, however, there is rarely any dialogue between the external audio describer and the artistic team, so there is no room for (small) dramaturgical adjustments that would yield enormous gains in terms of accessibility. In addition, there is no feedback from the target group during the creation process and an element of exclusion remains present because of the headphones, which hinder direct accessibility and, in my opinion, form a visual beacon and deprive AD-users of their anonymity and distinguishes the audience member as a person with a visual disability which they may or may not wish to disclose. A professional audio describer indicated to me personally that a whole group of visually impaired people do not come to the theater for that reason.

Other practical drawbacks I experienced myself when visiting theater performances in Flanders with traditional AD were the inconvenience of the headphones that are made available. These are very heavy devices that bring a physical discomfort after only a few minutes and do not always offer the possibility to connect one's own headphones. The volume of the audio description and the sound of the performance itself are difficult to balance. For example, during performances with AD, I often took off my headphones to listen to the actors on stage, and then missed the first words of the description when I put the headphones back on. Finally, most performances with AD require AD users to be present an hour in advance, so there is time and space for headphone assignment, distribution, and testing, as well as for the audio introduction. For short performances this is not a major hurdle, but for theater performances of longer duration this extra hour is a considerable

investment of time. Some AD users indicated in a personal conversation that they would prefer to go to the theater independently, without having to meet in advance.

It is important to emphasize that my personal conversations with AD users showed that they are generally very grateful and excited about the current offer of traditional AD, and that they have difficulty criticizing it. Jo Bannon, UK based artist working in performance, choreography and live art and focusing on sensory perception, wrote me as a feedback that on a wider political level it might be considered troubling as the fact traditional AD is not critiqued by its users is a consequence of visually disabled audiences not being prioritized, which creates a power imbalance where visually disabled audiences don't 'expect' AD and therefore don't feel empowered to critique the quality of it. In Jo Bannons opinion this lack of critique also leads to the art form stagnating and not developing.

The research project ArtInAD is a search for methods and tools to enable a more integrated accessibility in collaboration with the target group by approaching AD in an artistic way and taking it into the writing and creation process. Moreover, the project realized output within the art education of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp, so that the idea of accessibility and creative AD can hopefully positively influence the new generation of contemporary artists.

This workbook is a chronicle of two years of trial and error, with working methods, tools and exercises. It is a collection of self-developed methodologies, inspired by the work of performing artists and theater makers I have met over the past three years, such as Claire Cunningham, Jo Bannon, Wagner Moreira, Jess Curtis, Amelia Cavallo, Saïd Gharbi and many others. The focus is on practice and I hope this collection provides a starting point for artists, teachers, students and audio describers who want to research, create or implement an integrated form of AD in their own artistic practice.

About inclusive work and relevance

This text is an adaptation of the keynote speech I delivered at the research festival 'Collaborations are more refreshing than new socks', on December 5ᵗʰ 2019 in DeSingel, titled: 'From excellence to relevance - a contemporary approach to redefining artistic practices as a motor for a more inclusive society.'

My name is Max Greyson. I am thirty-one year old man, one meter seventy-five tall. In winter I have white skin, in summer I have red skin. I have blue eyes and a stubble. My hair is neither long nor short and I would define its color as pepper and salt. My name in sign language is formed by bringing the fingertips of my right hand together on my chin, and then moving my right hand forward while my fingers open with the palm up.

How do we perceive? How can we diversify perception? Can we broaden the contemporary arts sector if the standards are based on a dominant Western cultural image? When we talk about diversity, we should not ask ourselves how to involve or integrate new and different art practices. The question is how to banish the principle of a certain cultural aesthetic as a quality standard and thus eliminate the paradoxical distinction between so-called 'excellence' and 'relevance'. The relevance of art cannot be measured by a choice to create something that has social issues as an explicit theme, as for example in the work of many young spoken word artists in Flemish cities who identify with the slam poetry movement. The work of these artists is often labeled as relevant by its audience, because many of them come from less privileged layers of society and their lyrics often contain an explicit indictment of inequality, racism, intolerance, discrimination, etc.

By definition, art is relevant and political, and using these two words merely to describe art that puts social problems at the heart of our perception, steers us in the wrong direction. There is an apparent contradiction with 'excellent' art, by which I mean art of high artistic quality produced and presented by large companies and art organizations. This art is just as relevant, just as the work of a young spoken word artist can be excellent. We should always be aware of our language, especially the use of the words 'relevant', 'excellence', 'diversity' and 'inclusive'. The emphasis should be on art itself. Distinguishing between these characteristics creates the risk of implying a difference in quality.

A simple comparison is the sonnet versus the free verse in poetry. When we measure the quality of a poem against an imposed structure and formal requirements such as those of a sonnet, all poems in free verse are of poor quality. Acceptance of the free verse as a qualitative form of poetry allows us to assess its literary quality on the basis of specific content and form. This principle is important and, in my opinion, should also apply in the broad sense. When we measure the quality of a contemporary dance performance against the standards that have grown out of a history of able-bodied choreographers and dancers, we will downgrade all dance performances by and with wheelchair users. Our expectations will stand in the way of the development of these dancers and their art. The consequences will be: less opportunities to perform, lower audience reach, less media attention, lower fees, in short less access to all levels of the contemporary arts sector. The same applies to non-native speakers, the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind and visually impaired, people with a (temporary or otherwise) mental or social perception, people of color, people who identify themselves as non-

cis gender, and so on. This principle deprives us of access to their creativity, innovation and craftsmanship. Again, the relevance of their art must be a result of its specific content and form. If we are able to embrace this principle, 'excellence' and 'relevance' will no longer become paradoxical concepts and their meaning will coincide.

Therefore, it is important not to name the individuals from these groups and their creations as 'relevant' or 'inclusive' if this designates a subcategory that could be interpreted as some kind of compensation for quality.

As a member of the international, interdisciplinary, mixed-abled performing arts ensemble Un-Label, I experience the relevance of art deeper than ever. In recent years, the ensemble has worked with a blind dancer, two deaf dancers, three performers using wheelchairs, an actor with Down syndrome, a group of able-bodied directors, dancers and musicians, and myself, a writer and performer without government-defined disabilities. The performances of Un-Label are always collaborative. The performers are the creators. The aim of the ensemble is to make art accessible in an artistic way, i.e. with as few intermediaries as possible such as interpreters for sign language or AD for the blind and visually impaired by an external party. In Flanders, traditional AD is created and delivered by people with a background in Applied Linguistics and Translation. They have no or little artistic background and offer a translation of the visual elements of a live performance with as little interpretation as possible. Un-Label works from a different principle. We try to artistically integrate tools for accessibility. The artists are the accessibility specialists and since they are also creators, accessibility is an essential part of the creation process, which often leads to unexpected discoveries.

An example is my own research project on artistically integrated AD at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp; ArtInAD. It is a research into methods to approach accessibility for the blind and visually impaired (and other AD users) as aesthetic, dramaturgical elements of a theater performance. During this research several unexpected positive discoveries were made.

Firstly, the methods of self-description, poetic description and openness to subjective, artistic interpretation of visual elements have had a great influence on my own art practice as a poet, theater maker and performer. By using description as an artistic tool for accessibility, I also found an instrument to make my work more accessible to myself. Description has proven to be a constructive method for reflection and introspection.

There are also unexpected developments in the reactions of the audience. In the summer of 2019 I wrote and co-created the dance theater performance Gravity (and other attractions), within the framework of my research project ArtInAD and the ImPArt-project. The starting point of Gravity (and other attractions) is a poetic AD that forms the script and the spoken text of the performance. The creative process was an open dialogue between writer, director, choreographers, performers, musician, sign interpreters and regular feedback from the target group of the blind and visually impaired. The artistic elements inspired each other. The text evoked movement, music and projections, the dance inspired poetry and story line, the music suggested dance, etc. Audio-description as an accessibility tool became the inspiration and artistic basis of the performance. The AD was audible to everyone in the audience, including the visually impaired, and therefore not exclusively aimed at the blind and visually impaired. After several try-outs and a premiere at the National Opera of Athens,

feedback showed that some blind and visually impaired people were surprised by this new form of integrated AD. Some had enjoyed it, others were more in favor of a more traditional form of AD, namely a more concrete, objective description of visual elements, written specifically for people who do not have access to them.

What we didn't expect was the reaction of the sighted people who have little experience of visiting contemporary dance performances. This group was always furiously enthusiastic. Many of them stated that the abstract nature of contemporary dance had always deterred them, but that thanks to the integrated poetic AD they felt they had access to the content and the story, and that they would visit dance performances much more often if they were made accessible in this verbal way. A quote from Lisette Reuter, artistic producer of the Un-Label ensemble: 'After fifteen years as a creative producer, today I feel for the first time that I have understood contemporary dance'. Although sighted people have less or no need for accessibility by AD, the research into integrated AD by both sighted and blind and visually impaired people will hopefully lead to a larger, broader and more qualitative supply.

These examples show the unexplored potential in the search for accessibility. More inclusive art and culture can be an engine for a more inclusive society. When artists create bridges for perception, they not only expand their audience, but also give people access to the culture and society in which they live. Ben Evans, Head of Arts & Disability at British Council, says: "The history of art is the history of marginalized groups that break down barriers." Inaccessibility is a huge barrier to break through. It affects everything and everyone. It needs the unique, exceptional creativity of artists.

Existing accessibility tools for the blind and visually impaired

Traditional AD

The name for an AD that is written in advance on the basis of rehearsals and/or video recording of a theatre performance and is passed on live to AD users during the performance. This is usually done by the describers themselves, from the control room or another place with a view on the stage. The description is delivered through headphones. It is often a neutral, verbal description of the visual elements. Traditional AD is usually written in the present tense, from an auctorial point of view, with as many concrete, visual details as possible. The describer tries to create as little overlap as possible between description and dialogue, music or important acoustic elements.

Audio introduction and introduction by the performers

An audio introduction is a spoken text, usually between five and fifteen minutes long, in which information about the play is given before it begins. It includes information about the performers and characters, the duration of the play and contains a description of the scenery and costumes. If necessary, the artistic background of the ensemble can also be given, as well as an announcement of elements from the play that could be confusing or frightening, such as a gunshot or a long silence. In an audio introduction, a describer is given time to introduce the context of the piece and certain elements for which there is little space and time during the piece itself.

In some theater performances I visited with a group of the Association of Blind and Visually Impaired People (VeBeS), the actors came on stage half an hour before the start of the performance to introduce themselves as characters for the AD users in an informal way.

Touch tour

Some culture houses and companies organize a touch tour prior to a theater performance. AD users are admitted to the stage during a guided tour and are given a live description of the decor, the costumes and the characters. Usually AD users can feel the stage elements and costumes during such a tour.

There are also examples of companies that made miniature versions of decor and costumes to offer the AD users a tactile experience.

Creeds

The results of the ArtInAD research project are very extensive. Below I try to make a list of guidelines that I have personally implemented in my artistic practice.

Specific creeds of integrated access

- For artists and companies, an open dialogue between describer and artistic direction, crew and production is vital. Integrated accessibility cannot be talked about when this line of communication is not open, even when AD is written and/or spoken by someone who is not in the artistic core team.

- There is no universal method for artistic integration of accessibility or AD. It is always completely relative to the artwork itself.

- Accessibility is never a sacrifice. It is a shift of energy, time and resources that takes the artistic process and product to a higher level when you have the same dedication to it.

- Integrate the target group into the creation process, either by bringing an AD user into your artistic team, or by inviting external AD users and using them as a dramaturgical sounding board. It is impossible to fully evaluate the quality and accessibility of an AD. Even if you think you have sufficient knowledge about the world of the blind and visually impaired, it remains difficult to assess how they experience dance, theatre and drama.

- Accessibility does not mean that you or the work you create should be understood, but it does mean that there should be no difference in the ability to perceive its artistic and aesthetic essence.

- Integrating accessibility also means integrating yourself, developing a practice that embraces the breaking of expectations as a principle. Failure does not exist, everything is perception. Disorientation is fruitful because it forces us to think about structure and opens doors to new forms of creativity and aesthetics.

- The target group of an AD is not exclusively an audience of the blind and visually impaired. Hearing impaired, foreign-language newcomers, people with concentration problems, etc. can also gain more access to the performing arts through AD. A more descriptive, accessible language is often a way for the entire audience to gain access to the artwork.

- A work of art does not become interpretive, duplicated or of a lower artistic level when the integration of accessibility is a dramaturgical and aesthetic choice.

- Everything starts with the contract you make with your audience. When you can give an audience the confidence that they will not miss anything, regardless of their own sensory capabilities, you are free to artistically go in all directions if, and only if you honor your promises.

Specific creeds of integrated AD

- When writing an AD, start with the definition of place and time to create a context in which images can form themselves clearly. This context sometimes benefits more from naming than describing. The challenge is not to think from the purely visual or the seeing-culture, but to create an idea, a space that lays the right foundations for the imaginary. The example I got from a blind man is not to describe a hospital room purely by how it looks. When I use the word hospital room as a space, he can move to it because he has visited a hospital room more than once. Thus, with the word hospital room I evoke enough emotional and cognitive contextual information, and I do not have to describe white walls, medical devices, a white bed on wheels, etc. Only if there is an element that does not fall within the expectations of a hospital room, naming becomes meaningful. For example, if there is a crib, it means for a seeing person that there is probably a newborn child, and so there is essential visual information that is not accessible to someone who cannot see it.

- Only when the context is clear enough, meaning and form can become fully accessible. The choice of (narrative) perspective often determines the context. In traditional AD too, variations in narrative perspective can bring describers closer to artistic content.

- Precision and clarity are two important criteria to evaluate your own work, both in terms of literary quality and accessibility.

- A description becomes more precise through active verbs. Moreover, the use of troponymes often gives a description a livelier, more detailed character and more individuality. Troponymes are verbs that describe an action more precisely than a more general verb. Whispering, for example, is a more precise form of speaking, and sprinting is a more precise form of running.

- The use of the present tense brings clarity. When an AD user does not have to wonder whether the description is literally related to what is happening at that moment, she or he gets the chance to create mental space to form an image in the mind. Interpreting and understanding references to the past or the future requires a lot of concentration.

- Adjectives are a good way to make a description visual and animated. Excessive use, however, is at the expense of sharpness and can be tiring.

- Repetition is a grateful and meaningful tool to create space for depth and detail. When a description refers to a person, action or object, it is important to use the same words as often as possible to avoid confusion.

- As in literary texts, stylistic unity, visual language, clear perspective, organic rhythm and sentence structure are of great importance in a description.

- AD users want concrete language. In a poetic or artistic description of dance, however, it is also important to give a place to the abstract value of contemporary dance and to develop a suitable vocabulary in which abstract and concrete reinforce each other.

- An AD can tap into the tonality and dramaturgy of a performance by transposing the tension curve into the language. Tension can be amplified by short sentences, few adjectives, direct language, active verbs, stylistic simplicity, repetition, enumeration and dynamic intonation. Sometimes it is enough to give a contextual description with a few words so that the music and/or the sound of the piece itself feed the tension.

- In the transmission it is essential to recognize that the AD is an aesthetic element and not an add-on, by approaching it in an artistic way. This means that there is a great added value when the AD is recited by an experienced speaker. Dynamic voice use, intonation, speaking rhythm and proper breathing make a big difference. Moreover, it is good if the tone and voice color fit well within the dramaturgy of the performance.

- It remains important to realize that the most abstract, original or creative idea is not always the best. Artistically integrated AD also has the basic idea of giving the target group access to the visual elements of a theater performance (or other work of art).

Projects

In the past two years the ArtInAD project has realized output in several projects. Throughout this publication I will refer to these projects.

Creability

Creability is a collaboration between Un-Label Performing Arts Company (DE), SMouTh (GR) and the TU University Dortmund, in which I worked as a performing artist and researcher. The project posed the following main questions: how can artistic creation methods be transformed so that they are practically accessible and applicable to everyone? How can the deaf participate in verbally guided rhythm workshops? How can a dance warm-up be equally accessible to wheelchair users? How can the blind and visually impaired apply the same creation methods as sighted people without so-called 'sacrifice of quality'?

The project formed groups of professional performing artists with and without disabilities to explore existing artistic working methods for dance, theatre, creative writing and music in terms of accessibility. During several residencies in Athens and Cologne, the groups developed innovative practical creation tools and warm-up exercises to make them available to all those who will be working artistically in the future.

The results of this project have been published in the form of a handbook (available at www.un-label.eu) with inclusive warm-ups, interdisciplinary workshop concepts and creation methods, aimed at all those active in the fields of inclusive culture, education and youth work. Some of the tools in the workbook ArtInAD have been developed within the framework of the Creability project and adapted within the ArtInAD project.

ImPArt

The ImPArt project is an international collaboration between Un-Label Performing Arts Company, SMouTh, NCA Small Theatre and OrienteOccident Festival.

Accessibility in the arts usually translates into audio description, surtitling, sign language interpretation and other technical or practical tools that are not embedded in the artistic or aesthetic elements of the work of art. In this way, an audience of people with disabilities gets a neutral translation from the point of view of an external person rather than a truly inclusive experience.

The key question of the ImPArt project is: how can we dramaturgically integrate accessibility elements in the creation process and in the final work of art?

A wide group of artists from different disciplines came together during workshops, master classes, international symposia and creative residencies in Germany, Greece, Italy and Armenia and developed three interdisciplinary performances in a year and a half. I was involved in two of these performances as a creative and performing artist, namely *Gravity (and other attractions)* and *Re:Construction*.

Some of the tools in this workbook were developed within the framework of the ImPArt project and adapted within the ArtInAD project.

More information: https://un-label.eu/en/project/impart/

Gravity (and other attractions)

Gravity (and other attractions) is a contemporary dance theatre duet about Lolo and Tiki, two people who meet on the subway and apparently can't communicate. They travel through their own imagination while experiencing different forms of attraction.

The starting point of the performance is an audio description that is both the script and the spoken text of the performance. The creative process was an open dialogue between writer, director, choreographers, performers, musician, sign interpreters and some regular feedback from the target group of people with disabilities. The artistic elements inspired each other. The text evoked movement, music and projections, the dance inspired poetry and story line, the music suggested dance, etc. During the performance part of the text is spoken live by one of the dancers, another part was prerecorded.

At the beginning of the performance an introduction is projected and read aloud. It concerns a description of the set and the performers, and an explanation of the choice to use an integrated audio description as a starting point for the performance. This introduction has been added as an appendix to this workbook.

The audio description in *Gravity (and other attractions)* is an attempt to integrate poetic, descriptive language into a theater performance so that it is not aimed exclusively at a target audience of blind and visually impaired people. The performance also includes an audio introduction, several languages, international sign language, visual vernacular, a simple decor without props and simple, clear projections. There are no surtitles. The performers are a deaf dancer and a hearing dancer and the narration voice, music and projections are prerecorded and synchronized live with the performance.

An important aspect of the creation process was the artistic ping-pong within the creative team. One of the performers, Dodzi Dougban, is a deaf dancer. The intention was to keep the creative input equal, so that his sign language and visual vernacular* retained their uniqueness and were not a translation or adaptation of a written text. This sign language in turn had to be described verbally.

Visual vernacular is an art form that uses figurative gestures and movements to visualize stories or scenes, with elements of poetry and mime. It is mainly created and performed by deaf artists.

As when writing a novel, I started to create the script by creating the space and time in which the action takes place, in connection with the characters and their motives for the actions on stage. I don't describe what I see, but try to reinvent the framework for the story that is about to take place. In this way the narrative tone is set, and I based that on my own imagination and interpretation rather than on the visual reality.

For example, when one of the dancers experiences sadness, the text, movement, music, lights and projections will create the image together and each element adds a facet of the sadness. Describing all these facets separately would never express the same coherence, so I chose to complement the whole with the descriptive text. I wrote the audio description in that sense rather as a verbal interpretation, and not merely as a description. Within the context of ArtInAD the aim was always to make the artistic experience more unique, more full, deeper and more pleasant for an AD audience and not necessarily to offer them only a better understanding. I wanted to build a bridge for perception, so to speak.

As already mentioned, the reactions of the different target groups were very divergent. Some blind people indicated that the poetic description did not provide them with sufficient visual information. Others were amazed and inspired by this form of AD, which many had never experienced before. Wilke Franziska, a fifty-year-old woman who became blind at the age of twenty, was very moved by the performance. She said she felt sorry for those in the audience who had only seen a dance performance, while through the poetic description she had travelled through a whole universe of images and meaning. Many deaf and hard of hearing had greatly enjoyed the visual power of the simple figurative projections, the sober decor and the presence of sign language. Of the rest of the audience, it was very remarkable that those who seldom, if ever, visit contemporary dance theater performances felt that the description and visual simplicity gave them access to an art form that often feels too abstract for them.

I also received personal feedback from Lesley De Ceulaer, a blind woman who has been attending theater performances with AD for years. After the performance she wrote to me: "*It took some getting used to. And I noticed that I regularly asked my niece what was happening. And whether I understood it well (to what extent should/can you understand an artistic dance performance?) The prerecorded voice during the performance did not always captivate me. So it took some effort to keep me focused. I do hope for a larger offer of performances with integrated AD. In my opinion it is also a matter of time and regular attendance of integrated AD to get used to this as a blind spectator*".

The premiere took place in the National Opera of Athens. The performance then toured DeSingel in Antwerp, OrienteOccidente Festival in Rovereto, in Larissa and in Cologne.

More information: https://un-label.eu/en/project/gravity-and-other-attractions/

Re:Construction

Re:construction is a multimedia installation with live performance. It is an artistic reconstruction of a crash. The central element is a deformed wheelchair. The core theme is speechlessness. *Re:construction* tries to raise questions about the language of our thoughts when we experience something that distorts our sensory perception, such as fear, sexuality, powerlessness, poetry, music, an accident, etc.

The idea of accessibility is approached in different ways by playing with sensory exclusivity. There are video descriptions in sign language and visual vernacular, tactile elements, story lines and subjective descriptions audible through headphones, smartphone messages in sign language and a poetic audio description that focuses on the emotional aspects of a crash.

As a performer I have taken on another role, that of an artistic live-accessibility maker. During the installation I seek contact with visitors and try to offer them personal accessibility. For example, I can ask a sighted visitor to describe the installation for a blind visitor. In this way the AD becomes an interpretation of the visitors themselves. I ask the audience to describe abstract elements and in this way I try to give them access through reflection.

The premiere took place in the National Opera of Athens. Afterwards the performance toured in Köln Opera and at the ALL-IN Symposium in Cologne.

More information: https://un-label.eu/en/project/reconstruction/

Antwerp Royal Conservatoire

During the two-year research period I had the opportunity to create, try out and refine tools and methods at the Antwerp Royal Conservatoire.

The Silenced

Flutist Ine Vanoeveren created the contemporary monodrama *The Silenced* together with composer Jason Eckardt.

The first idea was to integrate a live spoken audio description into the performance. However, after attending a rehearsal, I realized that the impact of a spoken, descriptive text would break the tonality of the performance. *The Silenced* would become more accessible for the blind and visually impaired, but at the same time change dramatically. The core theme is being 'Silenced', in other words, speechless, gagged. Moreover, it is difficult, if not impossible, to do justice to the musical, aural nature of the performance if there is a speaking voice on top of it. Many of the elements in the performance already made a bridge for accessibility, namely the pronounced breathing, the audible movement and the contemporary music with a lot of figurative musicality. In addition, the audience sits in a circle on the stage, around the performer. That's why we chose to create a poetic audio introduction in order to create a content and visual basis that provided AD users with an entrance to an interpretation of what was audible and tangible during the performance, without interfering with the dramaturgy. For this AI, I asked the composer and performer to interpret the narrative elements of the performance, and added my own poetic interpretation to describe the visual elements.

This audio introduction has been added as an appendix to this workbook. A video of the performance (without audio introduction) can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzjBY0t_7lE

Research festival 'Collaborations are more refreshing than new socks'

This three-day symposium festival in DeSingel was a collaboration between the research group CREATIE of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and the research group Mixed Currents of Huddersfield University. The festival was organized and curated by Ine Vanoeveren, Winnie Huang, Marco Fusi, myself and Linda Jankowska from Huddersfield University.

The third day of the festival focused on inclusive collaboration in contemporary performance and was a great source of inspiration for ArtInAD because of the experiential expertise and innovative ideas in the panel discussions and workshops, among others by Patricia Alessandrini, Hind Eljadid, Marcelo F. Lazcano and Saïd Gharbi.

Symposium Dance & Diversity & Labo Inclusiedans

The annual Dance & Diversity Symposium is an initiative of the Dance Department of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp. For three days, dance students explore new artistic methods. During this symposium I shared the tools and methods of ArtInAD with a group of students and people from the Labo Inclusiedans. It was an exploration of identity through description. We asked ourselves the questions: how does description influence something or someone's identity? How can description be a bridge for communication, a two-way connection, a collective consciousness of physical presence?

Dance & Diversity 2019 was a collaboration between Nienke Reehorst and Natalie Gordon of the Antwerp Royal Conservatoire, Saïd Gharbi, Leif Fernhaber, Vera Tussing, Sebastian Kann, Marco Torrice, Greet Vissers (KunstZ), and the Labo inclusiedans and was made possible thanks to Integrated.

The Labo Inclusiedans is an integral part of the Bachelor of Dance program and researches the value of the inclusive dance practice for the training, work and the development of the dancers themselves. In a weekly creative lab, guests with disabilities meet the students. They dance together in a setting where the diversity in physicality and personality cross-fertilizes with equality, mutual learning and creation. Once a year they work together intensively during the symposium.

A video report of this Symposium can be found via: https://ap-arts.be/dans-en-diversiteit

Nextdoors

Each year, Ine Vanoeveren of the research group CREATIE organizes Nextdoors, a lesson-free week at the Conservatoire to challenge students to work interdisciplinary. During this week in February 2020, the Un-Label Performing Arts Ensemble was invited in residence to perform the performance *Gravity (and other attractions)* at DeSingel, and to facilitate a group of students from the departments of Drama, Dance and Music and members of the Labo Inclusiedans to an interdisciplinary creation throughout the project week. During this week, many of the tools of the ArtInAD research project were implemented and the inclusive, interdisciplinary methods of the Un-Label ensemble were passed on to the participants by experimenting with questions of accessibility, both to performers and audiences.

Masterclass for Master students Drama

In October 2019, three master students from the Drama department participated in a master class 'Description in the present', in which we worked on some of the tools of the ArtInAD project, which allowed me to test and refine the same tools with different disciplines.

Creative writing classes

Creative Writing Professor Yella Arnouts opened up the writing classes for third-year bachelor students to the ArtInAD project. Three Drama-students watched the same video clip of a dance performance by Peeping Tom, and wrote a subjective, literary audio description for it, focusing on the chosen perspective. This tool (A New Perspective) is included in this workbook.

Workshop Introduction week

During the introduction week for new bachelor students of the Music department, Ine Vanoeveren and I had the opportunity to share one of the ArtInAD-tools (The Myth).

Voyeurs in BXL

Voyeurs in BXL is a music theater performance by ARType vzw and theater collective Voyeurs. It is a mix of literary performance, classical cello, contemporary music and live illustration, of which I was one of the scriptwriters and performers, allowing me to write an audio introduction based on my own artistic vision and interpretation.

Since this performance did not tour after April 2019, I wrote an extensive audio introduction for this performance, which can be found as an appendix to this workbook.

The process of artistic integration of AD

Integration before the creation process

With an integrated form of AD, it is essential to make contact with the target audience of AD users prior to the creation process, even if there are experienced experts in the artistic team.

In addition, enough time and space should be given to develop specific artistic skills. Most of the tools in this workbook are aimed at this. The most important skills that the ArtInAD research incorporated were:
- descriptive writing;
- narrative perspective;
- the relationship between language, voice and movement;
- forms and modalities of perception;
- sensory translation and synesthesia;
- tactile perception;
- instant composition and improvisation;
- physical awareness;
- vocal and verbal aspects of embodiment;
- non-verbal transmission and translation of visual elements.

An AD can also be integrated prior to the creation process. For example, the starting point for the dance theater performance *Gravity (and other attractions)* of the ImPArt project was to write a script that formed the integrated AD, after which the entire performance could be created based on the AD. Within the project, however, it was decided to continue working on the script during the creation process because of the collaborative nature of the ensemble and the artistic added value of open dialogue within the entire artistic team.

Author AD is the name that is used when the script and the AD are written by the same person. This can be done before as well as during the creation process.

Integration during the creation process

The integration of an AD during the creation process means that the describer not only observes and describes, but can also consult with the artistic team to increase accessibility. She or he can ask questions about the creation and artistic choices so that the description can fully implement the artists' vision in the AD. In addition, the describer can also make suggestions about time and structure, such as asking for longer pauses between music or dialogue to create space for the description. The text can be presented to the creators and players and can adopt their vocabulary and style. Also, prior to writing, the describer can have an existing

choreography or action described in a number of key words by the choreographer, actor, or dancer to inspire the AD.

According to a publication by Louise Fryer (1), performing artist Amelia Cavalho states that there are five important aspects that distinguish integrated AD from traditional AD:
- the AD is creative and/or subjective and therefore not neutral;
- the AD is the result of collaboration;
- the AD reflects the vision of the scriptwriter and director;
- the AD is a priori, not an add-on;
- the AD is open and inclusive, so audible to the entire audience.

When, during the creation process, there is sufficient space and time to approach the integrated AD as a tailor-made work, the description will become a genuine aesthetic element of the performance. There are already some examples of this, such as a performance of Hamlet by Hart House Theatre in Toronto, Ontario. The AD was written in the iambic pentameter, as an imitation of the language, style and rhythmic structure used by Shakespeare. In addition, the AD was written from the perspective of the character Horatio (2).

In the performance 'The way you look at me tonight' by Claire Cunningham and Jess Curtis, the performers constantly describe themselves. They describe their own and each other's appearance and actions in an organic way as they move on the stage. The AD doesn't feel like a description, it's part of the relationship the performers create with their audience and is part of the dramaturgy. Without the descriptions the performance wouldn't have the informal, 'relaxed' character it has.

In the dance theater performance *Gravity (and other attractions)* the AD could at certain moments be used as a cue for the performers, offering a structure for the synchronization of music, light effects and projections.

For the description of dance the Laban Movement Analysis exists. It is a method and language for description, visualization and interpretation that finds its origin in the work of dancer, choreographer and theorist Rudolf Laban. It can be a starting point for a movement vocabulary.

Another method to increase accessibility for the blind and visually impaired is to eliminate the need for AD by integrating non-verbal, auditory and sensitive information. Examples are costumes that make a sound, audible breathing, very figurative music, audible props, etc.

(1) Louise Fryer – Staging the Audio Describer (An Exploration of Integrated AD) –
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327428376_Staging_the_Audio_Describer_An_Exploration_of_Integrated_Audio_Description

(2) Udo, Acevedo, & Fels, 2010; Udo & Fels, 2009

Integration after the creation process

An AD can also be integrated after the creation process. The main difference with a traditional form of AD is that each of the performances becomes accessible to AD users instead of performances on specific dates and hours.

In the performative multimedia installation *Re:Construction* of the ImPArt project, the performer is an artistic accessibility assistant. While the audience walks along different video stations throughout the installation, the performer can increase accessibility in personal contact by giving a visual description, or asking a sighted person to describe an element to an AD user. In this way, the AD is always different because it is conceived and spoken by the audience itself.

Sometimes an extensive audio introduction is sufficient and no extra verbal information needs or can be added during the performance itself. In that case the introduction can be offered in advance via online channels and is not integrated in the dramaturgy but in the framework. It can also be offered to the entire audience at the beginning. Here, too, an enormous added value is created when the audio introduction connects to the artistic style and tone of the performance. For example, it can be read by one of the characters or accompanied by music from the performance.

When writing a comprehensive audio introduction, it is important to describe the visual elements such as the decor, the light, the costumes and the players. In addition, an AI can make connections between the visible and audible elements in the performance. Elements that are repeated during the performance, such as musical motifs, certain actions, specific sounds associated with a movement or an emotion, can be explained or described so that they are easily recognizable for an audience of blind and visually impaired people, as in 'The Silenced'. The AI of this performance has been added as an appendix to this workbook.

Another example is the spectacle musical *40'-45'* by Studio 100. The AD was written and performed by Susanne Verberk according to the principles of traditional AD. The audio writer and the Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired (VeBeS) were involved to finalize the technical requirements for the AD and get feedback from the target group. When visiting this performance, the entire audience wears headphones and during performances with AD there is a separate grandstand with 200 seats for AD users.

Interesting sources

For a complete explanation of the history, forms of existence and research of AD I refer to the following sources, which helped me enormously to find a starting point for ArtInAD.

– Louise Fryer – An Introduction to Audio Description
Book is available online through various channels

– Louise Fryer – Staging the Audio Describer (An Exploration of Integrated AD)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 327428376_Staging_the_Audio_Describer_An_Exploration_of_Integrated_Audio_Description

– ADLAB Audio description guidelines (ADLAB)
http://www.adlabproject.eu/Docs/adlab%20book/index.html

– CND – Dance and visual impairment (for an accessibility of choreographic practices)
https://www.cnd.fr/en/products/477-dance-visual-impairment-for-an-accessibility-of-choreographic-practices

– Amelia Cavalho (the artistic possibilities of audio description in theatrical performance)
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13569783.2014.983892

– Creability (Method-handbook)
https://un-label.eu/

– Extant – Integrated Access Report 2018
https://extant.org.uk/integrated_access-_is_it_working/

– Extant – Integrated Access, is it working? (Podcast)
https://soundcloud.com/user-52301083/episode-6-is-it-working

– Mandy Redvers-Rowe about the AD for 'The House of Bernarda Abla' by Graeae Theatre Company
https://graeae.org/audio-description-house-bernarda-alba/

– Audio Description: the Art of Access (with podcast)
https://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/audio-description-art-access/

– Masterthesis Eline Van der Jonckheyd Universiteit Antwerpen (from audio description to audio drama)
https://www.scriptiebank.be/sites/default/files/thesis/2016-10/Eline%20Van%20der %20Jonckheyd_masterscriptie%20vertalen_2015-2016.pdf

– Research by Mariana Lopez and Gavin Kearney around integrated AD for film and television
http://enhancingaudiodescription.com/

– VocalEyes Guidelines
https://vocaleyes.co.uk/services/theatre-audio-describers/

– Creating Accessible Events (Unlimited Impact)
https://www.weareunlimited.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Unlimited-Impact.-Creating-Accessible-Events.-AD-TopTips.pdf

– Project report: Describing Diversity: an exploration of the description of human characteristics and appearance within the practice of theatre audio description
https://vocaleyes.co.uk/describing-diversity-report-published/

– Project of Bojana Coklyat and Shannon Finnegan, supported by Eyebeam and Disability Visibility Project (workbook for alt-text as poetry and web accessibility)
https://alt-text-as-poetry.net/

Tools

Music and dance theater takes place on stage. A performance is a unique shared moment for both performer and audience. Throughout the history of the performing arts, thousands of ways have been conceived and developed for a performer to prepare optimally to share an emotion, message, and energy with an audience. These include physical warming of muscles, joints, breathing, voice and concentration exercises. They are an essential part of the tools.

The tools in this publication are an attempt at broad accessibility for performers with various physical and sensory abilities. In addition, it is specifically aimed at mixed-abled groups and at authors and performing artists who want to work with different forms of description, whether or not to promote accessibility.

It is a collection of self-developed methodologies, inspired by the work of performing artists and theater makers I have met over the past three years, such as Claire Cunningham, Jo Bannon, Jess Curtis, Wagner Moreira, Amelia Cavallo, Saïd Gharbi and many others.

The artistic core themes include narrative perspective in the broad sense, self-description, verbal and vocal aspects of embodiment and instant composition.

For all tools and exercises, observation and description are possible in many ways. Observation can be done by looking, but just as well by closing one's eyes and feeling by hand, as long as the focus is on outer characteristics and there is permission from all participants for physical contact. Description can be verbal or written, but also in sign language.

Although the exercises of different tools can also be sequenced or mixed, this overview aims to show a complete session per page (sometimes 2 pages).

The number of participants always depends on the space. There should always be enough space to move freely and safely, especially if there are people in the group with a different mobility need. It is also important that the room has the right acoustics, enough light and sufficient ventilation.

During the ArtInAD research, I experienced the importance of short feedback rounds after each session. It doesn't have to be an extensive discussion. For example, everyone says in one word or sentence what they have experienced. Each tool suggests a few possible feedback questions.

Short warm-up exercises

These warm-up exercises can be a preparation for a performance, but also for a group workshop, a writing session or a creative jam session. They are a kind of stretching exercise for the body, the language muscle, the senses, concentration and the creative mind.

> (+/- 3 minutes) Loosen your body by making twisting movements. Start with fingers, hands, wrists, elbows, shoulders, neck, head, mouth, torso, hip, knees, ankles, feet, toes and then in reverse order.

> (+/- 2 minutes) Make crazy faces. Fold your lips, tongue, nose, jaws, ears and eyes in the most bizarre positions.

> (+/- 2 minutes) Warm up your voice and mouth by speaking very expressively, with extreme articulation. Then let a sound resonate through your body (like Ohm) and lead the vibrations with your hands through your chest, neck, forehead, skull, and cheeks. Continue to resonate until you feel the vibration everywhere in your body.

> (+/- 5 minutes) Warm up your voice by pronouncing a short text (4 to 5 sentences). Then say the same text and start whispering silently and make it louder and louder so that you almost scream at the end of the text. Then say the same text and start slowly (with a lot of space between the words) and accelerate until you speak almost unintelligibly fast at the end of the text. Then say the same text and start in a low tone and go up a bit in tone with each word until you almost sound hyper sonic at the end.

> (+/- 5 minutes) Warm up your voice and body by pronouncing a short text as if you were a character, such as a president, a priest, a strict teacher, a soccer fan, a witch, an elf, etc.

> (+/- 3 minutes per participant) Tell a joke in a descriptive way. Add visual details and use your intonation and speaking rhythm as expressive tools to enhance the visual power.

> (+/- 5 minutes per participant) You take an object and try to make a sound that makes it clear which object it is. The rest of the group closes their eyes and has to guess the object.

> (+/- 5 minutes) Divide into pairs and stand opposite each other. Count together 1, 2, 3 by saying a number in turn. You say 1, your partner says 2, you say 3, your partner says 1, etc. Then you can also add a physical component by replacing a number with a movement, such as a knock on the chest or a hand clap.

Short writing exercises

Below is a collection of writing exercises for descriptive writing with a focus on precision (in style, perception, choice of words), always starting from the sensory and evolving towards interpretation and emotion. The details make the image unique and naming is sometimes more efficient than describing.

> (+/- 30 minutes) Sit down in a place where many people pass by, such as a train station, a busy bar or a shopping street. Look at the people passing by and choose people you can describe in one clear sentence based on their appearance. Make them a type that is individual and unique.

> (+/- 15 minutes) Describe a city or place in a distant future or a distant past. What would your hometown look like within 100 years or within 1000 years, or what did your region look like in antiquity or in the Victorian age?

> (+/- 20 minutes) Search in a literary work (novel, poem, script, etc.) for a long description (especially early 20th century literature is full of it) and rewrite it. Make sure the image remains intact but gains in precision. How many sentences and words can you delete without losing content?

> (+/- 10 minutes) Find an object and describe it in five sentences. In each sentence you use a different sense. Don't name the senses literally but look for ways to evoke the sensory experience. Write for example: 'A cloud of wet earth surrounds the shoe' instead of: 'The shoe smells like leather'. Have no fear of exaggerating. What is the effect? What is closest to your natural writing style and perception?

> (+/- 20 minutes) Look for a figurative photo or image. Describe it first in a 5-word sentence, then in a 10-word sentence, then in a 20-word sentence. Always keep the description in one sentence. Then look for another picture or image and do the opposite, first describe it in 20 words, then in 10 and finally in a 5 word sentence.

> (+/- 20 minutes) Describe a room in your house and let someone else draw its floor plan to compare how far your description corresponds to reality. (This exercise was developed by Nina Reviers and Aline Remael of the University of Antwerp.)

> (+/- 20 minutes) Describe your perfect day. Start when you wake up and end when you fall asleep. What would you do on the perfect day? Where would you spend it and with whom? Challenge your own imagination and try to go into as much detail as possible.

A new perspective

Creative writing

This tool was developed as part of the ArtInAD project and carried out in collaboration with teacher Yella Arnouts and three students from the Drama Department at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp. The video clip used was 'Peeping Tom - Le Salon (Trio Gaby Uma Franck)', which can be found on YouTube.

Needed: pen, paper, video clip

1 > Find a video clip from a dance or theater performance of up to 5 minutes that contains no or very little spoken text. Watch it at least twice.

2 > Create a descriptive text (audio description) for the clip that starts from a subjective describer. This can be one of the characters, but also a prop or an invisible element. You create a voice with its own style and character to give context and perspective to your description. Try to find a balance between the subjective perspective and the need for visual information for a target group of AD users.

Important questions are:
- Which of the characters is best suited for a descriptive role?
- Do you choose first person, third person limited, third person omniscient?
- How do you make it clear who is speaking? Do you start with self-description?
- Do you describe synchronously (simultaneously with the actions) or do you apply a different time structure, in which your descriptions do not coincide with what is visible to a seeing person?
- Which style fits the descriptive character? Poetic, voyeuristic, cynical, omnipotent, short, emotional, aloof, etc.
- Where do you put the focus? How do you find a balance between the description of the actions, the mimicry, the unspoken tension, the emotion, etc?

3 > Read your text out loud and try to fit it to the clip. Remember that it takes a lot of concentration to listen to a descriptive text, and that sounds such as music, movement, voice, breathing, etc. are important. Leave enough pauses. If your text is too long, you can incorporate some of the visual information into an audio introduction. That is a text that can be spoken beforehand and therefore does not belong to the descriptive text itself.

4 > When you have tried this tool with several people, compare the texts and the chosen perspectives. Could these different texts also be combined to make one audio description?

The mirror

Concentration, senses, creative writing, creation

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project and executed in December 2018 with a group of mixed-abled artists from the dance theatre ensemble Un-Label in Cologne.

> Number of participants: 1 to 15
> Total duration: 60 à 90 minutes
> Needed: mirror, space (ballet room is optimal, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 3 minutes) You look in the mirror and describe yourself out loud based on the pure outer characteristics. The description zooms in, evolving from general to detail, as you start at about 4 meters distance and slowly get closer to your reflection. Notice the differences between the description of a person or a face. Try to find a rhythm in the description by not thinking too long and experiment with the interpretation of your own reflection. Do you embellish? Do you add adjectives? What is the effect?

3 > (+/- 10 minutes) You look in the mirror and describe yourself, but now on paper. Go deeper into the details and try to apply a structure that makes zooming in clear and camera-like. Play with the language you used in [2] and look for other, more precise words. Then read your text out loud.

Variant in group workshop (Only when the participants know each other and there is enough trust to describe each other publicly. Participants must give their explicit approval. Care and empathy are essential. Describing someone and being described can be very confronting. This exercise offers an opportunity to make ourselves and each other aware of the terminology and language we use to visually describe people).

4 > (+/- 5 minutes) You stand in duo opposite each other at about 4 meters distance and describe each other. Make sure you can hear each other but can't understand each other well by leaving few pauses in the speech. It is not about the question: 'how am I described by someone else?' but about: 'how do I perceive the other person and what language do I use to describe his or her physical appearance?'

5 > (+/- 30 minutes) Same exercise as [4], on paper. You take 15 minutes to write the other person's description. After writing, give the text to the person you have described and let him or her read it to you. In larger groups you can also collect all the texts and have someone read to you so that you can guess who was described in the text.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: (how) did you find a rhythm in the description? What is the difference between describing yourself or the other?

Description dialogue
Creation, play, creative writing

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project and performed in December 2018 with a group of mixed-abled stage artists from the dance theatre ensemble Un-Label in Cologne.

> Number of participants: 4 to 20
> Total duration: 50 à 75 minutes
> Needed: space, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 5 minutes) You face each other in pairs and have an improvisation dialogue, trying to add a subjective description to everything you say. By means of the description you try to create a context about the situation, place and relation to the other as quickly as possible. Ask questions and re-questions. It is important to name as many visual elements as possible. The genre of dialogue is completely free.

An example:
- 'Say brother, why are you looking at me like that with your face in a thousand folds? You seem to be thinking very deeply.'
* 'That's because in all these years I've never noticed that you have such small feet.'
- 'You're big and wide like Daddy, I've got Mommy's arms and legs.'
* 'And you also have her black curls and her absent-mindedness.'
- 'By the way, you're three years older than me. When I turn sixteen, I'll be just as big as you.'
* 'Then maybe you won't have to climb on the sink to get to the cookie box, like now. Pay attention, you'll tear your new jeans.'
- 'No problem, I'll steal yours.'

In this way, we as an audience know who's speaking (brothers), where the situation is (kitchen) and we have a rough picture of the age, shape and clothing of the characters, without using an objective description. Another example is: 'Do you always play music on the street?' as a sentence that immediately creates a character and context.

3 > (+/- 40 minutes) Each duo gets 20 minutes to come up with a situation and write out a dialogue. You may base it on the dialogue from [2], or create something completely different. Then each duo presents the dialogue to the group.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: which 'tricks' did you use to make the dialogue creative? Which physical features immediately create an image and which do not? With which questions could you best characterize a character?

People and things

Creative writing

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project and performed in December 2018 with a group of mixed-abled stage artists from the dance- heatre ensemble Un-Label in Cologne.

> Number of participants: 1 to 15
> Total duration: 50 à 80 minutes
> Needed: pen, paper

1 > (+/- 5 minutes) Find an object and describe it in 1 word, without mentioning its name. Think Afrikaans, in which names of objects sometimes describe their use or appearance. Be creative. For example, 'chair' becomes: 'seat with legs,' and 'smartphone' becomes: 'handlightphonecase'.

2 > (+/- 10 minutes) In the next step you describe the object sensory, again without naming the object itself. First write separate words. Describe how it looks, feels, sounds, smells, maybe even how it would taste. Then make up all kinds of ways in which the object could be used. Search for visual language and collect different kinds of words, namely verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.

3 > (+/- 15 minutes) When you have about 20 words, make sentences with them. Use as many of the words from your list as possible and add as few new ones as possible to make the sentences (adverbs, pronouns and conjunctions). Your text is a description of the object, in which the name of the object is still not mentioned. The word from [1] is the title of your text.

4 > (+/- 15 minutes) Then you convert the sentences to the description of a person. So you forget about the object and change 'it' into 'he' or 'she' so that all the properties of the object are personalized. You can add details, as long as they are visually descriptive, and thus try to characterize the person.

Extension to performing arts

5 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

6 > (+/- 30 minutes) Look for elements that make a personal and/or emotional connection with your text and enlarge them by transforming your text into another art form, such as dance, painting, sculpture, poetry, theater dialogue, monologue, music piece, soundscape, etc. How can you maximally preserve the descriptive characteristics in another form of expression?

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: did you quickly find the right language? Do you now have a different image of the object you described?

Still
Expression, play, movement, improvisation

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project and executed in December 2018 with a group of mixed-abled stage artists from the dance theatre ensemble Un-Label in Cologne. This tool focuses on improvisation. It is a well-known and widely used exercise among actors and performers, which has been adapted in terms of accessibility by adding description.

> Number of participants: 4 to 15
> Total duration: 50 à 70 minutes
> Needed: space

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 15 minutes) Imagine an empty space as a playing surface, in which you can make a physical still. Someone stands first in the picture and adopts a position and posture. Then a second person joins in to take another position. Try to create an image as clear as possible, it may be absurd, comical, poetic, etc., and it is always the intention to have - as with a photo or painting - one clear subject. Participants are free to step in and out of the still whenever they want. Important rule: the image should never contain less than 3 or more than 6 people.

When a participant says 'Freeze!', the still must remain as it stands. Every participant who stands outside the still, tries to describe the image in 1 sentence. Then you can make a new image or move on to the next step.

3 > (+ / - 20 minutes) A participant sketches an image in a few words. The rest of the group makes the image visual by forming a physical still. Again, improvisation is central and the challenge is to embody the image sketch as clearly as possible.

4 > (+/- 20 minutes) One participant tells a short story (maximum 4 minutes), while the rest of the group converts the story into physical images. They do this as synchronously as possible with the story, so this time it is not a still but may be moved to follow the story structure. The image forms itself while the story is being told. For the narrator it is important to maintain a clear structure and descriptive language. The story does not have to be made up, it can also be a commonly known story, such as a myth, fairy tale, operetta, etc.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: were there images that turned out to be impossible to describe clearly in words? Is it possible to form and/or describe abstract images?

Do what you say and say what you do

Concentration, live-description

This tool is an adaptation of a method by US choreographer Jess Curtis, shared with me via Scottish choreographer Claire Cunningham (and collaborator with Curtis) whom I met during a masterclass in Cologne in April 2019. The tool was also carried out within the ArtInAD project with a group of students from the departments of Drama, Music and Dance at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and artists from the Labo Inclusiedans in November 2019 and February 2020.

> Number of participants: 5 to 20
> Total duration: 45 à 60 minutes
> Needed: space

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 7 minutes) You take a place and position in space. From that position you move forward about 3 meters, while describing your own movements out loud.

3 > (+/- 7 minutes) You return to the place where you began, describing your own movements aloud. You experiment with the sequence, describing what you do and doing what you describe. Investigate how description and movement relate to each other.

4 > (+/- 7 minutes) You take a place and position in space. You describe out loud what you see in front of you. Then you focus on your own sensory experience of the moment, going beyond the visual and trying to use all your senses to describe the moment and space in which you find yourself. Look for visual language as much as possible.

5 > (+/- 7 minutes) You take a different place and position in the room and describe a memory out loud. You visualize the time, place, people and emotions you associate with this memory. It doesn't have to be a story, but a visual sketch of a moment in your past that you remember.

6 > (+/- 15 minutes) You summarize your memory in a maximum of 5 words and share this short summary with the whole group.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how in [2] did the description affect your movement and vice versa? What was the choice of your memory based on in [5]?

Four ways of presence
Concentration, live-description, creation

This tool is an adaptation of a method by US choreographer Jess Curtis, shared with me via Scottish choreographer Claire Cunningham (and collaborator with Curtis) whom I met during a masterclass in Cologne in April 2019. The tool was also carried out within the ArtInAD project with a group of students from the departments of Drama, Music and Dance at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and artists from the Labo Inclusiedans in November 2019 and February 2020.

In this tool you challenge the traditional performer-public relationship. It is an investigation of paradoxical questions such as: How does dance sound? What does music look like? How can we convey meaning by combining artistic disciplines and exchanging perspective by telling the same story in a different way? It is also an investigation of ways to allow yourself to be observed as a performer.

> Number of participants: 4 to 20
> Total duration: 120 à 150 minutes
> Needed: space, pen, paper, timer

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 15 minutes) The group splits into pairs that sit opposite each other in a comfortable position, about one meter away from each other. Choose the person in the group you know least.

You determine the roles in each duo. One person is a performer and the other person is an observer. The coach of this tool sets a timer to exactly 5 minutes. During these 5 minutes the duo keeps eye contact. The performer has to "perform" by mentally switching between 4 different ways of presence, namely:
- being present with oneself;
- being present with the space;
- being present with the observer;
- being absent.

The performer must have experienced each mode of presence during the 5 minutes, but is free to choose how often she or he changes and which mode of presence she or he is visiting the most. The role of the observer is to discover which way of presence the performer experiences and to recognize the moments when the performer changes the way of presence. Eye contact is maintained throughout and the performer does not use sound, movement, facial expressions or touch. After the first 5 minutes the roles change. Afterwards, each duo can briefly exchange experiences among each other.

3 > (+/- 15 minutes) Roles change again. The same parameters remain, but both performer and observer now close their eyes. Contact is through the hands. The performer offers her or his hands with the palms pointing upwards, the observer lays her or his hands loosely on them. The coach sets a timer on 5 minutes. During this

time the eyes remain closed and the performer randomly switches between the modes of presence and the observer tries to discover which mode of presence the performer experiences and where the moments lie when the performer switches between the modes of presence. After five minutes the roles change.

4 > (+/- 20 minutes) In the next step, the group divides into 2 equal groups. One group consists of performers, the other of observers. The coach sets a timer on exactly 8 minutes. The same parameters as in [2] apply. The performers take go on stage and the observers are audience. The performers mentally switch between the 4 different ways of presence, and another way is added, namely being present with the other performers. In this step, the performers are also allowed to add small movements and move around in the space, but no sound, mimicry or touch is allowed. The observers are still trying to discover in which form of presence the performers are present. After the first 8 minutes the roles change.

5 > (+/- 15 minutes) Short break.

6 > (+/- 40 minutes) The duos from [2] come together again. The roles remain those of performer and observer. They will each perform 15 minutes for each other, preferably in another room (outside air, corridors, other spaces, etc). From the moment the duo leaves the room, the performance starts. Everything is allowed. The performance can contain dance, text, movement, music, mime or any other form. The performer remains aware of the different ways of presence and tries to implement them.

The observer sets a timer to 15 minutes. Her or his assignment is to make an artistic, textual description by taking notes during the performance (there is time afterwards to make the description into a whole). It may be a traditional description, in which the observer mentions what she or he has seen, heard and felt, but it may also be a description which freely or symbolically captures the performance in words. When the first 15 minutes are over, the roles change immediately. Don't forget to bring pen and paper.

7 > (+/- 30 minutes) When each duo is back in the common space, take the time to finalize your textual description. You can turn it into a story, a report, a poem or an actual visual description. Then you read the description to the group and try to share with the group what you have experienced as an observer.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: which mental 'tricks' did you use in [2] to switch between different ways of presence? Which of these modes was the most difficult to achieve? Which role was most interesting for your artistic development? When observing and/or describing your audience as a performer, who is audience and who is performer?

Explore
Introduction, discovery, focus, trust, live description

This tool is an adaptation of a method of the British theater maker Jo Bannon. She shared this tool during the IntegrART Symposium in Zurich in May 2019.

> Number of participants: 4 to 20
> Total duration: 45 à 60 minutes
> Needed: space, eye masks

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 10 minutes) You introduce yourself to the group in a few sentences with a self-description of your appearance, and 1 word about something of yourself that is not visible, such as a character trait or a sense of the moment.

3 > (+/- 25 minutes) The group splits into pairs. Each duo explores space. One person is the guide and the other closes the eyes or puts on a sleeping mask (or something else that covers the eyes). The guide takes her or his partner by the hand, arm or shoulder and describes everything that they encounter. The guide describes, without literally naming objects, places or people they encounter. The coach sets a timer for 10 minutes. When these are over, guide and follower change roles.

4 > (+/- 15 minutes) Write a short text based on what you experienced when you were blindfolded. Try to remember the words of your guide and use them to describe a kind of journey, and use your imagination to create a space as far away as possible from the real space you are in.

5 > (+/- 10 minutes) Read the text to your guide.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how long did it take you to get used to the fact that your vision was disabled? Was it difficult to trust your guide? Was there a big difference between what you knew about space and your imagination when something was described instead of named?

Against the clock
Instant composition, association

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project and performed in February 2019 with a group of mixed-abled stage artists at the National Opera of Athens, and in May 2019 with a group of mixed-abled stage artists from the dance theatre ensemble Un-Label in Cologne.

> Number of participants: 4 to 15
> Total duration: 50 à 60 minutes
> Needed: space, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Warm up by shaking your muscles, using your voice and body, getting all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 5 minutes) The group forms a circle. The coach of this tool launches a word or concept and the person to his or her left says the first word that comes up in his or her mind, and so on around the circle. Free association is essential. You can associate on sound, content, form, rhythm, etc. The coach launches a new word or concept each time and thus goes around in the circle at least 5 times. When the group finds a rhythm and the associations follow each other quickly and spontaneously, the coach launches the last word, possibly a theme, if the group is at the beginning of a creation process.

3 > (+/- 5 minutes) You write the last word you said on a sheet of paper. This is the association you made in the last round. With that word you make 2 other free associations on paper, which you also write down, so that you have 3 words on paper.

4 > (+/- 5 minutes) The group divides into pairs. Each duo gets exactly 5 minutes to prepare a performance of up to 1 minute based on the words they have. One may think from one's own discipline, but this is not mandatory. It is very important that the coach keeps these 5 minutes as a maximum and also uses the time pressure as a (positive) element of restriction. The spontaneity of the creation is above any form of so-called artistic quality. There should not be time to think a lot about 'how' to build a performance or 'what' a duo will create. The only option is to fall back on what you already know and can do.

5 > (+/- 5 minutes) Each duo presents the creation. There is no feedback and no consultation.

6 > (+/- 5 minutes) Duos join together to form groups of 4 people (possibly 6 if the number of participants is not divisible by 4). Again, each group gets exactly 5 minutes to put together a creation of maximum 1 minute based on the duo's creations. The same rules as in [4] apply.

7 > (+/- 5 minutes) Each group presents the creation. There is no feedback and no consultation.

8 > (+/- 5 minutes) The group now becomes 1 whole. The group gets exactly 5 minutes to put together a creation of maximum 1 minute based on the creations created in [6]. The same rules as in [4] apply.

9 > (+/- 10 minutes) You describe on paper your own role in the performance of [8]. Focus only on your own actions and appearance and look for clear, visual language.

10 > (+/- 10 minutes) The group forms another circle and tries to evoke the performance of [8] by reading the individual descriptions as if the performance is live at that moment and the text is an audio description. Everyone reads her or his description and so the performance is created again, but then purely verbally.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how did the communication go? Which methods did you use to create a creation quickly and efficiently with each other?

Here I am

Introduction, relaxing, focus

This tool is an adaptation of a method of the Greek theater maker Costas Lamproulis, developed during the project Creability. This tool was performed on different locations and at different times in the framework of the ArtInAD project, each time with groups of mixed-abled artists, a.o. members of the dance theater ensemble Un-Label, students of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and members of the Labo Inclusiedans.

> Number of participants: 5 to 15
> Total duration: 30 à 50 minutes
> Needed: space

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Each participant looks for a comfortable place in the room and stands, lies or sits down to relax. Everyone closes their eyes. After a silence of at least one minute, the coach of this tool starts to introduce him- or herself by describing. (for example: '*I am Max. I lie on the floor with my arms spread out and my face to the ceiling. I have a stubble and blue eyes. I wear black pants, blue shirt and light gray socks. My brown hair touches the wooden floor and to my right I hear the calm breathing of someone else*'). Then another silence follows. One by one everyone describes themselves, without being asked. The coach of this tool tries to keep the process organic. It is important to give freedom and to consider the description not as an assignment, but as an invitation to meet. Mistakes don't exist. Even if someone deviates from the visual description because the task was not appointed, the process may take its course.

2 > (+/- 10 minutes) Everyone opens their eyes. From where you are, choose for yourself a place in the space as your destination. As you move to this destination, you describe every movement you make out loud. As a group you try to find a rhythm in which you leave and arrive at about the same time, without looking or listening to each other.

3 > (+/- 10 minutes) You return to the place where you left at [2]. Before you start, take the time to visualize and reconstruct the route you took. Then try to return in the same way and describe yourself as you do it.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: did the introduction in [1] take on a spontaneous rhythm? Did everyone introduce themselves? Did the descriptions of others change the image of space when your eyes were closed? Did the introductions follow a visual description or were there other forms of description, such as emotions or fantasized images?

People in picture and tongue
self-description, movement, instant composition

This tool was developed by Max Greyson in the framework of the ArtInAD project and performed in November 2019 with a group of students from the Dance Department at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and artists from the Labo Inclusiedans.

> Number of participants: 5 to 25
> Total duration: 50 à 60 minutes / 90 à 100 minutes
> Needed: space, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 5 minutes) You write down a word that defines your personality, the word you would use when someone asks you to describe yourself in one word. Then you transform the word into 1 short movement.

3 > (+/- 5 minutes) You write down a second word, the word you think someone else, such as a good friend or family member, would use to describe you. That word is also converted into 1 short movement.

4 > (+/- 15 minutes) You make a short sequence of the 2 movements. You attach them to each other and make a short choreography of them, consisting of only the 2 movements and not lasting longer than 20 seconds. Try not only to make a substantive link with yourself and your words in the movements, but also to find a formal and rhythmic similarity.

5 >(+/- 15 minutes) Present your choreography to the group, saying the words you wrote out loud at the beginning and end of your choreography, as if they were a title and a final chord.

6 > (+/- 15 minutes) Split into pairs and present your short choreography to each other again. Then make a short description of the movement you see of your partner, in a maximum of 2 sentences. Share this description with each other.

7 > (+/- 15 minutes) Then link the two sequences together by making a new piece with all the movement elements you have together. Do not add new elements but distort the movements so that they fit together.

8 > (+/- 15 minutes) Present your duo sequence to the group.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: what was the effect of the language on your movement and on the audience? Did your choreography change when you said the words out loud?

The myth
Creation, experiment

This tool is an adaptation of a method of the British director Amit Sharma of Graeae Theatre Company, shared during a creative lab in Remscheid in the project ImPArt in April 2019 and afterwards performed in the project ArtInAD with students Drama, Music and Dance of the Antwerp Conservatoire in September 2019 and February 2020.

> Number of participants: 8 to 25
> Total duration: 50 à 70 minutes
> Needed: space, existing myth story line

In advance, the story structure of a universal story, such as a myth, fairy tale, operetta or theater classic is written down in 5 to 8 points. As an example: the myth of Persephone.

1) Hades kidnaps Persephone to the underworld
2) Demeter, her mother, mourns and makes the earth infertile
3) Helios message to Demeter that Hades kidnapped her daughter
4) Demeter asks Zeus for help
5) Zeus forces Hades to release Persephone
6) Hades lets Persephone eat pomegranate seeds before he releases her
7) Persephone stays six months a year on earth and six months in the underworld

1 > (+/- 30 minutes) The group splits into 2. The first group brings the story acoustically (sound only, no text). The second group brings the story physically (only movement, no text).

After about 15 minutes the groups present their work to each other. The group that brings the story acoustically asks the other group to close or cover their eyes during the presentation. Think about the position of the audience. The traditional arrangement usually does not provide an optimal frame for a purely acoustic performance. After the presentation there is a short feedback moment with a focus on accessibility. How clear were the plot twists? It's not about what the audience understood, but about what they could perceive.

2 > (+/- 20 minutes) The groups rework their pieces based on the feedback and are allowed to add descriptive text when verbal information is essential for accessibility. This is followed by a presentation.

3 > (+/- 15 minutes) The groups merge their pieces without long consultation. You try to find a rhythm together and follow the story structure while performing the pieces at the same time.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: which elements were strong in terms of accessibility and therefore would not need audio description if the audience consisted of AD users?

Meeting the parents
Introduction, game, improvisation

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the Creability project and executed in Athens with a group of mixed-abled artists from different art disciplines.

> Number of participants: 4 to 20
> Total duration: 60 à 80 minutes
> Needed: space, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 15 minutes) Participants stand in pairs opposite each other. You describe each other out loud and may use only one sense to observe the other person, i.e. by looking, listening or touching. Ask your partner's permission beforehand, especially when you choose to use touch. The description is only based on external characteristics. Change partners every 3 minutes.

3 > (+/- 20 minutes) You go back to the first partner and have a conversation in which you can ask each other personal questions. You try to get to know the person and then introduce him or her to your family, of whom you know no one will be able to see your partner. After the personal interview, you take the time to prepare for the meeting. You can do this by writing a short text, but you don't have to, you can also go for a more improvisational approach. Challenge yourself to add creative, humorous details to your description. You don't have to prepare a realistic introduction. Use your imagination. Only the visual elements must be consistent with the truth.

4 > (+/- 3 minutes per participant) You introduce your partner to the group as if the group consists of your blind family. The group closes its eyes and will need your introduction description to form an image of your partner. After the introduction, the family members may ask you questions about your new partner.

For example: 'This is Sarah, my new girlfriend. She is very big. That is why she often walks with her head in the clouds. I met her in a coffee bar and immediately fell in love with her big green eyes and her exquisite eyebrows...'.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how did it feel to be described in [1]? Did you adjust the tone of your description to the person facing you? Was it easy to form a visual image when you were a relative in [3]?

Audience description

Improvisation, concentration, physical awareness, confidence

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project.

> Number of participants: 4 to 15
> Total duration: 30 à 60 minutes
> Needed: space

1 > (+/- 15 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system.

2 > (+/- 2 minutes per participant) The group positions itself as an audience, standing or sitting. One by one you go forward to speak as a performer. If you are a performer, pay close attention to the way you go forward. Your performance starts from the moment you are visible. When you stand on the spot from where you will speak, you wait 20 to 30 seconds to observe the space and the audience. Then you describe yourself. You start with visual elements and then expand to emotions or sensory experiences of the moment. Before you rejoin the audience, introduce the next speaker by describing her or him in a short sentence.

3 > (+/- 3 minutes per participant) Do one more round in which everyone comes forward. Again, wait 20 to 30 seconds to observe the room and the audience before you start speaking. Then describe out loud what you see, hear or feel from your own perspective. The audience and the space become the subject of your description. You start with visual elements and then expand to emotions, interpretations, connections, etc. Try to zoom in, from general to detail. Before you rejoin the audience, introduce the next speaker by describing her or him in one word.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how much time did you need to observe before you started speaking? How did this silence feel? Was it harder to describe yourself than the audience? Did you feel free to say what came to mind, or did you sometimes censor yourself?

Descriptive rhyming

Creative writing

This tool was developed by Max Greyson as part of the ArtInAD project and performed with a group of mixed-abled performing artists in Athens in February 2019 during a residency for the Creability project.

Rhyme, repetition, exaggeration, etc. are grateful tools to make a description unique, original and refined.

> Number of participants: individually or group of 4 to 20
> Total duration: 30 à 60 minutes
> Needed: space, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 10 minutes) You take pen and paper and write down 15 words starting with the same sound or letter (alliterations). When you are a sign language user, you try to think of 15 gestures that contain the same hand form, for example 15 gestures with a flat hand or 15 gestures with an index finger raised. Look for different kinds of words, such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, etc.

2 > (+/- 15 minutes) You use all 15 words or gestures in 1 descriptive sentence. You try to add as few other words as possible. The content of the sentence does not have to be realistic, feel free to describe something with a lot of imagination and language play. Try to describe the subject of your description clearly, without naming the subject literally.

Expansion in group workshop

3 > (+/- 15 minutes) You are looking for a way to make your sentence/description physically visual and to find visual elements that "rhyme".

4 > (+/- 15 minutes) You present to the group by reading out the sentence and performing the movement at the same time. Then the group tries to guess what you have described and depicted.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: what is the relation between sound, language and body. Were there "untranslatable" words or concepts that you could not translate into a movement?

The chain

Improvisation, instant composition, live description

This tool is an adaptation of a method by the Brazilian-German choreographer and performer Wagner Moreira and was reworked by Max Greyson for the ArtInAD project. The tool was performed in February 2020 with a group of students from the Drama, Music and Dance departments of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and members of the Labo Inclusiedans.

> Number of participants: 9 to 21
> Total duration: 30 à 50 minutes
> Needed: more than one space, pen, paper

1 > (+/- 20 minutes) Warm up by shaking your muscles, using your voice and body, getting all the tension out of your system. After that you will walk criss-cross in space and the assignment is to choose 2 other people from the group and move around so that you form an imaginary triangle with these people. Try to hide who you have chosen by never looking directly at these people but keeping them in your peripheral view.

2 > (+/- 5 minutes) You look for a movement that represents how you feel today. Perform this movement a few times and refine it.

3 > (+/- 15 minutes) The group splits into 3 (approximately) equal groups. Each group goes to a different room. Within your group you make a composition of the movements [2] that is about 2 minutes long. The only rule is that it is a sequence in which each movement is performed separately, so never 2 movements at the same time. Try to be creative by experimenting with repetition, geometric shapes, movement dialogue, etc.

4 > (+/- 45 minutes) The groups come together again and each gets a number. Group 1 starts by leaving the room. Group 2 presents its creation and group 3 describes the performance of group 2 on paper. Then group 1 comes back and they have to recreate the performance of group 2 based on the textual description of group 3, without further instruction or visual help. Rotate so that each group has presented, described and recreated.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: was the description sufficient to reconstruct the choreography? Did you stick to a description of the physical or did you also use abstract language or visual metaphors to name movement qualities?

Clair obscur
Improvisation, trust, discovery

This tool is an adaptation of several methods of dancers Saïd Gharbi, Leif Fernhaber and Mia Sophia Bilitza and was reworked by Max Greyson for the ArtInAD project. The tool was performed in February 2019 with a group of mixed-abled stage artists at the National Opera of Athens within the framework of the Creability project.

This tool can be coached by a sighted person but it has enormous added value when the coach is someone with personal experience of impaired vision or blindness.

> Number of participants: 4 to 20
> Total duration: 80 à 90 minutes
> Needed: big space, sleep masks, music (optional)

1 > (+/- 10 minutes) The coach brings the participants together at the door of the room and asks them to close their eyes or put on a sleeping mask. She or he guides the participants one by one blindfolded into the room and makes sure everyone sits or lies in a safe, comfortable place, with at least 1.5 meters of space. The coach keeps his or her eyes open at all times to maintain safety.

2 > (+/- 20 minutes) As a warm-up, the coach takes the participants into a descriptive metaphor. If necessary, the coach will put on some quiet music. During the contact improvisation at the end of this step, it is important that the participants trust each other. Those who do not feel comfortable when touched, can also indicate with a simple sound during the warm-up that they prefer not to make physical contact.

'The participants are trees in a dark forest, rooted in the ground, strong and flexible. They become aware of their bodies, with roots touching the ground, a trunk and branches and a crown that gently sways. Water flows through their bodies like blood. The participants gradually become aware of their feet, ankles, knees and legs, their thighs and hip, ribs, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists and hands, neck and head. Their whole body lies still but is still full of life. Slowly but surely the sun rises and the trees start to grow, starting from their roots. They discover for each body part how they live and move as they grow towards the sun. They stand upright and can explore the space, in a slow, gentle way. First in the circle around them, then further and further away from their place, so that they can also meet other trees on their path, which they let know they are there with a small touch, before continuing their exploration. Gradually the participants can look for a longer contact. When they have a contact improvisation together in larger groups, the coach looks for a good time to let the sun set and let the participants find an individual place again, root and rest for a few minutes before opening their eyes.'

3 > (+/- 15 minutes) The group splits into pairs and forms a row on the side of the room. The participants hold their partner by the arm, hand or shoulder and all close their eyes. The distance between the duos is at least 1.5 meters. Somewhere on the other side of the room, the coach sets an audio player to a soft, monotonous sound. The duos must find the sound source, without using their sight.

4 > (+/- 15 minutes) The duos spread throughout the room. One of them closes their eyes. The one who has the eyes open leads her or his partner around the room. The point of contact can be an arm or hand, but also both hands on the hips are possible, to give enough support and confidence. You start slowly and accelerate steadily as confidence increases. The partner always indicates how far she or he wants to go, but needs to be challenged and trust the guide. The goal is to walk through space with your partner after a few minutes. After about 5 minutes the roles change.

5 > (+/- 10 minutes) The duos stay together and agree on a sound to recognize each other. After that everyone closes their eyes and the coach spreads the participants all over the room. When the coach gives a sign, the duos have to find each other based on the sound they have agreed upon.

6 > (+/- 10 minutes) Finally, everyone closes their eyes again. The coach spreads the participants over the whole room and instructs the group to make a big circle by only exchanging verbal information. When the group thinks they have formed a circle, everyone opens their eyes.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how long did it take before you had a safe, comfortable feeling due to the lack of vision? Did you talk often to exchange information or was the tactile exchange sufficient?

A decision in the present

Improvisation, instant composition, live description

This tool is an adaptation of a method of the Brazilian-German choreographer and performer Wagner Moreira and was performed with groups of mixed-able stage artists, including members of the ensemble Un-Label, students of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and members of the Labo Inclusiedans.

> Number of participants: 4 to 20
> Total duration: 30 à 50 minutes
> Needed: space

1 > (+/- 20 minutes) Shake your muscles, use your voice and body to get all the tension out of your system. After that you will walk criss-cross in space. When you notice something about the appearance of someone passing by, describe out loud what you saw in up to 3 words and walk on afterwards.

2 > (+/- 10 minutes) You spread out in space. The task is to make decisions, to fully understand them, to open yourself to their consequences, and only then to execute them. In the present you make a choice about the future, for example: 'I will turn my head,' and then you turn your head. For instance, when you decide to walk to the wall, you first make a mental picture of how you will do that, and only then do you leave for the wall. When you get to the wall, you take the time to make a new decision, to realize what the decision is and then execute it. The decision must always precede the action. After a few minutes, the coach of this tool tells you that you have to involve at least one other person in every decision, for example: 'I am going to tell the person furthest away from me that I am looking up to her or him'.

3 > (+/- 10 minutes) You go back to the position where you started at [2] and try to make the same decisions again. It does not mean that you make the same movements or visit the same places, but it does mean that you make the same decisions. For example, if you decided to walk to the wall, it could be that this time it is a different wall. It's only the decisions you make again. In the same way, the interaction with other people can now take place in a completely different way and with a different timing, as long as it is based on the same decision as in [2]. You don't have to follow the same order as before, just make the same decisions.

4 > (+/- 10 minutes) You go back to the position where you started at [2] and try to make all your decisions again. This time you say them out loud. Pay attention to the effect. How does pronunciation affect your own decision and what changes when you hear the other person's decisions and can interpret them. Can you anticipate? Someone you thought came to you because she or he decided to give you a hand may now say out loud: 'I'm going to greet someone', and therefore this time you may say 'Hello' instead of giving them a hand.

= > (+/- 10 minutes) Possible feedback questions: how do you think about the decisions made as a performer? When you perform the same theater or dance performance several times, does performing always consist of the same text and action or always the same decisions? What was the influence of pronouncing a decision out loud in (4)?

Annexes

Annex 1: Audio introduction 'The Silenced'

This introduction was spoken live just before the start of the performance, when the audience had already taken their seats on the stage floor. It was audible to everyone.

The shadow of a past surrounds her
In a circle of light she sits
As in a period at the end of a sentence

Her face buried on her knees
She's locked up, smothered in her speechlessness.

She's about to breathe again
First she has to find a voice
A sigh to resonate

She must choose
Whether she will follow the light
or will be guided by it

A video of the performance can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzjBY0t_7lE

Annex 2: Audio introduction *Gravity (and other attractions)*

Welcome to Gravity (and other attractions), a dance theatre performance. Two dancers will perform: Lolo and Tiki. They will always be there, even if at times you can't see or hear them.

Lights on!

The stage has a five by five white floor and a white background. Two white cubes are standing close together at the back of the floor. It is a pure and spotless stage, on which minimalistic images will be projected, always closely related to the text.

The base of this performance is an English spoken poetic, artistically integrated audio description. This means that the dance inspired the text, and the text inspired the dance. The descriptive language is the inspiration, the verbal translation and the spoken text of the performance.

If you do not have access to one or more of the artistic elements in this performance, or if you cannot fully perceive them, all other artistic elements are designed to build bridges for your perception. They all tell the same story, in their own way.

Annex 3: Audio introduction Voyeurs in BXL

General audio introduction for those without access to the program or website

Welcome to Voyeurs in BXL, a music theatre performance by collective Voyeurs, consisting of writer-performers Max Greyson and Carmien Michels, drawing artist Wide Vercnocke, cellist Jolien Deley and multi-instrumentalist Tim Coenen. The scenography is in the capable hands of Stef Depover and Senne Mannaers controls the lighting and sound technique. Voyeurs in BXL is a mix of literary performance, classical cello, contemporary music and live illustration. The performance came about in collaboration with Vonk & Zonen, Passa Porta, LNVT and WALPURGIS and thanks to the support of the Flemish Literature Fund, the Flemish government and the VGC.

The following text can be found in the program booklet and on the website:
Nobody looks up when Barbara enters the new country of Brussels. Nobody says: 'what is she doing here in these streets? She doesn't belong here'. In Brussels you can be anonymous and forget yourself. Certainly now that no one speaks anymore. The music theatre performance Voyeurs in BXL is a feast for the eye and the ear. Wide Vercnocke fills his ink pot with the Brussels sewage and draws live, meter-high images. Musicians Jolien Deley and Tim Coenen play every heart with their guitar and cello. They create a hymn, a soundtrack for the new country. Writer-performers Max Greyson and Carmien Michels go inland and tell the exciting story of Barbara, who is looking for a childhood friend while living statues spy on her. With powerful and rhythmic lyrics, sounds and images, the quintet intoxicates everyone with feu de ket!

The performance features an artistic audio introduction, audible to the entire audience, and an artistically integrated audio description via headphones, for those who do not have access to the visual elements on stage. The description aims to bring the drawings to life and is written and spoken from the perspective of the drawings themselves.

Audio introduction at the start of the performance

Welcome. You are in a new Brussels, which is very similar to the Brussels you know, but by no means the same.

This Brussels has a black rectangular floor. A black, translucent screen of ten meters wide and five meters high stands up like an open book and fills the whole scene. There are no other set pieces or props. Behind the black gauze cloth are a performer, a drawing artist, a cellist and a guitarist. Their faces are always vaguely lit. They are the heads behind the cloth, the voyeurs. I too am there, unexposed and invisible. Together we are the eyes of the new Brussels that you spy on.

In the foreground is Barbara. A young woman with long, chestnut hair and brown eyes. She wears a sporty, hip bordeaux cardigan with hood, black jeans and pink sneakers. From behind the gauze I look at Barbara, play on her misunderstanding, challenge her, test her patience. She is looking for a childhood friend, but the city is silent. All the inhabitants refuse to speak. Yet Brussels has a voice. My voice. I am Brussels. Bienvenue.

The large black mesh on the playing floor forms the imaginary boundary between Barbara and the city. Live drawn images appear on the canvas. The drawing artist sketches lines and shapes with white marker on his sheet; monuments, city landscapes human figures, moving statues, friends and enemies. The drawings are projected onto the black gauze cloth, as if the drawing artist, while sketching, lets the light break through on the dark, black decor. In this way a dialogue will arise between Barbara and the city, which not only has a voice, but also communicates in music and image.

Et alors ça commence. Bienvenue. Welcome to Brussels.

Thanks

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In the future Max Greyson will conduct further research into integrated forms of accessibility, including description and AD. Contact for workshops, lectures, collaborations or creative exchanges: maxgreyson@gmail.com | www.max-greyson.be | www.artypevzw.be