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**Policy plan**

Updated Policy Plan 2023-2027

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In this document, you elaborate your updated policy plan. Along with your updated budget, it forms an **essential part** of your grant file. Load the document in **Word format** into **KIOSK.**

the official name of your organisation NTGent

Please indicate where you modified the updated policy plan from the original policy plan.

*List or summarise here the changes from your original policy plan, and in which chapter, paragraph or page you made them.*

Of course, an organisation is alive and must remain so. Plans change due to opportunities, experiences that provide new insights and so on. NTGent is a learning organisation and consequently plans are always being adjusted. But there is a clear plan with 'School of Ghent'. That plan was mainly adjusted by the changed economic reality. The impact of the energy crisis, the indexation of salaries, the only partial indexation of subsidies, the downsizing of the DAC funds, the fact that the full amount of the subsidy was not received, meant that NTGent had to adjust its plans by about 1 million euro. Moreover, we live in a very volatile environment. We assume that adjustments will be needed in the future. By organising ourselves well now, we hope to be ready to deal with the next disruptions.

The following are the main changes from the original policy plan:

* We align our artistic plans with economic realities:
  + We create 5 productions annually instead of 6
  + We are reducing the number of play dates at home and on tour.
  + We appoint 1 guest curator instead of 2 for *Fingerprints*
  + We eliminate or reform some innovative artistic activities
    - The Wild Card will be integrated into the possibilities within the functions development and presentation
    - We stop working with Luk Perceval as house artist and also stop 'the hour of truth' within the development function
    - The concepts of 'big landing' within the function 'reflection' will be deleted. Of course, some of these ambitions can be realised within the production function
    - We delete the podcast
    - We organise one reflective activity each season together with Etcetera
    - We reduce our budget to co-produce
* We align our business policies with economic realities:
  + We are reducing the share of fixed wage costs. We are doing this partly by reducing the number of staff and partly by working more with freelancers, allowing us to respond more flexibly to the realities at hand.
    - Removal of all additional profiles (e.g. player coach and additional technicians)
    - Deletion of a number of functions on leaving the company (e.g. décor workshop, management assistance, etc.)
    - Encouraging landing jobs and time credit
  + We do not index most operating funds (= savings of 10%) - so efficiency and savings should be sought in all parts of the organisation.
  + Maximising revenue through Tax Shelter, maximising exploitation of NTGent café, foyer and auditorium and sharpening our tour strategy.
* We are divesting Arca as a third play venue. We make it available to the GKO (the Ghentian Arts Consultation Platform).
* We introduce Bowhouse Ghent, a business-organisational collaboration between Ghent international producing houses resulting in efficiency and effectiveness gains, as well as the possibility of additional financing opportunities.
* Feedback from the committee was taken into account as much as possible. Of course.

*Justify why you choose these changes.*

The motivation for these changes is primarily financial and driven by economic realities catching up with us. We received a fine assessment and positive opinion from the committee, within budget, but not the requested budget of 3,430,873.03([[1]](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=nl%2DNL&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fntgent.sharepoint.com%2Fteams%2FCommunicatie%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F21b4af7b468f47c0937aeff29ed3c194&wdlor=c32564607-96D8-406C-B4F7-7136ADD51A87&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=F42EB758-3507-42F3-9BA0-717BE713BAC1&wdorigin=Outlook-Body.Sharing.ServerTransfer&wdhostclicktime=1681215215561&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=ba3e6cd1-c194-4ce3-9b01-446bfeae1e66&usid=ba3e6cd1-c194-4ce3-9b01-446bfeae1e66&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Normal&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftn1) ). Moreover, the downsizing of DAC funds (€236,000), inflation, successive wage indexations and rising energy prices are causing fixed costs to grow exponentially. Costs that we cannot simply recover on the revenue side.

Nevertheless, we are doing everything possible to optimise this income: through additional recovery of staff costs, sharpening the tour strategy, maximum efforts on tax shelter, etc.   
Despite these efforts, without an adjusted policy plan we expect a loss of €360,000. This is obviously not possible and consequently NTGent is thoroughly adjusting its plans. Because the plans for the coming year (2023) have already been prepared since 2021, we cannot simply change them. After all, we cannot go back on agreements made or contracts entered into. With the agreement of NTGent's board of directors, we will therefore realise a loss in 2023. The budgetary focus is therefore on 2024 and the following years to achieve a zero budget. When this is possible, the long-term decisions are already applied in 2023. When that is not possible, the preparations will happen as early as next year.

We submit a budget for 2023 with a loss of €307k In the figure annex and in the business policy section, we explain how we do expect to achieve a budget-neutral result in the long term (from 2024 onwards).

A number of substantive changes to the artistic plan also followed. Some resulted from changes in the artistic team (e.g. in the collaboration with Luk Perceval). Most concern adjustments or content refinements following feedback from the assessment committee (e.g. further explanation of our vision in programming, development, participation, etc.).

Finally, there is also an important third reason for change. NTGent took the initiative with 5 Ghent partners, with whom NTGent has in common that they are Ghent performing arts-producing organisations with an international focus, to start up a business-organisational collaboration. The major challenges require cooperation. This is best created out of trust. These six organisations built a strong bond during the past crisis years and increasingly wish to work together. This project is explained further.

Provide a concise synthesis, clearly highlighting the core of your plans

Since we started our current policy period in 2018, with Milo Rau as artistic director, we have shaped our operation in a very unique and internationally noticed way: with participatory projects and an engaged agenda that form the substantive and organisational framework for strong performing arts, where one pillar reinforces the other, and vice versa, in a constant interaction. This interaction, which we describe in the following pages through the five functions, defines our home, as a city theatre in Ghent and Flanders, and the interactive global operation we aspire to: the *School of Ghent.* No mean ambition, but recent years have shown that it is possible to build a solid bridge between the most diverse players and contexts. Especially if the dialogue starts with an inspiring proposal. In this way, we put our city and Flanders on the world map and actively invest in a new generation of makers in a multi-voiced theatre practice that is sustainable, groundbreaking and inclusive. These are values that recur in our business policy - which we now organise much more transparently, focusing on cooperation and strengthening the cultural landscape

# Mission, vision and history

**SCHOOL OF GHENT**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

We have only just begun. That feeling prevailed when, in April 2020, we were forced to shut down our operation due to the pandemic outbreak. And in fact, today is no different. We have only just left in this story: a new chapter that started - for the outside world - in September 2018, with the symbolically charged production *Lam Gods*.

For our house, it was much like a rebirth. *Lam Gods*, a re-enactment of the famous 15th-century painting by the Van Eyck brothers, was based on a concept by director Milo Rau, who stepped in as artistic director in autumn 2017. The play, which presents a number of Ghent citizens with their stories, had the same effect as the masterpiece it refers to: it put our city in the spotlight and attracted press and audiences from all over Europe, and even beyond. At the same time, *Lam Gods* announced a different way of working: the ensemble was disbanded, a new house dramaturgy has been linking artistic creations to an engaged agenda ever since, and the reality of the house became bilingual: Dutch plus English. It was the starting point of an operation that connects the *very local* with the *very international*.

Earlier that year, in May 2018, we had already challenged ourselves by presenting *the Ghent Manifesto*: ten rules of the game as a radical checklist. It expressed our need for greater awareness about our practice, technically, artistically and organisationally.

**Thinking in trajectories**

Covid-19 challenged us to make our approach explicit: in the way we produce, tour, organise debates.... The views that led to the *Ghent Manifesto* proved to be fertile ground to reassess our functions: what is theatre capable of, as art? How do we create the greatest possible engagement between our projects and our audiences? How do we turn ideas into a practice that is sustainable? Threshold-reducing and emancipatory? How do we organise inclusion, also behind the scenes?

Since 2018, our baseline has been: *the City Theatre of the Future*. This is a title that may sound presumptuous, but we do not consider it an achievement. Rather, this baseline implies our ambition: where do we want to land with our project, as a city theatre in Ghent, Flanders, Belgium, the world? We consciously look ahead in time - without forgetting where we come from. *City Theatre of the Future*. above all speaks of thinking in longer lines: working in projects and trajectories that need sufficient incubation to realise their full potential. That potential can be both artistic and business; it can refer to our audience reach or to our ever-growing network of partners.

Today, the complexity of our operation is greater than ever. It starts with a highly diversified production scale: from hall performances to streaming events, from books to films, from workshops and debates to forms of cooperation with various partners, such as the KASK & Conservatory of Ghent, the UGent, Théâtre Vidy in Lausanne, the Sans-Papiers in Europe, the Landlozenbeweging in Brazil...

**Multilingualism, polyphony**

For a theatre producer of our scale, our current radius of action is unusual and even unseen. We are present with our creations in very different contexts, in, say, Sint-Niklaas and Vienna and Amsterdam, but also at the Avignon Festival or the Venice Film Festival. We are establishing a film school in Mosul, Iraq, with the support of UNESCO, while we are preparing an interpretation of Sophocles' *Antigone* with activists in the Amazon. In our hometown of Ghent, we are organising citizens' parliaments in collaboration with the Flemish magazine Etcetera, while. NTGent is a producer for a young generation of makers - like Jesse Vandamme or Princess Bangura - but also for experienced names like Milo Rau and Thom Luz. We produce text theatre but also more conceptual work, such as with Miet Warlop, whom we welcome as artist in residence.

To manage this polyphony, a framework is needed: the School of Ghent. The word 'schooling' came up back in January 2017, as a recommendation by the Artistic Advisory Board. There was also talk of a Ghentian School in our artistic director Milo Rau's plans from the very beginning. This is no coincidence: our programme emerges from the dialectic between our practice and current events.

**New curriculum**

School of Ghent fits the 'trajectory thinking' we organise: for ourselves, for our artists and guests, for our audiences. In essence, our mission remains the same: theatre at the heart of society. The learning process is collective: we too learn daily about pressing issues and smart strategies.

On the following pages, we explain how we want to fulfil our role - in Ghent, Flanders and the world. In other words: how we want to make school with an inspiring project. In doing so, we already highlight one title: *All Greeks*. A festival covering a full season. Under the motto: what can we learn from the ancient Greeks and their tragedies? Does the myth of ancient Athens remain, as the cradle of our civilisation? Or is the curriculum in need of revision, and by extension our canon?

Welcome to the School of Ghent.

1. **MISSION, VISION AND HISTORY**
   1. **Mission**

NTGent, as a city theatre in Ghent, is a foundation of public utility (son). Our mission:

The foundation's disinterested aim is to provide the city of Ghent with a city theatre through which to create, present and distribute performing arts, in particular Dutch-language performing arts, of artistic excellence, with local, national and international relevance, and thus contribute to reflection on, education about and participation in art and culture.

* 1. **Vision**

We translate the above mission statement, enshrined in our bylaws, as follows, as a **mission**:

As a city theatre, NTGent wants to question, motivate and move a diverse audience. We do this by creating and presenting high-profile productions and using theatre for social debate.

Our home base is Ghent. As an open and travelling company, we want to bring our productions into the world (into Ghent) and show them (to the world). We want to play a leading role in the Flemish and international performing arts landscape. We are an open house, accessible to everyone.

The urban theatre that interests us stands between tradition and utopia. It does not stay on the stage where it was rehearsed, but goes on tour internationally. And it brings world issues to the city. We travel with our collaborators for research and events. We offer a stage to actors and non-professional players, of different nationalities and languages. We make our plays together: together with all stakeholders, together with the audience, in constant interaction with society. After all, we are not only interested in the canon of classical theatre literature, but above all in the world we live in.

We go in search of new classics, of the myths, tragedies and contradictions of our time: by mythologising current events, and actualising mythology. In this way, we want to shape a political, mobile and creative 'urban theatre of the future'.

To fulfil this mission, we base ourselves on **five values.** These values form a guideline, both for our internal operation and for our positioning in the arts field, in our relationship with externals:

1. Sustainable
2. Boundless
3. Collaborative
4. Transparent
5. Vulnerable

Every year we evaluate our operation and consider how, and to what extent, we live up to these values. They guide our self-reflection.

NTGent also uses a number of **guiding principles**, as a policy instrument. We place these principles, so to speak, on top of our core values. Together, they form the framework for our daily policy:

1. NTGent realises an artistic operation in the performing arts of outstanding international level. NTGent is firmly committed to the five functions - production, presentation, development, reflection and participation - and aspires to be recognised as a Flemish institution. That status can only be initiated by a formal invitation from the government; in the meantime, we meet the criteria.
2. NTGent pursues a dynamic, open and honest business policy, with a special focus on sustainability, innovative leadership, good governance, fair practice and cooperation.
3. NTGent exists by grace of its audience. With our public activities, we aim to reach a large and diverse audience: local and international, live and digital.
4. We are a home for artists, for our partners, for our staff. NTGent is transforming into a city theatre of the future, with an open and sustainable infrastructure and a diverse and inclusive operation.
5. NTGent is a reliable and innovative partner in the cultural field. NTGent takes the initiative, supports and participates in local, national and international collaborations aimed at developing, renewing and supporting the arts.

These guiding principles lead to strategic and operational objectives. NTGent prepares an annual overview of objectives (adapted to the economic reality) supplemented by indicators that allow us to follow up our strategic plan.

* 1. **History**

**Dutch-speaking ensemble in Ghent**

Our house has gone through a turbulent period over the past decade. In summary, you can say that an operating model was installed that was successful for a long time, until it bumped against certain limits, only to implode. From that crisis, a very different operating model emerged from 2017.

The previous operating model was installed by Dutch director **Johan Simons**. He was artistic director of NTGent twice. In his first period - 2005 to 2010 - his approach garnered much praise, also abroad: Simons formed a strong Dutch-speaking ensemble of actors. The slogan was: '*Middle of the city, middle of the world.*' The house dramaturgy consisted mainly of the adaptation of film scripts and novels: literary texts by Michel Houellebecq or Tommy Wieringa, and art house cinema by directors such as Pier Paolo Pasolini. This line was complemented by writing commissions and by musical theatre.

When Simons left for Germany in 2010, the ensemble decided to stay, with **Wim Opbrouck** becoming the artistic director in '*A house of players'*. The emphasis came to lie more than ever on the actor, as the embodiment of theatre art. The artistic approach remained the same: contemporary text theatre based on literary, cinematic and musical sources. Opbrouck, for instance, entered into an alliance with Swiss tenor Christoph Homberger. Occasionally there was an international co-production, including with Thalia Theater in Hamburg.

**Financial and other crises**

Between 2007 and 2015, a jubilee year as it marked the 50th anniversary of Nederlands Toneel Gent, the house had to plug a financial hole. Indeed, in the course of the first Simons period, it came to light that a structural loss worth around three million euros had been built up. The board intervened and cleaned up, including through a tight personnel policy. The well was eliminated by 2015.

Simons returned in the same autumn, following his artistic mandate at the Münchner Kammerspiele. He combined NTGent with the Ruhrtriennale, the well-known German festival. This offered opportunities in terms of co-production and international prestige, but his absence in Ghent was conspicuous, even among the outside world. In the course of the 2016-17 season, NTGent came to a standstill: a deep malaise due to fundamental disagreements at various levels. The board had to intervene once again, with layoffs. A transition was announced, with Simons distancing himself - only to eventually leave.

A vacancy for artistic direction was shared in early 2017. This vacancy came about following the creation of **an Artistic Advisory Board**, a team of interns and externals tasked with writing out a set of guidelines. These served as context for prospective artistic directors.

**Rebirth including utopia**

The Artistic Advisory Board's **recommendations**, as formulated on 16 January 2017, boiled down to these:

1. The need for greater representation of the outside world on stage; 2. The need for a firmer local anchoring; 3. The need for more international clout, including through co-productions; 4. The need for intersectional thinking, read: abandoning the "white, Western, male, bourgeois narrative perspective" as the sole or main approach; 5. The need for interdisciplinary creations; 6. The need for a more horizontally oriented house; 7. The need for trajectory thinking with artistic collaborators, including designers; 8. The need for a differentiated programme to reach a wide audience, locally and internationally; and 9. The need for more (self-)education and training, as an artistic philosophy but also as an investment in the team.

In spring 2017, several candidates applied, including a trio consisting of Swiss director **Milo Rau,** his German dramatist **Stefan Bläske** and NTGent's artistic coordinator **Steven Heene**. Together, they submitted a plan to revitalise NTGent: ***A Place for Utopias***.

'NTGent is a city theatre in Ghent, Flanders, Belgium, Europe. We consider this urban environment, including its rich cultural history and rapidly changing demographics, as the natural context of our house dramaturgy. Not as a narrow framework or perspective, but to look at the city and its inhabitants as a local community and as Europeans at the same time. It is a way of working that responds to the state of mind of people in other European cities: everyone, young and old, shares some dreams and fears. We all want a safe place to live, to be free from poverty or prejudice, to live in a clean environment, and so on. At the same time, every city is built on its own stories, its heroes and villains. Such anecdotes make a city's history more specific and colourful. When choosing our stories for artistic creations, we look at both elements: what do we have in common as Europeans, and what is specific about the story? So it's not about pitting one subject against the other; it's about making a meaningful and exciting connection.' (*A Place for Utopias*, April 2017)

**Global realism**

The reasoning still holds true almost five years later. On the understanding that we do not let our operation be limited by Europe: we aim for a connection that is global: **global realism**. Productions like *Orestes in Mosul, Black - The Sorrows of Belgium I* or *The Case of Samuel* have a content and urgency that transcend the European continent.

In *A Place for Utopias,* a number of principles were identified as guiding: the interaction between local and international as a natural interplay; the complementarity between fiction and non-fiction; the city (and the world) as an online and offline event; the encounter between artistic generations; the importance of a global network; and the need for a more horizontal house culture after that protracted crisis. The ambition, in short, was to organise a very different reality, on stage but also in the auditorium:

'The aim is to invest in future artistic generations - directors and performers - from different social and ethnic backgrounds. We think NTGent is ready for a colourful future, also in terms of audiences.' (*A Place for Utopias,* April 2017)

# POSITIONING AND COOPERATION

*Specifically for the preparation of this part of the policy plan, it is best to read the following articles:*

* *Article 56 from the* [*Arts Decree*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/60819130d129f6000c000353.pdf)*.*

1. **URBAN LEVEL**

**Ghent calendar**

Our first context as a home is our city. It is a context that is **dynamic**, with a social mix that is visibly different from 20 years ago. In which public space functions differently than it did then. And in which a large number of young people - some 80,000 students every year - are taking their first steps towards a professional life. But it is also a city with challenges: rising poverty and gentrification, to name but two. These are factors that recur in the recent *Landscape Drawing of Ghent*.

Typical of the Ghent scene, is a distinctly **emancipatory** agenda: the need to repeatedly take art off its pedestal and into the middle of society. Just think of figures like Jan Hoet or Alain Platel. It is this mentality that also greatly appealed to Milo Rau as a director, after his direction of the blockbuster Five Easy Pieces in 2016 at CAMPO, to stay 'around' a bit longer.

The challenge and added value of our policy is to provide that context with an urban theatre that is performing, generous and **innovative**, with an international network that can be used for joint actions at city level. Our expertise is that of an experienced theatre producer that also hosts numerous performances, organises reflection and development, and so on. What is innovative - our 'uniqueness' as a house - consists in the idiosyncratic directorial concepts we apply in our creations, with sensitive subjects that resonate in the world and that we send on tour worldwide. They are concepts in which we do not forget but integrate local stories. Conversely, we bring authentic stories from other countries and contexts - such as the testimonies from the destroyed city of Mosul, after decades of war - to our home city of Ghent. This is how theatre can play its empathetic role, as an art form.

**Audience broadening**

NTGent today is no longer the home of and for 'text theatre'. Our artistic perspective is much broader and, as a result, our working relationship with VierNulVier and CAMPO has evolved. Our **differentiated** approach to theatre, in which we shape ideas through a directorial concept, is compatible with their programmes, making it easier together to organise festivals. We have done the same in the past few years, with Same Same But Different and no(w)worries. And so in January 2022 there will be the first edition of the Ghent International Festival. We are putting this new biennial together with, besides CAMPO and VierNulVier, also Kopergietery, Opera Ballet Vlaanderen and the S.M.A.K..

Apart from this 'festival operation', we are pursuing a number of lines. Such as the co-presentation of guest performances with VierNulVier, a method we now also apply with Compagnie Cecilia and Kopergietery. Specifically, we co-present several titles, based on our shared interest in the makers. In this way, we simultaneously do audience broadening: we show the public the way to other houses that might not have been on our radar beforehand.

NTGent is also very active in other **urban networks**, such as the Gents Kunstenoverleg (GKO) and the former Diversiteitswerf, now Diversity and Inclusion Ghent (DIG) - where we are present both in the steering group (Vuurgroep), in the *Learning Networks* for creation, participation and public action and in Greentrack. We also, as usual, take up our responsibility as a partner in the Minard. This remains a crucial link in the network of Ghent venues: for theatre, but also for concerts and literature.

**Action Zoo Humain**, the Ghent company around director Chokri Ben Chikha, remains **artist in residence** at NTGent. Through Chokri, we also receive students from the performance course at KASK every year: for a reflection with our dramaturgy team.

During the summer months, more specifically during the Ghent Festivities in July, we support the Zomer&Zonen family festival, an initiative of 4Hoog and the Kopergietery. This way, we attract the very youngest generation of theatre lovers at a favourable time.

**Bowhouse Ghent**

The **exemplary role in support of the artist and the safeguarding of sufficient artistic resources** are the starting point of a cooperation agreement we concluded with six Ghent partners.

With the creation of a new management platform for Ghent's internationally producing arts houses, we want to make a far-reaching commitment to look for shared solutions and an unspoken business-organisational collaboration based on our expertise.

Every arts organisation today is on an intense quest to maintain sufficient artistic resources. Must cope with fickle, structural cost increases. Wants to escape increased workloads. Wants to bet on fair treatment of artists and staff. Wants to continue building a sustainable, integer and inclusive world. And that for a diverse and future audience.

However, we are doing this in a sector where there are fewer and fewer resources and opportunities to implement new policies. At the level of the individual organisation, a dogged fight for survival is being waged. The need to cluster, share and look for new strategies has never been more urgent.

Therefore, we want to help develop a **new cooperation model** that should lead to optimised revenues, efficiency gains, better cost management, and better distribution of plan load. But also improved care for employees and organisation with more opportunities for advancement, inflow and outflow. More attention to precarious positions, more care for the young but also for the older cultural worker.

We see the platform as a pilot project that, after a test period and concrete realisation, can serve as an example for other cores within the Ghent cultural ecosystem and for inter-city cooperation.   
  
The six partners are NTGent, CAMPO, Kopergieterij, LoD muziektheater, La Geste, Ontroerend Goed.

**Openings in our programme**

As mentioned elsewhere in this file (under *Participation, Development and Reflection*), we have a structural collaboration with KASK & Conservatory of Ghent, the drama school. This translates into workshops and structural working space in the seasonal calendar of our theatre, the place they want to explore as young actors and makers. Also with Victoria Deluxe and the young collective Par Hasard, we organise ~~annual~~ **inflow activities** for local stage talent.

From 2022-23, we will add two instruments to further anchor our operation. These are about **free space** that we reserve and fill in in alternative ways. *See Content operation*.

**Solidarity in the coldest month**

In full Corona time, more specifically in December 2020, we supported *De armste week*: by making our venue Arca available and participating in a call centre (as a listening ear for lonely souls, including freelance artists) and in a three-day with live radio that was streamed, raising money for the Ghent solidarity fund. The concept was overseen by Cirq vzw and director Ruud Gielens. The proceeds were worth it: 75,000 euros. It proves that, as a sector, we are able to connect people in a creative way. For this reason, we decided to keep an annual budget and calendar available for a **solidarity action** in December.

Urban partners on programme and presentation: VierNulVier, CAMPO, Kopergietery, S.M.A.K., Opera Ballet Vlaanderen (OBV), Minard, Action Zoo Humain, Victoria Deluxe, Gouvernement, LOD, les ballets C de la B, Compagnie Cecilia, Ontroerend Goed, de HOE, de Expeditie, 4Hoog and others.

Urban partners on participation, development and reflection: KASK Ghent, Victoria Deluxe, les ballets C de la B, Par Hasard, UGent / Humanities Academy, Ghent schools and others.

Urban partners on general policy and solidarity: Gents Kunstenoverleg (GKO), DIG-Diversiteit en Inclus Cirq, Gent Zonder Grenzen, Enchanté and others.

Urban partners on business-organisational cooperation: CAMPO, Copper Foundry, La Geste, LOD, Real Estate

1. **FLEMISH LEVEL**

**City theatres: 1 + 1 + 1 = 4**

With fellow city theatres in Antwerp and Brussels, there is regular consultation, artistic and business. And that frequency is higher than before. The reason is our position that Flemish city theatres should be able to evolve into a **Flemish institution** - as there is currently no theatre producer in that list. This position was the subject of an exploratory trajectory in 2020-21, in dialogue with the Culture Cabinet. KVS, Toneelhuis and NTGent continue to defend and promote this point.

Between city theatres, there are several forms of structural cooperation. To start with, there is the **house exchange**, where we exchange our creations without paying a buy-out fee. We continue this line: it is a useful tool to introduce artists to our respective audiences.

We also commit to having consultations four times a year on the best possible **development** of various performing artists. Unlike before, city theatres now provide separate resources for development, but even apart from that, it makes sense to see where we can converge those trajectories.

In the coming years, Toneelhuis, KVS and NTGent will also jointly promote Flemish artists abroad. In other words, this action aims at **spreading** The working title for this extra 'shell' in our spread is Flemish Factory. We consider this a label and consult with our respective partners about bundling this offer. The approach is the same as for the home exchange: it is about emerging talent.

**Activating reflection**

In autumn 2021, we started a structural collaboration with Etcetera, the Flemish magazine for performing arts. This line, Etcetera x NTGent, consists of one think and do day per year. Both partners start from the same feeling: the time to organise talking heads is over, there is a need for formats that are more interactive and that mobilise the audience in other ways than by sharing knowledge.

The collaboration with Etcetera, which also involves other partners, is one way in which we land our reflection series School of Resistance in Ghent and in Flanders. Started in 2020, shortly after the pandemic outbreak, that series was initially online and internationally oriented, with guests from several continents. Unlike the English-language online series, the main language for the local version is Dutch. More info: see under *Content operation.*

**Inflows and exchanges**

For years, NTGent has been a partner in the **After Summer School**, an initiative of CAMPO that takes place annually in September. That month is a rewarding moment for students to meet a number of artists and intellectuals at the start of the academic year. Together with KASK, LUCA and RITCS, we draw up a longlist of relevant names; from this we distil a programme in which a group of students (50 participants) spend one or two days in an artist's practice. It is a light formula, but we find that these contacts pay off a lot for the younger generation. The students also make a report, live or via video, of their encounter. When compiling the list, we seek a balance between artistic disciplines, contexts, views. Through NTGent, Lara Staal, Renzo Martens, Milo Rau, Monster Truck, Fredo De Smet, Ersan Mondtag and Susanne Kennedy, among others, have already participated. Every year we check what the needs are. Sometimes we deploy our house artists or artists-in-residence, our international partners or make space available.

We have also been supporting **WIPCOOP**, an initiative of Mestizo Arts Platform, for several years. This travelling platform offers opportunities to talent that does not enter through training programmes. Its relevance is unquestionable for us: a few years ago, for instance, we met Lua Casella as a maker, with a fledgling version of Short of Lying. Our dramaturgs also participate in feedback sessions in Brussels and Antwerp. Through this, we got to know Nganji Mutiri, one of the actors in director Ilyas Mettioui's production Ouragan. It led to a role for Nganji in the production Black, directed by Luk Perceval. NTGent is hosting this year's Ghent edition of WIPCOOP, where we provide Minnemeers for rehearsal and presentation. From 2022, we will take up this role structurally and provide space for WIPCOOP in one of our theatres every autumn, in addition to financial support. One of our dramaturgs participates in the feedback sessions.

**Miet Warlop** and her company Irene Wool will be artist in residence. Miet will make a creation in the series Histoire(s) du Théâtre in 2022, entitled One Song. As an extension of our co-production, we will enter into a structural collaboration, including for her artistic research on spoken language in Slamming Doors. Irene Wool, based in Brussels, thus enters 'alongside' Action Zoo Humain as a resident. See IV. Content operation.

With Brussels-based partners such as the **Piano Factory** and **Moussem,** we collaborate around the trajectories of creators such as Khadija El Kharraz Alami, Oxana Sankova and Ehsan Hemat. We do this both through presentations and bespoke Development*. See Content operation*.

**Flemish tours**

NTGent continues to tour, as much as possible, in Flanders. This spread is logic itself. At the same time, more than ever, we assume our responsibility to **present** companies from all over Flanders in Ghent: De Roovers, Needcompany, De NWe Tijd, SKaGeN, Zuidpool ... The list is long. There is a cooperation with the Flemish Theatre Festival for the editions that take place in our city, where we will set up a district jury in the coming years, complementing the annual selection by a professional jury.

Flemish partners on programme, development and presentation: KVS, Toneelhuis, Miet Warlop/Irene Wool, de Pianofabriek, Moussem, Theaterfestival, KASK, LUCA, RITCS, Lumière, et al.

Flemish partners on participation and reflection: Etcetera, WIPCOOP, Oikos, Theatre Festival, et al.

1. **INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

**Foreign on the inside**

NTGent's internationalisation has been happening from within since 2017. First of all, our artistic team is more international than ever, with a Swiss artistic director, dramaturges from Germany and Italy, and (guest) directors, actors and designers with different nationalities. We seek out this diversity for our creations: through intensive casting and often on the basis of a co-production with a non-Belgian partner. But the internationalisation of our operation is also a fact in other areas; Also not insignificant are the requests from various countries, mostly within Europe, to come to NTGent for an internship, either as a director's assistant, actor or dramaturge. The latter is a sign that NTGent's story is now resonating very widely.

On the audience side, too, we have been pursuing broadening and multilingualism for some time. Not just by touring our creations, or organising internationally-oriented reflection online, but by supertitling all our productions in English - a decision with a real impact on the social mix in our venues. Of course, since Lam Gods, the first creation under Milo Rau's leadership in September 2018, our communications have also been bilingual, in print and online.

The first name in the list of foreign partners is IIPM, in full: International Institute for Political Murder. It is Rau's foundation, based in Berlin and Cologne, and a partner for political and activist projects with a European - or wider - dimension. Examples of projects include our Golden Books, published by Verbrecher Verlag, and talks in the School of Resistance series.

**Let's meet online**

Pertinent content also benefits from a large network: to spread that content widely. We learned that lesson some time ago and apply it as much as possible. For example, by partnering with **HowlRound** for School of Resistance. Based in New York, this non-profit organisation's mission is to support theatre makers worldwide in sharing progressive ideas online, mainly through essays, videos and podcasts. Every episode of SoR that we produce is shared through their channels - the increased visibility is corresponding.

**European network**

Last summer, we submitted a new dossier to Europe for a joint track entitled **STAGES**. A name that refers to its content in its first three letters: Sustainable Theatre Alliance. It is about a four-year course, starting in 2022, with a focus on ecologically responsible theatre practice. For Belgium, NTGent and Théâtre de Liège are founding partners; other members include Piccolo Teatro in Milan, Dramaten in Stockholm, MC2-Maison de la Culture in Grenoble, Teatro Nacional Dona Maria II in Lisbon. The group is also associating for this route with partners in Singapore and Taiwan, members of the Asia Connection, among others. More info on this trajectory can be found elsewhere in this file and attached.

**Film school in Mosul**

The devastated city of Mosul in Iraq is the stark context where we set the performance (and documentary) *Orestes in Mosul*. Directed by Milo Rau, local artists featured, and acted in a number of re-enactments based on the Greek tragedy. Since the local situation was and is so dire, due to the war, we submitted a project to **UNESCO** to start a film training programme with and for Iraqi youth. In mid-2021, it became clear that our request was honoured; since then, filmmaker Daniel Demoustier, actors Marijke Pinoy and Johan Leysen, and dramatist Giacomo Bisordi have been active in helping to organise that training, in collaboration with the Institute for Fine Arts. For the youth of Mosul, this is an excellent opportunity. And we are sure that the stories made through the new training by a young generation of filmmakers will soon follow.

**All roads lead to Athens**

Apart from these examples of cooperation at the international level, there is of course more going on. For instance, there is our plan to hang season 2023-24 on the Greek tragedies that have been handed down to us: 32 titles in total. The season's All Greeks festival is explained under IV. under Production, but can only succeed through solid international cooperation: with IIPM as partner and co-director, but also with cultural bodies and companies in countries worldwide: from Kiev to Beijing, from Beirut to Paris.

**Other partners**

In Switzerland, we have a loyal partner in **Théâtre Vidy** in Lausanne. This house, directed by Vincent Baudriller, was our guest as recently as February 2020 with the *European Philosophical Song Contest*, a concept by director Massimo Furlan and dramaturge Claire De Ribaupierre. We are now collaborating with Vidy in the context of STAGES, among other things, because part of this project on ecology is a version we are producing as NTGent of *A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction*, a concept by British director Katie Mitchell. Our version is directed by Martha Balthazar and will be shown in autumn 2022; a similar collaboration around a concept by French director Jérôme Bel will follow later.

NTGent is also a regular guest at festivals abroad. Last summer, there was the world premiere in **Avignon** of *One Song*, the creation in our series *Histoire(s) du Théâtre* by Miet Warlop. Earlier, the same festival also featured the creations of Faustin Linyekula, Angélica Liddell and our artistic director Milo Rau, respectively *Liebestod, Histoire(s) du Théâtre II*, with Oscar Van Rompay and others, and *La Reprise*, the first in the Histoire(s) series. With the recent appointment of Tiago Rodrigues as festival director, we expect to continue this line together. Tiago has also agreed to direct a performance in this series. *See under Content operation.*

International partners on programme and presentation: IIPM, Schaubühne Berlin, Théâtre de la Colline Paris, Goethe Institute, Pro Helvetia, Schauspielhaus Zürich, Malta Festival Poznan, Verbrecher Verlag, Segal Center New York, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Festival d'Avignon, Athens Epidaurus Festival, Film Festival Venezia, IDFA Amsterdam, Locarno Festival, Wiener Festwochen, Kammerspiele München, Salzburger Festspiele, Schauspiel Köln, ITA in Amsterdam, e.a.

International partners on positive impact and ecology: the thirteen members of the European network Create to Connect, the twelve members of the European network STAGES, UNESCO, Institute for Fine Arts Mosul, Akademie der Künste in Berlin, Landless Movement Brasil, Leavenoonebehind Germany, Medico International, ECCHR, and others.

Content operation (INhoudelijke werking)

*Specifically for the preparation of this part of the policy plan, it is best to read the following articles:*

* *Article 56 from the* [*Arts Decree*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/60819130d129f6000c000353.pdf)*;*
* *Article 18 from the executive order.*

**1**. **CONTENT OPERATION (inhoudelijke werking)**

**1.1 Artistic vision and plans**

**Objectives**

ince 2018, as indicated in the chapter on our history, we have been giving a very different interpretation to the term 'city theatre'. NTGent's **narrative** is primarily determined by a number of regular makers and directors, who are given the freedom to choose who they want to work with for their creations. But we do not only do Production: we fully commit to **all five functions**, so also Development, Presentation, Participation, Reflection. To manage the *School of Ghent*, these are our **strategic objectives**:

S1. We produce theatre on an international level, with regular creators and guests, and go on tour. We strive for a healthy balance between authentic signatures, artistic generations and geographical spread.   
S2. We provide calendar time, know-how and resources for residencies, development and research. We support promising projects that need an extra push, financially and/or productionally.   
S3. We present guests from home and abroad and organise festivals and other forms of co-presentation, in our city but also internationally.

S4. We provide white space in our programme, both in our creations and receptively, coordinating or delegating our choices with third parties. The goal is: the greatest possible representation of the city and the world on our stages.   
S5. We organise inclusion and participation at different levels: in our creations and receptive programme, through public outreach and inflow pathways, through policy participation.   
S6. We invest in sustainable, quality access to our offerings, analogue and digital. Our theatrical films fit into that logic.   
S7. We reflect on theatre, art and society on a local and international level. In doing so, we activate our audiences and invest in long-term projects with various partners, including educational institutions.

Production: S1, S4, S6 Development: S2 Presentation: S3, S4, S5 Participation: S4, S5 Reflection: S7



**1.2 Production**

- We create 5 productions instead of 6  
- We end the collaboration with Luk Perceval  
- We are scrapping the player coach  
- We integrate the School of Resistance into other formats  
- We delete our wildcard and integrate the search for young talent into our development function  
- We add Martha Balthazar as one of the artists with whom we are building a lasting relationship (instead of Louise Bergez)  
- With the sustainable, high-quality disclosure of our offer, analogue and digital, we aim at broadening our audience and deepening it. With our theatre films, we reach audiences outside the theatres.

**PRODUCTION / S4 We produce theatre on an international level, with regular creators and guests, and go on tour. In doing so, we strive for a healthy balance between authentic signatures, artistic generations and geographical spread**.

1. We make five new theatre productions a year that have an international level. These creations are shown in Ghent and go on tour, also internationally.
2. We work with three permanent creators - Lua Casella, Lara Staal, Milo Rau - and three artists in residence: Miet Warlop, Action Zoo Humain, and Ontroerend Goed.
3. We invest in a strong artistic team, with in-house dramaturges
4. We invest in an open, strong artistic family of actors and designers and all artists connected to NTGent in one way or another.
5. We continue our *Histoire(s) du Théâtre line*; we invite a guest director for this.

**1.2.1 Makers of the house**

**Milo Rau**

The first line in this feature is, logically, the trajectory of Milo Rau, our artistic director. It is the line par excellence in which our dialectical dramaturgy becomes visible: how does the world enter our theatres, and how does theatre step out? Milo's performances combine a deep knowledge of the artistic canon with a great sensitivity to the international political agenda. As described in our brief: it is theatre that mythologises current affairs, and that actualises mythology.

'In the coming years, I want to anchor our operation even more in the local and international scene: by bringing classic theatre productions and hybrid formats, artistic creation and social debate even closer together. An example is *All Greeks*, a festival uniting all 32 Greek tragedies. This is how we devote ourselves to our mission: how can we unite tradition and utopia? How do we rewrite the classics for our times? But it is about much more than artistic research.

Even more than before, I want to work on hybrid formats in the coming years. Thus, the School of Resistance will be discovered as a mini-festival of reflection based on two strands: Sustainability and Solidarity. That second line, Solidarity, is about global citizenship in a (post)migration society. The first line, sustainability, is research on both local and global levels. That is why we participate in STAGES and invest in a film school in Mosul, which we co-founded with UNESCO. But we also outsource part of our programme in Ghent to partners and curators: to gather expertise and inspiration. The ultimate goal is: a theatre of all for all, at the highest artistic level and with maximum impact. Our recipe has proved successful - so that formula remains.' (Milo Rau)

Per season: one creation or more, plus a political action , reflection, Golden Book

**Lua Casella**

Language is central to Lua Casella's oeuvre. Apart from being a theatre-maker, she is also a part-time teacher and has built up artistic expertise as a performer, director and storyteller in recent years. After our acquaintance through WIPCOOP, with a fledgling version of *Short of Lying*, there was a 'click'. After a form of collaboration, to finish the scenography of *Short of Lying*, the co-production *Killjoy Quiz* followed, with NTGent eventually acting as executive producer. Since 2021, she has been one of our four in-house directors. In May 2022, *Ferox Tempus* premiered.

'My work is about the deconstruction of language. It is about the narrative machine and revealing some of its manipulation techniques. I use literature to create speculative discourse in theatre, combining basic notions of fiction with popular forms of communication, such as the Ted Talk in *Short of Lying* or the quiz in *KillJoy Quiz*. I explored strategies of narrative video games for *Ferox Tempus, terror at its best* (premiering in May 2022).

In the coming years, I hope to dive into the world of social media. Among other things, by setting up a YouTube channel **together with master students at KASK Ghent**, where I am a part-time teacher, and investing in a **reality TV project**. Both projects should culminate in performances that are partly 'live' in the theatre and partly broadcast. The idea behind this is simple: use artistic strategies and the vibrancy of theatre to corrupt popular formats and mainstream radicalism. Generate critical content to reveal how these formats - accompanied by the narrative machine - hold a potential for social transformation when paired with stories of resistance. The aim is to question our paradigms of language to emancipate a wider audience.

As a city theatre that nurtures artistic research and produces art, I see NTGent as a house in full transformation that is increasingly positioning itself as a space for confrontation; a space of listening, of questioning; a space open to address our contemporary anxieties. It has consistently broadened its existing programming strategies and promoted artistic encounters and educational efforts: to position itself as a house of resistance and to boldly participate in redefining our lifestyles ... Becoming one of the house artists at NTGent gives me the opportunity to carve out a solid trajectory. It offers me a platform where I can further develop my practice: for the purpose of creations, but also for sharing knowledge.' (Lua Casella)

Per season: one creation, tour or project, plus editing Golden Book, reflection

**Lara Staal**

Since starting with Milo Rau, we are also taking a multi-faceted course with Lara Staal. A dramaturge, curator and director, Lara has a nose for social issues that often remain under the radar. Initially, her presence consisted of a number of 'staged' debates: evenings that challenge the definition of a 'debate': through an alternative set-up and specific dramaturgy. Her first two seasons at NTGent resulted in the series *De Staat van*. In it, major concepts were reviewed, such as *Beauty* and *Justice*. Gradually, Lara focused more on production direction, in collaboration with her regular scenographer Grischa Runge.

'NTGent has given me the chance to fully develop my hybrid practice: by giving me complete trust and being open to my interests and ideas. Three years ago, I was given the opportunity to create the series *De Staat van*... in which I staged performative conferences that explored classical values such as *Truth*, *Faith* or *Beauty*. During the series, the episodes gradually became more artistic and performative. *The State of Beauty*, for instance, became a mix of a witness report and a theatre performance. And *The State of Justice* became a short film. In my latest project *Dissident,* I worked with five young people who are labelled problem kids at school. The performance is a mix of autobiographical material, documentary film and performance elements, developed in close cooperation with Serdi Faki Alici, a well-known beatboxer in Ghent. In *Dissident,* the young people, known as problem cases, teach the audience in 12 lessons why the current education system is failing and propose alternatives.

My interest is in projects where fiction and reality intertwine and reinforce each other. Projects that address audiences on a political level and challenge current power relations. In the coming years, I want to continue along this line: by continuing to mix conferences with performative concepts.' (Lara Staal)

Per season: one creation or project, plus reflection incl. artistic follow-up STAGES

**1.2.2 Artists in residence**

In the coming years, NTGent will have two companies in residence. Under this heading, we foresee a structural form of cooperation, respecting each other's artistic autonomy.

**Action Zoo Humain**

In the case of Action Zoo Humain, artistically led by director **Chokri Ben Chikha** and based in Ghent, this is an extension of their residency. It only feels logical to continue this collaboration, with respect for their own trajectory and, as mentioned, a number of structural agreements in terms of presentation (planning, financial, communication) and reflection (including through a collaboration between Chokri in his capacity as a teacher at KASK Ghent and our house dramaturgy). Both our organisations are also part of the Vuurgroep in Ghent, the steering group for diversity and inclusion at city level (DIG).

**Miet Warlop**

New in residence is Miet Warlop with her non-profit organisation Irene Wool. We initiated this line in 2018 through a co-production for *Ghost Writer and the Broken Hand Break*. Miet's very own stage language, with influences from visual art, music and performance, is a signature we welcome. Miet also created a performance in our *Histoire(s) du Théâtre* series. This successful performance, *titled One Song,* a co-production by NTGent and Irene Wool, premiered at the Festival d'Avignon in July 2022. So even after that premiere, we will continue our collaboration through a residency.

**Ontroerend Goed**

**1.2.3 Histoire(s) du Théâtre**

The title of this series refers to a documentary series by French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard: Histoire(s) du Cinéma. In it, he goes over some of the milestones of European film history. It inspired us for this line in which we invite guest directors to reflect on their own trajectory, and on the function and history of theatre. It is pre-eminently a line in which Production and Reflection meet. In putting it together, we strive for an exciting mix of generations and signatures in an international context, paying attention to a gender balance. The series began with Milo, followed by Faustin Linyekula and Angélica Liddell. Number four is in the hands of Miet Warlop. For future years, the names below are on our list - the first three have been confirmed

**2023**

**Rabih Mroué**, born 1967 in Beirut, is Lebanon's leading performance artist, known for his performances on the Lebanese civil war such as *The Pixelated Revolution*. Like Faustin Linyekula, he will ask questions about the emergence of Lebanese theatre after World War II and the journey of performance art through censorship and war.

**2024**

**Tiago Rodrigues**, born in Lisbon in 1977, director of the Portuguese National Theatre, will become the artistic director of the Avignon Festival from 2023 and in that capacity he will work closely with NTGent and Milo Rau. For his *Histoire(s) du Théâtre,* he will question the power of memory, death and theatre by bringing the last weeks and also the life of his father - and therefore the history of Portugal - to the stage as a 'documentary musical'. Starring legendary actress Teresa Faria, who spent the last weeks volunteering with his father at the hospital.

**2025**

**Christiane Jatahy**, born in 1968 in Rio de Janeiro, is the leading Brazilian playwright of her generation. With this, our series lands for the first time in South America, specifically in northern Brazil, where the first peoples of the Amazon region are fighting against the destruction of their homelands by Bolsonaro's turbo-capitalist system. Jatahy's question, as in many of her other projects, is: how can art become activism? How can we represent the violence of the modern world and turn it into solidarity? With a deep insight into the history of Brazilian theatre, as a history of various resistance movements from the arrival of the first Europeans to today.

**2026**

**Wooster Group** (US). Founded in 1975 by Elizabeth LeCompte and others, the Wooster Group united members such as Laurie Anderson, John Malkovich, Steve Buscemi and Richard Foreman over the years, and is perhaps the most mythical company of the American avant-garde. Its 'post-dramatic theatre' is largely based on the Wooster Group's deconstructive approach to classical texts, mixed with research, performative elements and video technology. Thus, through *Histoire(s) du Théâtre*, we look back at almost 50 years of American theatre: bringing together the great classical myths and texts from Shakespeare to O'Neill with popular forms such as vaudeville and musical.

**1.2.5 State of affairs regarding creations by NTGent: season 22-23**

**Miet Warlop/ Histoire(s) du Théâtre IV - One Song**

Is the fourth creation in the series *Histoire(s) du Théâtre*. In this new performance, a co-production by NTGent and Irene Wool vzw, resonates a history that has both artistic and personal meaning for Miet. Her reflection on theatre leads to a physical concept in which we recognise elements from previous productions. Like the ritual concert that formed the basis of *GHOST WRITER AND THE BROKEN HAND BREAK (2018) and THE SPORTBAND/ AFGETRAINED CLANKS (2005). Or the invitation to breathe together, performers and audience, to exorcise our fears and demons, as we saw in FRUITS OF LABOR* (2016). In her oeuvre, everything is connected. It is circular, like life itself.

**Martha Balthazar i.c.w. Katie Mitchell/ A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction**

Martha graduated from KASK Ghent in 2021, with a successful interpretation of Boerenpsalm. It was a location project focusing on agriculture, and its tension with today's ecological agenda. The latter subject is close to her heart, and so we asked her to direct this concept by British director Katie Mitchell, created for Théâtre Vidy in Lausanne. It is a 'travelling' concept that will be customised for each partner - as part of our EU project STAGES - with one actress, a choir and two cyclists (to generate electricity). The monologue was written by US author Miranda Rose Hall and is being translated into Dutch.

**Thom Luz/ Maison Maeterlinck**

Swiss director Thom Luz studied at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Zurich. In 2014, he was nominated by Theater Heute as that year's most promising new director. For his creation in autumn 2022, Luz, who is akin to his compatriot Christoph Marthaler in his atmospheric productions of "musical theatre", is delving into the artistic legacy of Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), the Ghent native who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1911. In particular, his essays serve as inspiration for a new performance, including a text entitled Un théâtre d'androïdes.

**Princess Bangura/ Great Apes of the West Coast**

Princess stars in *Grief and Beauty*, a production by Milo Rau. But she also aspires to a body of work of her own. During 2022, we foresee time and space for research for her first creation: *Great Apes of the West Coast*. It is a working title that is not innocuous and refers to her migration background in Sierra Leone, West Africa. In her own words, Princess did not want to make theatre about her 'double' identity until now, but that subject is now pressing. NTGent supports her in the creation of this solo. We foresee the premiere in spring 2023, with the option to tour in autumn 2023.

**Jesse Vandamme, Werktoneel/ Gruis/Aan de twijfel**

Following on from his direction of Solipsists, with actors Louise Bergez, Joeri Happel and Lucas van der Vegt, Jesse is setting up the vzw Werktoneel with them. In spring 2022, the group will delve into the theme of madness, including by delving into the archives of the Museum Dr Guislain in Ghent. But there is also a lot of theatre and other literature on the table, including the collected works of Chekhov. Through readings and improvisations on the floor, a show will be created to be released in spring 2023, in which Jesse and co do what they do best: create exciting theatre through strong individual acting and fresh actor direction. With Joeri Happel, Louise Bergez, Lucas van der Vegt and Lucie Plasschaert. And Laurens Aneca as dramaturge.

**Milo Rau/ Antigone in the Amazon**

Due to the pandemic, we have had to postpone this creation, scheduled for 2020. But in spring 2023, we hope to finally land this international project. For *Antigone in the Amazon,* Milo Rau and his team travelled to the Brazilian state of Pará, where forests are burning due to the expanding monoculture of soya cultivation and where capitalism is devouring nature. Together with indigenous people, activists and actors from Brazil and Europe, the tragedy of Antigone is retold. On an occupied piece of land, in collaboration with Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra, the world's largest organisation of 'landless' people, the team creates an allegory about violent destruction and displacement by the state, which considers private property more important than the traditional right to land. The role of Antigone is played by indigenous actress Kay Sara, the chorus by survivors of a massacre perpetrated by the police.

**1.2.6 State of affairs regarding creations by NTGent: season 23-24**

**Lua Casella/ Trojan Women (working title)**

Together with a group of directing students at KASK, where Lua has been teaching for several years, she is developing an in-depth investigation into how violence becomes language in Greek tragedies. Based on the figure of Cassandra - the visionary who foresees the fall of Troy and later becomes a sex slave to the Greek conqueror Agamemnon - Lua questions the impossibility of changing our fatality through words. Faced with the objective end of the world as we know it, what can we artists and intellectuals do?

**Milo Rau, Peter Seynaeve/ Medea's children (working title)**

A long artistic trajectory links director Milo Rau and actor-director Peter Seynaeve. The collaboration began in 2015 for Five Easy Pieces that toured the world: a production with children, about the crimes of Marc Dutroux, produced by CAMPO. Peter created Just Asking for NTGent and appeared as an actor in Luk Perceval's Black (2019) and Yellow (2021). He also co-directed Family (2020) and Grief and Beauty (2021) by Milo Rau, parts one and two in the Trilogy of Private Life. Now they join forces again: to conclude the trilogy with a mystical piece with young people, questioning the role of childhood, violence and sexuality in Greek tragedies.

**Rabih Mroué/ Histoire(s) du Théâtre V.**

See above under Histoire(s).

**Lara Staal/ The Prison (working title)**

In her trajectory, Lara Staal, one of the regular creators at NTGent, does often choose a very concrete group from society that she approaches simultaneously as subject and cast. After her recent production *Dissident*, with and about so-called 'difficult young people' and their experience of school, she is preparing a trajectory and creation focusing on people in captivity. It is one of our **people's projects**. See also Participation.

**Production/ S6. We invest in sustainable, quality access to our offerings, analogue and digital. Our theatrical films fit into that logic.**

1. With each production, we explore developing additional (digital) products that we unlock for our audience: short videos, a book, a lecture, a debate
2. We strengthen our online content, allowing the narrative of NTGent to be followed permanently. We open up our story, and all related topics, in an active and accessible way in function of our target groups.
3. We are taking the next steps in opening up our archive, which we have digitised (with a separate website since 2015, see: www.ntgentarchief.be). For this, we are looking for expert partners, both in the performing arts and archive organisations. See Archives.
4. During Corona, NTGent developed a digital film strategy. It seems obvious to us to continue this exploration and - in time - to make it even more profitable, as an innovation for our sector. For this reason, NTGent, together with KVS and Toneelhuis, wants to organise a crossover with the film sector. We are developing a separate business plan for this, with resources for innovation and films.

**Hybrid production and distribution**

Since 2018, NTGent has produced or co-produced no fewer than **ten theatre films** that have been screened on online platforms, festivals, in cinemas and on television. Such as the documentaries *De Aanbidding* (2019, Canvas/NTGent, about the creation of *Lam Gods* in 2018) and *Orestes in Mosul - the Making-Of* (2020, Theaterfestival Amsterdam/NTGent) directed by Daniel Demoustier; the theatrical film by in-house director Luk Perceval*: Yellow. The Sorrows of Belgium II: Rex* (2021, NTGent, selected for the Flemish Theatre Festival) and the international co-production *The New Gospel* (2020, NTGent/IIPM/Fruitmarket) directed by Milo Rau, which won the Swiss Film Award. Our theatre production Familie (2020) was also given a **film version**, in collaboration with Filip Peeters; that version premiered at Film Fest Gent the same year and screened in the national competition at the Brussels International Film Festival. Peter Seynaeve and Oscar Van Rompay made a low budget film version - in one take - of *Just Asking (*2020).

The next major international co-production is scheduled for 2022-23 with director Milo Rau's *The Massacre*, which, like previous NTGent films, will be created in a network of theatre and film producers. The boundaries between theatre and film, which have often been crossed in NTGent's **hybrid** productions of the past four years, are now leading to a new production model: **theatre films** on the level of classic documentaries and feature films, in collaboration with classic film distributors (as for Familie), streaming platforms like Lumière (as for *Yellow*) or Amazon (as for *The New Gospel*) and all forms of hybrid **distribution** (*Orestes in Mosul - the Making-Of* and *Yellow* were screened as part of the Best-Of at the Dutch and Flemish Theatre Festivals). NTGent is thus expanding its distribution network, together with our colleagues in Brussels and Antwerp, from the perspective of the global accessibility of art, but also as a sustainable **alternative** to theatre tours.

In principle, we plan one theatrical film and one documentary per year, each time based on a production from NTGent's programme. There are also plans for productions in and with the newly founded film school in Mosul, Iraq; a programme that NTGent has supported since 2020.

Directed by Milo Rau: *The Massacre* (a Belgian-French-German-Swiss co-production), shooting in summer and autumn 2022, will be released in 2023.

Directed by Shabab Kermani: *Antigone in the Amazon* (the making-of of the play of the same name, a Belgian-German-Brazilian co-production), shooting in 2023.

Various directors: *Film from Mosul* (a UNESCO-NTGent co-production), a first collective film by the Mosul film school, will be released in 2024.

Directed by Milo Rau: *Trilogy of Passions,* a film version of the theatre trilogy of the same name that we co-produced with ITA, Schaubühne and NTGent, starring - in three chapters - three generations: Isabelle Huppert, Ursina Lardi, Adèle Haenel. Recordings in Germany, France and Belgium.

Various directors - final direction: Daniel Demoustier (o.v.): a documentary on *All Greeks* festival, the making-of. Shooting in season 2023-24.

**1.3 Development**

- We clarify the interpretation of our residencies  
- We scrap The Hour of Truth, a project by Luk Perceval  
- We clarify our role in the After Summer School  
- We clarify our guidance of artists in the context of development

**DEVELOPMENT/ S2. We provide calendar time, know-how and resources for residencies, development and research. We support promising projects that need an extra push, financially and/or productionally**

We invest in the development of a new generation of creators in a structural and customised way: with our own formats, through collaboration and through individual trajectories.

1. After Summer School (one week in collaboration with Flemish art schools, CAMPO and others)
2. WIPCOOP: we host this platform for new names for the annual edition in Ghent and participate with our house dramaturges in the editions in the other cities.
3. Par Hasard: we support this young Ghent-based work-in-progress initiative.
4. We organise two working weeks per season for KASK Ghent in our theatre.
5. We coordinate our development strategy with our Ghent partners, but also at the Flemish level: together with KVS and Toneelhuis. Supporting young or new talent thus becomes, more than ever, a shared responsibility.
6. Additional investment for talent development: workspace for a minimum of 2 residencies per year. We support artists with a dramaturge, a technician and/or a production manager. We provide an additional development budget of EUR 30,000 on top of that.

**1.3.1 Development projects**

**Residences**

We organise residencies for young creators, artists experimenting with new formats and support creators in their artistic research. We provide an additional budget for talent development of 30,000 euros per year. We support artists with a dramaturge, a technician and a production manager and we provide a space

**After summer school**

NTGent has for years been one of Ghent's partners in this format, an initiative of CAMPO, among others, which takes place annually in September. See Positioning and cooperation, Flemish level.

**WIPCOOP**

We have also been partners in Ghent for several years for this travelling platform, an initiative of Mestizo Arts. The platform offers opportunities to talent that does not enter through the programmes. See also Positioning.

**Par Hasard**

Is the name of a young Ghent collective consisting of Mira Bryssinck, Laura Vroom and Fred Libert. The asbl was founded in 2020 with two objectives: making productions, but also organising an annual platform for work-in-progress. It is on this second line that we find each other, particularly to make this platform possible in our calendar. Unlike WIPCOOP, Par Hasard is aimed more at talent seeking its place via KASK, or another training course. NTGent makes a hall available.

**Bachelors in the main hall**

We have been working with the KASK & Conservatory of Music in Ghent for years, in various ways. For instance, they are involved in the After Summer School and encourage their students to participate in Het Uur van de Waarheid. In addition, we regularly organise **workshops**. Because a theatre as a venue is so specific, we commit to releasing two weeks in our **main hall** each season for KASK students: for a working session in that hall. This responds to a real need: "Only in the great hall do you get to know the great hall". It is part of our cooperation agreement with KASK.

**1.3.2 Names with whom we would like to associate, in the coming years, in the School of Ghent**

**Khadija El Kharraz Alami**

This Dutch actress and theatre maker, living in Brussels, was one of the very first participants in The Hour of Truth. That experience, and meeting Luk Perceval as director, resulted in her solo *Now I am Medea*, a production of Theater Rotterdam. With it, she won the Young Theatre Award at TAZ in Ostend in 2018. In our country, Khadija is supported by the Pianofabriek, the partner with whom we coordinate what is the best possible step.

Last year, Khadija had a month-long work residency in our rehearsal loft. During those weeks, she met Dounia Mahammed, Aminata Demba, Kopano Maroga and Lois Brochez, among others, with a view to developing her production Re-claiming Space. That production was our guest at the theatre this autumn (20/10/21), with theatre costume designer Soner Cetin as a guest.

Khadija is performing Now I am Medea in our theatre in spring, in co-presentation with UGent, which is including this production as a lecture performance in its Humanities Academy. NTGent is also working with De Pianofabriek to realise The Waves, Khadija's creation that will be released at KunstenfestivaldesArts in May 2022. With us, that production will be seen in season 2022-23. We are also in talks about her new creations - and the desired **preliminary stage in Ghent** - with the working titles Judge, Mis(s).Anthrope and Dancing.

**Jesse Vandamme**

This young Ghent native graduated from KASK this year with the performance *Giants*. He is part of Camping Sunset, known for their interpretations of *Happiness* and *Ten Oorlog*. Apart from being an actor, Jesse is also a promising director. He proved that with *Scenes*, an interpretation of a film classic by Bergman. We recorded that production as a guest performance at Arca this autumn and help spread the word through our sales. As part of his masters year, Jesse did **an internship** with Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke, during their remake of *Gardenia*, our co-production with les ballets C de la B. The next step in Jesse's itinerary is a final direction of three solos, some of which have already been made, with Lucas van der Vegt, Joeri Happel and Louise Bergez. The project - read: three solos in a row on location in and around Minnemeers - is called *Solipsists* and we are including that in our programme for *GIF* in January 2022.

Then, in spring 2022, we foresee a paid internship for Jesse during the creation of *Red*, part three in *The Sorrows of Belgium* by Luk Perceval. After *Red,* we also foresee time and space for artistic **research**, with a view to a creation by Jesse coming out in 2023: *Madness (working title)*.

In our planning, we foresee a **co-direction** for the main stage by Jesse and Alain Platel in 2024-25.

**Ehsan Hemat**

Also linked to les ballets C de la B is Ehsan, a promising theatre maker who learned the ropes as a performer in various dance performances. Originally from Iran, Ehsan has lived in Brussels for many years, where he will receive structural support from Moussem asbl in the coming years. He first made his mark as a theatre maker in 2018 with the tasteful performance *I put a spell on you*, created together with Mohammed Abasi. With his new project, *A in the role of B when C didn't make it*, about three generations in theatre, and the cultural gap between Brussels and Tehran, Ehsan takes another step towards text theatre. NTGent co- presents a **tone moment** of *ABC*, the result of a month of rehearsals at Minnemeers in December and January. The tone moment is part of *GIF*; the premiere of this project is scheduled for 2023. Then we will present the final result i.c.w. Moussem.

**Princess Bangura**

Studied at the performance school in Maastricht, where she graduated in 2021. We presented two of her master's projects at Minnemeers in July 2021, as part of a festival featuring student work from Maastricht. Princess performs in *Grief and Beauty,* Milo Rau's recent creation. In 2022, we foresee time and space for **research** for a first creation: *Great Apes of the West Coast*. Premiere: in spring 2023.

**1.3.3 Other players and creators returning to our schedule**

**Martha Balthazar**

Martha graduated from KASK Ghent in 2021 with a successful interpretation of *Boerenpsalm*. It was a location project focusing on agriculture, and its tension with today's ecological agenda. Her first feat at NTGent is her direction for the local version of *A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction,* an EU project based on British director Katie Mitchell's concept, created for Théâtre Vidy in Lausanne.

**Oxana Sankova**

We also got to know Oxana through *The Hour* in 2019. This former ensemble actress from Moscow studied directing at the RITCS and appeared at Theatre by the Sea last summer with *I forgot*, a production we will receive receptively in season 22-23. Oxana is also directing a project as part of *All Greeks* the following season . In this context, we are once again collaborating with The Piano Factory.

**Dalilla Hermans**

In early 2020, Dalilla made her theatre debut at NTGent, as director, with *Her(e).* This led to *Us (k)now*, in coproduction with HetPaleis, which will be released in early 2022. Both performances start from testimonies of girls and women of colour: how do they experience growing up in predominantly white Flanders? Dalilla is a resident at Concertgebouw Brugge; with them, we watch a third production, featuring black women aged 60-plus, as the final part of this triptych. The approach is to work towards an auditorium performance via a documentary (theatre film).

**Ilyas Mettioui**

We got to know this talented French-speaking director from Brussels through WIPCOOP, which led to the autumn 2021 presentation of *Ouragan*, featuring Nganji Mutiri (also seen in our production *Black,* among others). Ilyas collaborated with Tiago R drigues, one of our partners, and is one of the curators in our series *Fingerprints*. See *Presentation*.

**1.4 Presentation**

**-** We clarify how our guest programming comes about  
- We explain the modified concept for the All Greeks festival.  
- We clarify our target groups in terms of audience broadening and deepening  
- We adapt our representation options to economic reality (e.g. by divesting ARCA, etc.)

**PRESENTATION/ S3. We present guests from home and abroad and organise festivals and other forms of co-presentation, in our city but also internationally.**

1. Every year, we present around 30 theatre productions from Ghent, Flanders and abroad in our three venues: in our theatre, Minnemeers. Content choices are made by our artistic team, except under Fingerprints.
2. We assume our responsibility as Ghent players in Minard's programming, together with colleagues from CAMPO and VierNulVier.
3. We are co-founders of several important festivals with a Flemish and international reputation: GIF and Theaterfestival Vlaanderen (for the editions in Ghent).
4. In the 2022-23 season, together with IIPM in Berlin, we will organise the festival All Greeks, a mix of creations, projects, lectures and participation tracks.
5. We do house swaps with our fellow city theatres from Brussels and Antwerp.
6. We organise threshold-reducing activities, through our schools operation, but also through new tools such as the theatre tablet, with a view to integral accessibility.
7. We do co-presentation, especially with local partners like VierNulVier and Cie Cecilia. In such cases, we do audience recruitment together, based on a shared interest in the creator(s).
8. In our agreement with the City of Ghent, apart from city days, we also reserve a number of stage days: a service for local initiatives that need extra support.
9. NTGent is a pacesetter in opening up the Arsenaal site: as a temporary interdisciplinary workplace for the broad field of art and culture in Ghent. See also under Business operations.

**1.4.1 How does our guest programming come about?**

In NTGent, not 1 programmer but a team of 6 staff members make the final decision in putting together our guest programme. This team consists of artistic director Milo Rau, the in-house dramaturges and the artistic planning coordinator.

In the first instance, the offer is collected, researched, requested... Every request from artists, agencies or every tip from staff members or audiences that arrives at NTGent is told in the short term whether the offer qualifies for programming or not on the basis of an initial artistic choice by this artistic team. Frequent prospecting and an active search for programming is also carried out by this team. Naturally, NTGent also has an existing number of companies and artists with whom it collaborates and enters into dialogue every year. An important source of inspiration and tips are also our artists' meetings where we ask our regular/loose artists to pass on suitable proposals.

The criteria for withholding cases are

1. Artistically, does the performance fit into the broad spectrum NTGent stands for ?
2. Are there any links to the NTGent programme or NTGent actors or directors ?
3. Does the performance fit into NTGent's development or participation line ?
4. Is NTGent possibly the only partner in Ghent who can/will show the work or are there other - more logical - choices?
5. Is the information submitted stimulating and exciting and do we want to engage in further conversation ?

The remaining projects will end up on a longlist. The makers are notified and asked to provide more info. This may involve additional artistic information or an interview, but financial and practical information is also examined (checking budget, dates, room possibilities, communication possibilities and technical requirements). Due to impossibilities (technically not feasible, impossible in terms of dates, too expensive, etc.), a few projects are not held back.

The remaining list will again be submitted to the artistic team, which at that time will examine the balance in the programming. Now it is no longer about the value of the project an sich for NTGent but about the balance in the programming as a whole. Questions that are asked in the process are :

1. Are there enough Dutch-language productions ?
2. Is there international work ?
3. Does young work come into play ?
4. Is there enough diversity ? (age, gender, cultural background, artistic, artistic collaborators...)
5. Are the different target groups addressed ?
6. Should certain projects be dropped because they are too similar to each other ?
7. Are there projects that are mutually exclusive due to their timing (e.g. too many in 1 period and not relocatable ?)
8. Is the whole thing financially feasible in the total budget foreseen ?

All this results in a shortlist that is checked again with communications, technique and production at the programming meeting. The artistic team then makes a final decision and is communicated to the companies. Space is left free for possible subsequent applications (see S4 and 1.2.5. white space) .

**1.4.2 Festivals**

**GIF - Ghent International Festival**

A number of Ghent arts organisations are joining forces for *GIF*, a new festival that will henceforth take place **biennially**. *Ghent International Festival* is an initiative of CAMPO, Kopergietery, NTGent, Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, S.M.A.K. and VierNulVier and came about from a joint assessment: in the rich cultural life for which Ghent as a city has been known for decades, there are many creations, projects and contexts that now coexist. The *GIF* biennial provides a framework in which we present this vibrant dynamic, which we cherish so much, to the outside world: to the people of Ghent and to our audience, to the foreign press and programmers, to the international arts field. By joining forces, we do this in a way that suits Ghent: in a tradition of openness and solidarity. *GIF* is not driven by a need for scale: it is about **connection**.

First edition: January 2022, at various locations in Ghent. From 2024, the festival will take place in March, every two years. We link the 2024 edition to Ghent's title as *European Youth Capital*, including through the city-wide neighbourhood project *Kamerkind.*

**All Greeks**

Meanwhile, the concept for the all Greeks festival changed slightly. The format of the festival is as simple as it is megalomaniacal. The 2023-2024 season is dedicated to all Greek **tragedies.** We will conclude the season with a festival in which all 32 tragedies will be performed outdoors in the morning. We will translate the 32 ancient texts into the most diverse artistic forms: from monologue to classical adaptation, from political action to video, from an installation to a ritual fight between two machines, from an occupation of public space to a congress, from *lecture performance* to a neighbourhood project. The most famous directors will show their work there alongside students, activists alongside actors. It will be wildly interesting.

**PRESENTATION/ S4. We provide white space in our programme, both in our creations and receptively, coordinating or delegating our choices with third parties. The aim is: the greatest possible representation of the city and the world on our stages.**

**PRESENTATION/ S5. We organise inclusion and participation at different levels: in our creations and receptive programme, through public outreach and inflow pathways, through policy participation**

**Fingerprints**

See under *IV.V. Participation.*

**Audience engagement and outreach**

NTGent has been organising a wide range of barrier-reducing activities for years, focusing on **passive** and **active experience**. To this end, we rely on two pillars: integral accessibility and audience broadening. In total, this involves more than thirty formats for various target groups:

We target **young people** through targeted communicative actions, the class performance *Theatre in the Classroom*, an intense operation for schools (including workshops, framing, tailor-made behind-the-scenes tours, etc.), mirror projects. Through our **schools operation** alone, we thus reach more than 100 schools, which in season 2019-20 amounted to almost 3,000 young people coming into contact with our programme. These elements will be added in the coming years:

1. A *youth panel*: young people from an organisation intensively follow all NTGent performances, through a framed programme of workshops, talks and so on. We plan this as a relay over five seasons, with one year's panel looking for a panel for the next season. We are doing the same with some adult organisations from Ghent.
2. We put together a team of young *reporters* to report on NTGent productions and interesting guest productions: in text, audio, video ...
3. We link a *buddy* to each reception employee via Refu Interim. This way, newcomers to our country get to know our operation in a personal way.

We target people from **different ethnic-cultural backgrounds and new residents of Ghent** through, among other things, community actions with Ghent socio-cultural organisations and service actions in consultation with the GKO's fire group.

We focus on **people with disabilities** by investing in accessible infrastructure and integral accessibility through the tablet project (see below), FM ringers, live Audio Description, interpreter VGT (Flemish Sign Language), customised behind-the-scenes tours, among others.

We want to offer **people in a precarious financial situation** the chance to participate in our offerings through UiTPas zn a.o. Enchanté.

In addition, we target specific groups and civil society, also focusing on audience deepening through, among other things, open rehearsals, introductions to performances, follow-up talks, tailor-made workshops and tours, and so on.

**Theatre tablet**

NTGent presented the **theatre tablet** on 4 March 2020, together with Orange, Panthea, the OPEN Expertise Centre for Accessible Media and Culture of the University of Antwerp, among others. By bringing together image and time, this project is unique within the Flemish performing arts. All of NTGent's creations can now be voiced by a VGT interpreter and provided with subtitles. NTGent is thus playing a pioneering role in the integral accessibility of theatre: for the blind, visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing. See annex.

**1.5 Participation**

- We work with 1 curator instead of 2 per season in our Fingerprints project  
- We cancel some actions due to the changed economic situation.

**PARTICIPATION/ S4. We provide white space in our programme, both in our creations and receptively, coordinating or delegating our choices with third parties. The goal is: the greatest possible representation of the city and the world on our stages.**

**PARTICIPATION/ S5. We organise inclusion and participation at different levels: in our creations and receptive programme, through public outreach and inflow pathways, through policy participation.**

1. We produce theatre with non-professionals, giving authentic stories and testimonies a place on our stages. We call these *people's projects.*
2. We 'outsource' part of our receptive programme, through the *Fingerprints* line, with a guest curator who makes the choices.
3. We engage with target groups through our so-called *Mirror Projects*.
4. At city level, we are active in the DIG network, in full Diversity and Inclusion Ghent, and this both in the so-called *Learning Networks* and in the Fire Group (the steering group).
5. In cooperation with the Theatre Festival, we organise a Ghent *Neighbourhood Jury*, as an alternative to the professional jury.
6. We involve external stakeholders in our policy through the *Artistic Advisory Board*, with representatives from the arts field but also from other sectors.

**People's projects**

We started this policy period in 2018 with the creation of *Lam Gods*, directed by Milo Rau. This was no coincidence: it reflects how much 'city' we want to welcome and activate in our theatre. One of the slogans in that first year was: *theatre for everyone and by everyone*. Participation is also explicitly part of our *Manifesto*. Since then, several 'people's projects' have been produced. Like *Anatomy of Pain* directed by Lies Pauwels in 2019, featuring pain patients. Or *The Narrator's Ship* (2021), in co-production with German collective Monster Truck and with Platform K. The cast then consisted of performers with disabilities. In season 2022-23, this line features *Antigone in the Amazon*, directed by Milo Rau, with local farmers in Brazil. And in spring 2024, Lara Staal will mount a production with prisoners:

'I very much want to make a performance in and with Ghent prison. It seems logical to me that, to attend that production, the audience can only follow the presentation 'inside'. Apart from the aspect of loneliness and isolation, I would also like to explore the typical architecture of such a building. And what it means.' (Lara Staal)

**Fingerprints**

This working title refers to the 'fingerprints' of 1 curator each year whom we intend to mandate to invite 4 or 5 titles as part of our receptive programme. The designation of curators by the artistic team aims at diversity, to maximise impact. We are not necessarily talking about professionals from the arts, we are mainly aiming for **personalities**, people with their own vision and expertise, who can make relevant choices to enrich our programme.

For the coming seasons, we asked:

**2022-23 : Alexia Leysen** is the figurehead of *Dagen Zonder Vlees* and received the 2016 Dioraphte Cement Prize as an up-and-coming theatre talent. She is also a photographer, with a column in *De Standaard*, and in 2018 worked with actor Valentijn Dhaenens on the production *KNAUS. //* **Leni Van Goidsenhoven** is a postdoctoral researcher at UA, Philosophy, and KUL. Her research focuses on the importance of imagination and stories of experience of people with disabilities. She is author of *Autism in Multiple* (Garant, 2020) and *Unheard* (EPO, 2021).

**2023-24 Fleur Pierets** is an author and human rights activist living in Antwerp. She did a global action with her husband Julian: where they got married as a *gay* couple in every country where it was allowed. Until her husband died. She wrote the book *Julian* about it, published by Das Mag.

**2024-25 Ilyas Mettioui** is a Brussels-based theatre director whom we already presented with *Ouragan*. Ilyas is a promising maker of whom we will hear a lot. We ask him partly because of his perspective on the francophone arts field in Belgium. See also *IV. III. Development*.

**Mirror projects**

For several years now, we have produced a - small and/or large - *Mirror Project* every season. These are participative trajectories that culminate in a **fully-fledged** performance, with a professional director and a short performance series in one of our venues. In terms of content, a theme or subject is chosen that mirrors a creation by NTGent in that same season, but this idea is worked out autonomously - which usually yields a surprising result. Recent examples are *Almost everyone can fall over,* a project i.c.w. Samana, the Flemish association for chronic patients, made in the same season as *Anatomy of Pain* (2019)*.* And *Through Your Eyes* (2021), produced by the *Voorkamer* in Utrecht (NL) and inspired by *Yellow* by Luk Perceval. Following *Dissident* by Lara Staal, there was also a festival of projects by six schools this autumn, presented at Minnemeers. This programme will continue in season 2021-22, with other schools. For season 2022-23, we are considering which tragedies to mirror.

**Neighbourhood Jury in collaboration with Theatre Festival**

The WijkJury consists of twelve to fifteen open-minded, non-specialist city residents from different neighbourhoods, with different cultural backgrounds and from widely varying age groups. Together, they visit ten to fifteen performances a year in theatres in their city and choose their favourite at the end of the season: *The Choice of the Neighbourhood Jury*. Besides the joint theatre visits, meetings take place in which the performances are analysed, and there is room for the development of the neighbourhood jury members' **vocabulary**, insight and ambassadorship to each other and to the outside world. Throughout the year, the neighbourhood jury shares its adventures via social media. Partners per city open up their venues, suggest performances, host members for an after-party discussion, offer drinks and contribute financially. We will start this in 2023 and let it continue. This is how we do audience broadening in a sustainable way.

**Artistic Advisory Board**

This group acts as a sounding board for our artistic policy and has a structural mandate, read: for several years. Chairman is Freddy Decreus, former board member of NTGent. The current nine members are: Kadir Balci, filmmaker; Sarah Moeremans, director; Liv Laveyne, programmer and former reviewer; Sarah Eisa, dramaturge; Alain Platel, choreographer; Bram Van Oostveldt, prof. dr. at UGent; Jan Steen, coordinator of the

drama course at KASK; Aminata Demba, actress; and Sarah Avci, formation worker.

**1.6**  **Reflection**

- Because of the changed economic situation, we are scrapping a number of initiatives:  
 o We will organise 1 interactive activity each year in collaboration with Etcetera  
 o We are scrapping Earth Day  
 o We are scrapping the 'open source' library 'Why Theatre?'

**REFLECTION/ S7. We reflect on theatre, art and society on a local and international level. In doing so, we activate our audiences and invest in long-term trajectories with various partners, including educational institutions.**

As a city theatre, we consider it one of our core tasks to invest in debate and reflection. Since the lockdown, we have developed this function in two main lines. For instance, we started the *School of Resistance*, a series in which experts from various sectors engage in conversation. We also started a far-reaching exercise in self-reflection: *Why theatre?* But there is more:

1. We publish one *Golden Book* every year, in cooperation with Verbrecher Verlag and EPO.
2. We have started a partnership with *Etcetera*
3. We are working with UGent, as a partner of their newly established Humanities Academy.
4. We are launching a four-year European track on sustainability in the arts: *STAGES*.

**Golden Book**

Is the name of our line of books. We publish these books in cooperation with a publisher in Berlin, Verbrecher Verlag, and EPO in Flanders. We prefer this 'old-fashioned' form to deepen our artistic research, in Dutch and English (and sometimes even in French). Specifically, each time we work out a relevant theme linked to a recent creation of the house, where our dramaturgy takes on the role of main and final editor, and where we invite guest authors for an inspired contribution. Since the first season under Milo Rau, five *Golden Books* have been published, consecutively on: *Global Realism* (2018), *Lam Gods* (2018), *Orestes in Mosul* (2019), *The Art of Resistance* (2020, with Lua Casella stepping in as co-editor, along with Lara Staal) and *Why Theatre*? (2020, curated by Carmen Hornbostel, Milo Rau and Kaatje De Geest). In 2022 came *Theatre is democracy in miniature. Art, society, resistance* (Milo Rau) came out. In preparation are:

1. *The School of Resistance. Manifestos, Interviews, Essays* (2022)
2. *Hack the System! Art as Micro-ecology* (2023)
3. *The Green Book. Theatre and Sustainability* (2024)

**School of Resistance**

How can we shape the future of our planet without falling back on the unhealthy capitalist narratives of the past? The *School of Resistance series* began in 2020 as an online platform on which various experts - 'change experts' - from around the world entered into conversation with each other: artists, activists, politicians and philosophers (see appendix). The series came about in collaboration with our Berlin partner IIPM and focused on contradictions and fields of tension in global politics and economics. The title indicates why we believe **critical thinking**, and even a degree of 'resistance', is necessary to shape the future in a more just, sustainable and inclusive way. Unsurprisingly, a wide variety of topics have already been covered in this regard: human rights, seed and resource politics, queer activism, human dignity, a different form of political representation, and so on. In the current season, 2021-22, *School of Resistance* expanded, with live editions in Kiev and Cologne (in collaboration with Schauspiel Köln). In Ghent, it is part of a new line-up with *Etcetera*, the Flemish performing arts magazine. The think tank will be linked to workshops, films, campaigns and events - and all fully accessible: live and online.

**Etcetera x NTGent**

As described above under *School of Resistance, there* was a need for a live context in physical space, for Reflection. We soon found a partner for this in *Etcetera*, the Flemish magazine for performing arts, with whom we organised a first *field day in* Minnemeers on 2 October this year. In our cooperation, we want to inform and activate our audience through **participative** concepts. During the first edition, the day's programme consisted of: a yoga session, a picnic, a sector moment for the performing arts, a mobile piano concert (by Sioen), a live *School of Resistance* (in cooperation with Oikos) and a Citizens' Parliament. The theme was: *what twenties do we want?* That question was interpreted in various ways, with our hall Minnemeers transforming into a different setup each time. The next edition will take place on 29 January 2022 and will be framed by *GIF.* Theme: (dis)learning. A report will follow each edition in the magazine and on our website.

**Humanities Academy**

The digital revolution has substantially changed **art and cultural criticism**. On the one hand, numerous initiatives have emerged on the internet that offer publishing opportunities; on the other hand, coverage of art and culture in the traditional media is under pressure. As a result, newspapers, magazines and websites are looking for the best pens, without investing in thorough supervision of those pens. As part of the new Humanities Academy at UGent, there is therefore a new **postgraduate** course since 2021, part-time and open to 15 students. NTGent is one of the partners from the cultural field, together with De Buren, Opera Ballet Vlaanderen and the Poetry Centre, among others. This means that, where possible, we bridge the gap between this new course and our own practice, in terms of content and organisation. For example: by meeting a director or dramaturge during a creation process, by making our archive available, or by an aftertalk at a performance.

**STAGES - Sustainable Theatre Alliance**

The years when theatre productions travelled around the world are behind us: we need to invest in other ways of presentation and interaction. That is why we started a trajectory with several partners: Théâtre de Liège in Belgium, the European Theatre Convention (ETC), Dramaten (Stockholm, Sweden), Théâtre Vidy (Lausanne, Switzerland), Piccolo Teatro (Milan, Italy), the National Theatre in Lisbon (Portugal) and many others. The trajectory, presented to the EU in September 2021, is called *STAGES* (see annex)*.* This stands for a new **sustainable** theatre alliance with partners around the world - including the *Asia Connection* with theatres in eight Asian countries, such as Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Japan. In our home city, we are joining forces with UGent, including the Centre for Sustainable Development, and Oikos, the green think tank involved in our live editions of *School of Resistance*.

From 2022 to 2025, we are on a joint journey with each partner investing in research and innovation. This starts with a **self-analysis** - how big is our ecological footprint? - and is followed by a series of workshops in which we bring artists and scientists to the table together. Thus, for the first year, NTGent is collaborating with De NWe Tijd, following their performance *De zaak Shell,* and with Ontroerend Goed following their new travelling concept *Handle With Care*. In November, we will present our own version of a concept by Katie Mitchell, directed by Martha Balthazar. During this period, we will also organise a first international forum, together with Liege.

# Business management

*Specifically for the preparation of this part of the policy plan, it is best to read the following articles:*

* *Article 56 from the* [*Arts Decree*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/60819130d129f6000c000353.pdf)*;*
* *Article 66(1) from the* [*executive order*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/Uitvoering%20Kunstendecreet.pdf)*.*

Include your budget in the [figure annex](https://vlaamseoverheid.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/CJM/BM/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BA63322BC-4C58-40D0-98B1-97912053D98A%7D&file=20210629_Sjabloon_Kunsten_test.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true). Space is provided there to explain the figures in detail.

Within the philosophy of the *School of Ghent,* artistic challenge and innovation go hand in hand with a high-quality, transparent and contemporary business policy. We therefore formulate the following strategic objective: NTGent pursues a dynamic, open and honest business policy, with special attention to sustainability, innovative leadership, good governance, fair practice and cooperation.

The operationalisation of this objective falls into several aspects, which we will explain in more detail next:

1. A realistic balanced budget and transparent financial management
2. A personnel policy of integrity and the application of fair practice
3. Sound governance organisation and principles of good governance put into practice
4. A caring safety, welfare and integrity policy
5. Sustainability as a burning issue
6. Quality management and forward-looking development of our infrastructure
7. A rich, professional and accessible archive

1. **BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**  
   1. **Introduction**

Summurazing:   
The economic situation has changed completely, as already described at the beginning. The changes are outlined without repeating ourselves all the time. Some important changes:

- Wage indexations were adjusted to the Planning Bureau's estimate resulting in a major financial impact.  
 - We make a realistic estimate of energy costs.  
 - We reduce the share of fixed wage costs to remain agile and crisis-proof  
 - We maximise our own income   
 - We use freelancers to supplement in-house expertise  
 - We organise business-organisational cooperation

NTGent's financial situation has changed completely in the past year. So it is impossible to adapt the text below to every detail, because everything has changed for mainly 3 reasons:

* The grant awarded is significantly lower than the amount requested taking into account the downsizing of DAC funds.
* The energy crisis has significantly increased energy prices. NTGent anticipates 390,000 euros instead of 125,000 euros in costs for EGW.
* The energy crisis has also increased wages, as have many products or services. This impact is huge on our budget.

The above reasons cause a change in our plans. You could already read the artistic implications above. From a budgetary point of view, NTGent chose to implement a sanitation starting in 2022, continuing in 2023 and resulting in a budget structural balance from 2024 onwards. Of course, all efforts will have to be monitored to see if we are on track.

For the 2022 and 2023 season, NTGent assumed the new subsidies. We knew the risk of not being fully granted, but judged that the reserve built up during corona should be used for artistic work. Due to the new crisis, we have already adjusted the plans as much as possible, but we still expect a loss of 307,000 euros. NTGent still plans efforts to reduce this loss. We also count on maximum support from the authorities.

For the year 2024, we need to achieve a balanced budget. We will achieve this (narrowly) through the following measures:

* Changes to the artistic plan (see previous section)
* Non-indexation of operating costs until 2024 for all budget items where possible.
* Partially unreplacing natural outflow of staff, enabling landing jobs and career reductions and converting human resources to freelance budgets
* Divesting our third stage, being ARCA. We will make it available to the GKO. If no interest, we will end the lease in 2023.
* Through a business-organisational collaboration with 5 other Ghent internationally producing performing arts organisations, we seek to increase our efficiency and effectiveness.
* We maximise our own revenues.

You can find the details in the figure annex. We included the 2023 figures as requested and indicated where further savings will be made in 2024 in order to achieve equilibrium.

We chose to leave the original text as far as it still has some relevance to explain the methodology. After all, we worked with exactly the same methodology. We did choose not to change every figure. We refer to the figure annex for that. In this way, we hope to maintain readability, even if the exact figures have to be looked elsewhere.

NTGent is a financially healthy organisation. In 2020, NTGent no longer had any debts. The result of sustained efforts and hard work over many years.

By subjecting ourselves to Company Duty from 2018, we were able to comply with the Tax Shelter requirements, thus providing a new source of income with more opportunities for our artistic productions. To safely implement the tax shelter, we started in 2018 with 1 test case. A wider pallet of productions followed in 2019 and we reached cruising speed in 2020. Today, it is a unique strength of NTGent that we can again realise productions with a larger number of actors on stage.

In function of a sound business policy and a realistic estimation of our operating costs, NTGent has in recent years developed a number of financial tools tailored to our production methods. Thanks in part to the reporting obligation under tax shelter and the high level of detail required, these tools were further refined. This toolbox allows us to develop a confidence-building methodology for our financial planning in a complex environment. We are pleased to present our new financial plan built from this methodology.

**Working method**

In preparing our budget, we work bottom-up starting from:

1. our artistic plans
2. calculated within our analytical accounting by cost type
3. and this with the involvement of the various budget managers.

It is important to mention that for the 2023-2027 budget, we have completely redone our financial exercise. The funding of each artistic product has been scrutinised, evaluated and adjusted separately. We have redeveloped and filled in our organisation and staffing from scratch. This makes our plans solid and underpinned but also difficult to compare with the past.

**Key figures**

Please note, purely for the 2023-2024 season, and thus spread over 2 financial years, we must take into account an 'Exceptional Cost'. This is a one-off use of a reserve created in 2021 for artistic costs in the *All Greeks* festival in the amount of €210K. We did not include this cost in the financial table to avoid having to create a variable budget just for the use of this reserve. You will also find the comment added in the figure annex.

For the 2023 and 2024 budget, a drawdown of this reserve in the total amount of €210,000 is obviously planned.

1.2 **Our cost side in detail**

Before delving deeper into the various cost items, an overview of how the main

costs of NTGent have been compiled:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Artistic costs & artistic employment | 5.700k |
| Other employment | 2.300k |
| Communication costs | 349k |
| Operating expenses (operating costs) | 837k |
| Depreciation | 617k |
| Risk management | 272k |
| Financial costs & taxes | 134k |

**1.2.1 The beating heart of NTGent, our artistic operation**

As indicated, when drawing up our budget we start bottom-up and this from the 5 functions that are we fulfil. For all our artistic activities, we create a fiche around the project's lines of force. Thus, for each project, we create a specific artistic budget in which both production and personnel expenses (employees in service and freelancers) are recorded. Following details are included in this artistic budget:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What |  |
| Decor-props-provided (602200)  Costumes (602200)  Sound (602200)  Lighting (602200)  Video (602200)  Supertitles (602200)  Transport costs (602200) | 612  612  612  612  612  612  612 |
| Premiere (614155)  Participatie (614216) | 616  616 |
| Distribution equipment (612031)  Translations (613226)  Social media (614213)  Flyers and posters printing (614214)  Photography, video and trailers (614215) | 611  61,320  616  616  616 |
| Artistic performing (Travel expenses 614103/61404)  Artistic content (Travel expenses 614103/61404)  Technical Artistic ((Travel expenses 614103/61404)  Technical (Travel expenses 614103/61404) | 615  615  615  615 |
| Artistic performing (Accommodation costs 614105/614106)  Artistic content (Accommodation costs 614105/614106)  Technical Artistic (Accommodation costs 614105/614106)  Technical (Accommodation costs 614105/614106) | 615  615  615  615 |
| Artistic performing (Séjours/Catering 623230)  Artistic content (Séjours/Catering 623230)  Technical Artistic (Séjours/Catering 623230)  Technical (Séjours/Catering 623230) | 623  623  623  623 |
| Artistic performing (Fixed-Los Staff payroll)  Artistic content (Fixed-Los Staff payroll)  Technical Artistic (Fixed-Los Staff payroll)  Technical (Fixed-Los Staff payroll)  Cva Los Personnel | 620  62  620  620  620 |
| CP contribution AAN (604400) | 61330 |

We then compile all artistic project budgets into a total variable overview costs including a calculation of the necessary labour time. On this basis, we can provide an estimate make the (necessary) revenue, to be linked to each project. In preparing the multi-year budget, we assume averages based on experience from the past, also adjusted by risk rates (see further under 'Risk management'). These exercises result in a cost summary broken down into the five functions:

ATTENTION: The table below is the modified table YET TO BE INSERTED

The above amounts are a sum of both the (one-off) creation & creation costs as well as the run costs per performance day (including creation team, dramaturgy, performers, technical freelancers, set, costumes, props, lighting, sound, etc.).

To get an overall picture of the cost of realising our artistic plans (on top of this 4.7 million), we must also take into account the following costs, totalling 1.39 million euros:

1. Artistic director and house dramaturgy (concerns global artistic operation, not linked to a specific production, 226K euros)
2. Set and costume workshop (€465K)
3. Performers' rights and royalties (€142K)
4. Public operation, reception and volunteers (€559K)

This brings us to an overall artistic cost total of €6.1 million.

**1.2.2 Employment in support of artistic operation**

The total of the 62 'Remuneration' accounts amounts to 5.8 million euros1 .

**1.2.3**  **Communication costs**

So that we can spread our artistic operation sufficiently widely, we foresee a total budget of €349K for communication-related expenses for 2023. There is a shift from 'print' costs to 'production communication'. This should allow flexible and project-based decisions on which communication tools are used.

NTGent deliberately chooses to free up resources to make every production integrally accessible through the theatre tablet project (annual budget 24K).

For further perusal, please refer to Free Note 4 in the 'Optional Notes' tab.

**1.2.4 Operating costs (general operating or fixed costs)**

All costs to keep the NTG-house running (rent of buildings, office costs, ICT, insurance, fees, etc.) were scrutinised, checked against the past and adapted to our strategic plan. This resulted in a total budget of EUR 0.8 million. The big increase is caused by the rise in energy costs. We keep this expenditure more or less under control by disposing of our third stage ARCA and by not indexing various operating costs which equals a big saving of 10%. Details can be found in the figure annex.

It should also be noted that NTGent is betting on further digitalisation ifv a further professionalisation. We foresee a new accounting package, a new planning tool, a new ticket provider (via ticketsGent), ...

**1.2.5 Depreciation**

Total depreciation amounts to 617K euro of which the biggest impact is realised by the depreciation of the right in rem of the long lease on the KNS theatre (311K euro). These are offset by capital grants (see account 736 for 316K euro).

The depreciation on our investments for 'infrastructure & techniques' amounts to 246K euro. The remaining €60K of depreciation relates to IT & furniture.

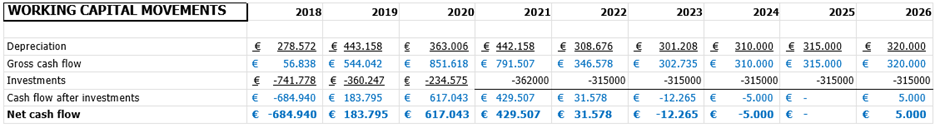
The annual planned investment amount includes:

1. 229K euros in necessary investments for infrastructure & techniques through which we deliver the desired professionalism to our artists and audiences.
2. an annual budget of 10K euro in furniture & equipment in the NTGent Café.
3. An annual IT investment budget of €75K to implement IT evolutions in our (artistic) operation.

**1.2.6 Cashflow**

We work with a balanced budget. As a result, our investments must remain in balance with the evolution of depreciation. You can see this in the table below. To finance our projects, we continue to use the straight loan to absorb the delay in income compared to expenditure.

We cannot do this pre-funding adequately from our own resources.



**1.2.7 Risk management**

We like to approach our budget with caution and realism, which is why we apply various risk percentages to the sales of all performances we rate as 'not quite certain' to 'uncertain'. This risk adjustment is an important part of our operation and has grown from our experience over the years.

In addition, we also take a risk provision on the revenues of the Tax Shelter. To limit the risk of unsigned framework agreements, in the future we will focus even more on creating an entrepreneurial network around NTGent. The new 'public and external relations' department will be responsible for this (see further).

Finally, we set aside a provision of 0.4% in the 62 account to implement the commitments under the VIA 3-agreement to be reached.

This risk management results in a negative adjustment to our turnovers that we account for as a provision, specifically for 2023 equal to -272K euros in account number 635/8.

**1.2.8 Additional notes film ambitions**

In our artistic plan, we talked about our ambitions to (co-)produce films. You will not find these in this business plan. We foresee in NTGent's budget only re-use of artistic creation and dramaturgical work (for the play and the film) or audiovisual by-products not covered by the VAF (e.g. making of...). The budgets for the film productions will be raised in the film world, more specifically from VAF and the film Tax Shelter. To make this happen, we will work together with Toneelhuis and KVS.

**1.3 Our revenue side in detail**

**1.3.1 Grants**

The subtotal of 6 million includes Flemish subsidies from the Arts Decree (3.43M euros) on the one hand, and cultural subsidies from the city of Ghent (2.51M euros) on the other, as well as EU subsidies for 470K euros.

There are also obviously a number of additional subsidies for 641K euro, such as capital subsidies (316K euro) and interventions in labour costs (325K euro).

**1.3.2 Own income**

NTGent continues to actively work on a nice mix of own revenues:

1. Buyouts (1.2M, of which 914K euros abroad and 309K euros in Flanders)
2. Ticket sales (552K euros)
3. Tax Shelter funds (€1.26 million)
4. Bar income (own management, 400K euro)
5. Rental of various halls and concession Foyer (100K euros)
6. Sporadic billing of our people (€120K)
7. Guided tours and educational operation (€45K)
8. Coproduction contributions international (€100K)
9. Domestic sponsorship (109K euro)
10. Rights & Royalties (25K euros)

Given the focus on sufficient diversity in these revenue sources, we believe that this revenue post-corona can grow back to a level of €3.9 million or 37.5% own income. In doing so, we continue our policy of maximising own income.

Implementing the tax shelter ensures that this revenue source translates into additional artistic budget invested mainly in artistic staff. However, we should also point out an important risk. What if the tax shelter does not run so smoothly? Will enough activities remain eligible for tax shelter now that we are focusing on 5 functions. The market is also changing fiercely due to the crisis. Can we find enough companies to entrust us with their money? So tax shelter becomes a particularly vulnerable pillar of our own income. A pillar that accounts for 11% to 14% of our own revenue. We are leaning hard on it. There is no other choice but to be aware of the risk.

1. **PERSONNEL POLICY AND FAIR PRACTICE**

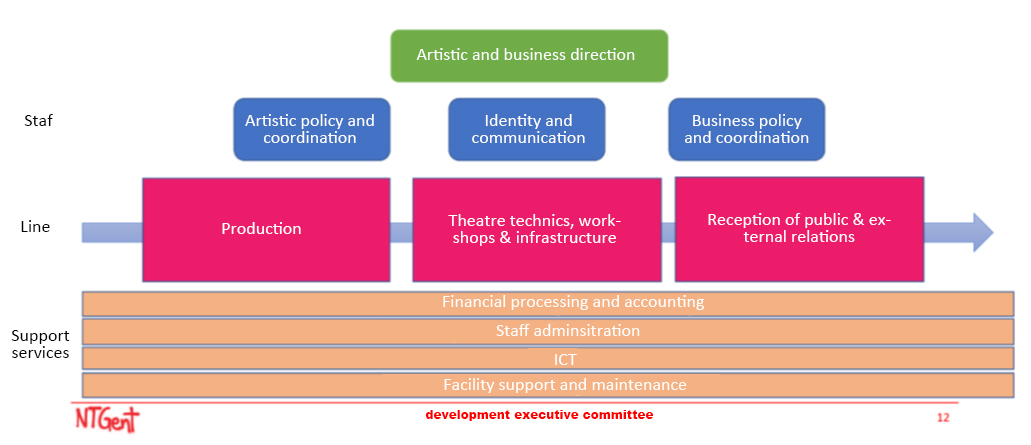
|  |
| --- |
| * We drew up a new organisational chart * We scrap the recruitment of 2 technicians and a production manager * We deploy freelancers to complement in-house expertise * For performers, in addition to stage performances, we foresee more time for study and general education * BowHouse Ghent (see earlier) |

Human resources policy also follows the house strategy and so our mission, values, guiding principles and strategic objectives form the basis of our policy here too. We are happy to explain.

**2.1 Organisation chart and staff organisation**

Organisational and management model:

interaction and core tasks



What does the cultural leadership of the future look like? What leadership model will allow us to meet the artistic and business challenges in a healthy balance? Under the guidance of an external consultant and after internal questioning, NTGent's organisational model for its 'school of Ghent' was further developed. The building blocks were approved at the Board of Directors' meeting (see annex). A schematic representation:

This organisational model lays down the principles for the future:

1. NTGent resolutely opts for dual leadership with an artistic and business leader at the same level. In this way, a good balance can be guaranteed between the artistic operation, carried by an actively producing theatre maker with international appeal, and a healthy business policy. To provide this interaction with the necessary care and follow-up, a member of the core board (not the president) will join the executive committee to support, evaluate or adjust the dual leadership.
2. NTGent opts for a process- and project-oriented cooperation model away from purely hierarchical management. We create staff and line departments that work together transparently. The staff departments have a coordinating, policy-advising and integral task. The line departments deliver a clear, finished end product.
3. Within the artistic operation, we roll out project management. This gives greater autonomy, simplifies processes and increases adaptability to increasingly complex artistic creations. Project teams can be expanded to include external experts. We focus on increasing the competences of our employees and the development of (digital) tools.
4. In our interactive organisational model, we ensure healthy balances, checks and balances, by dividing responsibilities and building in control and adjustment. For example, the business staff is responsible for the budget and its monitoring, not for financial processing or accounting. For instance, the artistic staff coordinates its plans with the planning cell of the production department to achieve a feasible programme.
5. The exemplary role in support of the artist and the safeguarding of sufficient artistic resources are the starting point of a cooperation agreement we concluded with six Ghent partners BOWHOUSE GENT.

With the creation of a new management platform for Ghent's internationally producing arts houses, we want to make a far-reaching commitment to look for shared solutions and unspoken business-organisational cooperation from our expertise.

Every arts organisation today is on an intense quest to maintain sufficient artistic resources. Must cope with fickle, structural cost increases. Wants to escape increased workloads. Wants to bet on fair treatment of artists and staff. Wants to continue building a sustainable, integer and inclusive world. And that for a diverse and future audience.

However, we are doing this in a sector where there are fewer and fewer resources and opportunities to implement new policies. At the level of the individual organisation, a dogged fight for survival is being waged. The need to cluster, share and look for new strategies has never been more urgent.

Therefore, we want to help develop a new cooperation model that should lead to optimised revenues, efficiency gains, better cost management, and better distribution of plan load. But also improved care for employees and organisation with more opportunities for advancement, inflow and outflow. More attention to precarious positions, more care for the young but also for the older cultural worker.

We see the platform as a pilot project that, after a test period and concrete realisation, can serve as an example for other cores within the Ghent cultural ecosystem and for inter-city cooperation.  
 The partners in BOWHOUSE GENT are NTGent, Campo, Kopergieterij, La Geste, Ontroerend Goed, Lod.

**2.2 Staffing plan and salary budget**

NTGent operates a transparent pay policy for all its employees. We follow the job classifications of the CAO for the performing arts for correct and equal pay. We have also introduced some company-specific schemes (mobility policy, internet allowance, meal vouchers, hospitalisation insurance) accessible to all employees regardless of function or type of contract. This wage policy is the basis of our wage budget.

Attached is the old and new personnel plan (incl. organisation chart), according to the principles of the new organisational structure. Staff from staff and line departments are added to artistic project teams based on expertise.

**2.2.1 Our core team, the permanent staff**

In response to the energy crisis and wage indexations, NTGent did have to make an updated plan. To respond to financial shocks with sufficient vigour, we are keeping the share of fixed wage costs under control. We cannot let it grow as much as foreseen in the original plans. How do we do that? We do not fill a number of additions (e.g. player coach, diversity officer, assistant building management, maintenance officer, expansion of payroll, etc.). We are also reducing our permanent team by not or only partially replacing a number of natural redundancies or by converting budgets to a freelance budget. We also want to make part-time work easier.

**2.2.2 Our flexible team, the project-related staff**

Our artistic plans generate project-specific contracts: the cast and crew of projects, the desired  
expertise ... So to the permanent staff team we add artistic and technical-artistic employees on a temporary basis. They are chosen specifically for their competences and additional expertise so that we can ensure the necessary continuity and professionalism in realising the five functions.We also engage +/- 85 volunteers on an annual basis to welcome our audience. In the NTGent Café works with a small permanent team, supplemented by students.

**2.3 Diversity**

The intended super-diversity in NTGent's team is not there yet. NTGent already pays a lot of attention to this theme. Now we are taking a radical next step. NTGent will take positive action in the coming policy period by:

1. For a maximum number of vacancies with targeted search assignments scout diverse talent and actively solicit applications.
2. Reforming our selection policy to remove remaining thresholds in collaboration with experts from the GKO and UGent.
3. Actively collaborate within the GKO to train diverse talent and ensure advancement to open positions.
4. Remove physical, mental and organisational barriers for employees with disabilities so that they can reach their full potential

NTGent is also actively committing itself as a member of the Learning Network (LN) Diversity (GKO) by (1) making a deed of accession with the other Ghent culture houses that enables this positive action; (2) strongly believing in the value of internships as a lever towards more diversity; mapping all types of internships and exploring the possibilities of exchanging interns among themselves; and (3) drawing up a shared database of strong profiles to be exchanged among themselves.

**2.4 Fair practice and care for artists**

NTGent signed the fair practice charter 'Juist is Juist' and consistently follows the four principles and twelve agreements. We continuously evaluate how to make our policy even more transparent and sustainable. The pandemic also forced us to take new steps in our care for artists. Despite the artists' status, their financial and psychosocial situation proved worrying. We actively help artists find the best social solutions and are committed to a professional and safe development context. We refuse to work for professional artists with the small fees scheme.

For the performers, in addition to stage performances, we also include the necessary study time and general formation into account. This gives a more accurate picture of their actual commitment. This applies to every performer, no matter how short or long the effective performance is, extra time is paid for meetings, preparation, text study, general training, aftercare,... The duration of their contract then looks as follows: One-year contract = 220 days of which 170 are effective performances for an actor and 50 days of self-study & general training. Example:

* 2 x rehearsals of 8 weeks (80 days)
* 70 performance days
* 10 travel days & 10 rehearsal days repeats
* 10 general days (artistic team meeting, ...)
* 20-day self-study text
* 20 days of 'general education'

NTGent is strongly committed to psychosocial well-being and a healthy balance between work and rest, of great importance because of the high percentage of *burn-outs* in our sector. Via a needs analysis, we calculate how much staff budget is needed to realise a project in a feasible way. On this basis, we draw up a realistic budget (see also point 5).

Specifically for our artistic staff (often freelance), we commit to the following action points:

* We actively introduce artistic collaborators to directors within a dialogue approach and aimed at maximum development of the artistic collaborator in question.
* Within the sector, we contribute to further conversation and agreements on proper financial remuneration of artistic staff.
* We aim to offer the contract min. 6 months before an assignment in order to provide more financial security for the artistic collaborators and avoid a needlessly free agenda.
* We invest in coaching and training to promote the professional functioning of artistical staff.

**2.5 An Erasmus project for staff: personal and professional growth**

Together with KVS and Toneelhuis and some of our regular foreign partners, we are launching an exchange of staff. This is to offer a professional experience in a very different work context that does still provides sufficient connection to one's field of work. This change of working environment, city or country, we see as a catalyst for personal and professional growth.

2.6 Bowhouse Ghent

Six Ghent-based organisations want to make a far-reaching commitment to look for shared solutions and unspoken business-organisational cooperation from their expertise.

Every arts organisation today is on an intense quest to maintain sufficient artistic resources. Must cope with fickle, structural cost increases. Wants to escape increased workloads. Wants to bet on fair treatment of artists and staff. Wants to continue building a sustainable, integer and inclusive world. And that for a diverse and future audience.

We are doing this in a sector where there are fewer and fewer resources and opportunities to pursue new policies. At the level of the individual organisation, a dogged fight for survival is being waged. Safeguarding artistic resources and deploying sufficient artistic investment is paramount.

The need to cluster, share and look for new strategies has never been more urgent.

Therefore, we want to develop a new cooperation model that should lead to optimised revenues, efficiency gains, better cost management, better distribution of plan burden.

But also improved employee and organisational care. More opportunities for advancement, inflow and outflow. More attention to those positions that are precarious, more care for the young but also for the older culture worker.

Our organisations share common ground. They create performing arts and take many artistic risks every year. They provide artistic input and invest in creation. They operate in areas of high uncertainty and bet on the riskiest artistic positions. This makes them vulnerable, especially when the continuing pressure on all resources is so great.

Furthermore, we all work in an international context. We export our productions in a world that is increasingly businesslike and complex. In foreign countries where international distribution and invitations are at risk and regulations are expanding daily.

Our organisations form a specific core within the Ghent cultural ecosystem but do not exclude any collaboration with other cultural cores.

The individuality and uniformity of work, the many risks we bear and the similar working frameworks provide the delineation of this platform.

This shared position but also the great willingness to cooperate and mutual trust are the conditions for developing this cooperation platform.

We want to build a platform that explores business-organisational support and provides concrete solutions for the organisations involved.

But also provides the opportunity to strengthen each individual organisation by seeking mutual assets, synergies and aligned strategies.

We look for solutions that go beyond the regular sharing of know-how and resources. To do so, we relinquish a piece of our organisational autonomy and intensify the area of shared responsibility, of consciously giving and taking and nurturing this cooperation.

The business and, above all, artistic identity of each organisation remains guaranteed.

The individuality and authenticity of each organisation is and remains a starting point.

But we want to better leverage and strengthen the uniqueness and strength of our potential network.

We are exploring forms of cooperation through knowledge exchange, sharing tools, mutual services, service provision for joint actions. (GIF, Ghent 2030, etc.), by exchange and replacement of staff, training and coaching.

We realise a pool of employees who can jump in, pitch in and take over assignments.

We start with a number of concrete yards located in the following areas:

-Business support functions such as HR, accounting, financial planning and control, ICT, building management.

-The business strategic files related to funding such as European grants, support from international cultural funds, Tax Shelter, alternative funding.

-Cooperation on international distribution with alignment of distribution strategies, shared promotion and sales at festivals and sector moments, exchange and sharing of international relationships and representation.

Strengthening the underpinnings of the international network. Establishing a 'Ghent European Secretariat'.

-The collaboration in terms of the different technical and production teams.

We see the platform as a pilot project that, after a test period and concrete realisation, can serve as an example for other cores within the Ghent cultural ecosystem and for inter-city cooperation.

We will take time during the next policy period to develop the concept and model. And engage with those bodies that inspire, challenge or question us.

Subsequent Ghent arts organisations resolve to work on this platform and the challenging concept of collaboration, and want to devote sufficient time, energy and resources to it:

NTGent, CAMPO, Kopergietery, LOD, laGeste, Ontroerend Goed.

The name.

'Bowhouse Ghent'

building house, arched house, bow house, bauhaus, bowhouse, bowhow, knowbow, bowmore, ...

Bowhouse Ghent

Constructive, open, international with style

Works on a new cooperative managerial design for our art production houses.

Also a project of bending, serving. To generate more applause and show thanks and respect. So also bow more.

European link/reference international context

Bowhouse Ghent, the missing link in a vulnerable artistic production chain.

Bowhouse Ghent refers to:

'The New European Bauhaus initiative' calls on all of us to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls. Beautiful are the places, practices, and experiences that are:

* Enriching, inspired by art and culture, responding to needs beyond functionality.
* Sustainable, in harmony with nature, the environment, and our planet.
* Inclusive, encouraging a dialogue across cultures, disciplines, genders and ages.

1. **GOVERNANCE ORGANISATION & PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE**

NTGent's administrative organisation was recently renewed and brought fully in line with the principles of good governance.

**Statutes amendment**

In the lap of the Board of Directors, new statutes (see annex) were prepared and approved in November 2020. The tasks of the organs (Board of Directors, Core Board, Executive Committee and Artistic Advisory Board) were detailed, and a balanced distribution of powers and mutual control were built in. The principles of good governance were also applied in terms of composition and board mandates. On top of this, new internal regulations were drawn up, including a code of conduct for directors (see annex).

**Renewal of Board of Directors and Executive Committee**

In 2020, the Board of Directors underwent a thorough renewal. Helena De Meerleer was appointed as the new chairman, some directors ended their terms of office, a number of new directors were recruited, taking into account the a priori profile; administrative, business, entrepreneurial or artistic competences into consideration.

During this process, the management was also evaluated which resulted in a new composition of the executive committee. As a result, Daan Vander Steene was appointed interim business director in 2020. In doing so, he was given specific assignments:

1. Daily leadership in times of corona
2. Researching the right leadership model for NTGent; realising it and restructuring the executive committee
3. Develop a new strategic plan for necessary infrastructure renewal
4. Conclusion of a new management agreement with the city of Ghent and realisation of a new recognition by the Flemish government

Daan Vander Steene's assignment started in September 2020 and will last for 3 years. The first decisions regarding the leadership model, following discussions with the board and management, took shape in the new organisation and management model and the new composition of the executive committee (see earlier)

1. **SAFETY, WELFARE AND INTEGRITY POLICY**

NTGent has employment regulations, internal regulations and a welcome brochure for employees.

There is a CPBW and an internal prevention adviser (in 2022, an additional employee will start training as a prevention adviser), supplemented by an External Service for Prevention and Protection at Work, being Liantis. There are two internal confidential counsellors. We work with a Global Prevention Plan (GPP) with the resulting Annual Action Plan (JAP). The CPBW concretises all this into annual and monthly action points, among other things.

**What are the next steps?**

In 2022, the board and management, in consultation with the CPBW, will work to develop a robust integrity policy.

Responding to the current need for more psychosocial protection for every employee, the psychosocial well-being discussed. We thus detect problems in time and can be more proactive act. We actively engage with partners, colleagues and sector organisations to make this happen.

The planned new actions are (as part of the 2022 Annual Action Plan):

1. A statement of principles around respectful behaviour at work
2. A code of conduct for employees
3. An accessible register of facts
4. An update of the psychosocial risks procedure

We also focus on implementation, internal sensitisation and communication so that respectful behaviour is not only guaranteed on paper, but it is also guaranteed in the daily working environment. Additional we commit to targeted training and support for managers.

Finally, NTGent will develop a procedure for reporting misconduct, an internal whistle-blowing. Thus, any person faced with wrongdoing - when the normal procedures do not respond adequately - report cases to management, board or external, and appropriate response is guaranteed.

1. **SUSTAINABLE**

NTGent recognises the current climate emergency. As a social actor, we play an exemplary role. That is why NTGent radically chooses sustainability as a core value for its operations. We commit ourselves to making maximum efforts towards sustainability in everything we do. In our quest for transparency and to be groundbreaking and inspiring for the industry.

Inspired by the United Nations Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) and in collaboration with other actors in the cultural field, NTGent will take the following actions:

1. In our decision-making and choice processes, we always use sustainability as one of the decisive arguments  
2. We develop an ambitious sustainability plan with strategic and operational objectives for the next 10 years  
3. We reduce our carbon footprint to the maximum, starting from the baseline measurement (carried out at the end of 2021), within all parts of our organisation (production, infrastructure, mobility, hospitality, ...)   
4. We develop our productions carbon-neutral within the shortest possible time with the necessary tools and measurement instruments  
5. We disseminate our tools and experiences locally and internationally  
6. We take the lead in reflection and debate both within the sector and across sectors  
7. We commit to the *Theatre Green Book*, to the four-year study of the European theatre alliance *STAGES* and for a feasibility study infrastructure with explicit attention to sustainability:

▪ The *Theatre Green Book* is a sector tool to work on sustainability in various facets of the (production, infrastructure and back office). NTGent is an active test partner in its development and will be the driving force for further dissemination in Flanders.  
▪ NTGent is co-founder of the European network *STAGES*, aimed at sustainabletheatre practice in an alliance of ten European theatres. Here, besides experiments, cross-sector collaborations between artists and scientists are being set up (see annex).  
▪ The feasibility study on the theatre infrastructure of the future will identify and investigate possibilities (see also V.VI.). We are doing this in a network with urban actors, the University of Ghent and the Space working group of the Ghent Arts Council

Naturally, we extend our commitment in Greentrack and the Climate Alliance. Also within these local context, NTGent wants to develop and support projects that lead to greater sustainability.

1. **INFRASTRUCTURE**

|  |
| --- |
| We stop working on our third stage ARCA. |

**6.1 Management and development**

NTGent owns three buildings (KNS/Schouwburg, Minnemeers and Arca) and a warehouse for storage. Each location has a unique place in our operation. But there are also growing needs and challenges (architectural, ecological, social) that make a future plan imminent. Because of the economic situation, we will no longer operate a third stage. We will therefore stop serving ARCA.

**A brief state of play**

Our **Theatre (Schouwburg)** reflects the DNA of our operation, an internationally acclaimed city theatre. Besides production, presentation and development, we house offices, archives and hospitality. In a first phase of the theatre's renovation, the theatre technical installation was renovated (2018) so that we meet the (international) quality requirements for this type of venue. A second renovation phase is needed to bring the building as a whole up to contemporary standards, both for the public and non-public parts. Preparations for the second phase will start in early 2022 with a feasibility study carried out by the Ghent City Development Agency.

**Minnemeers** offers space for production and presentation (with a black box) as well as offices, costume stock and our prized set studio. A thorough renovation is needed to bring the accommodation up to current quality expectations. Also, the current environmental licence expires in 2025. The question arises as to how we move forward with Minnemeers into the future.

We are quitting our third stage **Arca**. Due to the financial reality we are facing, we are forced to discontinue our rental contract with vzw Wido. All the more so because it would require too heavy an investment to guarantee good air quality, in accordance with the guidelines of the Flemish Government. Since the demand for rehearsal space in the sector is high, we want to investigate whether we can offer the space to artists or other arts organisations via the GKO (Gents Kunstenoverleg).

**Feasibility study master plan infrastructure**

Together with various urban actors (inside and outside the cultural sector), NTGent will work on a master plan for infrastructure, which will be submitted to the City and the Flemish government in early 2023. As part of this exercise, we want to think critically and constructively about:

1. societal evolutions concerning the use of space (infrastructure sharing, growing need for
2. to space for culture, theatre as an actor in the city, participation, ...)
3. needs of the (local and Flemish) cultural sector
4. needs of the public (accessibility of premises, seating comfort, suitable catering outlets, etc.)
5. today's sustainable challenges (insulation, energy consumption, solar panels,
6. water recovery, green roofs, new production methods, ...)
7. quality standards (air quality, heat recovery, etc.)

The feasibility study will be a transparent and participatory project. After all, our infrastructure must be a respond to many needs, both those of NTGent and those of its many partners in Flanders.

In the meantime, we continue to invest in quality technological equipment in terms of lighting, audio and video technology; and we are modernising our costume and set studio.

**6.2 Arsenal site development**

Together with many other (cultural) partners, NTGent developed a candidacy for a temporary artistic infill on the Arsenaal site in Gentbrugge from 2022 onwards. On this site (13ha), we want to actively participate in and take responsibility for the development of a temporary interdisciplinary art place at a strategic location on the edge of the city, with a local, urban and regional ambition.

NTGent facilitated the operation of the file from the start and, as a stable and reliable partner, helps create trust in the project among the various stakeholders. NTGent provides a contribution to the initial capital of this initiative of 50,000 euros.

**Vision Arsenal**

The management of the temporary cultural filling of the Arsenaalsite is facilitated by the broad Ghent cultural and arts field, backed by the commitment of players such as NTGent, Handelsbeurs, VierNulVier, CAMPO, Nucleo, LOD, les ballets C de la B, Democrazy, Minard ...

The site will be a shared space that encourages artistic cross-fertilisation and responds to the call to safeguard new, additional spaces in Ghent for art and culture.

Through open and targeted calls, we will actively seek small and large players who want to use the space for development (workshops, rehearsals, workshops, recordings, projects, etc.) and presentation (showcases, performances, concerts, exhibitions, etc.), and that for short and longer terms. It will be pre-eminently and place for debate on urban development and the place for art and culture in new urban development.

1. **ARCHIVE**

In the current policy period, under the impetus of and in **cooperation with Meemoo**, we have focused on the digitising our audiovisual material, in addition to, of course, the continued archiving of our production-related material according to the calibrated archiving methods. To ensure optimal preservation for the future and to achieve better access to our archive for a wider audience, a next step is needed. The question arises whether it is feasible and appropriate to continue managing and opening up our growing archive ourselves. Our analogue and digital archives (texts, posters, promo material, captures, trailers ...) are only opened up and accessible to a limited extent today. In addition, we have a wealth of material that is currently unmanaged and therefore unlocked: dramaturgic texts for productions, set drawings and models, costume stock and business archive documents.

# **Together with Toneelhuis,** NTGent is exploring the possibilities of transferring our multifaceted theatre archive to the management of a (nationally) recognised cultural archive institution. Together, we want to work out criteria for a possible transfer of ownership, as well as for future archive disclosure. The aim is to house both archives at the same archive institution, so that we can achieve greater visibility and accessibility of our rich theatre archive.

# Additional questions for organisations awarded a 10-year grant

|  |
| --- |
| - We clarify target audiences for audience broadening (see earlier)  - We end our collaboration with Luk Perceval (see earlier)  - We scrap Wildcard and appoint one curator per season in fingerprints (see earlier)  - We cancel Arca (see earlier) |

*Specifically for the preparation of this part of the policy plan, it is best to read the following articles:*

* *Article 59 from the* [*Arts Decree*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/60819130d129f6000c000353.pdf)*;*
* *Article 60 from the Arts Decree;*
* *Article 66, second paragraph from the* [*executive order*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/Uitvoering%20Kunstendecreet.pdf)
* *Article 80§2 from the executive order.*

How does your organisation take on a landscape-strengthening role within the (sub)sector ecosystem?

As a city theatre in Ghent, with urban, Flemish and international operations and appeal, our **landscape-strengthening** role is an essential objective. As described in this dossier, we started the policy period under Milo Rau in 2018 by throwing open our windows and doors. Since abandoning our ensemble as a premise, we have been producing in a fundamentally different way: with various creators - regulars and guests - to whom we give freedom, based on content, to compose the cast and crew. In that **constellation**, we pursue a meaningful mix that allows many 'voices': Lua Casella, Lara Staal, Jesse Vandamme, Ehsan Hemat, Martha Balthazar, Thom Luz, Princess Bangura, Miet Warlop, Alain Platel, Chokri Ben Chikha, Dalilla Hermans ...

In our **receptive** programme, too, which we organise in our three halls and sometimes on location, we make more possible today than ever before: not only by programming numerous guest performances via a buy-out fee, but also by additionally applying all kinds of forms of **cooperation**, such as an increased buy-out fee, extra rehearsal time, an assignment for our set studio, dramaturgical support and so on. This open approach, with extra production support of all kinds, is also expressed during the festivals we co-organise, such as *GIF*.

It is the consequence of an artistic operation that continues to question itself critically, and in which we want to assume maximum responsibility in the Flemish arts field. For the same reason, we hand over part of our receptive operation each season: in the new line *Fingerprints* (working title), *two curators* are commissioned to choose three titles each that we welcome. This too contributes to the **multi-voicedness** in house.

We also provide an annual budget for **development** that we use to create tailor-made pathways. We host WIPCOOP and *After Summer School*, two platforms that accelerate the **influx** of new creators.

We continue the line of our *School of Resistance* as a forum for reflection, together with *Etcetera*. We take the lead, within the Gents Kunstenoverleg, in the Arsenaal dossier: as an on-site work and presentation space to be explored, with a horizontal decision-making model. We support Covitesse's solidarity actions for freelance artists. And so on.

In all these lines, we show that NTGent is a solidary partner with **a sense of responsibility** towardsour sector. We do this with a view to the future - for the arts and the public. That is why we invest in a research project on ecology (STAGES), together with a series of international partners. For this, we also collaborate with educational institutions such as UGent and the KASK in Ghent.

Why is long-term funding necessary for the functioning of your organisation?

Our operation, artistic as well as business, has a high **complexity** that results from our mission, and from the way we fulfil this mission. NTGent actively focuses on the five functions and these pillars interact more than ever. Moreover, our action radius is greater than ever, with tours and projects in Flanders and Europe but also beyond. We invest in co-productions and presentations that are both local and international. In doing so, we make maximum use of our know-how, our resources and our infrastructure to also pursue an **innovative** policy, both artistically and commercially, with a view to a sustainable arts practice that is future-proof. This leads to numerous **processes** that are of longer duration.

Some examples: a large-scale project like *All Greeks, which* provides a low-threshold but equally **challenging framework** for both local players and international institutions, requires a substantive, business and logistical preparation that quickly takes several years to get all partners on the same page. The same goes for the European trajectory called STAGES, where we bridge art and science and an annual forum is organised by one of the international partners: this is not possible without intense preparation and follow-up, if only to align the respective schedules of all involved, read: theatre producers and universities **worldwide**.

Our investment, together with colleagues in Antwerp and Brussels, to further explore the genre of 'theatre film' through quality co-productions, with partners in the Flemish **audiovisual** sector and finding new funding, is also innovative and thus requires the necessary time: to make this genre artistically and business-wise sound.

These are not processes that are completed in two or three years: between the concept phase, the search and finding of partners, the clicking of commitments, the actual realisation and after-care and evaluation, five, six years or more easily pass. These timescales are also logical if, peculiar to our mission - but also to the spirit of the times - you pursue a horizontal working method in the decision-making process. The more partners there are at the table, the slower things sometimes go. On the other hand, you do create a larger and often more sustainable **support base** this way.

The latter also applies to opening up the former NMBS site called Arsenaal. From the outset, we embarked on this project as an important opportunity for numerous players in Ghent: by mapping out the wishes and needs in a **transparent manner**, including through the Ghent Arts Consultation. Anyway, in terms of infrastructure, there is a reality that calls for a healthy and smart long-term policy. NTGent is responsible for three playgrounds in Ghent. This infrastructure needs to be renovated. Two feasibility studies are being launched (see Infrastructure) to arrive at a new **master plan**. Realising this will again require long-term commitment.

Maximising our **income is** another important reason. To build a reliable relationship with investors, a long-term relationship and planning is necessary. Moreover, the only efficiency gain is still to be gained from better cooperation with our partners. Here, too, NTGent wants to play a positive role in the sector: by being true to our values - transparent, sustainable, groundbreaking, collaborative and vulnerable - we enter into dialogue with all kinds of partners. This dialogue requires **stability** and trust, to build truly sustainable relationships in our network.

Explain how your organisation is sustainably committed to tradition and how it focuses on innovation within the different parts of its content and business operations. Explain how it takes an exemplary role in this.

An example of an artistic line combining tradition and innovation is *Histoire(s) du Théâtre.* As described earlier, it involves creations with a high degree of reflection: we invite a director or creator to look back on his or her artistic trajectory. By extension, it is about a commentary on theatre through the years or even centuries: how does it function? **What are the traditions? How do we look at it today**?

For instance, choreographer and director Faustin Linyekula based his contribution in this series - *Histoire(s) du Théâtre II -* on a 1974 historical performance by the National Ballet of Zaire/Congo. As a child, he saw this production on television - where it was repeatedly broadcast. It led to a *re-enactment* with some dancers from the original cast, in a new narrative perspective including actor Oscar Van Rompay.

Spanish theatre director Angélica Liddell also looked back at her own trajectory and traditions within theatre and performance art in her recent creation, *Liebestod* (2021). We continue this line, including Miet Warlop and other reputable directors in Europe.

The *All Greeks* festival is on the same lines. Through our past and world heritage - in this case, Greek **tragedy** as one of the oldest genres on stage - we take stock of today and tomorrow, artistically but also socially. It is an exceptional project with as many as 32 titles that we intend to give an artistic translation, either once or through a play series. The unprecedented scale and pronounced ambition of this seasonal festival, a collaboration with IIPM in Berlin, among others, also calls for a solid, proactive and transparent business operation*,* both with local and international partners. The **added value** of *All Greeks* within our *School of Ghent philosophy* is that it makes a connection across a number of partitions: between small and big players, between different countries and continents, between festivals and mainstream producers, between universities and governments, and so on. But also between our ancient European history and our global future, as a global *community*. Achieving this in a healthy and sustainable way is a big challenge, but we note that a lot of organisations are eager to enter this artistic story precisely because it is so exceptional.

Another example of a file between tradition and innovation is the investment, together with colleagues at KVS and Toneelhuis, in the **hybrid** genre 'theatre film', as a missing link. See elsewhere in this dossier.

How does your organisation set an example where public outreach and outreach is concerned?

**Public outreach**

Since the start of our current policy period in 2018, we have been pulling audience engagement to the **core** of our operation. In our communication, this is symbolically expressed through slogans such as *#createyourownclassics* and 'a theatre for everyone, by everyone'. NTGent emphatically wants to place theatre at the centre of society and makes this movement by not only appealing to the audience, but also **activating it**. We do this in our *people's projects* in which non-professionals also have a place, thus generating broader interest on the audience side. We often combine this with a - at first sight - simple idea or concept: a theatrical interpretation of a famous painting (*Lam Gods*), a performance about pain (*Anatomy of Pain*), a performance with and by 'difficult young people' (*Dissident*), and so on. These are **readable concepts** that invite a much wider audience than, say, a re-enactment of a classic, or the adaptation of a film or novel.

On the basis of these artistic ideas and concepts, we organise an operation that is as diverse and inclusive as possible: through a wide range of threshold-reducing activities, including the **theatre tablet** as a new tool in the context of integral accessibility, and an intensive school operation. We organise a neighbourhood jury, workshops and *Mirror projects*, each with its own autonomy and finality, and we gather and share knowledge about participatory theatre, together with a number of partners. We also provide **white space** in both our productions and our receptive programme, through the *wildcard* and *Fingerprints* respectively*.* For this too, we work with partners such as WIPCOOP and Victoria Deluxe.

In short, by striving to maximise social **representation** on stage, as well as through the tools and policies mentioned, we invest daily in audience broadening, in our venues but also **online**. Ultimately, it is about the content coherence of our projects and presentations: is it accessible and attractive? Is each artistic idea sufficiently developed and diversified, also through additional products such as theatre films? Are we credible in this? It is an ambition in which we strive and also make **multi-voicedness** possible: by decentralising and even outsourcing part of our operation, for instance to guest curators with their own vision. In this way, we hope for a multiplier effect, locally but also internationally. That NTGent offers something that benefits the most diverse groups, with a distinctly **emancipatory** character, moreover.

**Audience broadening**

NTGent exists by grace of its audience. With our public activities, we want to reach a large and diverse audience: local and international, live and digital. To achieve this, we rely on two pillars: integral accessibility and audience expansion.

1. We aim for an 80% occupancy rate (with a 60% minus) and 20% new customers after 5 years.
2. We focus on young people through targeted communication actions, an extensive school operation, mirror projects and framing of performances aimed at young people.
3. We target people of colour through, among other things, actions aimed at Ghent neighbourhoods and collaborations with socio-cultural organisations.
4. We focus on people with disabilities by investing in accessible infrastructure and making performances accessible to deaf/hearing impaired and blind/visually impaired people via the theatre tablet (audio description, Flemish Sign Language interpreters), surtitles, loops.
5. We want to offer people in a precarious financial situation the chance to participate in our offerings through UiTPas, and Enchanté.
6. Through co-presentations, house swaps, joint promotion with partners and (inter)national tours, we tap into new audiences.
7. We develop theatre films that also appeal to audiences outside the theatre.

Demonstrate that your organisation stands out from similar organisations in one or more of the following areas:

* turnover;

We refer to the section on *Budget*, where our business plan was explained. NTGent wants to realise a turnover of more than 10M euro. This is only possible through sufficient own income. With such a turnover, we realise a confident long-term perspective.

* collaborations with artists and other actors;

We refer to our plans for this, within the five functions, under *Content operation.*

* network of partners;

For this, we refer to the network we list under *Positioning and Cooperation.*

* entrepreneurship;

NTGent distinguishes itself in its entrepreneurship in several areas. A very important one is the strong expansion of the Tax Shelter in cooperation with investing entrepreneurs. We are the main shareholder of the cooperative 'Tickets Gent'. We put our weight behind several collaborations and festival initiatives in Ghent, Flanders and internationally to enable more artistic activity. We undertake - without funds from the Flemish Arts Decree - in the development of the theatre film. Further cooperation in the sector is an important challenge for the future. NTGent wants to be a reliable partner in those collaborations.

* audience reach;

NTGent experienced a sharp rise in its audience numbers in artistic director Milo Rau's first two seasons. In Ghent, the audience numbers went from 28,000 (17-18) to 41,000 (18-19), and the auditorium occupancy rose from less than 60% to 80%. Especially the in-house productions were often sold out well before the premiere.

Notable: NTGent reaches more audiences on tour than at home.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| - | at NTGent | public outreach    on tour | total |
| season |
| 17-'18 | 28000 | 13000 | 41000 |
| 18-'19 | 41000 | 42000 | 83000 |
| 19-'20 | 36000 | 28000 | 64000 |
| 20-'21 | 17000 | 18000 | 35000 |
| 21-'22 | 27783 | 29587 | 57370 |

We aim for a minimum 60% occupancy rate and aim for 80%. 20% new customers after 5 years and 20% more young people. This is possible by increasing the number of activities and intensifying our communication efforts, focusing on hard-to-reach target groups, sociocultural and civil society organisations.

That 'normal' communication around an in-house production consists on the one hand of a number of classic elements (seasonal brochure, posters, flyers, trailer, newsletters, direct mails, website ...), on the other hand from a mix of an intensive and well-thought-out social media plan and a thorough press operation. NTGent distinguishes itself here because communication via that social media plan and the (national and international) press often starts months before the premiere. Casting calls are distributed via social media and the press, rehearsals are open to the press (and the public), which means that there is often already ample national and international press attention, long before the usual press reviews.

Over the past few years, we have put a lot of effort into further digitalising our communication: thanks to video screens on our buildings, there are hardly (paper) posters anymore, the programme booklet went 100% digital (this approach is well received by the public) and our seasonal brochure is now also available digitally (via the Readymag format).

Besides classic social media (FB, Instagram, Twitter), we are experimenting with Spotify (we are working on a musical line, where music from our creations will be listenable via Spotify) and keeping our finger on the pulse for new developments.

We are putting even more effort into storytelling in the coming years, showing the stories behind the scenes:

who are our people, our creators, and what do they do? One storytelling line is already visible to you on our site: *People of NTGent*, highlighting staff members of our house.

* international operation.

NTGent is one of the few organisations in Flanders, and by extension in Belgium, with an **artistic director** who comes from abroad. In the wake of Swiss Milo Rau, other international profiles have come to Ghent: dramaturgists such as Carmen Hornbostel and Giacomo Bisordi, but also cameraman Moritz von Dungern, sound designer Jens Baudisch and scenographer Anton Lukas, who designed part of the house style in our buildings. This further internationalisation felt familiar, after a number of previous co-productions with, among others, Thalia Theater, Münchner Kammerspiele, the Ruhrtriënnale, Rote Fabrik... As described in our *II.III. History.*

Since our relaunch in 2018, NTGent's international appeal has increased significantly. We notice this in the frequent **press reactions**. At our premieres, for more than three years now, reviewers from *The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, Le Figaro, Libération, Frankfürter Allgemeine, Süddeutsche Zeitung, De Volkskrant, NRC, Het Parool, among others,* have been regular guests (see appendix).

The number of applications for **internships** at NTGent, for example as a dramaturge or director's assistant, has also increased enormously and internationalised, with applicants from France, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, as well as Hong Kong and the United States. At the same time, we are betting on long-term forms of cooperation, as described elsewhere in this dossier, investing, for example, in a new film school in Mosul, Iraq. And we have developed a reflection line with *School of Resistance with* **global** reach, with guests such as: Vanessa Nakata (Uganda), Maciej Gosniowski (Poland), Susan Buck-Morrs (US), Nora Amin (Egypt), Andreas Malm (Sweden), Lynne Segal (UK), Ece Temelkuran (Turkey), Sylvestre Bisimwa (Congo), Achille Mbembe (Cameroon), Vandana Shiva (India).

It is the path we want to pursue through our five functions as *School of Ghent*. Thus, we combine research, presentation and reflection in the *STAGES* track, with numerous international partners, within but also outside Europe. Similarly, with our Berlin partner IIPM, we are organising the festival *All Greeks* in 2023-24, again with a dimension that transcends Europe, with partners and companies in Brazil, Cuba, Iraq, Beijing ... So the road is open to a sustainable **global network**.

# Additional questions for organisations with specific core tasks

*Specifically for the preparation of this part of the policy plan, it is best to read the following articles:*

* *Article 67-74 from the* [*Arts Decree*](https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/sites/default/files/2021-07/60819130d129f6000c000353.pdf)*.*

Indicate how your organisation will fulfil the core tasks in the coming policy period.

[[1]](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=nl%2DNL&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fntgent.sharepoint.com%2Fteams%2FCommunicatie%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F21b4af7b468f47c0937aeff29ed3c194&wdlor=c32564607-96D8-406C-B4F7-7136ADD51A87&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=F42EB758-3507-42F3-9BA0-717BE713BAC1&wdorigin=Outlook-Body.Sharing.ServerTransfer&wdhostclicktime=1681215215561&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=ba3e6cd1-c194-4ce3-9b01-446bfeae1e66&usid=ba3e6cd1-c194-4ce3-9b01-446bfeae1e66&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Normal&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftnref1) NTGent will receive an annual amount of €3,379,200 from 2023 onwards. For 2023, this will be indexed €3,498,747.

[[2]](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=nl%2DNL&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fntgent.sharepoint.com%2Fteams%2FCommunicatie%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F21b4af7b468f47c0937aeff29ed3c194&wdlor=c32564607-96D8-406C-B4F7-7136ADD51A87&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=F42EB758-3507-42F3-9BA0-717BE713BAC1&wdorigin=Outlook-Body.Sharing.ServerTransfer&wdhostclicktime=1681215215561&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=ba3e6cd1-c194-4ce3-9b01-446bfeae1e66&usid=ba3e6cd1-c194-4ce3-9b01-446bfeae1e66&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Normal&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftnref2) Regarding seniority, as recommended, we have calculated the average additional cost for this application. This amounts to a

average payroll increase of 150k. Since we want to correctly reflect what our needs are, we have also

taken into account the natural turnover of employees, for this reason we applied a 50% adjustment,

with other be, only 75,000€ has been taken into account for the baremic increases.