

A photograph of a person's head and shoulders peering out from a window frame. The window is set into a plain white wall. To the right, another window with a grid pattern is visible, partially open. The lighting is soft, suggesting an indoor setting.

united cowboys

NEW TERRITORIES – RE-SHUFFLE THE DECK 2021-24

United Cowboys - Burn (Sofia - BU); photo: Boriana Pandova

With this proposal we would like to invite you to join our new Europe-wide investigation to re-encourage physicality and sustainable ways of collaboration.

The focus area of investigation is *THE BODY AS A REFERENCE FOR (R) EVOLUTION* - in times of expanding digital interaction.

//WHY?

United Cowboys welcomes challenges and thrives through artistic risk.

In these changing times, in which travel becomes a challenge and where we risk losing sight of each other, but in which the interpersonal and affective is also receiving new attention, United Cowboys is reviewing its ways of national and international artistic cooperation and exchange.

The *New Territories - Reshuffle the Deck* project aims to collaborate with European partners, which were all heavily damaged by the pandemic, and to create new partnerships based on past achievements.

The new reality we all find ourselves in, shows us that it is no longer merely about working together within a single harmonious community - however local, provincial, national or international - nor is it about working with a rigid process - because we learned that a pandemic can disrupt us all in an instant.

We want to enhance the pivotal and diverse forces within multiple communities, such as the multitude of languages, practices and more...

//WHAT?

THE BODY AS A REFERENCE FOR (R) EVOLUTION

United Cowboys researches, guides and makes live-art in which people are central; literally physically and mentality; translated into images. We believe it is important to emphasize the human dimension, the physical, especially in times of smart technology, the internet and digitized human interactions. We encourage tangibility and the use of the senses in these live experiences. We place truthfulness and (self-chosen) vulnerability against the one-dimensional nature of digital information and exposure.

With *New Territories - Reshuffle the Deck* we question the physical body and human interaction, especially in times of expanding digital interaction. This project uses physicality as a tool and point of reflection — a non-verbal language that communicates through head-heart-body.

What does the manipulability of the body mean?

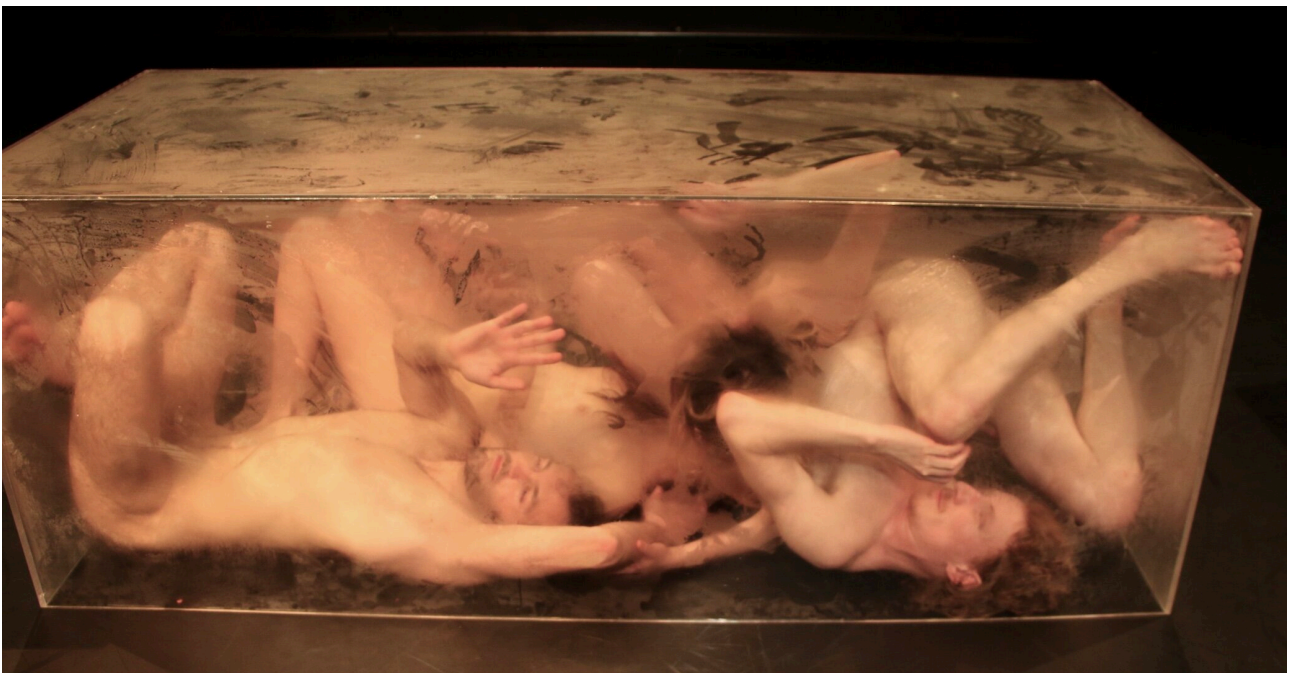
What is individuality and what does humanity and the position of the creative person mean within an autocratic society?

What values do we project on our own body and that of others? The human body is our most precious asset, and in this time of technological developments we can track everything ourselves.

But how can we use the body, and what exactly is it worth?

Has our body become a battleground for ethical, sociological, philosophical and technological issues that are relevant today for those who think critically about the future of humanity and positions in society?

Recent global developments add new important aspects to this investigation. How does social distancing and isolation effect our sense of physicality and ultimately also our mental states.



//HOW?

We invite partners to contribute to the current international art and performance circuit in a sustainable way by exchanging possibilities and combining experience, network and reach; the aim is to re-encourage physicality and sustainable ways of collaboration.

The method for doing this is to combine tailor-made research, creation, participation of local artists, audiences and presentation models.

// HOW CAN WE MAKE INTERNATIONAL MORE SUSTAINABLE?

Existing and new partnerships that we are inviting to *New Territories - Reshuffle the Deck* offer prospects for sustainable projects up to 2023. These partnerships should cover geographic regions with several partners at the same time, so that we can collectively conduct research in a broader context, test projects and execute these.

The elaborations take place alternately in Brabant and in the regional clusters. In this way we can learn from each other, in the field of art, culture and socio-cultural trends. To focus on specific regions, we give ourselves the opportunity to form a much more nuanced picture of the context in which the collaboration takes place. In this case, micro and macro histories are breeding grounds for learning to understand each other's language, getting to know each other's cultural heritage and respecting each other's motives.



// CAN WE CREATE A NEW DNA FOR COLLABORATION?

We propose the following overarching structure for the project trajectory:

● MEETINGS

There are meetings and conferences, including visits to each other's workplaces, and short interventions to get to know each other's work; meetings also take place online, in the 'Digital Art House'.

● RESEARCH & CO-CREATION

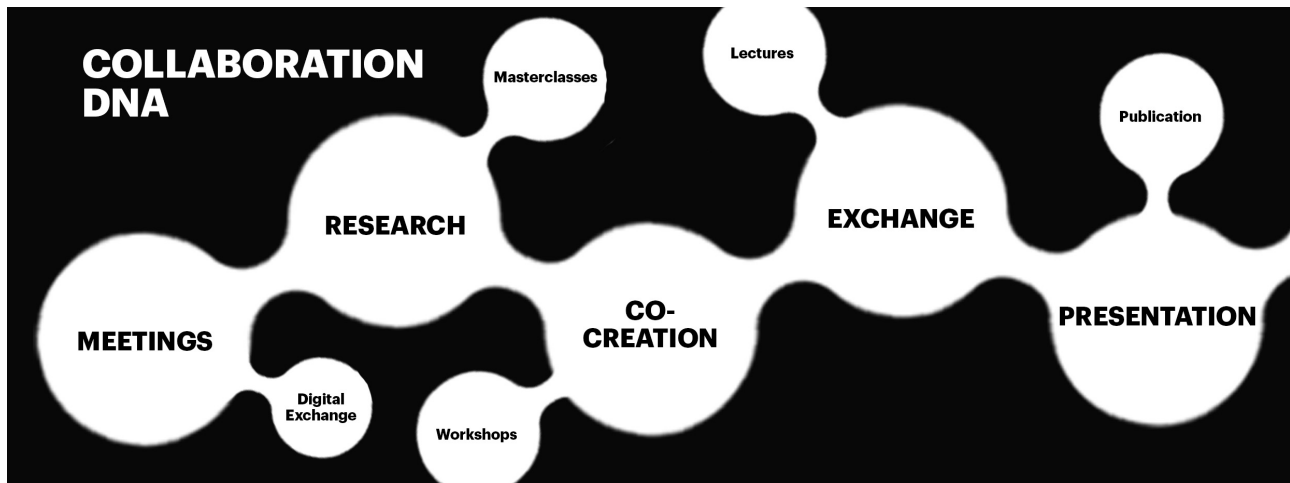
There are development moments, including research and the development of performances, the co-creation, the "construction and furnishing" of the Mobile Art Houses, but also the workshops, living labs and the digital platform, including participation of the public and local citizens.

● EXCHANGE & PRESENTATION POP-UPS

There is exchange; knowledge and experience sharing within and between the regions and feedback to the Netherlands in short projects, lectures and presentations, both live and via the 'Digital Art House'

● PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

The results of interventions will be publicly presented in form of performances and presentations as outcomes of the collective co-creations. The presentation formats will be based on collective choices and should offer flexibility. From (intimate) encounters or performances, to clusters of activities and duration pieces such as biotopes or on-going, even permanent installations.



PRACTICALITIES

- Regional and International funding opportunities will be explored collectively.
- United Cowboys has the possibility to apply for financial support for travel expenses, accommodation and can support the promotion of *activities*.
- This project allows for flexibility in media, scale and technical execution.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Due to the ongoing nature of the concept, this proposal can be subject to change, in order to move towards the individual partners' objectives. We would welcome a more detailed discussion about context, possibilities, and the overall framework.



Burn (Sofia - BU); photo: Boriana Pandova

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