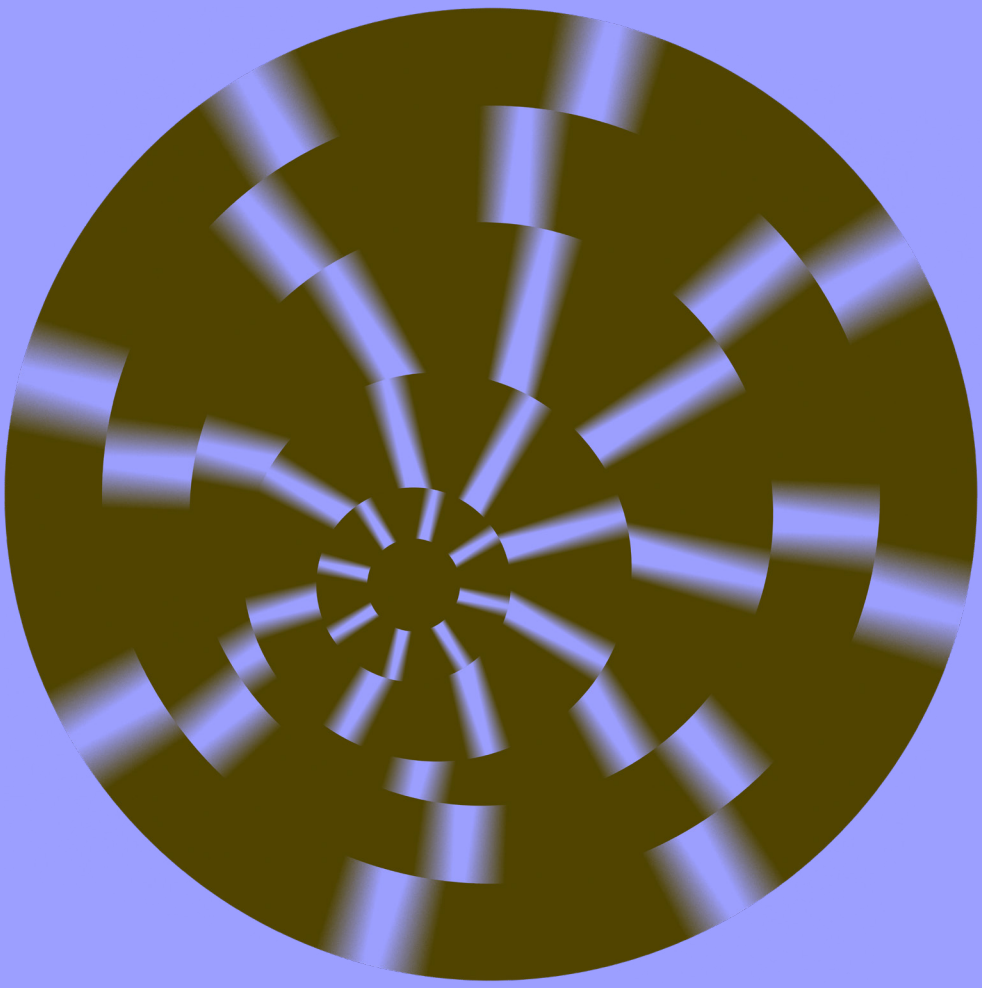


GOING OFF CENTRE

ELIA Biennial Conference 2026
18 — 21 November
Zwolle, The Netherlands

Hosted by ArtEZ University of the Arts

ArtEZ
University
of the Arts

ELIA

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THEME

In volatile times it becomes clear that no centre is fixed or permanent. When things fall apart, both crisis and imagination arise. We find ourselves on edge.

It is arts schools and socio-cultural institutions who maintain open spaces for multi-dimensional and divergent thinking – trying to convene shared community spaces.

Polarisation is the collective shift awayfrom communal centres leading to deeper misunderstanding and eroding common values. As a result, institutions that gather and embolden communities through the arts, education, heritage, and social justice can struggle to re-imagine and risk being dismantled.

For this reason, ELIA Biennial Conference 2026 calls on artistic practitioners, researchers, educators, students, administrative staff, technicians and leaders to ‘go off centre’. We ask participants to step out of binary-thinking comfort zones, pull back from the mainstream towards the alternative, break from the fulcrum,

and head to the margins. We encourage a rethinking of positions and roles held within these shifting forcefields.

Hosted by ArtEZ University of the Arts, over four days in the city of Zwolle, participants will explore the act and art of decentring and embrace the tension this brings. Through provocative keynotes, paradoxical presentations, imaginative and strategic workshops, cultural tours, and artistic interventions, we will reposition the art school not by restoring a lost centre, but by reforming as a body of knowing[1]: a living, breathing whole that resists being bricked in by definitions, dogmas, or hierarchies.

With strong and open hearts, we seek to create new and expansive centres of artistic and academic integrity. Join us.

1 Instead of a body of knowledge (as is common in education), a body of knowing is porous. It breathes, doubts, forgets, is vulnerable and mobile. It stands open to voices that are usually not heard, and to ways of knowing that cannot be captured in categories, language, frameworks, or curricula. M.Boumeester, "On the Ontology of Synthetic Desire: The Politics of Recursive Imaging" in Cadernos PROARQ, (Rio de Janeiro: FAU, 2025).

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY
17 NOVEMBER

Tuesday 17 November

Ontology of the Image

14:00 - 15:00	ArtEZ Zwolle: ECHO Rhijnvis Feithlaan 50, Zwolle	optional

Tour of ArtEZ Arnhem

15:00 - 17:00	ArtEZ Arnhem Onderlangs 9, Arnhem	optional

Tour of ArtEZ Academy of Music in Enschede

15:00 - 17:00	ArtEZ Conservatorium Enschede Van Essengaarde 10, Enschede	optional

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY
18 NOVEMBER

Wednesday 18 November

Registration open

09:00 – 18:30 De Spiegel

Optional Activities

10:00 – 12:00

Tour of ArtEZ Academy in Zwolle

Meeting Point: ArtEZ Zwolle,
Rhijnvis Feithlaan 50

Tour of ArtEZ Conservatorium in Zwolle

Meeting Point: ArtEZ Conservatorium Zwolle,
Aan de Stadsmuur 88

Tours of city

Meeting Point: De Spiegel

Image, Art, Practices and Education: Triple Book Presentation by ArtEZ Press and Valiz

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

The Backstage Conversation Room

De Spiegel: Kleedkamer 12, Kleedkamer 2, White Cube, Rooftopbar

Off-Centre Coordination: Rethinking Time, Space, and Access

De Spiegel: KEES

Meet & mingle session

12:00 – 13:00 De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

Lunch

13:00 – 14:00 De Spiegel: Foyers

Official Opening
Opening keynote by Cissie Fu

14:00 – 15:45 De Spiegel: Mateboerzaal + Live Stream

Coffee break

15:45 – 16:30 De Spiegel: Foyers

Breakout session 1

16:30 – 18:15

Open Session

De Spiegel: Rooftopbar

Arts Education for All!

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal + Live Stream

Workshopping ‘Impossible Conversations’

Pedagogical Protest

De Spiegel: White Cube

ÓRTESIS URBANA (Urban Orthosis). Community Urban Intervention

De Spiegel: KEES

The (Not Yet) Handicapped

De Spiegel: WarmingUp

Artist Work in the Post-Rural Context: Everything You Want Was Already Here

Curatorial Practices in Music

Cultuurschip Thor

Rap on the Table: The Aesthetics of the Otherworldly

How do I Communicate Sringara Rasa (the Emotion Love) Through Pulaneri Vazhakku (Mode of ‘Sensing’)?

Hedon: Abbey Road

Until Between: Listening as Decentring

Love Letters to Europe: An Album Without a Centre

Hedon: Kleine Zaal

Creative Pedagogy Across Borders: Innovative Models for Global Learning in Art and Design Education

Obscura: Heterotopic Performance Pedagogy

What If...?

Achtergracht: Podium

Reclaiming AI

Future Storytelling Lab

Posters exhibition visit

18:45 – 19:30 | De Spiegel: Foyers, De Cortegaerdtzaal

Bridging the Gap
On Gaza
The Pola's Monument: Struggle, Culture, and Identity
SATLE Pathfinder Project
PULSE: Designing Interaction Off-Centre
Genuine Connections
An Atlas for Upending the World
Art as Stance
Tactile Archive: Making at the Margins
Aviform

The Backstage Conversation Room

18:45 – 19:45 | De Spiegel: KEES

Dinner

19:30 – 20:15 | De Spiegel: Foyers

Cultural programme by master's students in Classical Music and Jazz & Pop, inspired by the theme 'Going Off Centre'

20:30 | De Spiegel: White Cube, Achtergracht, De Staatsmanzaal, Doopsgezinde Kerk, Cultuurschip Thor, Het Academiehuis

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER

Thursday 19 November

We Walk the Line of the Water Star

07:30 – 09:00	Meeting Point: De Spiegel	optional

The Backstage Conversation Room

08:15 - 09:15	De Spiegel: Kleedkamer 12, Kleedkamer 2, White Cube, Rooftopbar

Registration & coffee

08:30 - 09:30	De Spiegel: Foyers

Panel conversation with Asma Derja, John Johnston, Miguel Ángel Vargas Rubio & Katrien van Beurden

09:30 – 11:00	De Spiegel: Mateboerzaal + Live Stream

Coffee break

11:00 – 11:30	De Spiegel: Foyers

Breakout session 2

11:30 – 13:00

Between Openness and Responsibility: Workshop Masters in Contemporary Art and Design Education

The Ontology of the Image

Feral Roaming with Dark Forests: Methods for Multispecies Knowing

De Spiegel: WarmingUp

Unveiling the Black Box: Decentred Authorship and Ethical Responsibility in AI-Driven Film Practices

Creatively Resisting Carceral Capitalism

European AI Commons – Shaping AI for the Creative and Cultural Industries

De Spiegel: Rooftopbar

Shaping the Future of Art Education

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

Go Off Centre: Where the Margin Becomes the Method

De Spiegel: KEES

The Unexpected Encounter

De Spiegel: White Cube

Rebalancing Power in Times of Resistance: Transforming Learning Cultures in Serbian Arts Education

Community Curricula and the Neoliberal University: The Paradox of Postgraduate Priorities

Doing Democracy is Actually Care Work in Business Suit Drag

Hedon: Grote Zaal

Blending Research, Art, Education and Action: ABAR Explained

Out of Sight: Stories of Homeless Women in the City of Amsterdam

Hedon: Kleine Zaal

ELIA Community Hubs – Connecting the Dots

Cultuurschip Thor

Off-Centre Architectures of Belonging: Serious Gaming as Pedagogical and Spatial Agency

Achtergracht: Podium

Learning from the Nervous System: Possible Threads for Linking Neuroscience and the Arts

OPEN UP

Future Storytelling Lab

Lunch

13:00 – 14:30 De Spiegel: Foyers

ELIA Community Hubs Moment

14:30 – 16:30

Constellating Urgencies in Artistic Research

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

Accountability, Identity and Becoming: EDI Beyond Aspiration

De Spiegel: WarmingUp

Students

De Spiegel: KEES

Living Lineages

De Spiegel: White Cube

Global Connectedness

De Spiegel: Rooftopbar

Co-creating Futures: Technology, Expertise and Arts Education

Future Storytelling Lab

Arts & Ecology

Hedon: Kleine Zaal

PIE: Off-Centre Internationalisation in Higher Art Education

Cultuurschip Thor

Coffee break

16:30 – 17:30 De Spiegel: Foyers + Hedon

Breakout session 3

17:30 – 18:30

The Mediterranean of Civil Resistance: When Artistic Practices Assume a Civic Function

From White Box to Brown Earth: Alternative Pedagogies in Fashion Education

De Spiegel: Rooftopbar

Fallowness: The Importance of Being Still in an Age of Urgency

On Shyness: A Nordic/Pan-African Approach

De Spiegel: Artiestenfoyer
Meeting Point: Registration Desk

The Role of Art in Wartime Ukraine: Socio-political Poster as Archive, Memory and Emotional Survival

Shared Migrants (Archive): Centring Migrant Knowledge in Irish Art Spaces

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

From Embodiment to Disembodiment: Shaping Our Movement in the AI Age

De Spiegel: White Cube

Common Stage: Collective Improvisational Performances with a Diverse Community

Cultuurschip Thor

Sediments

De Spiegel: KEES

Off-Centre Coordination:
Rethinking Time, Space and Access

De Spiegel: WarmingUp

Listening and Sounding at an Angle

Achtergracht: Podium

Kill your Darlings

Free Advice or Asking for a Friend

Hedon: Kleine Zaal

When Narratives Become Shared Living Structures

Future Storytelling Lab

Dinner

19:15 De Rode Hal, Hanzelaan 95B

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY
20 NOVEMBER

Friday 20 November

The Hum of Memory

08:00 – 09:00 Meeting Point: De Spiegel

ADrift in Zwolle

08:00 – 09:00 Zwolle Canal + Future Storytelling Lab

Registration & coffee

08:30 – 09:30 De Spiegel: Foyers

Breakout session 4

09:30 – 10:45

ELIA Dialogue Series 2026 Session #4: Art as a Space for Dialogue

Cultuurschip Thor

Avoiding the Centre: A Creative and Political Moving Practice

De Spiegel: WarmingUp

Comics Against Dominant Narrative Frameworks

Practising Futures / Future Practices: Ecocentric Life Skills in Art & Design Education

De Spiegel: KEES

Listening to Noisy Intra-Actions

De Spiegel: Rooftopbar

The Curious Research Method

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

Shifting Mixed-Able Perspective in Dance

De Spiegel: White Cube

Ways of Being: An Off-Centre Experiment in Creative Education

Future Storytelling Lab + Live Stream

What If Workshop

Achtergracht: Podium

Models of Misuse: Creative Explorations of Failure

Hedon: Kleine Zaal

Labyrinth of Becoming:
A Sensory Journey through Burnout

Hedon: Grote Zaal + Abbey Road

Coffee break

10:45 – 11:30 De Spiegel: Foyers + Hedon

Breakout session 5

11:30 – 13:00

Failure, Designed

De Spiegel: De Cortegaerdtzaal

Invisible Courses

De Spiegel: KEES

Going Off Centre: Paradox-as-Praxis and the Art School as Social Sculpture

At the Curricular Periphery:
A Fishbowl on Off-Centre Learning Opportunities

De Spiegel: White Cube

We Won’t Stay Quiet: Students, Change, and Collective Action

"Gulaš" the Student-made Zine

Achtergracht: Podium

Becoming Floodplain -
Somatic Ecologies of the In-Between

De Spiegel: WarmingUp

Be With You / Be With Me: Digital Narratives To Be with What's Difficult

Future Storytelling Lab

Making the Arts Accessible for People on the Margins: Including People with Disabilities in Collegiate Performing Arts Education

Keepsaking Speech

Going Off Centre in Music Therapy: Decolonising Symptom-Reduction Practices (The Dar al-Kalima University Bethlehem Experience)

Cultuurschip Thor

Interdependence, a Crip-centered Collaborative Learning Practice

Hedon: Kleine Zaal

Off Centre Contact Zones

From Polarised Currents to Shared Horizons in Arts institutions

Hedon: Grote Zaal

Lunch

13:00 – 14:30 De Spiegel: Foyers

Mobile visits

14:30 – 16:30 Meeting Point: De Spiegel

1

Zwolle City

Museum de Fundatie
ANNO Stadsmuseum
De Verhalenboot

Cultuurship Thor
Zwolle Street Art Tour
Zwolle Canal Cruise + Adrift in Zwolle

2

Off-Centre Explorations

Koelwaterhal - From power plant to cultural space
Dressed to Draw - Victor Elberse

3

Het Engelse Werk

Beau Voerman - Oilfactory designer and artistic researcher

Drawn by the Body Janneke Berendsen,
ArtEZ University of the Arts

4

De Makersfabriek

Roestug and Ragnarøk
in Makersfabriek

5

Off-Centre in the Neighbourhood

The Power of Failure
WIJZ

Coffee break

16:30 – 17:00	Academiehuis Grote Kerk, Grote Markt 18

Closing keynote by Jerry Afriyie & closing ceremony

17:00 – 18:30	Academiehuis Grote Kerk + Live Stream

Closing dinner

18:30 – 20:00	Academiehuis Grote Kerk

Closing party

20:00	Bloopers, Voorstraat 7-9

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY
21 NOVEMBER

Saturday 21 November

Registration & coffee

08:30 – 09:30	Odeon, Blijmarkt 25

ELIA General Assembly

09:30 – 13:00	Odeon: Dommerholtzaal + Live Stream

DURING

During

THIS IS SO LIMINAL

De Rode Hal

Off-Centre Frequencies

Future Storytelling Lab

Presenting together with students of Artisteducator in Theater

De Spiegel

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR



JERRY AFRIYIE

Poet and the co-founder of Nederland Wordt Beter Foundation

SPEAKER

Jerry Afriyie is a poet and the co-founder of Nederland Wordt Beter Foundation, where he provides guest lectures on anti-Black racism and awareness-raising projects about the colonial and slavery past of the Netherlands.

Jerry coordinated the production and publication of a free-to-download curriculum on the history of colonialism and slavery, to be used in classrooms throughout the Netherlands, from primary schools to universities. Companies, schools, and municipalities in the Netherlands call upon the organisation's expertise to combat everyday racism, social exclusion, and inequality.

Nederland Wordt Beter was one of the main organisers of the Black Lives Matter protests in the Netherlands in 2020. Through the efforts of Jerry Afriyie, Nederland Wordt Beter, and other anti-racist organisations, the government has acknowledged that institutional racism exists in the Netherlands, following apologies by the Dutch Prime Minister and the Dutch King in 2022 and 2023.



ASMA DERJA

Founder of the Ethical AI Alliance

SPEAKER

Asma Derja is the founder of the Ethical AI Alliance, a transdisciplinary community advancing AI governance grounded in human rights, institutional accountability, and pluralist perspectives.

She brings over 15 years of experience in technology strategy and institutional transformation, including senior roles at AWS and Deloitte across four continents. At the Alliance, she convenes practitioners, policymakers, civil society, and researchers working on practical governance frameworks.

She is a keynote speaker, guest lecturer, and author, and is known for bringing critical, non-technical perspectives on AI into educational, cultural, and policy spaces. She is based in Spain.



CISSIE FU

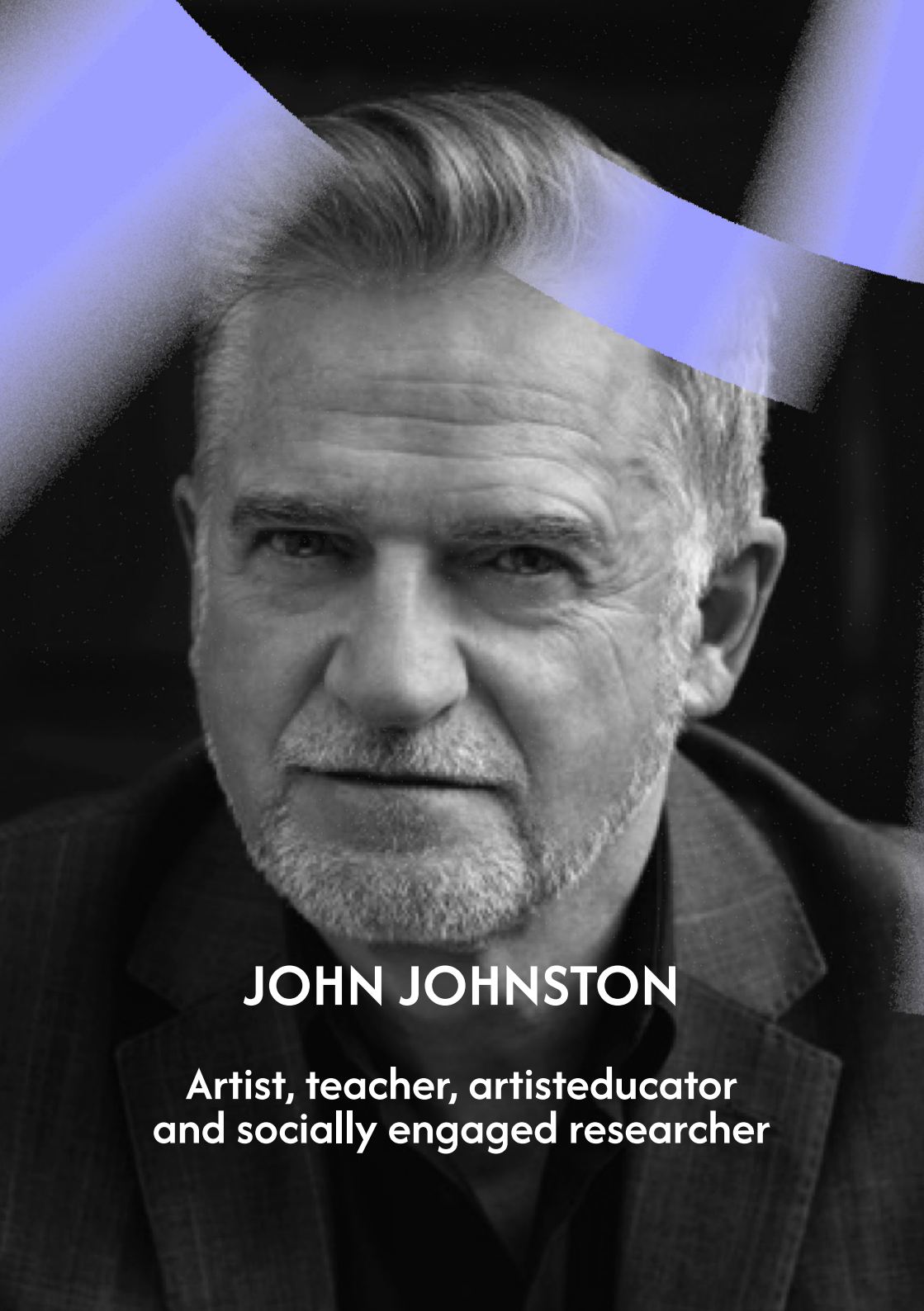
Political theorist and co-founder of the Political Arts Initiative

SPEAKER

Dr. Cissie Fu (AB Harvard; MSt, MSc, DPhil Oxford) is a political theorist and co-founder of the Political Arts Initiative, which invites 21st-century imag-e-nations of the political through digital technology and the creative and performing arts.

Born in Hong Kong, Cissie taught and performed across cultural and educational institutions in Asia, Europe, UK, and the Americas. She joined University of the Arts Singapore in 2022 as Head of the McNally School of Fine Arts at LASALLE College of the Arts, after having served as Dean of the Faculty of Culture + Community at Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver and, earlier, Director of Studies at Leiden University College in The Hague.

Cissie's research connects politics, philosophy, and performance. Her interests in relational aesthetics and decolonial action, combined with her experiments in experiential and transformative organisational design, inform her approach to institution-building as a creative, critical, and communal cultural practice.



JOHN JOHNSTON

Artist, teacher, artisteducator
and socially engaged researcher

SPEAKER

John Johnston is an artist, teacher, artisteducator and socially engaged researcher. He was born in Belfast in 1962, where he lived and made art against the backdrop of the political and sectarian violence that took the lives of over 4000 people. In 1992, he made the conscious choice to step away from his studio practice to study art education at Goldsmiths University of London.

He currently holds the inaugural UNESCO Chair in Issues Based Art and Conflict Prevention at the ArtEZ University of the Arts in the Netherlands.



MIGUEL ÁNGEL VARGAS RUBIO

Art historian, theatre director, researcher, and cultural mediator

SPEAKER

Miguel Ángel Vargas Rubio is a Spanish Romani art historian, theatre director, researcher, and cultural mediator. His work moves between artistic creation and historical research, exploring Romani memory, flamenco, urban space, and the politics of representation and cultural institutions.

He has worked internationally across performance, curatorial practice, cultural mediation, and research, collaborating with institutions and initiatives including Central Saint Martins, Central European University, RomArchive, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, and Spain's Ministry of Culture. From 2018 to 2025, he worked in the Cultural Mediation Service of Seville City Council (ICAS).

He currently serves as Arts and Culture Section Coordinator at the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) and is completing a PhD in Contemporary History at Universidad Pablo de Olavide. His research examines urban racialisation, Romani memory, cultural mediation, and the politics of public space in contemporary Seville.



KATRIEN VAN BEURDEN

Actress, theatre maker,
director & founder of Troupe Courage

SPEAKER

Katrien van Beurden is an actress, theatre maker, director and founder and artistic director of the international theatre company Troupe Courage. As an actress, she works in theatre, film and television.

For almost thirty years, Katrien has been travelling the world with Troupe Courage, creating theatre in a wide variety of venues and under a wide variety of circumstances.

In May 2023, Katrien van Beurden was appointed Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau (Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau). She received this honour for her many years of work across borders, in which she uses stories to question the present, makes theatre accessible and creates social impact.



JENNIFER MUNTSLAG

Presenter, actress, MC
and performer

MODERATOR

Jennifer Muntslag, also known as JNM the Naked MC, is a versatile presenter, actress, MC and performer who has built a strong reputation within the Cultural & Creative sector. Professionally, she is known for her dynamic and energetic stage presence, where she brings events to life with her unique style of hosting and audience interaction.

As “The Naked MC”, Jennifer is known for her “unfiltered” and honest style. The name “Naked” refers to her drive to speak and act without masks or facades, which imbues her presentations with authenticity and power. She is not afraid to share personal experiences and encourages others to do the same.

Map Zwolle

Venues Wednesday - Friday

1. Theater De Spiegel,
   Spinhuisplein 14
2. Hedon,
   Burgemeester Drijbersingel 7
3. Future Storytelling Lab (FSL),
   Burgemeester Drijbersingel 25
4. Achtergracht: Podium,
   Burgemeester Drijbersingel 25
5. Cultuurschip Thor,
   Pletterstraat 24

Venue Saturday

6. Schouwburg Odeon,
   Blijmarkt 25

Other

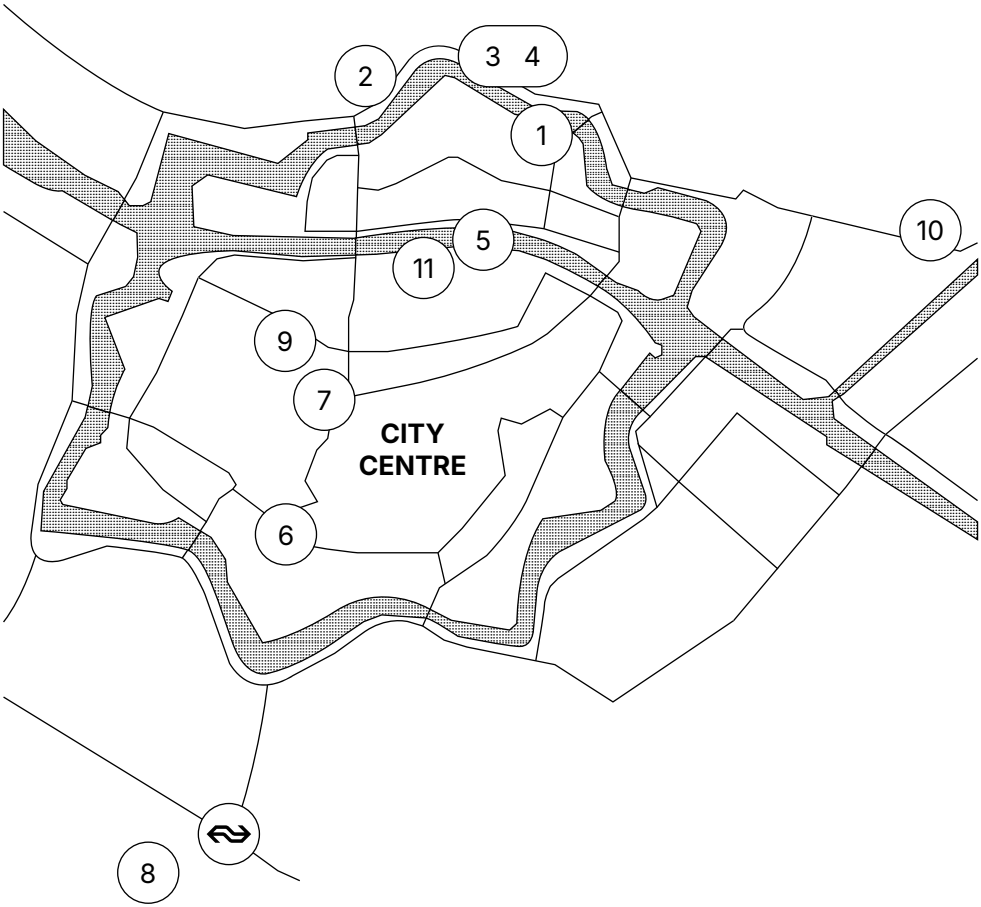
7. Academiehuis Grote Kerk,
   Grote Markt 18
8. De Rode Hal,
   Hanzelaan 95B
9. Bloopers,
   Voorstraat 7-9

General

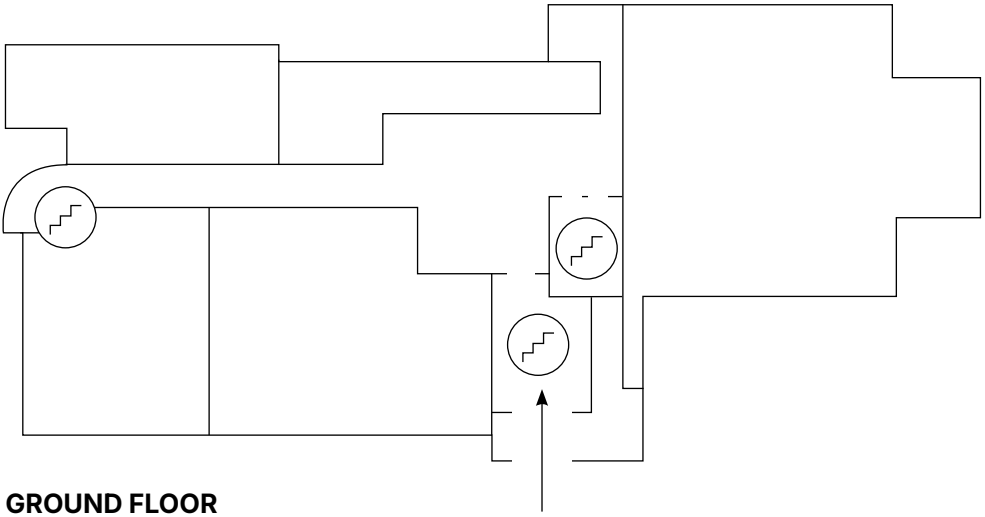
10 ArtEZ University of the Arts,
Rhijnvis Feithlaan 50

11 ArtEZ Conservatory,
Aan de Stadsmuur 88

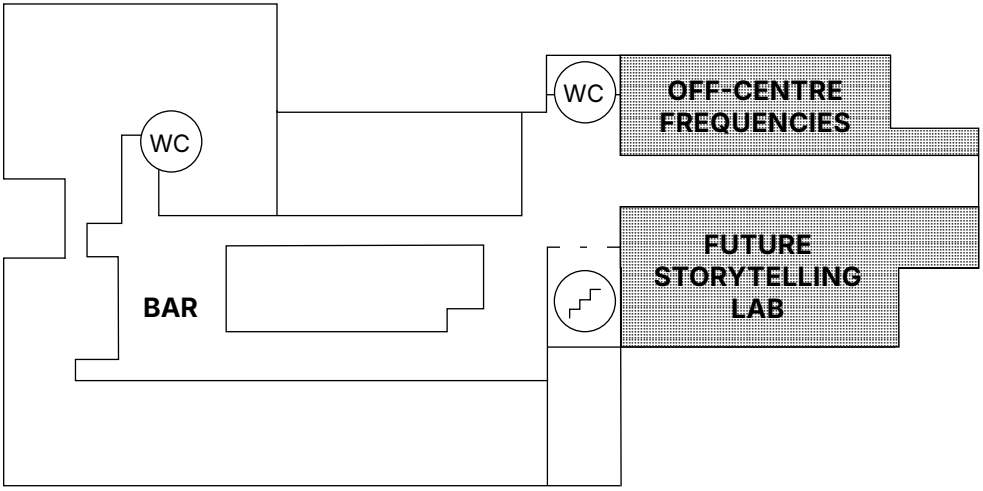
Zwolle Train Station,
Stationsgebouw Zwolle, Stationsplein 17



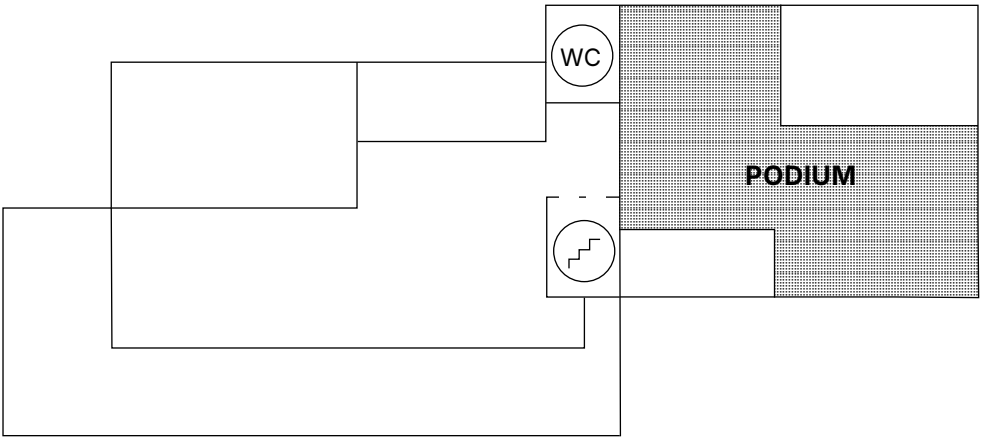
Floor plan Achtergracht



GROUND FLOOR

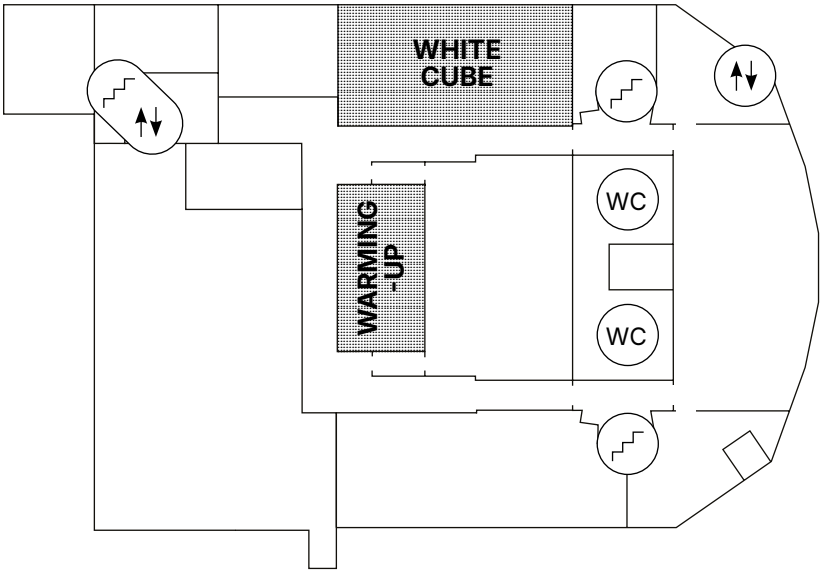


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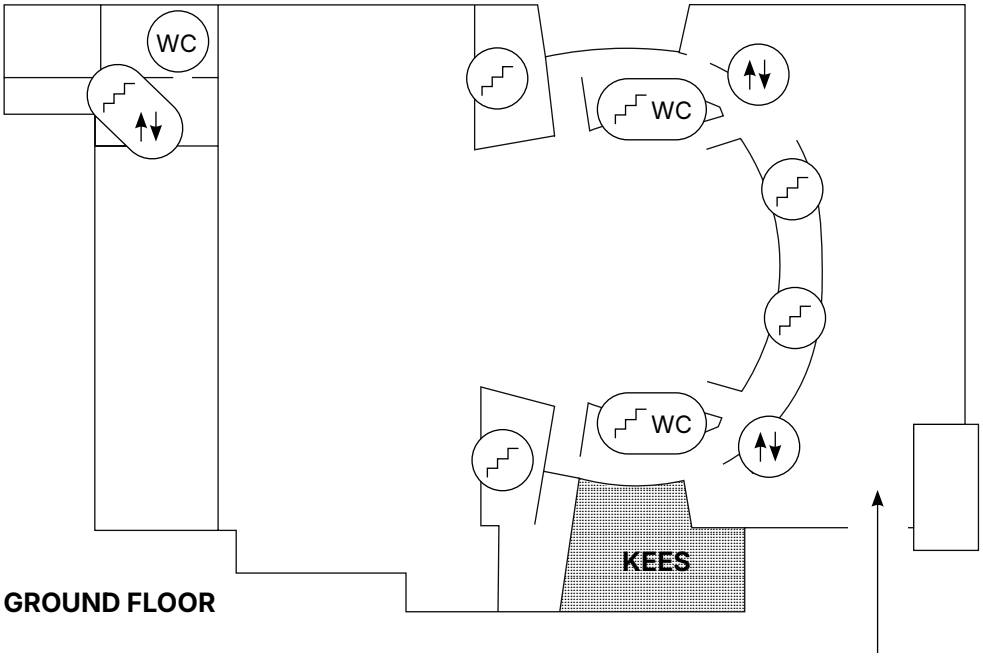


2nd FLOOR

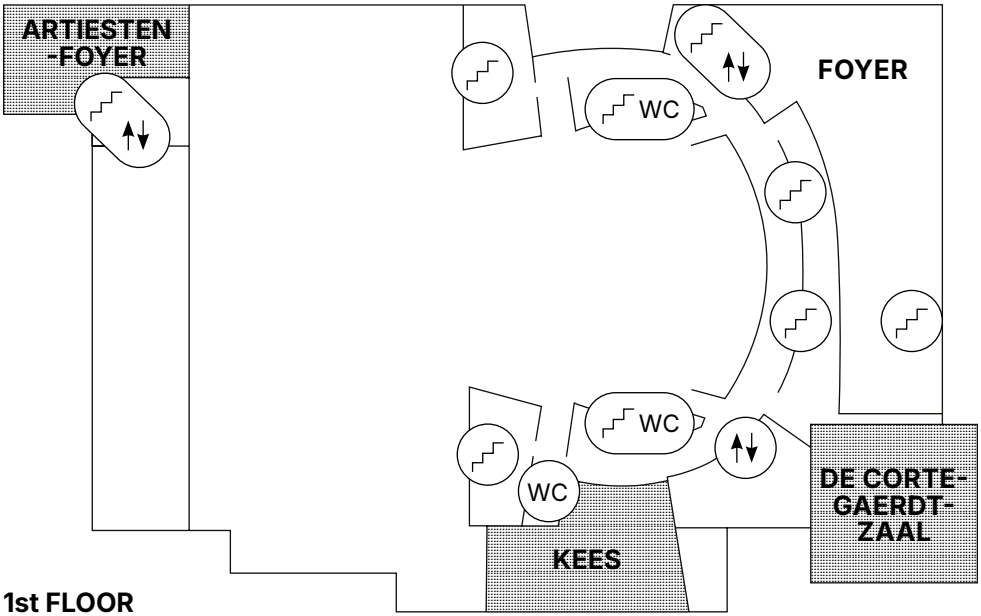
Floor plan De Spiegel



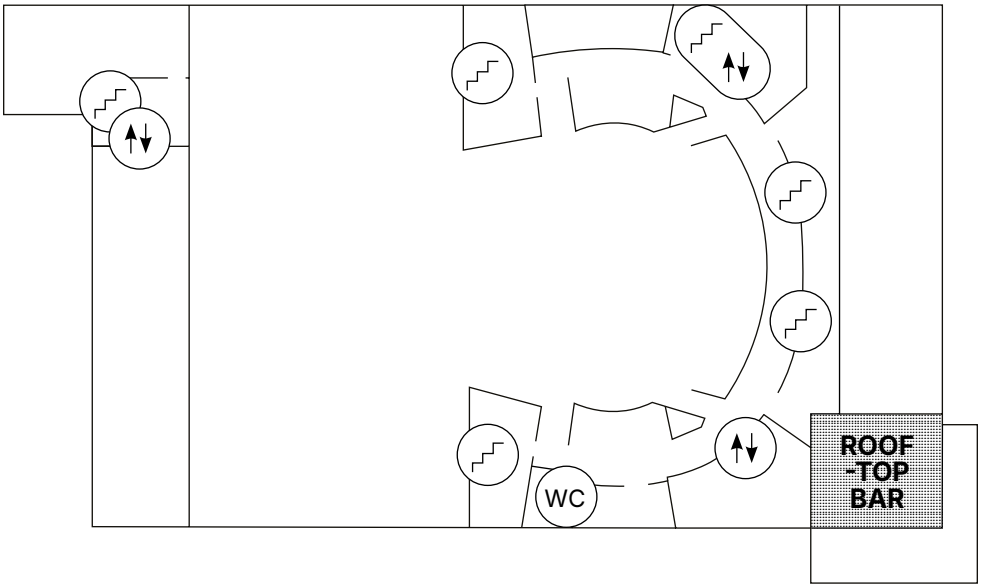
BASEMENT



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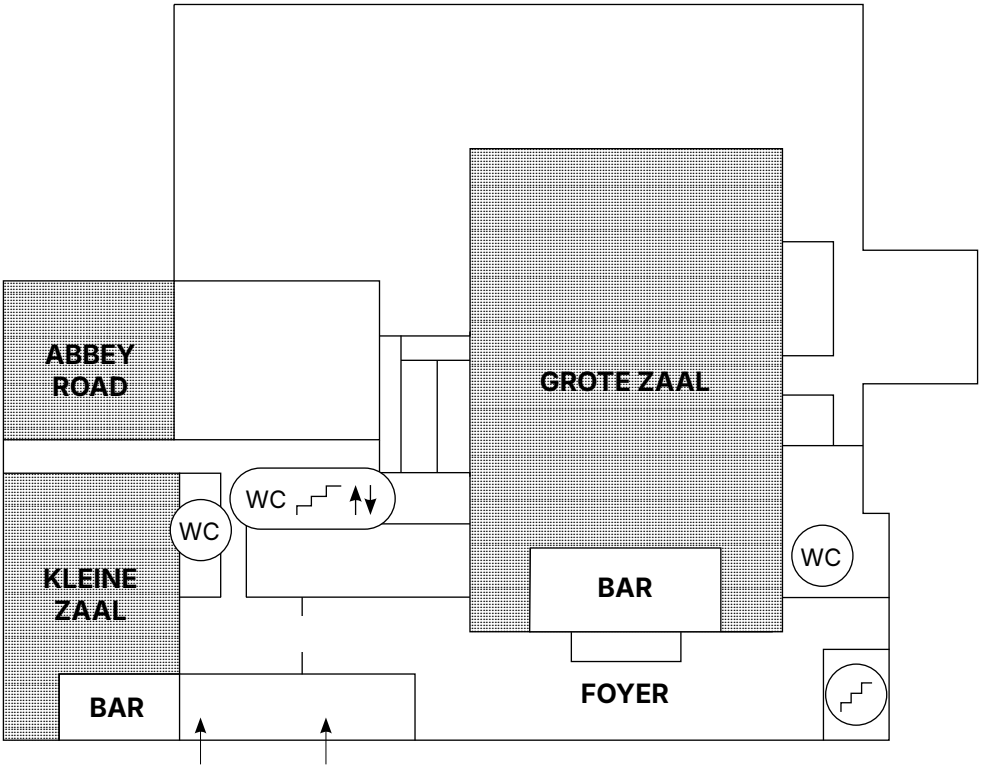


1st FLOOR



2nd FLOOR

Floor plan Hedon

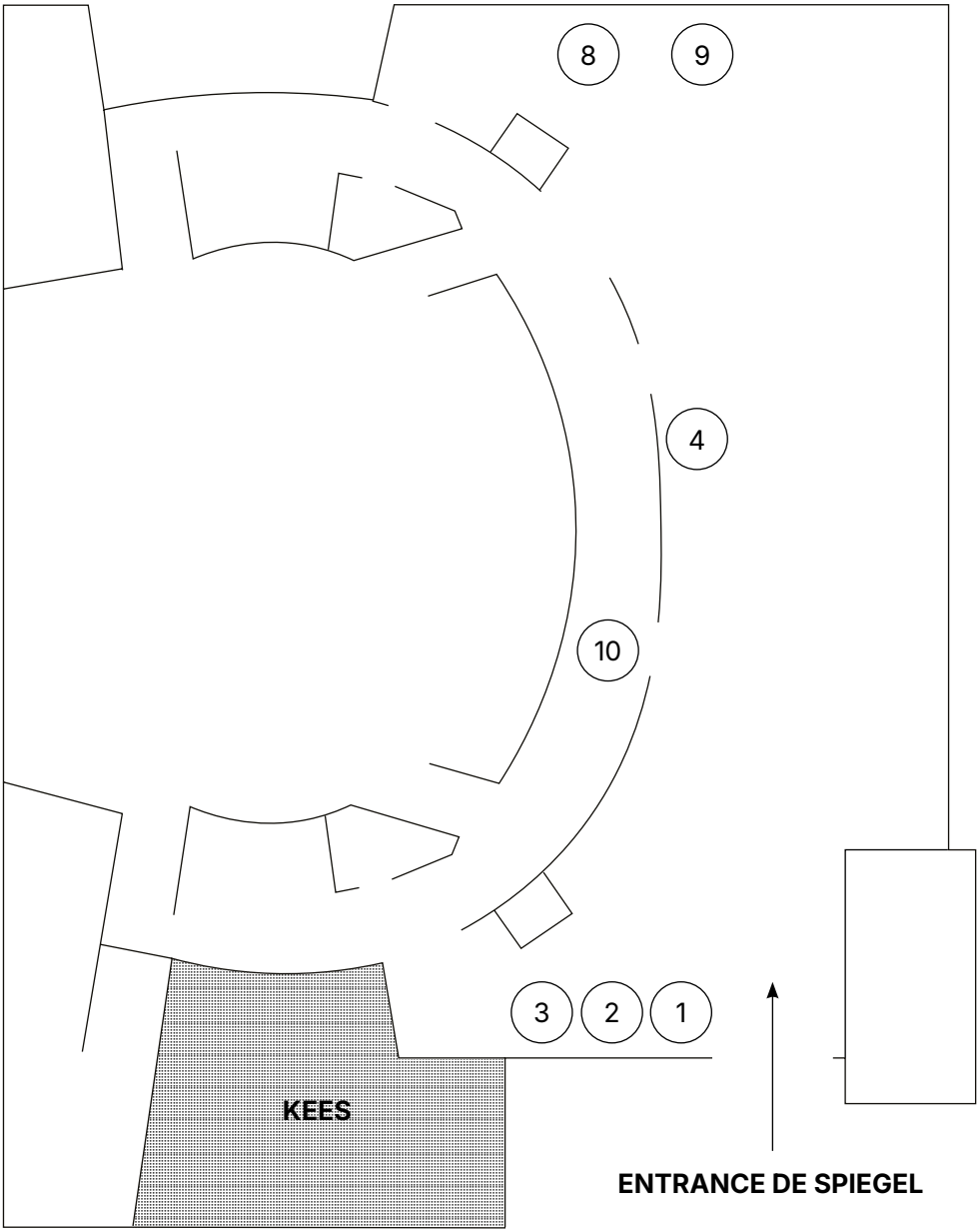


GROUND FLOOR

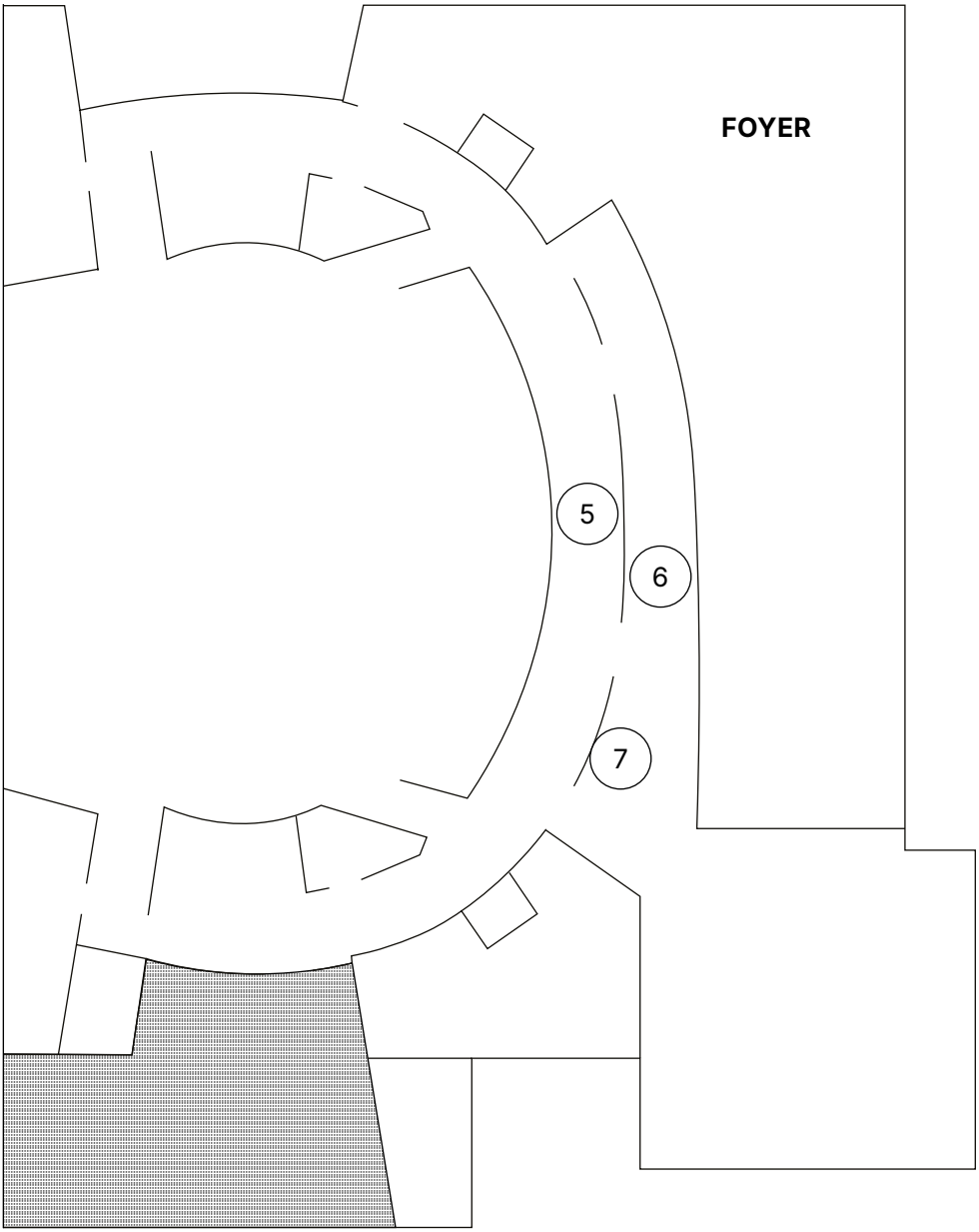
Floor plan Posters Exhibition

Titles

1. PULSE: Designing Interaction Off-Centre - A Practice-Based Poster on Interacting, Participation, and Embodied Knowing
2. Genuine Connections
3. SATLE Pathfinder Project
4. The Pola’s Monument: Struggle, Culture, and Identity
5. On Gaza
6. Bridging the Gap
7. Art as Stance
8. Poster Tactile Archive: Making at the Margins
9. An Atlas for Upending the World
10. Aviform



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

ECOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY

ELIA and ArtEZ University of the Arts recognise that large international conferences can have a negative environmental impact due to participant travel and the event's overall footprint (e.g., consumption and waste). To reduce the environmental impact of the ELIA Biennial Conference, both ELIA and ArtEZ will make greener choices in organising the conference and encourage participants to join us in this effort!

ELIA and ArtEZ consider sustainability a key priority, and several measures have been implemented to minimise the meeting's environmental and climate impact:

ACCOMMODATION

All recommended hotels are easily accessible from the conference venue, either by foot or a short public transport connection. These hotels are taking ecological steps to enhance their services and make them more environmentally friendly.

TRAVEL

Participants are encouraged to travel to Zwolle by train, if possible, or to make other sustainable travel arrangements. If air travel is necessary, consider a direct

flight (if available), as it has lower carbon emissions than a flight with a transfer. For travel within Zwolle, walking, cycling, or public transportation are recommended.

FOOD & DRINKS

Catering at the event has been selected based on sustainability criteria and will include local, seasonal, and/or vegetarian options. Participants are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles.

MATERIALS

Printed materials and giveaways will be kept to a minimum. During registration, please indicate if you require a printed programme (large print is available). Participants are encouraged to bring their own (tote) bags to carry conference materials, as bags will not be provided at the venue.

AWARENESS

To raise awareness about environmental sustainability, we will communicate our sustainable actions to our suppliers and partners. Before, during, and after the conference, we will engage with participants to foster dialogue and co-create a more sustainable event.

ELIA and ArtEZ are aligning the event's sustainability efforts with the SHIFT Eco-Guidelines for Networks.

EDI STATEMENT

ELIA and ArtEZ University of the Arts are dedicated to hosting events that prioritise equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. We have worked together with ArtEZ University of the Arts, to make this event a safer and more accessible space for all.

Should you have any specific accessibility needs (such as transportation assistance, support from a staff member, or a large-print programme), or if you need help registering for the event and/or registering an assistant to accompany you, please contact the ELIA Team so we can ensure this event is inclusive and accessible to you.

All our events have a support system in place.
If you witness any harassment or discriminatory behaviour during the event, please contact a member of the team or call or send a message: {+31 616119665}. This phone line will be monitored for the duration of the event.

If you prefer to make an anonymous report, please use the online form that will be made available shortly before the event.

We value any feedback you may have on how inclusive and accessible you find this event. You can submit your feedback in the event evaluation report that will be disseminated after the event. Your honesty is appreciated and will help us to understand how to improve the inclusivity and accessibility of our future events.
All feedback will be collected anonymously.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Emergency Number (police, fire brigade and ambulance services): 112

Janja Škerget, ELIA Conference Manager:
+31 (0) 650401938

Naomi Verbiesen, ArtEZ Project Manager ELIA Biennial Conference:
+31 (0) 611715445

PROGRAMME INFORMATION

For more information on the programme, please use the PINE App.

The event invitation code is:
ELIABIE26

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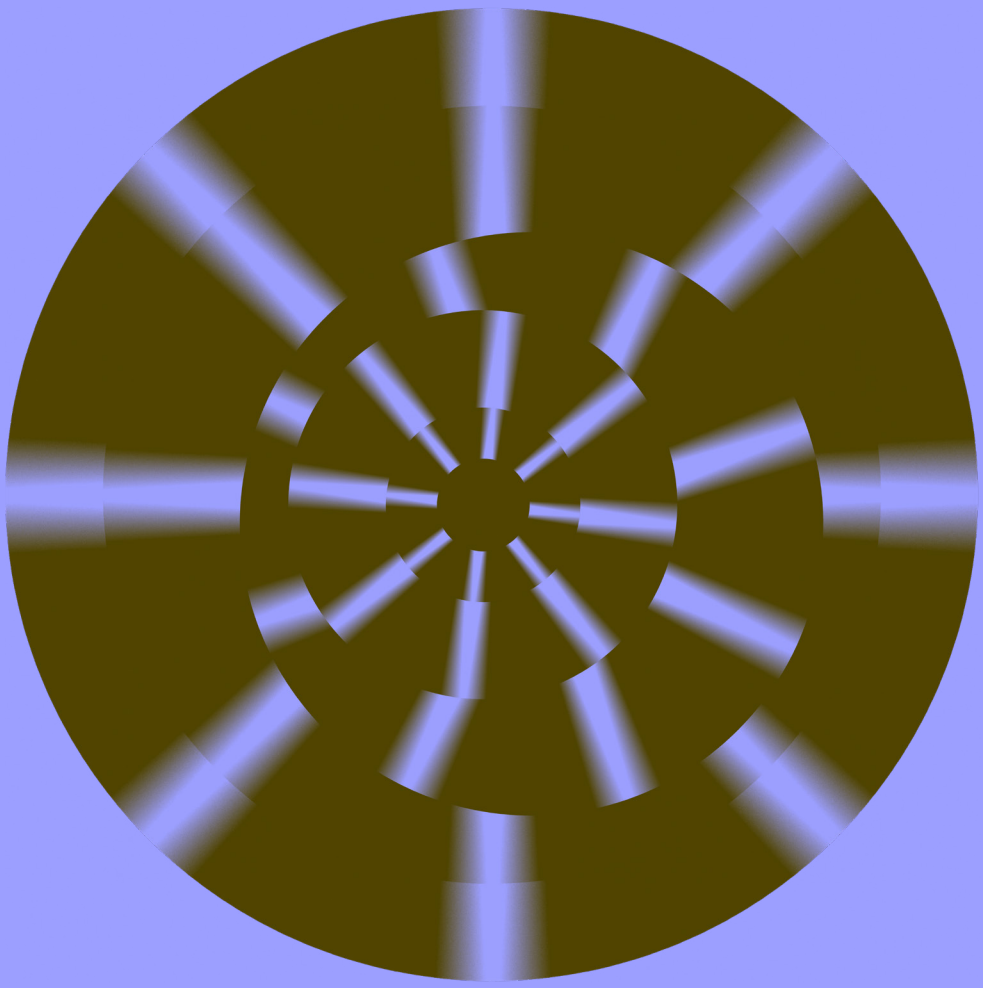
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