

The Festival of Older People



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On the 17th, 18th and 19th of October 2017, we are hosting ‘The Festival of Older People’ in the ZIMHIC Theaters in Utrecht.

The concept of the festival is: “The elderly do not exist!”. From this statement we reflect on how society would be established without the need to differentiate between ‘young’ and ‘old’.

Our programme consists of:

- A congress in which experience speaks for itself
- Performing arts demonstrating the specialness and power of older people.
- A film festival consisting of short-films, long films and documentaries.
- Fine art made by, for and about older people

We allow art, science and philosophy fuse together in order to achieve lasting change that is right around the corner.

Background

We are currently facing a worldwide demographic shift that has never occurred before. Slowly but surely a substantial amount of the global population is growing older than 55. The increase of world population is largely accounted for by aging. Expectations are that eventually this demographic will grow to constitute 35% of the world’s population. This shift will change everything: in modern media culture, the economy, healthcare, societal formations, you name it.

We hope this invokes an uprising among the elderly, who will no longer accept social exclusion and isolated lives in nursing homes where they await their grandchildren and certain death. We are shifting into a society in which older people remain active participants.



In our international research into what it means to be old it appears that the principles on which a society is formed determine the way in which elderly people are seen and treated. In Cambodia, older people remain active participants in the so-called “Household Strategy”. In Bolivia, older people are active participants of the community while in Western liberal capitalist countries they are just another expenditure on a scale that mainly focuses on the population that contributes to

capital enhancement.

We are waiting on the first Coca Cola advert portrays a pair of beaming eighty-year-olds passionately kissing while sharing a coke and the first band of 60-year-olds expressing “their generation’s sentiment” in the form of a grunge-band, cheered on by a crowd of their peers. And when will the first 70-year-old Prince emerge with the best guitar solo in the history of time? Or do these people already exist?



There is a noticeable change in demographics. What is remarkable is how it is mainly approached from an economic perspective: it all costs money. Thus, all over the world, existing structures in healthcare are being disintegrated or rather even tossed aside completely.

Just as the refugee crisis has now been solved because the

refugees are perishing on the perimeters of our prosperity, the weak among the elderly will vanish as well. Even now humanity is being sacrificed in the name of concepts like security, efficiency, cost reduction and bureaucratic equalization. The typical image of a liberal society shows the working class stepping over the sleeping homeless during break time. It also portrays elderly people who are be-

ing evicted because their pensions are not being altered to compensate for inflation, as is happening in Brazil.

It's not just that governments are lying about their so-called "costs", their solution to leave everything up to a market economy system and be rid of it is too simple. This will eventually lead to a liberal society like Brazil or will revert the Netherlands back to its system in 1880, which is the current system in Cambodia. Outsourcing collective facilities equals desertion of the people who are in need of these facilities.

We travelled around the world to capture the lives of elderly in scientific research and portray their lives through stories, photos and videos. The festival will revolve around two basic themes. **How can we shape a society in which 35% of people are over 55 years old? And we wondered how a society would be arranged without the differentiation between young and old.** Is it possible to neutralize the differences between the young and the old? That is why we are creating this festival with both younger and older people.

Artists from all over the world are invited to reflect on these two significant issues and translate their thoughts into images, expansions and answers. These reflections will be joined with scientific research and people who have explored topics concerning healthcare and the elderly. **In October 2017 a festival will take place in the Netherlands, during which light will be shed on these queries and the social innovation necessary to work through them.** We invite all who are part of this society, older people, caregivers, and anyone concerned with aging and 'care' to join us. We inspire them to achieve the next step in their daily lives and work.

Dreams

I recently read a story about an Islamic prince in the Middle ages, among whom art and science flourished. This is a vastly different qualification than maintaining a positive balance amongst ones checkbook. In the Netherlands, performing arts is growing extinct. Something is only allowed to exist when it meets capitalist ideals that make a profit. There are only approximately 200 payed actors in the Netherlands. The rest lives on love, old paper and passion. The festival is an invitation to dream again.

What would your society look like when older people are considered of value and worth contribution? What if social exclusion based on age alone would be considered outdated and the difference is no longer made?

Scientific Research

In Brazil, Bolivia, Bangladesh, the Netherlands and Cambodia, we interviewed and portrayed dozens of elderly people. Shanghai and New York are still to come. When the project is finished, all of these interviews and portraits will be collected and published under the title: **“Elderly of the World – They differ everywhere...”** The photos will be exhibited as A0 prints.



Martijn's Great-Great-Grreatmother Gozina Dijkstra, presumably born before 1850 waarschijnlijk Gozina Dijkstra geb voor 1850. Photo dated around 1910.

Documentary

We made a documentary about what aging is like in Cambodia, which is a pretend-democracy where the elite shamelessly robs the country blind. Currently, 6% of the population in Cambodia is over the age of 55 while the average age of death has risen to 75.

What is it like to grow old in a society without a central organisation for caregivers, which means you can only rely on yourself, your family and religious institutes?

And how is it possible that the average age of death in the Netherlands only differs 8 years from that in Cambodia, when the Cambodian government does not spend a penny on pensions, facilities and elderly care and next to nothing on care services while the Netherlands spends tens of millions on these expensive items? Where is the balance?

We delve into Cambodian ways the elderly live together and care for each other: OPA (or Old People Associations) and strong social relationships formed between family members that are referred to as 'household strategy'. The documentary we have made addresses these phenomena and will premiere at the festival.

Scientific research into the functioning of a “free” market

We are also working together with a growing number of people who are involved in caregiving in the Netherlands. Board members, formal and informal caregivers, and other professionals are figuring out how the questionable free market in Dutch healthcare system influences their daily choices, thoughts and feelings.

Are they still able to connect to those they work for and vice versa or is the system taking over? Is our current way of providing care proving to be sufficient? This research project is a continuation of a project we initiated at the University of Utrecht

in 2004 which examined the wave of privatization that was led by Ruud Lubbers (1986-1989).

It resulted in the book *‘De elementen van het spel, over verzelfstandiging’* which roughly translates into *‘Elements of the game, all about privatization’*. The book proposes discontinuation of privatisation and calls for different arrangements to solve existing issues without blindly accepting American solutions.



Margarida from Sao Paulo, had a love at her beach-house until she died on her return from the beach to her apartment in Sao Paulo, next to us.



We would like to invite as many people as possible to join our festival. Contribute to the creation of a movement that results in awareness and change.



Who we are



We are an international collective consisting of artists, philosophers, academics and others who continually contribute to a world that is sustainable. Our research ranges from Cambodia to Brazil and from Bangladesh to the Netherlands.

In addition to our core team, we have a vastly growing network of artists and



creators involved in contributing to our world. All this in order to enhance beauty and counteract the violence of blind profiteers who thrive at financial conventions, are loved greatly by the elite, and will go to any length to there defend their achievements.

Three of our friends in Dhaka have recently been killed by extremist violence in Dhaka, namely Xulhaz Namman, gay activist and human rights lawyer, Albinta, granddaughter of Nilu Murshed and blogger Niloy Neel, all chopped into pieces.

Xulhaz Namman at the Dhaka Social Art Festival. We will remember him for ever. He edited the first Bangladesh Gay Magazine.

A short introduction to the history of The Faketory

The Faketory represents Social Art and stems from the idea that art can only be art if it contributes to the world. The Faketory originates as 'De Oplichterij' which is a Dutch play on words that refers to 'ergens licht op werpen' which roughly translates into 'shine a light on' or 'highlight' something that has remained unseen by most.

De Oplichterij was founded in 1999 in the Witte de Withstraat in Rotterdam. Its founders, Martijn van Oorschot (a.k.a. Martijn Crowe) and Michiel Hogerhuis, bought two properties in the Witte de Withstraat. In a former shoe shop they opened an independent art space in the broadest sense of the word.

Both oplichters/highlighters worked as change-consultants and interim board members. They have their doctorates in Anthropology and Science of Management and were employed by universities. Together they published 10 scientifically founded books.

They blame society for its constant need to classify social reality and establish the entirely illusive nature of the social world as a given reality. This results in systems becoming more important than the people who invent them. Systems become weapons to be used at random by those in power. This comes at the high cost of social exclusion and violence against others. Meanwhile, the believers of these systems stall and suffer at the hand of their own solutions. Martijn and Michiel suggest that people start each day with a blank page, like an artist starts with a blank canvas.

Some highlights from de Oplichterij's existence are:

- Publishing books with small publishers
- The social science project and book '*Zoektocht naar schoonheid*' which translates into '*In search of Beauty*' that focuses on lack of taste in the Netherlands
- The establishment of the Faculty of Literature and Poetry at Erasmus University
- A popular performance given by the already deceased composer John Cage
- Streetfestivals in the Witte de Withstraat
- Many exhibitions by Rotterdam-based artists
- Deafening performances by Jazz bands such as 'Truth of the Magnet',
- On Sunday morning: "Klassiek met wentelteefjes" (Classical with French toast), incomparably prepared by Divina accompanied by an idyllic set of strings from the conservatory
- The surrealist weeks with Boijmans van Beuningen
- A visit to the Twin Towers, the day before they were hit by two stray planes
- A 100 guilder subsidy from the OBR, which forced us to use their logo in all of our work

What we do now



In 2005 both properties were sold. In search of financial security, Michiel started a job at the ministry of education, culture and science. Martijn left for Brazil and continued the Oplichterij with his partner Sabya.

The Oplichterij was transformed into an international initiative and was renamed 'The Faketory'. A penthouse was bought in the old city centre and red light district of Sao Paulo where the projects proceeded without restraint. *Artist presentations* that were meant to facilitate dialogue between artist and viewer attracted approximately 300 visitors. In order to shed light on social themes, many courses of action were taken: the making of exhibitions, teaching courses at universities as well as producing photos, paintings and websites, publishing books and scientific research papers.

Two focal points were established:

1. Art & Publishing

First of all, we produce books, documentaries and art. This stems from the idea that art can only be useful if it contributes to a better world. Time and time again, the corporate world invades the world of art by exhibiting and selling it, which completely corrupts the nature of art.

www.thefaketory.org



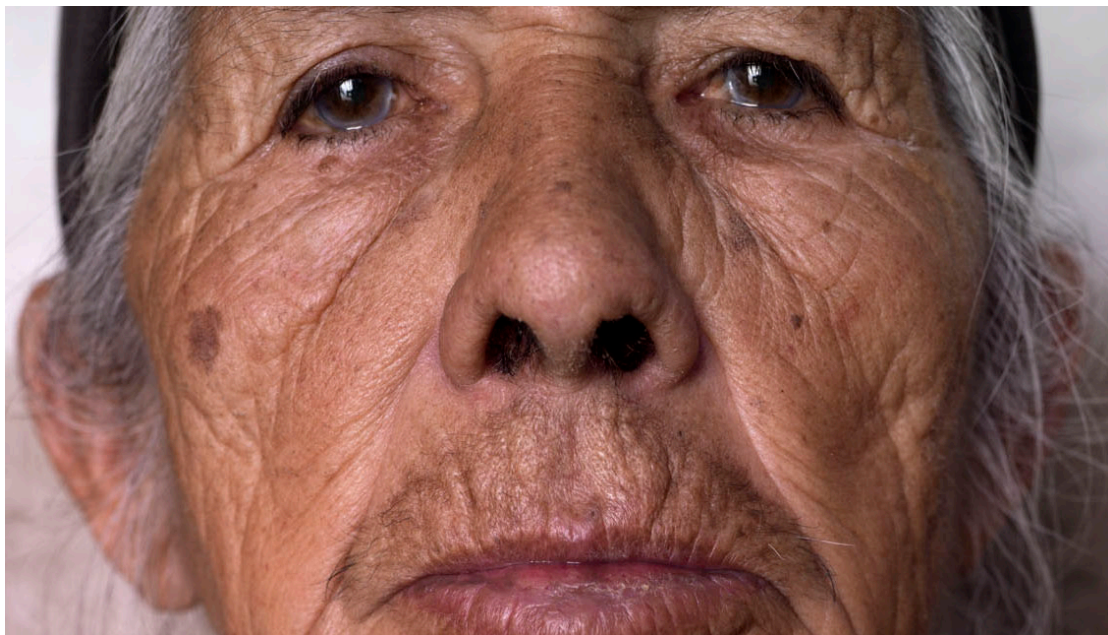
2. Scientific Research

Secondly, we focus on international scientific research into social exclusion. At the present time, research has been done in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Netherlands, Mexico, Cambodia and Brazil. This research will continue in China and North America. All progress can be found on our websites, which are created and maintained by the team. Eventually, all of our current research projects will be published in the form of books, originating from the perspective of the combination of art and science.

a. Elderly

What is it like to be old and how do the elderly deal with it? How does society deal with aging?

www.elderly-oftheworld.com



b. Homeless

The complex phenomenon of people who roam and live on the streets.

www.homeless-oftheworld.com



c. Gender

Concerning the double outing of a group of cross-dressing men and the complex social interdependence of this phenomenon.

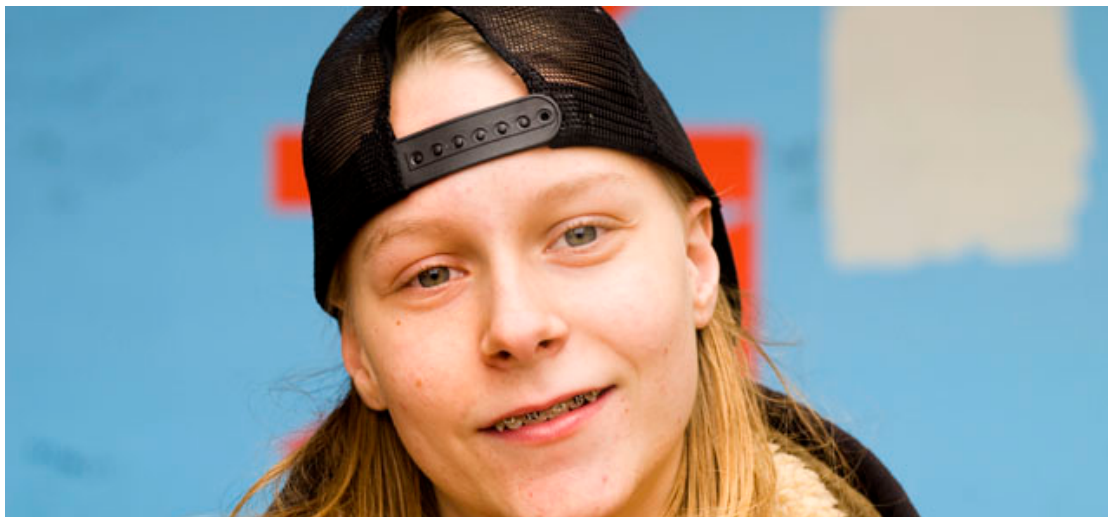
www.dragqueens-oftheworld.com



d. Children

Children can be victimised by their own redundancy before the age of 14. We did a project in which 100 children from deprived neighbourhoods in which they were “taught” to dream. This resulted in 100 inspired children and a book called “Dromen Doen” or “Doing Dreams”, in which these children are portrayed in their dream job.

www.doingdreams.org



We have also created a documentary called ‘*Utsho*’ about the lives of prostitutes’ children in Dhaka in Bangladesh: <https://vimeo.com/134604662>

3. Festivals

Thirdly, we organise international festivals in all the main cities of the world, which by now adds up to about seven cities, including:

Amsterdam: Gespuis in the Spuistraat, during which the entire Spuistraat was converted into a gallery.

www.gespuisindespuistraat.nl



Dhaka and The Hague: The Dhaka Social Art Festival, during which the poverty that causes our Western greed was the central theme. In collaboration with the Embassy of Bangladesh this will be a recurring festival.

www.Bangladesh-Theproject.com

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Social Art Festival

Dhaka Art Centre
Grand opening
22-08-2014 16:00
Until 24-08-2014 24:00

Dhaka Art Centre, House 60, Road 7/A, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka



The photo-strips are pinholes portraying the villa neighbourhood in Kep, the former French Riviera in modern day Cambodia. During its glory days, Kep was where the richest of the French had their beach houses. Despite nothing but tender loving care from the French, they were suddenly forced to leave Cambodia in 1953. They abandoned their villas, which have since then deteriorated to ruins. Unfortunately these ruins caught the eye of the Cambodian upper-middle class. As a result all grounds are being wiped clean and redistributed to the next rich person as bare plots encircled by walls.

(All art, text, photos, posters, and concepts are courtesy of The Faketory and Martijn van Oorschot and are considered to be intellectual property. None of the above may be published, used, copied or distributed without written consent from the Faketory. For inquiries send an email to martijn@thefaketory.org)

We invite as many people as possible to join and connect with our festival. Contribute and create a movement that results in awareness and change. Participate in social innovation in order to provide resistance to an elite that is mostly interested in protecting their own achievements.

And if there's anything we can do for you, we would love to hear from you.

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www.thefaketory.org