

*Plan Atelier: Artists Working Spaces*  
**Round table English**

**30/05/2023, Meyboom Artist-run Spaces**

**Moderation and pv:**

Jesse van Winden (Meyboom-Artists-Run spaces) and Meike de Roest (RAB/BKO)

**Present at this discussion table:**

Alice Ciresola (Globe Aroma)

Yanick Roman (VGC)

Roshan Di Puppo (visual artist)

Giel Vanhoutte (perspective city of Brussels)

Kasper Demeulemeester (visual artist, Uitvoerend Comité of the Tijdelijk Informatie Centrum)

Joris Vermeir (commune of Koekelberg cultuurbeleid)

Sarah Fellahi (cultuurbeleid commune of Ixelles)

Melissa Ryke (visual artist, Meyboom Artist-Run-Spaces)

Lotte Stoops (brussels parlamentslid)

Eva Wilsens (De Markten)

Steyn Bergs (Ateliers MAX)

Alex Pfeiffenberger (Ateliers MAX)

Pia Louwerens (artist Meyboom Artist-Run-Spaces and a.pass)

Sarah Van Ransbeeck (cultuurdienst commune of Anderlecht)

**Moderation and notes**

Jesse van Winden (Meyboom Artist-Run spaces) and Meike de Roest (RAB/BKO)

Each person presents themselves and shares their questions or good practices:

**Alice Ciresola** (Globe Aroma): Globe Aroma provides free space for primo arrivants, network and facilitation. We're in the process of buying the place where we are

situated now. Artists get a space for three months and can apply to stay longer, but it would be better to extend this period of three months.

> Globe Aroma can become a bubble for artists, while they should move at some point and feel like Globe Aroma is a starting point. But where should they go next?

**Jesse van Winden** (Meyboom Artist-Run spaces): This is the situation of many students, they have a working space as long as they're in school, afterwards it becomes unclear.

**Yannick Roman** (VGC) used to work for Parts (De Keersmaecker), and cabinet of De Smet, and Needcompany where he also worked around artists spaces. It's been top of his interest since a long time.

**Jesse van Winden** (Meyboom Artist-Run spaces): Needcompany and Peeping Tom are stage-based arts. The needs for space are quite different than visual arts, as they demand different types of spaces and needs. This is usually company based arts instead of individual. Level Five and Meyboom can learn from this.

**Roshan Di Puppo** (visual artist, has her atelier at SB34) finished her art degree last year. The change from school to a private space didn't feel quite right, so she was happy to find an existing space for a very affordable price, where she's part of a community.

> *We need spaces, but also people that are paid to find those spaces.* The work of searching available spaces and to make them accessible needs recognition.

**Giel Vanhoutte** (perspective, city of Brussels) works around temporary occupation in the Brussels region. More than 50% of temporary occupation is cultural. He wants to hear the needs of the cultural world.

**Jesse van Winden** (Meyboom Artist-Run spaces: it's important to define 'cultural occupation'. Does this include sports, arts, and education?

**Kasper Demeulemeester** (visual artist, Uitvoerend Comité of the Tijdelijk Informatie Centrum): in 2016 I created Tropicana as a temporary space for three weeks - and it's still there. It's an 'epicerie solidaire'. We asked ourselves the question what would happen to a space if you leave it empty and open? We created this space without organization, no administration, where all projects are welcome.

> At Tijdelijk informatiecentrum we study *de-professionalisation*. Doing things less professional, for the 'unsuccessful' artist.

> The building is owned by CPAS. Every year we get a prolongation of the place. CPAS wants to rent the space at some point.

**Joris Vermeir** (cultural policy at the Commune of Koekelberg): Some years ago, we occupied the 11<sup>th</sup> floor at rue du Canal, with the organisation Wolken. After a while the space professionalized which changes the approach. Wants to know what he can do being inside an administration.

> Cultural policy coordinator is organized by the Vlaamse gemeenschap, which means Flemish projects. The regions can't organize culture because it is community/language based + municipalities with their own budgets. The region manages urbanism, so Smet is regulation and Vervoort is city development.

**Sarah Fellahi** (cultural policy at the Commune of Ixelles): our department is mixed French and Dutch speaking. We have a project manager Visual Arts and we offer ateliers for two years residencies. We're also the only municipality with their own museum of visual arts.

> In our ateliers you pay a caution but no rent. There are 12 places for both Belgian and European artists. The first period of two years just ended, and the two years duration is the question at the moment. Here social housing and artist working spaces are combined.

**Melissa Ryke** (visual artist, Meyboom Artists-Run-Spaces): audio visual artist, with experience in artist run spaces.

**Lotte Stoops** (member of the Brussels Parliament, president of commission of culture of VGC and artist): She believes in the community of the Brussels arts scene. I'm pro guichet unique, because the situation is complicated. Having an atelier is the basis of sustainable art practice, the balance between temporary and permanent use can be a complementary structure.

> *Culture and infrastructure are on two ends of our policy*, it's a big challenge.

> *Resilience budgeting*: we talk about what makes money (CPAS), this would mean: within budget of policies, we take into account the value of other things next to the monetary things, educational or social value. Difference between government owned buildings and private property, governmental should be having social benefit.

> 'Saussurioning' of the policy: value on health issue, social issue and loneliness... It's not easy to create the framework of values.

**Eva Wilsens** (De Markten): De Markten has a lot of space, but the question is how to put it to good use. The current construction works give time to re-evaluate the use of it. Before it was classical use (social, yoga etc), but there's a small theater and expo space. They have been experimenting with residencies. There are no spaces to give for a year, but periods of time are possible.

**Steyn Bergs** (Ateliers MAX): university of Utrecht, stretches the importance of the work to get the needed space for artists.

**Alex Pfeiffenberger** (Ateliers MAX): We deal with small scale hands-on questions; how to put things into action etc, politically less we have less knowledge.

**Pia Louwerens** (artist Meyboom Artists-run Spaces and a.pass): being part of the Meyboom community is important. It's valuable to work together, we learn

empowering skills, such as becoming a *vzw*. Often affordable studio space is on the edge of can I or can't.

**Sarah Van Ransbeeck** (cultural policy at the Commune of Anderlecht): A few weeks ago we started a *database/ map of existing places* (ateliers, residencies and rehearsal spaces). We will invite artists for a day end of September to get in touch with each other, to present the map.

> Physical, mental and public space will be central in this story. You have to know all these spaces, and it would be great if info would be centralized.

**Melissa Ryke**: there's a facebook group bringing together artists and atelier opportunities (but you need to reply within the hour).

**Giel Vanhoutte** (perspective city of Brussels): We need to create a vision for temporary occupation. What are the social benefits for the society? What's social value? It's not easy to define. Does it need to include the whole neighborhood or is the artistic work itself already of value? Temporarily.brussels website matchmaking to find and offer spaces.

> There's a lot of demand, since people need spaces. 70 people are asking for a place while there were only two available. We're trying to pull in private owners. First step is the artists and developing a vision, then the communes.

> **Kasper Demeulemeester**: is there a way to not make it *the immoweb of temporary occupation*?

> **Lotte Stoops**: we made a list at the city of brussels and the administration already did some lucky matchmaking, but it's not transparent or visible on the website. How is the collaboration with the 19 communes?

> **Roshan Di Puppo**: It's not one to one, artist vs market, it's important to be part of a group and part of the discussion. Use the expertise by bringing together the artists so they can develop a sustainable practice.

> **Eva Wilsens**: Agree, looking at the bigger plan is urban planning with so many empty buildings while others are being built. Brussels as a city need to have a vision (like not privatizing public spaces).